

**The Weekly Word**  
February 19-25, 2018

Happy February... Winter is flying by and so is 2Chronicles. Happy reading...  
Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

**Monday, February 19: 2Chronicles 14- it is so easy to slide away from God...**

I thought how quickly things can change. It had only been 20 years since Solomon's death and Rehoboam began his reign. He reigned 17 years and Abijah 3 years. Now as Asa ascended to the throne a revival of sorts is needed to purify the habits of the people. *Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God. He removed the foreign altars and the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. He commanded Judah to seek the LORD, the God of their ancestors, and to obey his laws and commands. He removed the high places and incense altars in every town in Judah, and the kingdom was at peace under him. He built up the fortified cities of Judah, since the land was at peace. No one was at war with him during those years, for the LORD gave him rest (2-6).*

In 20 years, maybe more if it stretched back into Solomon's reign, altars to foreign gods, sacred high place to foreign gods, Asherah poles and other pagan religious practices proliferated *in every town in Judah*. How easily people can slip from the worship of the Lord into idol worship. Some of these pagan practices may have mimicked the cultic practices of the Lord but much, if not most, were completely divergent from worship practices of Israel. Israel had to know the gods they worshiped were not the Lord.

I am back to my initial thought. How quickly our worship focus can change if we are not careful. This is as true today as it was back in Asa's day. The slide from the truth of God's word is so easy. Change can happen subtly –the proverbial boiled frog in the water; change the temperature slowly and the frog doesn't realize what is happening. Change can also come suddenly when one generation of unbelief locks its belief into the consciousness of society.

Our only defense is constant study and conformity to God's word. Study is important, but then I (and we) must consciously submit to obey and follow God's word. There is no substitute for obedience.

Asa was correct. As a people we need to *seek the LORD... and to obey his laws and commands*.

Day in and day out sitting with the Word open, listening to its message and trying to bring it into my heart is my first line of seeking...

Thanks for seeking with me.

*Lord, may the meditations of my heart be pleasing in Your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

**Tuesday, February 20: 2Chronicles 15- Seek Me, invites the Lord...**

For revival or renewal to truly settle into Israel, the people must embrace the Lord. If it remained a dictum from 'on high' and was not brought into the average person's life then renewal would never really take root.

Encouraged by a prophet's word, Asa continued his reforms and gathered the people for a celebration.

*Then he assembled all Judah and Benjamin and the people from Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon who had settled among them, for large numbers had come over to him from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him. They assembled at Jerusalem in the third month of the fifteenth year of Asa's reign.*

*At that time they sacrificed to the LORD seven hundred head of cattle and seven thousand sheep and goats from the plunder they had brought back. They entered into a covenant to seek the LORD, the God of their ancestors, with all their heart and soul. All who would not seek the LORD, the God of Israel, were to be put to death, whether small or great, man or woman. They took an oath to the LORD with loud acclamation, with shouting and with trumpets and horns. All Judah rejoiced about the oath because they had sworn it wholeheartedly. They sought God eagerly, and he was found by them. So the LORD gave them rest on every side (9-15).*

Now revival had a chance because the people had embraced it... they pledged their lives anew to the Lord.

There is something about verbalizing our commitment to the Lord. Speaking our allegiance out loud in a public setting is often a powerful moment. I have been with tens of thousands of men at a Promise Keepers rally and in congregations of various sizes when we renew our love and commitment to the Lord... these have been powerful moments or rededication.

Moments and events will only carry a person so far, but they do provide a jumpstart. I have learned that I have to live into my rededication by continuing to trust the Lord and press into His will through study, prayer, and mutual accountability.

I love the fact that when God's people seek Him with all their heart He is found by them (15). God is wooing me (and you). "Seek Me," says the Lord, "because you will find Me."

With the beckoning from the Lord I am drawn to prayer... to be with Him...

*O Lord, refresh my heart. Draw me closer to You. Give me strength and a community that will help me cast off sin and cling to You. Unfurl Your glory that I might experience You... I pray this in Jesus name. Amen.*

### **Wednesday, February 21: 2Chronicles 16- So sad...**

My heart trembles as I read this chapter... How can someone so faithful become so hard against the Lord? I knew it was difficult to receive a rebuke from the Lord, but Asa seemed to shut his heart to the Lord. The line at the end was particularly sad for me to read... *Though his disease was severe, even in his illness he did not seek help from the LORD, but only from the physicians (12).* He did not and apparently he would not seek help from the Lord. Oh, my!

I never quite understand the journey from faithfulness to faithlessness... but at the same time I feel a sense of warning. If Asa could fall any of us can fall, and more to the point, I could fall. And this scares me and drives me to my knees...

