

LIVING A GODLY LIFE IN AN UNGODLY WORLD



How can we live godly lives in this ungodly world?

Christians can look confidently toward a future with Christ that will be free of the grief and problems we face in this world.

But what do we do in the meantime? We live in a world that does nothing to encourage our walk with Christ; in fact, many times the world actively opposes anyone who seeks to live a godly life for Christ.

We can stand strong, though. In the Old Testament, the life of King Asa shows us how to face life head on. His example points to the value of focusing on God, living a lifestyle of worship, and persisting with courage and dependence on Him. We'll also see how his example influenced those around him and the generation that came after. By studying his life, we will see that, even though we will face enemies and challenges, we can live godly lives.



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Living a Godly Life in an Ungodly World

Session 1 **Pursue Godliness** *2 Chronicles 14:1-8*

Session 2 **Depend on God** *2 Chronicles 14:9-15*

Session 3 **Act with Courage** *2 Chronicles 15:1-9*

Session 4 **Worship Continually** *2 Chronicles 15:10-19*

Session 5 **Remember God's Faithfulness** *2 Chronicles 16:1-13*

Session 6 **Leave a Legacy** *2 Chronicles 17:1-13*

BIBLE
STUDIES
FOR LIFE.

DISCIPLESHIP PLAN

How "Living a Godly Life in an Ungodly World" supports the Discipleship Plan (see page 129):

Serve God and Others. Serving God does not happen only in a serene environment. In fact, our service for Him is often best seen when we serve in challenging—even hostile—circumstances. When we obediently follow God no matter what, we serve others by giving them an example to follow.

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PURSUE GODLINESS



What are some things you enjoy being distracted by?

QUESTION #1

THE POINT

Make God the focus of your life.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Every day we are faced with a multitude of distractions. Apps on our smartphones easily sidetrack us. Social media, text messages, and email after email vie for our attention too. Is it any wonder we might have a problem with keeping our focus on the task at hand?

- ▶ The average worker wastes 759 hours each year due to distractions in the workplace.¹
- ▶ In 2015, 3,477 people were killed and nearly 400,000 more were injured in vehicle crashes that involved distracted drivers.²
- ▶ Ninety-two percent of college students have used their phones to send text messages during class.³

Any distraction can be dangerous, but being distracted from what really matters in life can have devastating consequences. In the Book of 2 Chronicles, we meet one man who kept his focus. King Asa made sure nothing distracted him from keeping his focus on God.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

2 Chronicles 14:1-2

¹ And Abijah rested with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David. Asa his son succeeded him as king, and in his days the country was at peace for ten years. ² Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God.

When a new president takes office, we watch closely to see what he will do during his first one hundred days. Moving beyond the campaign promises, we begin to see his abilities and character in action. The first one hundred days set the tone for the rest of his administration.

Asa was suddenly thrust into leadership simply because his father died. Perhaps the nation of Judah was watching to see, in a sense, what his first one hundred days would be like. Asa himself may have wondered what kind of king he should be. We don't know how old he was when he became king, but he had observed how his father, Abijah, reigned. Abijah was only king for three years (1 Kings 15:2), so Asa also had the example of his grandfather, Rehoboam, to consider.

Asa had seen how both men responded to the challenges of leading. Both men had dealt with wars and conflicts, and each had failed to keep his focus on God and doing what was right in His sight. As a result, up to this point, the nation had little to no peace in the land, although Abijah did lead the Southern Kingdom of Judah to victory over the Northern Kingdom of Israel who had wandered away from God under the leadership of King Jeroboam.

When Asa assumed the kingship, the country had peace—and it remained in peace for ten years. But a king must still keep his focus in times of peace just as he does in times of war. Peacetime leadership also carries great responsibility.

When have you been inspired to follow in someone's footsteps?

QUESTION #2

The question remained: would Asa lead like those before him or would he choose a better path? Asa didn't have to look very far back in history to see what happened when a leader took his focus off of God. Asa chose a different route: he chose to keep his relationship with God his top priority.

Asa would lead by example both in his actions before the people and in his relationship with God. He would need to depend on the Lord and in His direction. As he trusted the Lord to guide his actions and thoughts, he would lead the people to also follow the directions given by God.

How would King Asa be able to do all of this? He would have to make every decision as king in the right way no matter what situations or circumstances came up. "Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God." What made his leadership remarkable is that what he did was good and right in God's eyes. It's tempting for us to be "people pleasers," doing what others consider good and right. People want us to do what is good and right for them. But such motives are often self-centered, and defining what is "good and right" can vary with each circumstance. Not so in God's eyes. God's standard of goodness and righteousness does not change. Asa wasn't doing good and right things to please the people in his kingdom; he was doing them to please God.

2 Chronicles 14:3-5

³ He removed the foreign altars and the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. ⁴ He commanded Judah to seek the LORD, the God of their ancestors, and to obey his laws and commands. ⁵ He removed the high places and incense altars in every town in Judah, and the kingdom was at peace under him.

Once Asa became king, he didn't waste any time in taking action to do what needed to be done. His actions centered on getting the people's attention back on God.

