

NCMI EQUIP South Africa 2013

Session 3b



Living a Life of Example

by Justine Wimble

In 2 Kings 11 and 12 we see that the king of Judah (Ahaziah) died and his mother, Athaliah – whose mother was Jezebel – is desperate to rule the Kingdom; so much so that she kills the whole royal family, even the children. But without her knowing, Ahaziah's sister takes her nephew Joash and arranges to have him hid in the temple with his nurse. When Joash turns seven, the priest of the temple, Jehoiada, brings him out and they proclaim him as king. They kill Athaliah and do wonderful things for God – tearing down all the idol worship. Joash rules for 40 years and then Jehoiada dies. Shortly after, Joash dies as well.

There are a few points I want to bring out from this account that I feel God is saying to us.

1. In the place of obscurity, God takes the ordinary and makes it extraordinary

Can you imagine what it would have been like to be a God-fearing person in Israel at that time? You love God and serve him but all around you is complete chaos. There's a wild Queen who's killing the people of God. Baal worship is exploding and is so rife that they're even going into the temple of the Lord and taking the articles of God for their worship. Asherah poles are everywhere and the royal family has been wiped out.

You would be wondering, where's God? What's he doing? Has he left? But unknown to all those people, hidden in some back room of the temple, is this little baby, the king, and at the right time God brings him out. Can you imagine being there when this little seven year old is brought forward and they say he is the king? You would first respond in disbelief. But all of a sudden hope for this nation has appeared. All of a sudden you would realise that God hasn't left, he had a plan all along.

Isn't this often the case in our own lives? We go through something, maybe in our marriage or family, or our ministry, or our friendships, or at our school, and you say, "God, where are you? I can't see you, feel you or hear you. I don't even know what you're doing." So often we find ourselves in these obscure places that make no sense. Yet God is always at work.

God says in the Bible, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5.) The reality is that we want to see, we want to know, we want to hear and feel God and that's a good thing. God has

given us those senses. He desires that we want to be with him and know him and seek him. But there are moments in our lives when he uses obscure things and puts us on the side and we don't understand. In those moments – if you're there now – don't sit down or jump out the boat. God is at work, he has not left you.

When I was younger and I had just gotten saved (I was 13 years old) I wanted to desperately lead a Connect (Home) Group. When I got saved many of my friends got saved at the same time. After being saved after a year or so the church was running a leadership course and in those days you got given a letter inviting you on this course. Every one of my friends got a letter. Except me. I was horrified. At that time, Steve Wimble was leading the youth and I couldn't believe this – I thought he was ignoring me and had forgotten about me, even though he knew my desires and dreams.

I thought maybe the letter was just late but the day before the course started I realised that no letter was coming. All my friends went on the course and some of them didn't even care about leading a Connect Group when I was desperate to lead one! I couldn't understand this and I felt that I'd been forgotten. Yet one day, after the course, I felt God say, “Justine, you were longing to be in that leadership team and be a part of that. I'm not calling you to be in that team. I'm calling you to be in my presence, and from there I will place you in the right context and the right team. But it's in my presence first.” God put me in a back room and was digging into my foundations. It was obscure and it didn't make sense and I didn't know what he was doing, but he was at work.

Some time later I was at university and Mark (my husband-to-be at the time) was leading a group there. We had a chat and realised there was nothing going on at our campus at that time. So I thought I'd start a Connect Group there and we did. But I was used to full meetings and lots of things going on, yet found myself leading on this campus with a handful of people. I thought that surely it wouldn't be like this for long, but seven months later things were still the same. I thought, “God, honestly, are you sure you've brought us to reach this campus?”

Then suddenly it was like the heavens opened and God just started bringing people in. And we had an incredible time. Even today there are many groups at that campus. So, sometimes in our walk with God he puts us into obscure places so he can do deep and good things in us that he wouldn't be able to do otherwise.

2. God is wanting to give us influence and increase our influence

In 2 Kings 11 we see that Joash was made king at just seven years old. I've got a son and he's five years old and I can't imagine him ruling a kingdom – he can't even rule his own bedroom! Alongside Joash God places the priest Jehoiada, who had every opportunity to sit back and wait for Joash to grow up. But instead he comes alongside this little king and together they kill Athaliah and the Baal priests

and get rid of all the idol worship. They go to the temple of the Lord, post guards, and start to rebuild it.

What can we see here? Young people: If God can use a seven year old boy, he can use anyone. There is never an excuse to say you're too young to do anything.