*O God, protect me. Keep me safe. I throw myself on Your mercy. Lord, I cling to You and I hold to the Word particularly in Romans 8:28-30: And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*

*Lord, I hold to the truth You will see me to glory. I love You, Lord, and I praise You as my Savior, Lord and Redeemer. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

### **Thursday, February 22: 2Chronicles 17- What are you doing for the Lord?...**

Jehoshaphat, Asa's son, was faithful to the Lord. This was my big take-a-way from the chapter. As I sat with that thought I began to see that Jehoshaphat's faithfulness translated into action. Verse 6 helped crystalize this for me. *His heart was devoted to the ways of the LORD; furthermore, he removed the high places and the Asherah poles from Judah.*

As I chewed on this God seemed to whisper to me, "Bill, where is your faith driving action in your life? Where is your belief in Me causing you to live differently than people who don't believe in Me?"

And this led me to take an inventory of my life, which I will not journal for all to see. As I pondered my inventory, many, even most of the items I listed I have been doing for years, some since I was a babe in Christ...

It was at that point that the Lord raised the stakes some and queried me again, "Bill, where are some new places or what are some new actions you can do that reveal My life in yours?"

I don't have immediate answers to this query by the Lord. And this drove me to prayer...

*Lord, to copy Isaiah, 'here am I send me'. Lord, open my eyes to things that break Your heart and break mine and send me forth.... Amen.*

### **Friday, February 23: 2Chronicles 18 Who are you allying yourself with?...**

Why would Jehoshaphat ally himself with Ahab? *Now Jehoshaphat had great wealth and honor, and he allied himself with Ahab by marriage* (1). I cannot fathom this. Jehoshaphat was faithful and Ahab was the epitome of faithlessness. Even if somehow the Israel brotherhood was strong for Jehoshaphat, as the story continues, he had plenty of evidence that Ahab was not walking with the Lord. For example verse 6: *But Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there no longer a prophet of the LORD here whom we can inquire of?"*

I kept wondering, why Jehoshaphat wouldn't back out gracefully once Ahab's true colors began to show? At least he pressed the issue and had a true prophet come in. After that, why would he continue? I have so many questions.

As I meditate on this, I began to scan my life wondering how often I continue in some kind of a business or working relationship with someone who shows their colors as someone like Ahab... feigning faith but serving another god. It is much easier seeing problematic ways in other people's lives than seeing it in my life.

I am pleased that the Lord continues to protect and watch over Jehoshaphat particularly when he called out to the Lord (see 31-32). However, that doesn't excuse him for being in that situation in the first place. I certainly don't want to presume on the Lord to save me if I am foolishly diving into an 'empty pool.'

I am also wondering if this association with Ahab will rise up and create problems in the future.

Associations are vital to our growth and are sometimes a key factor in our fall...

*Lord, help me to be honest about my associations and to do so with my ears open to Your voice and whisperings. Protect me where I am weak or off base and help me cement those relationships that will help me grow closer to You. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen*

### **Saturday, February 24: 2Chronicles 19...**

I felt vindicated for my thoughts yesterday when I read the opening of chapter 19. *When Jehoshaphat king of Judah returned safely to his palace in Jerusalem, Jehu the seer, the son of Hanani, went out to meet him and said to the king, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD? Because of this, the wrath of the LORD is on you. There is, however, some good in you, for you have rid the land of the Asherah poles and have set your heart on seeking God"* (1-3). The Lord called Jehoshaphat on his mixed loyalties.

It seemed that this conversation with the Lord was a spiritual wakeup call for Jehoshaphat, who responded by calling the people back to the Lord.

I began wondering about how I respond to the Lord's rebuke. Am I willing to change my heart and ways and return to the Lord or do I brood?

This week we had opposite examples in Asa and Jehoshaphat. Confronted by the Lord, Asa turned his heart from God; Jehoshaphat turned to the Lord.

As I penned the above God said to me, "Whose example will you follow?"

I pray I follow Jehoshaphat. I pray I always turn back to the Lord when I stumble and fall and someone shows me God's way...

How about you? How do you respond to the Lord's rebuke?

*Oh, God, soften my heart to You. And when you place a plumb line upon my life and find I am out of square, send Your Holy Spirit to help me turn back to You and NEVER away from You. I need Your help, Oh Lord, for I am a mere fallen human being, broken and sin filled. And apart from YOU I can do no good thing. Help me, Lord God. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## **Sunday, February 25, 2018, Sunday Worship**

*If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.*

*If you are reading along with me from the PCOG website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at [office@pcogonline.org](mailto:office@pcogonline.org).*

Click here for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.