

Worship Guide

FIRST WEDNESDAY

Then the king ordered Hilkiah the high priest, his associate priest, and The Temple sentries to clean house.

He fired the pagan priests whom the kings of Judah had hired to supervise the local sex-and-religion shrines in the towns of Judah and neighborhoods of Jerusalem. In a stroke he swept the country clean of the polluting stench of the round-the-clock worship of Baal, sun and moon, stars—all the so-called cosmic powers.

Check the influencers.

- Josiah removed ungodly people from their position of influence, so that they could not encourage sin.
- These leaders promoted pleasure and manipulation. People who only promote what feels good, and try to control you by making you feel bad have got to go.
- When you fire the influencers, you eliminate their influence.
- Evaluate friends, people you follow on social media, news outlets, etc.
- Evaluate who and what influences you the most.

He took the obscene phallic Asherah pole from The Temple of God to the Valley of Kidron outside Jerusalem, burned it up, then ground up the ashes and scattered them in the cemetery. — 2 Kings 23:6-7

Change the view.

- This Asherah pole was built to be graphic.
- It was created to draw your eye in and invade your thoughts.
- It intended to plant a sexual thought.
- Josiah changed what was in front of the people's eyes.

- He changed the view. What pictures, videos, screensavers, posts and files are constantly in front of our eyes?
- Take control of what you can and be very conscious of what you allow your eyes to consume

He tore out the rooms of the male sacred prostitutes that had been set up in The Temple of God; women also used these rooms for weavings for Asherah. — 2 Kings 23:7

“Tear out” selfishness.

- The weavings were for tents for people to engage in sexual activity in God’s house.
- The weavings were for tents in which people would engage in sexual activity in God’s House. The temple was made into a brothel.
- Are we using God’s house to fill our own desires? Are we using church as a self-serving tool?
- This could also be as simple as using church as an opportunity for any type of selfish gain. For example, contacts for your business, multi level marketing, or a dating service.
- Josiah removed anything self-serving from God’s house.
- Church was never meant to be a place to solely receive for ourselves.

He swept the outlying towns of Judah clean of priests and smashed the sex-and-religion shrines where they worked their trade from one end of the country to the other—all the way from Geba to Beersheba. He smashed the sex-and-religion shrine that had been set up just to the left of the city gate for the private use of Joshua, the city mayor. Even though these sex-and-religion priests did not defile the Altar in The Temple itself, they were part of the general priestly corruption and had to go. — 2 Kings 23:8-9

Stay away from compromises.

- Josiah made changes regardless of who they would affect.
- He would not accommodate anyone’s sin. Even if they were the city mayor.

- When you make “allowances,” you leave a crack in the door for the enemy.
- When we allow compromise, we leave room for corruption.
- When you clean house, the whole house has to fall in line.
- No divided houses or half-measures can be left in place to appease anyone if you want to make a real change.
- Don’t be intimidated by fear.

Then Josiah demolished the Topheth, the iron furnace griddle set up in the Valley of Ben Hinnom for sacrificing children in the fire. No longer could anyone burn son or daughter to the god Molech. — 2 Kings 23:10

Silence the noise.

- The griddle being named Topheth comes from the Topha drum.
- They would play drums to make noise so the screams of the children would not be heard. - Josiah created quiet in his country so that evil couldn’t be ignored.
- Put our phones down. Turn off the WiFi. Turn off devices. Have quiet times at home where we talk and listen as a family. So if one of our kids is “screaming” for help, we won’t have so much noise distracting us that we can’t hear.

He hauled off the horse statues honoring the sun god that the kings of Judah had set up near the entrance to The Temple. They were in the courtyard next to the office of Nathan-Melech, the warden. He burned up the sun-chariots as so much rubbish. — 2 Kings 23:11

Disable the vehicle.

- Worshippers of the sun would ride horses out from these stables to worship the sun. The chariots were even worshiped. Josiah dismantled all of this.
- Destroy the vehicle that brings you close to sin.
- What thoughts bring you close to sin? Is there certain media (web, tv, movies, music, phone apps) that carries you toward idolatry? Cut it out; it’s not worth it.

