

LAMENTATIONS: JEREMIAH'S JOURNAL OF WOES

STUDY TWO

The Influence of One Devoted Parent

Selections from 2 Kings 22 and 2 Chronicles 33–35

Now let me tell you something that I hope you never forget. I speak to parents and to grandparents. I speak to mentors. I speak to coaches. I speak to choir directors. And I speak to teachers. To anyone who influences a young life, you just can't imagine how significant your influence is. It is incredibly significant!

—Charles R. Swindoll

JEREMIAH received his call to prophesy while Josiah held the king's scepter over Judah. The two men belonged to the same kingdom and likely shared a similar age. But their fathers could not have been more different.

Hilkiah, the godly priest, reared Jeremiah. Hilkiah taught Jeremiah how to worship and how to pray. Hilkiah taught Jeremiah how to follow the God of Moses who had rescued the people of Israel from Egyptian tyranny and slavery.

Contrary to faithful Hilkiah, Amon, Josiah's father and wicked king of Judah, "did what was evil in the LORD's sight . . . worshiping the same idols his father had worshiped. He abandoned the LORD, the God of his ancestors, and he refused to follow the LORD's ways" (2 Kings 21:20–22).

Josiah inherited the throne at the raw age of eight years old after conspirators assassinated his father. Josiah, however, "did not turn away from doing what was right" (22:2). Long before Jeremiah's laments over Jerusalem, he had entered the ministry during a time of promise—when godly King Josiah led the nation with God-aligned edicts and God-aimed worship.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

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While under Josiah, Jeremiah likely cultivated the spiritual depth and courage needed to withstand the flood of depravity and hostility he would face leading up to Jerusalem's destruction. Before perusing Jeremiah's journal of lament over Jerusalem, we explore the righteous influence behind the last great king of Judah.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Let's pray before we dive into God's Word.

Father, right now I acknowledge and give thanks for those in my life who have taken the time to love me, to teach me, to help me, and to grow me. Thank You for the godly leaders who have gone before me and modeled for me the life of faith. Please use this time to open my eyes to wondrous truths in Your Word and equip me to be a godly influence in the lives of those in my life who desperately need it. In Christ's name, amen.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

King Amon scorned the God of his fathers. He ignored the Word of that God. He bowed to figurines and worshiped false gods. He did not care to seek God's will or follow God's ways.

What a miracle to read how Amon's heir to the throne did otherwise! The author of 2 Kings documented Josiah's reign by opening with the following lines:

Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. His mother was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah from Bozkath. (2 Kings 22:1)

Surely the author did not write "His mother was Jedidah" merely for informational or genealogical purposes. As Pastor Chuck Swindoll emphasized in his sermon, surely that twig of a statement hints at a spiritual influence that would govern the entirety of Josiah's righteous reign.



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Before we explore how Jedidah's influence expressed itself in Josiah's life, think over the godly influences in your life. It might be a parent. Or it might be a grandparent or friend. How did this person help you? How does the love this person showed you in the past still affect you today?

I don't believe Jedidah was caught up in the lifestyle of her husband Amon. I believe she detested the life of Manasseh. I believe she walked with God. —Chuck Swindoll



Observation: The Example of His Ancestor David

Begin by reading *2 Chronicles 34:1–7*.¹

Did you notice the three time-markers in this verse? At what age was Josiah in each? Biblical authors include repeated statements like these time-markers to add emphasis and to increase the historical legitimacy of their writing. What do these markers emphasize?



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Summarize how Josiah refused the evil ways of his father.

By his early twenties, King Josiah had all but eradicated the pagan idol-worship that pervaded society during Manasseh's and Amon's reigns. Then, without expecting it, a discovery occurred in the temple that presented a powerful portrait of almighty God as well as a reliable blueprint for how to worship Him. Josiah would never be the same.



Interpretation: A Scroll of the Holy Writings

Now, give a thoughtful reading to the rest of the chapter, *2 Chronicles 34:8–33*. Here, we really see the kingdom-wide benefits of the spiritual influence of Josiah's mother.

How did Josiah exemplify a godward heart in the rest of this chapter? How did God respond to Josiah's humility and obedience?



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How might Jedidah have inculcated and fostered in Josiah the spiritual devotion and character he displayed throughout his reign?

Josiah grew up sheltered from the evil of his father. Why? Jedidah. She had such an overwhelming influence, I'm convinced, in the life of this boy that some would never even guess he was related to Amon or Manasseh. —Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: The Godly Home

Correlation compares Scripture with Scripture. Spanning fifteen-hundred years and written by dozens of authors, the acts of God are preserved in the Word of God. Numerous subjects and themes thread the whole corpus of biblical literature, which demonstrates how the Bible portrays a unified story.

As we read the Bible, we gain spiritual insight by comparing what different biblical authors wrote regarding the same subject. We'll do that now with the topic of this *Searching the Scriptures* study: godly parenting. We will examine three passages. Comment briefly on each passage's key directives and ideas.

Deuteronomy 6:1–9



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Deuteronomy 6:20–25

Ephesians 6:4

The family unit began in the heart of God. He endows parents with authority over their children to be used for building up, not tearing down. God smiles upon devoted parents and blesses those who labor to instruct, encourage, and disciple the children under their roof.

Application: Every Minute Is Worth It

Often, the daily grind of parenting and teaching as well as coaching and discipling keep one focused on the nuts and bolts of doing without leaving time for reflecting. How easy to miss the profound, even eternal significance of their efforts. For this reason, Pastor Chuck Swindoll wants to keep you spiritually encouraged and energized by offering some powerful reminders.

First, *any amount of time you spend encouraging and instructing your children is worth every minute*. Plant that truth deeply within your heart and water it such that it grows into a giant oak of conviction. Second, *any investment in your child's walk with Christ is a lifelong investment*. Keep your hand on the plow and your eyes straight ahead. God is with you.



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Reflect upon and record how these two reminders encourage you. Translate them into applicational pursuits for your walk with Christ even if you aren't a parent. How do these reminders inspire you to continue in that work? During this study, did a new idea come to mind about how you can improve in these endeavors? If so, record it here.

One person touching another's life can create ripple effects in eternity's ocean. Christ has authorized you and empowered you to make as large a splash as you possibly can. Children, students, mentees, athletes, and employees make for a good aiming point.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for the way You produce transformation—often in the unattractive, unadorned, and unrecognized routine of life-on-life. Thank You that I don't have to have years of expertise or mountains of wealth to do the good that You have called me to do. Thank You for giving me every spiritual blessing in Christ my King. In His name, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To review Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study method, visit the website sts.insight.org or grab a *copy* of the book for your library.

