

Kings & Kingdoms #12  
**The Pitfall of Self-Destruction**

*Word*

**Scripture Reference**

2 Chronicles 36

**Discussion Questions**

1. Why do people blame God for their own wrongdoings?
2. We fall in the pitfall of self-destruction because of our own choices and actions. Self-destruction is a behavior that causes physical or psychological harm. The best treatment to prevent this is early intervention. 2 Chronicles 36 gives us an account of the last four kings of Judah and reminds us of how we can avoid self-destructive behavior. King Josiah had four sons, and three of them became kings of Judah. The first one was King Jehoahaz who reigned only for three months. Why was his reign so short? How did he get dethroned (v. 1-4)?
3. With the defeat of King Jehoahaz, the Israelites should have already learned their lesson. God made it clear to His people that those who obey Him would be blessed, and those who disobey would be disciplined. They should know from their history that when they were in trouble and they called upon God, He would rescue them. But how did King Jehoiakim fare as king (v. 5-8)? Discuss what happens when you don't learn from the mistakes of others.
4. Jehoiachin replaced Jehoiakim as king of Judah (v. 9-10). He reigned only for three months and ten days, and like his brother did evil in the eyes of God. As a consequence of his evilness, God allowed him to be captive to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon who brought him along with other Jews to Babylon. Unlike King Josiah who was faithful to God since he was 16 years old, evilness before God was what described the three kings after him. They allowed these destructive actions/behaviors to destroy their lives:
  - a. *Allowing evil to be ingrained in your way of life (v. 5-10).* It only takes one or two generations of not teaching the Word of God for it to be forgotten and for evil to be ingrained in the culture and a person's way of life. Discuss how sin or evilness is so prevalent in today's generation and culture. Share examples of how unrighteousness has been mixed with culture and how people are living them out without their conscience being bothered. How would it lead to self-destruction? As a Christian, what should you do to avoid this?
  - b. *Hardening of your heart to not allow for humble correction and trusting in God (v. 11-14).* Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king. He reigned for 11 years, but just like his predecessors, he too did evil in the eyes of the

Lord. More than that, the Bible tells us that he did not humble himself before God. What happened when he did not ask God's help to protect his nation? What makes a person's heart hard? Discuss what happens when a Christian does not allow the Holy Spirit to transform him/her? What should be your motivation to change? Why would a hardened heart lead to self-destruction?

- c. *Mocking the message and messenger of God (v. 15-16).* God sent prophets and messengers to the people of Israel again and again because He felt compassion for His people and did not want them to suffer because of their sins. What was their response to the messengers of God? What was God's reaction to their response? Discuss the times that you have mocked God, even as a Christian. When does God stop giving second, third or fourth chances and say, "Enough is enough"?
5. The consequence of these self-destructive actions is severe: utter destruction (v. 17-21). Describe the utter destruction that God's people had to go through after all the evil things they did.
6. Even after all the terrible things that happened, how did God still show His love and forgiveness to His people (v. 22-23)?

*Walk*

God repeatedly warned the people of Judah about the consequences their sins and kept bringing them back to Him, only to have them turn away. It came to a point that the situation became beyond remedy because the Israelites were intent on destroying themselves. As a child of God, you need to examine yourself if you have allowed destructive behaviors to ruin your relationship with the Father. Are you allowing unrighteousness to be ingrained in the way you live? Are you aware that you may already be harboring sin that will cause your heart to be hardened? How do you respond to God's Word when it speaks to you? Do you mock it instead of being humbled that would lead to repentance? Ask God to help you if any of these things are leading you to the pit of self-destruction.

*Worship & Prayer*

*Father, thank You for Your Word that tells me of the mistakes Your people did in the past, not only so that I'll learn not to repeat them, but also to give hope that there is always redemption if I turn to Jesus Christ. Forgive me, Father, for unrighteous behaviors that I've allowed to be part of my lifestyle. I pray that as I draw closer to You, I may be more sensitive to Your Word and see sin as sin no matter what the culture dictates. Grant me a heart that is open to correction and humble enough to trust You no matter what. Forgive me for the times I mock Your Word by being selective about which of it to obey. Know my desire to follow You, Lord, and grant me the strength to follow-through. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.*