What are some idolatrous symbols popular in our culture?

QUESTION #3

Worship was abundant in the land, but it was the wrong kind of worship. For several years, those in power allowed the promiscuous worship of these false gods to run unrestrained in the land. Asa's father, Abijah, did nothing to stop this national sin. His refusal to take a stand against idolatry likely encouraged the practice. It's not clear if Abijah also engaged in false worship, but "his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God" (1 Kings 15:3).

Asa, however, was determined that he was going to do what was right in God's eyes and destroy the places of idol worship. And he didn't just want a few places cleaned up. He removed the places of false worship "in every town in Judah" (v. 5). Every plot of land over which he had authority was to be a place where God would be acknowledged and worshiped.

Asa was determined to point the nation back to God. He used his authority as king to remind the people to seek the God of their ancestors. We don't know if the people objected to the destruction of these idols, but they certainly complied outwardly.

As a result of his actions, the land lived in peace for ten years. Imagine the impact we would have today if we sought God with the same passion and determination Asa had. Our idols may look different, but we too must make the Lord the focus of every aspect of our lives.



2 Chronicles 14:6-8

⁶ 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. ⁷“Let us build up these towns,” he said to Judah, “and put walls around them, with towers, gates and bars. The land is still ours, because we have sought the LORD our God; we sought him and he has given us rest on every side.” So they built and prospered. ⁸ Asa had an army of three hundred thousand men from Judah, equipped with large shields and with spears, and two hundred and eighty thousand from Benjamin, armed with small shields and with bows. All these were brave fighting men.

Even though the land was experiencing a time of peace, Asa didn't take time off to go on a vacation or nap under the nearest olive tree. He maintained his focus on doing what was good and right. He rallied the people to look down the road to a possible time when there wouldn't be peace and they might be at risk of attack from their enemies.

When God gives us a time of peace, we often want to just sit back and relax. We must guard ourselves against temptations that pull our attention and focus away from God, however. We must continually seek after Christ. Thankfully, God has given us several things to help us stand strong and stay focused.

The church. The body of Christ—our brothers and sisters in Christ—are an incredible source of strength, not only during times of peace, but especially during times of discouragement and attacks from the enemy.

Spiritual gifts. God has given every believer spiritual gifts and He expects us to use them. When we “flex those muscles” by using the gifts that He has given us, we are strengthened—and we strengthen others. Even as other believers help us stand, we help them stand.

We stand strong and keep our focus on Christ when we stand together. Allow God to use you in the life of another believer even as you desire God to strengthen you through the gifts and ministries of others.

How can we enjoy a season of God-given rest without becoming complacent?

QUESTION #4

What are some ways our group can help one another guard against temptation and spiritual attacks?

QUESTION #5

MAINTAINING FOCUS

From the list of common distractions below, choose three that are a particular challenge for you. Then answer the questions.

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|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------|
| ___ cell phone | ___ media | ___ television | ___ pets |
| ___ sports | ___ video games | ___ exercise | ___ food |
| ___ computer | ___ news | ___ gossip | ___ friends |
| ___ other _____ | | | |

What are some things that could help you maintain healthy habits in these areas?

What are some practices that could help you center your life in Christ?

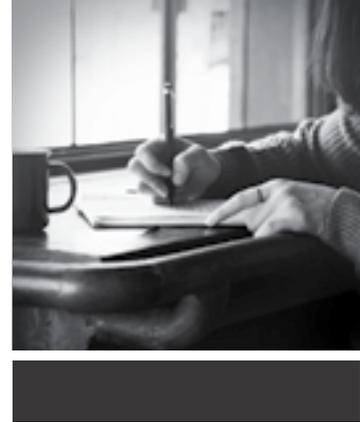
"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching!"

— HEBREWS 10:24-25

LIVE IT OUT

How will you pursue godliness this week and seek to do what is good and right before God? Choose one of the following applications:

- ▶ **Memorize.** Commit to memory Matthew 6:33: “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” Allow the truth of this verse to penetrate your heart and mind; let it be a driving force in your pursuit of godliness.
- ▶ **List.** Identify areas in your own life that have become idols and false gods. Develop a plan to purposely rid yourself of them. Enlist the help of your valiant warriors if necessary.
- ▶ **Recruit.** Enlist a small group of people to serve as your army of valiant warriors who will stand guard with you when attacks come from the enemy.



Pursuing godliness is not an easy thing to do in today's world. But it is possible when you avoid the distractions and keep your focus on Christ.

My thoughts

¹ Susanna Huth, “Employees waste 759 hours each year due to workplace distractions,” *The Telegraph*, June 22, 2015, www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/jobs/11691728/Employees-waste-759-hours-each-year-due-to-workplace-distractions.html.

² “Distracted Driving 2015,” *Traffic Safety Facts Research Note*, March 2017, https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/documents/812_381_distracteddriving2015.pdf.

³ Deborah R. Tindell & Robert W. Bohlander, “The Use and Abuse of Cell Phones and Text Messaging in the Classroom: A Survey of College Students,” *Taylor & Francis Online*, December 29, 2011, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/87567555.2011.604802>.