The king smashed all the altars to smithereens—the altar on the roof shrine of Ahaz, the various altars the kings of Judah had made, the altars of Manasseh that littered the courtyard of The Temple—he smashed them all, pulverized the fragments, and scattered their dust in the Valley of Kidron. — 2 Kings 23:12

Go big.

- Note the term smithereens. Pulverized. The goal being that the tool of idolatry can never again be used. This is an over the top approach: no half measures.

- The Roof of Ahaz was part of Josiah's palace.

- He didn't use the altars, but they were waiting in his house.

The altars of Manasseh had been removed from the temple by Manasseh previously, but not destroyed.

- As soon as the kingdom changed hands, his son Amon brought them right back. Josiah crushed them so they couldn't ever come back.

- Do you need to limit your time on an app or permanently delete it? Go big or go home! Do you hold on to that inappropriate relationship's contact and say you won't text ... or do you permanently delete it? Do we keep the pictures of that relationship that didn't honor God so you're constantly longing, or do you permanently remove the reminders?

The king proceeded to make a clean sweep of all the sex-and-religion shrines that had proliferated east of Jerusalem on the south slope of Abomination Hill, the ones Solomon king of Israel had built to the obscene Sidonian sex goddess Ashtoreth, to Chemosh the dirty-old-god of the Moabites, and to Milcom the depraved god of the Ammonites. He tore apart the altars, chopped down the phallic Asherah-poles, and scattered old bones over the sites. — 2 Kings 23:13

Eliminate substitutes.

The three were gods of rival nations. Each was a poor substitute for Yahweh who is the Jireh, the provider of all things.

- **Ashtoreth** - Fertility
- **Chemosh** - Protection and strength
- **Milcom** - Weather. Circumstances around us
- Solomon had built shrines for his foreign wives. They led the people astray to try to find resources in other places outside of God's provision.
- Are we trying to find resources from other gods?
- Josiah removed anything that people would look to for answers and provision.
- It's time to throw away anything we're asking to answer us outside of God: astrology, crystals, tarot, psychics, self-help, the occult.

As Josiah looked over the scene, he noticed the tombs on the hillside. He ordered the *bones removed from the tombs and had them cremated on the ruined altars, desacralizing the evil altars. This was a fulfillment of the word of God spoken by the Holy Man years before when Jeroboam had stood by the altar at the sacred convocation. — 2 Kings 23:16-19*

Put boundaries in place.

- By placing cremated bones on the ruined altars, Josiah was creating additional consequences for false worship. Touching dead things made you unclean.
- Josiah raised the difficulty for engaging with sinful behavior.
- Find someone you can be 100% honest with.
- Put boundaries in place.
- Add content restrictions to your phone and computer that make it harder to interact with temptation.
- Give your spouse access to your whole phone to create accountability.

Then the king said, "And that memorial stone—whose is that?" The men from the city said, "That's the grave of the Holy Man who spoke the message against the altar at Bethel that you have just fulfilled." Josiah said, "Don't trouble his bones." So they left his bones undisturbed, along with the bones of the prophet from Samaria. — 2

Kings 23:17

Keep the good ones.

- Make sure you leave people in place who will be real with you, and point you to God's truth.
- Find people who are willing to tell you no and refuse to remove them from their place of influence.
- Who brings the balance in your life of grace and truth?

But Josiah hadn't finished. He now moved through all the towns of Samaria where the kings of Israel had built neighborhood sex-and-religion shrines, shrines that had so angered God. He tore the shrines down and left them in ruins—just as at Bethel. He killed all the priests who had conducted the sacrifices and cremated them on their own altars, thus desacralizing the altars. Only then did Josiah return to Jerusalem.” — 2 Kings 23:18-20

Clean the surrounding area.

- Josiah went to the nearest neighboring cities and tore down their altars.
- He wanted to make sure that whatever was going to be close to his kingdom was going to be clean as well.
- We have the opportunity to choose who our family is close to.
- We get to choose who we spend time with.
- Our house may be clean, but what about the houses of people who are close to us?
- Do they have the same values as we do? Are there dangerous compromises just waiting to lure us?
- How you determine who is meant to be close is by evaluating an aligned value system.

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