“Choosing To Please the LORD”

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Please take your Bible with me and open it to II Chronicles chapter twelve. The Kings of Israel have a distinction; likely the greatest distinction ever among the nations of the world. Their stories have been recorded by the Holy Spirit in the Bible. Good or bad; the story of their lives is given in Scripture. Famous or infamous, they are there for the whole world to see.

And many of the kings of Israel could be compared to someone running a race in the mud. They never got any traction, spiritually-speaking, and never found success in their reign over the Jews.

Now, I’m sure that the same could be said for a lot of people throughout the centuries. And it can even be said of Christians that many Believers have lived and died, never having surrendered to the LORD for His service in this world. Let’s hope that it is not said of you and me.

The first king to follow Solomon was a man named Rehoboam. He’s a classic example of someone who never got any traction when it came to serving God.

Here’s what we read in II Chronicles chapter twelve and verse one. Please follow with me [read II Chronicles 12:1].

Now move on down to verse fourteen of this same chapter [read II Chronicles 12:14].

The LORD even gives to us the reason for Rehoboam living the kind of life he lived. “And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to see the LORD.”

Rehoboam was the son of the great King Solomon; the grandson of the great King David. Yet no one in history ever said “I want my son to grow up and become a man like Rehoboam.” Rehoboam was Israel’s third king. But he’s a man who never got out of the mud at the starting gate. So, his life is characterized by the Holy Spirit in the Bible as this. II Chronicles 12:14 *“And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord.”*

I’ve titled today’s sermon “Choosing to Please the LORD.” Shall we pray?

Rehoboam did have some big shoes to fill. After all, David was a true man; a man after God’s heart. And Solomon was called and used of God to raise up the Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem. And maybe Rehoboam, like so many, didn’t want to be known as the son of Solomon or the grandson of King David. For whatever reason, he refused to follow the LORD.

But folks, none of us can attribute our success *or* our failures to our parents or grandparents. We might have a godly heritage or an ungodly heritage. But we each have to make our own choices when it comes to surrendering to the LORD’s will. I think I can say with some confidence that Rehoboam never surrendered his life to the LORD. And yet, his life is still one we can learn from.

Look with me at what Rehoboam came into this world with. He entered the world of a palace. He was born a prince. He wasn’t born, as some used to say, “with a silver spoon in his mouth.” He was born with a gold spoon in his mouth. Solomon’s Temple alone had eight million pounds of gold in it as well as 76 million pounds of silver in it. According to today’s prices (silver is at $16.01 per Troy ounce and gold is at $1,182.00 per Troy ounce), the Temple itself would be worth $315,000,000.00. Besides the Temple, Solomon built his own house. To say the least, Rehoboam was born into tremendous wealth.

And wealth, as we all know, can do more to diminish your soul than any other thing in the world. Yet, as you read the life of Rehoboam, you don’t get the impression that he sold his soul to the god of mammon. I think he had a different heart problem.

Rehoboam also entered the world with some of the largest promises ever made by God.

Please turn with me to one of those promises; II Samuel 7:16 says this. *“And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established [made sure] for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established [made sure] for ever.”*

These are the words spoken by the Prophet Nathan to King David. It’s even possible that Rehoboam was alive when Nathan delivered this message to King David.

Can you see what this man began his life with? He started out with a huge promise from God through Nathan to his grandfather.

One, your house = your family; your descendants

Two, your kingdom = a territory running from the Euphrates River westward to the Mediterranean Sea.

And three, your throne = the kingdom of Israel; twelve tribes; each king from David onward down through history was to be one of David’s descendants.

Rehoboam was born into the kingly line. He was born a king. He was born a ruler over the LORD’s people, the Jews.

With some people, there seems to be a great and glorious privilege that comes with them just being in this world. That was the case with Rehoboam. He was born into the privileged society of this world.

Practically speaking, he had everything you can imagine going for him.

Yet, as we know from the words of II Chronicles 12:14 that, with all he had from the hand of the LORD, he did evil.

What lessons then can we find from Rehoboam’s life that will help us to find a measure of spiritual success?

First, choose carefully who you will listen to.

Turn with me to II Chronicles 10:1.

II Chronicles 10:1 *“And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for to Shechem were all Israel come to make him king. (2)* *And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was in Egypt, whither he fled from the presence of Solomon the king, heard it, that Jeroboam returned out of Egypt.(3)**And they sent and called him. So Jeroboam and all Israel came and spake to Rehoboam, saying,*

*(4) Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore ease thou somewhat the grievous servitude of thy father, and his heavy yoke that he put upon us, and we will serve thee. (5) And he said unto them, Come again unto me after three days. And the people departed.*

*(6) And king Rehoboam took counsel with the old men that had stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, saying, What counsel give ye me to return answer to this people? (7) And they spake unto him, saying, If thou be kind to this people, and please them, and speak good words to them, they will be thy servants for ever.*

*(8) But he forsook the counsel which the old men gave him, and took counsel with the young men that were brought up with him, that stood before him. (9) And he said unto them, What advice give ye that we may return answer to this people, which have spoken to me, saying, Ease somewhat the yoke that thy father did put upon us?*

*(10) And the young men that were brought up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou answer the people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it somewhat lighter for us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins.*

*(11) For whereas my father put a heavy yoke upon you, I will put more to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. (12) So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king bade, saying, Come again to me on the third day. (13) And the king answered them roughly; and king Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the old men,…”*

Every day you and I have decisions to make. But some days and some decisions are out of the ordinary. On this day, Rehoboam decided he would listen to two pieces of advice: his elders or the counsel of his friends.