But it's also amazing how Jehoiada took his role seriously to mentor and father that little boy. The Church right now is needing fathers and mothers. We're needing mentors. I want to urge you today, if you're old in the faith and can see the hand of God on a younger person in your church, won't you mentor them? Won't you walk alongside them and help them in making their decisions?

We've got a wonderful guy in our Connect Group who was previously into drugs and alcohol. He met a young woman and fell in love with her. But she was a Christian. After a bit of time she said that a relationship between them was not going to work – she loves God, he loves drugs, so it's not going to happen. He was distraught about this. But one day he was driving to work and he says the Holy Spirit fell down and he repented and cried out to God, giving his life to Jesus right there and then. He got radically transformed.

We started an Alpha course at our church and Mark asked him to think of running an Alpha table. He agreed and decided to invite the guys from his past to the course. They came and he had 15 young guys at the banquet – guys doing well in business and so on – and all not saved. As the course progressed not one of them left. It went on for eight weeks. Three got saved. And after the course, none of the guys wanted to leave, so they continued meeting together on Wednesday nights and more have gotten saved now. God spoke to this young man and said to him, “You took these guys into drugs and alcohol. You'll be the one to bring them out of it.”

What's my point here? It's this: God wants to use us to influence those around us. 1 Timothy 4:12 says, “Do not let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for other believers in your speech, behaviour, love, faithfulness, and purity.” Let no one look down on you because you're young, old, or because of your race, where you live, where you work or because of any circumstance. But set an example – let us be people that live lives where people say, "What do they have? I want to be like that."

Start strong; end strong

2 Chronicles 24: 7 – 27 gives us more detail around this account above in 2 Kings 11 and 12. If we look at Jehoiada we see that he starts well. He serves God; raises the king; they take out the Baal worship and destroy the enemy; they rebuild the temple; he counsels the king; and so on. He has a son, Zechariah who was a prophet and you can see in Jehoiada's private life that he also raised up

godliness. He started well and lived well and ended well.

But then we look at Joash, the king. He started well and did amazing things with Jehoiada but when the priest died he hit a wobble. The first to counsel him were not godly men, so he brought back the Baal worship and, sadly, if you look at his kingdom at the end, it looks the same as when he began. All the good things he did got undone. Let's not be like that. Let's start strong and end strong.

There are three pointers we can take out of this account:

1. We need to have our own convictions

King Joash didn't have strong convictions. If I look at this 1 Timothy 4:12 scripture about setting an example in speech, love and purity, I need to have convictions on how I relate to men; the way I dress; the way I speak; and the way I love. We need to live this life with convictions so when someone comes with something else that challenges our choices, we stand strong and are not moved.

2. Who are we listening to?

King Joash had a great counsellor in Jehoiada but after Jehoiada died we see that God had a plan in his son, Zechariah and raised him to go to Joash and bring him a word. But what did Joash do? He killed him. He didn't receive the word of God. Sometimes we've got fathers we follow and it's easy to follow them because they've given us counsel for so long, but maybe they leave us for some reason or we move on, and then a brother or sister comes and we don't want to receive them. But we need to see who God has got his hand on to speak into our lives. We need to listen and acknowledge that. We need to surround ourselves with people who we listen to that challenge us in the Lord and push us toward Jesus – people who make us want to be more like Jesus.

3. Remember God's goodness

In verse 20 - 22 you can see that Joash forgot the goodness of God. Sometimes we're so caught up in working in the Kingdom that become proud saying, "I'm doing well and leading well. There's fruit around me and it's good." But we must remember from where we came. Sure, we don't look at the past but the future, but we need to know we're only human and everything good is because of God. We must live humble and thankful lives, thanking God that he saved us and rescued us and thank him that every single day he gives us breath and the ability to be with his people and love them, to share this gospel wherever we go.

Run

We need to run, run, run. If you're in an obscure place where you feel God is not hearing you and no one sees you and you've been forgotten about, this is not the time to sit down and have a pity party or jump out the boat. No, it's a time to keep on running. Fix your eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of your faith, and at the *right time* God will reveal his plans to you.

Maybe you find yourself in a place where you don't know why God has put you there – a place of work, a business, a school, a campus and so on. My encouragement to you is take the Gospel of Jesus and keep running, no matter what comes against you. Let's give our lives for this Gospel, for Jesus. Everything for him and his Kingdom.

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