

Week 18

April 30 - May 6

2 Samuel 19:1-23:7; 24:1-25; 1 Kings 1:1-2:12; 1 Chronicles 20:4-29:22;
29:26-30; Psalm 4-9,11,18

“Vision is looking at life through the lens of God’s eye.” – Charles Swindoll

It is natural and understandable that we most often view things from a human outlook instead of “through the lens of God’s eye.” However, it is amazing when we are able to view things from God’s angle. Perhaps what is most amazing is the enormous difference between how we perceive something and how God sees it. There is often a remarkable twist and noticeable difference between the two. God’s intentions and purpose are exciting to observe. This week’s theme has much to do with our unique view of things.

April 30th

2 Samuel 19:31-21:22; Psalm 7; 1 Chronicles 20:4-8. "Highs and Lows"

In *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens wrote, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..." David's life as king had many similarities. A great time would come followed by a grueling time.

David was anointed as king, and that was followed by Saul trying to kill him so he wouldn't be king. David would conquer one army only later to have another army take his family captive. David was honored with the loyalty of mighty men, but later returned the favor with murder. David experienced the joy of children but later felt the sorrow of a child bent on destroying his kingdom.

Even in today's passage we see both extremes. In chapter 19, David is returning to Jerusalem, the city he had to escape from earlier. The rebellion has been stopped. As he heads home, King David shows mercy to Shimei who had cursed him earlier. He shows kindness to Mephibosheth and also honors faithful Barzillai. Yet, before David even gets home another revolt springs up.

If you can relate to highs and lows remember our Sovereign God gives strength to the weary.

May 1st

2 Samuel 22; Psalm 18. "Divine Descriptors"

David was truly gifted with the pen. He had the ability to poetically phrase commanding statements. He had a wonderful vocabulary that expounded his capacity to describe experiences and people.

Another large part of his writing gift was his awareness of God's working in his life. He was constantly aware of God's hand in each of his experiences.

What kind of song would you write about God? What experiences would you record that God has taken you through? What descriptions would you have of God?

As I read through this song, I focused on just the descriptions of God's character that David recorded. I would encourage you to read through this list as a prayer and meditate on the phenomenal qualities of our wonderful God. My rock, fortress, savior, protector, shield, strength, salvation, stronghold, high tower, one worthy of praise, one who listens, all-powerful, high above, mighty, controls and commands creation, rescuer, deliverer, expresses emotions of delight over us, rewarder, judge, lawgiver, faithful, possesses integrity, pure, watchful, light, perfect, true, alive, and exalted!

May 2nd

2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21-22. "Perspectives"

I appreciate the balance we receive by having the opportunity to read the same story from two passages. The two accounts prove the trustworthiness of the incident, and yet it also provides different perspectives.

Today's reading starts off with an example of varying perspective. One account leads us to believe God tempted David, but the other account clearly says Satan tempted David. It provides us with a clear illustration of the original Hebrew writers' perspectives. They did not always distinguish between primary and secondary causes. In other words, if God allowed Satan to tempt David, to them it was as if God did it.

Continuing with attention to perspective; David chose to sin even though Joab (of all people) knew it was wrong. And furthermore, from this story we learn the value which God places on the intentions of the heart. It is obvious that a census was not a sinful event. The problem God had with David's decision stemmed from David's pride. Bear in mind, our motives and not the action itself may contain the sin.

May 3rd

1 Chronicles 23-25. "Priests"

The duties of the priests were specific. The qualifications and responsibilities were detailed and established by God. It was a temporary fix until the permanent solution came.

The earthly high priest entered the Most Holy Place year after year to offer blood not his own, but that of an animal. He would offer the sacrifices time after time which never removed the sin. Jesus Christ did not have to die again and again, but came once for all time, to remove the power of sin forever by His perfect sacrificial death for us. Not only is Jesus the perfect sacrifice, but He is also our High Priest. Everything about His priesthood is superior and final (see the book of Hebrews).

Has the idea of Jesus Christ being the only High Priest been well accepted through the years? In the Gospels the "priests" were instrumental in the crucifixion of Christ (Matt. 27). There are various religions today which still hold high priestly offices, and they will continue to do so until they fully comprehend all Christ accomplished. Although, Revelation uses the term "priests" for all believers, we have but One High Priest.