Is there really a choice here? You would think that the choice would have been an easy one: listen to those who have experience. Listen to those who knew your father and your grandfather. Listen to those who understand people and life.

Now, can you guess what he did instead? He rejected their counsel. After all, he would be greatly admired by his younger friends if he took their advice.

You can always tell when someone is choosing to please the LORD. They realize they need advice. But they look to those who have traveled down that road before. They are open to hearing from those who have already made some large mistakes. They are willing to listen to wise counsel.

Let me ask you this. “Who do you find yourself listening to?” Is it someone who, in your eyes, is the voice of experience and wisdom? Or are you listening to someone who is directing you away from the LORD?

Who we are when it comes to walking with the LORD is greatly influenced our choice as to who we listen to.

Here’s word for us from Rehoboam’s grandfather.

It’s Psalm 1:1. *“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. (2) But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.*

*(3) And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”*

What difference has it made in your life who you’ve listened to? Did your choice result in your doing something that pleases the LORD or are you choosing to please someone else or are you choosing to please yourself?

We can please the LORD. But we do need counsel. And from whom should we accept counsel? We need the counsel of those who have walked before us. We all need godly counsel. The LORD says to not walk in the counsel of the ungodly or the counsel of the sinners or the counsel of the scornful.

Rehoboam’s story illustrates for us the power of listening to the wrong counsel.

First, then, shouldn’t we choose carefully who we will listen to?

Second, train yourself to see how what you seek will always produce its own results. Rehoboam’s heart did evil because he didn’t see the connection between what and who he prepared himself to seek and his behavior and character.

My point is simply this. Take the necessary time to prepare your heart to seek the LORD.

II Chronicles 12:14 helps us here. *“And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord.”*

Just two simple, but very powerful words here: prepared and seek.

“Prepared.” What this means is “ready.”

I Samuel 30:6 says this. *“And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.”*

Rehoboam may not have had a really good example in the life of his father Solomon at the close of his life. But he did have his grandfather. He did have King David.

And when David had large decisions to make, what did he do? He strengthened himself in the LORD.

You too can take yourself to the LORD and look for His strength. You can become a seeker after the LORD.

Had he chosen to do so, Rehoboam could have chosen the one thing that would have make the biggest difference in his life. He could have “prepared his heart to seek the LORD.”

Now, let me be as clear as I can. Look again at II Chronicles 12:1 and you will see the one matter that made all the difference in Rehoboam’s life.

II Chronicles 12:1 *“And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel with him.”*

Rehoboam made a deliberate choice to forsake the law of the LORD. He pushed it aside and left the one things that would have had the greatest influence on his life and service – the word of God.

It really is a simple, yet profound decision. Either we take the Word of God as a Word from God to our own hearts or we listen to the words of everyone but God.

Do you know what really happens when we set aside the word of God for something else? Here is what we are really doing. Look down at verse five.

II Chronicles 12:5 *“Then came Shemaiah the prophet to Rehoboam, and to the princes of Judah, that were gathered together to Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said unto them, Thus saith the Lord, Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak”.*

The gracious LORD of Heaven sent a prophet with a specific word for Rehoboam. “You have forsaken Me.” Isn’t it obvious that whenever we forsake the Law of the LORD, we are, in essence, forsaken the LORD of the Law?

The LORD is very patient. He is very gracious. He is always ready to receive the humbled heart. Yet, how often have you gone your way and set both the LORD and His Word aside?

Folks, it’s always to our detriment. It will always result in a path of disobedience. In the NT we read this. II Corinthians 5:9 “*Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of [pleasing to] him.”*

First, prepared.

2. Seek

To “seek” means “to set your mind and your affections on; to steadfastly set your face towards.”

You’ve heard it said, haven’t you “What you seek is what you get”?

Here’s what the NT teaches on this matter of seeking. Colossians 3:1 *“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. (2) Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”*

An easy way to remind yourself of what it means to seek is this. Ask yourself what you are seeking for and what you’ve set your affections on.

So, folks, the way you choose *is* going to produce the results that we can expect. It has to. The Bible principle is this Galatians 6:7 “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. (8) For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

Can you see and hear the warning from the LORD today? How long will you persist in choosing anything other than a life that pleases the LORD?

Folks, the LORD only expects what He Himself will give you grace to accomplish in this world. We live and we die by His power. We need His strength to live today.

So, what will it be? A life that pleases Him or a life that please someone other than Him?

One of the great British Bible teachers was Oswald Chambers. He lived for many years for himself. Here’s how he described what it meant to him to seek to please the LORD.

“Are you seeking great things for yourself? Not seeking to be a great one, but seeking great things from God for yourself. God wants you in a closer relationship to Himself than receiving His gifts, He wants you to get to know Him. A great thing is accidental, it comes and goes.

God never gives us anything accidental. Nothing is easier than getting into a right relationship with God except when it is not God Whom you want but only what He gives.

Jesus said, “I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me” ([John 5:30](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+5:30)).

Seeking to do “the will of the Father” was the one dominating concern throughout our Lord’s life. And whatever He encountered along the way, whether joy or sorrow, success or failure, He was never deterred from that purpose. “…He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem…” ([Luke 9:51](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+9:51)).

In conclusion, what will it be for you? Will you choose today to please Him?

I offer you the same prayer I’ve offered you for two years now. I call it the Prayer of Surrender. “LORD, thank you for the Blessed Cross of Christ. Right now I submit all that I am to you, my spirit, my soul, my body, my time, my finances; my entire life to yours to control. Do with me what is most pleasing to You. Work out Your Blessed will upon me today.”