May 4th

1 Chronicles 26-28. "Order"

These chapters are describing great organization and preparation. There are people placed in charge of music, finances, priestly duties, gatekeeping, record keeping, administration, judging, baking, and so forth.

There are several lessons here for us. One would be the charge that David placed before each person; "Do your job in honor of the LORD" (22:17-19). The second lesson given to us is a reminder, that every person is necessary. God created us with different gifts so that we could all serve in a variety of ways. The third lesson has to do with showing us the value of being prepared.

As William Barclay said, "To be a person of faith does not mean you are not a person who plans." We need to remember the Revolutionary War saying, "Trust in God, but keep your powder dry." George Washington wrote, "To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace."

Being prepared in this life is beneficial. In the parable of the ten bridesmaids (Matt. 25) we learn that being prepared for eternity is the most important.

May 5th

1 Kings 1; 1 Chronicles 29:1-22. "Inactive"

It is almost possible to read this passage and assume that King David, now rich in years, was unaware of what was taking place. Bathsheba inquires of him whom he intended to make the next king. Nathan inquired similarly.

However, Bathsheba and Nathan do acknowledge that David is aware of the fact that his son, Adonijah, was crowning himself king. Furthermore, we learn that David "had never disciplined Adonijah at any time, even by asking him, 'What are you doing?'" (1:6).

There were many who remained loyal to David. God's intended future king was not Adonijah. David knew these facts, but did not act upon them. Zadok, Benaiah, Nathan, Bathsheba, and many others also knew these facts. David needed to be confronted and challenged to act.

For whatever reason (perhaps age, laziness, complacency, or being overwhelmed) David took no action until confronted. If we are the inactive one, prayerfully someone will come encourage us to get up and get to the Lord's work. Or, perhaps we may be the one to encourage the stationary to rise up (1 Thes. 5:14).

May 6th

2 Samuel 23:1-7; 1 Kings 2:1-12; 1 Chronicles 29:26-30; Psalm 4-6,8,9,11.
"Final Thoughts"

David left a rich history. He was an amazing leader and powerful soldier. His life was committed to God in such a way that he was described by God as a man after His own heart (1 Sam. 13:14).

At 70, David left words of advice and experience for Solomon and many others. David had learned many lessons, and he expresses many of these in his last words.

David acknowledges the fact that it was God, and only God, who gave him the position of king over Israel. David thanks the Lord for the blessings and recognizes God's hand in all his life. He also emphasizes God's eternal, true, gracious, and righteous nature. Additionally, David recognizes the certainty of death.

David reminds his son of the importance of following the commands of the Lord, and assures him that life will be much better if he obeys God's laws. David knew firsthand that God forgives sin but the consequences still remain. David also left Solomon with several names of those whose actions assumed certain consequences.

What would your last words emphasize?

General Questions for each day:

Summarize the day's Bible passage in your own words.

What thoughts, actions, attitudes or beliefs are addressed in the passage?

How is the Holy Spirit leading you to apply this passage to your life today?

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Bible Discussion Guide:

Job said, “When I looked for good, evil came instead. I waited for the light, but darkness fell” (30:26). We have made similar statements in our life, e.g.: “When I thought this would happen, something else happened instead.” “When I thought things were looking up they really weren't.” Have you ever made a statement like these?

What is it that makes our view so uniquely different from reality or God's view?

Imagine being able to stand at a high vantage point and look back over your life. If you could see each of the high points and low points how would you feel? Were there benefits to the low points?

Continue imagining your perspective from that high vantage point. What were some of the things you learned along the way? Perhaps more specifically, what were some of the things you learned about yourself and God along the way?

Considering the list of descriptors from the May 1st devotional, what adjectives would you add to the list?

God helps us through those low points in our life. However, what takes us to those low points? Can God take us there? Can poor choices take us there? Be specific.

As you consider some of the ways we can take ourselves to places we should not be (i.e. King David's complacency nearly resulted in the loss of Solomon's reign), what things, attitudes, or decisions should you avoid? In making it specific and personal, it may be something different for each person.

Personal application: We may have a unique view compared with God's, but each of us often have views unique from one another. Nathan and Bathsheba had a different perspective than David (May 5th reading). Do you ever wrestle with the fact that others have a different take on things than you do? Have you ever found yourself saying or doing something distasteful because of it?