

Receiving God's Best: Overcoming Life's Obstacles

Genesis 41:38 (NKJV) ³⁸And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?"

Throughout the Bible, we are given examples of people who faced severe obstacles.

Some of these people were successful in overcoming the obstacles they faced, and some failed. This verse is referring to one of the great success stories.

Joseph faced all kinds of severe obstacles in his life. Those kinds of obstacles cause many people to give up or cave in. Even in his youth he was confronted with obstacles that challenged the dream that God had placed in his heart.

Follow his life and you see that he was confronted with one obstacle after another that was designed to destroy the heavenly vision.

After he was brought out of jail and appeared before Pharaoh, this verse was written.

Have you ever felt that nobody understood what God was doing in you? You just kept going from one trouble to another obstacle that was trying to keep you from God's best. "Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?"

2 Kings 12:1–3 (NKJV) ¹In the seventh year of Jehu, Jehoash became king, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba.

²Jehoash did what was right in the sight of the LORD all the days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him. ³But the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

2 Kings 12:6–8 (NKJV) ⁶Now it was so, by the twenty-third year of King Jehoash, that the priests had not repaired the damages of the temple. ⁷So King Jehoash called Jehoiada the priest and the other priests, and said to them, "Why have you not repaired the damages of the temple? Now therefore, do not take more money from your constituency, but deliver it for repairing the damages of the temple." ⁸And the priests agreed that they would neither receive more money from the people, nor repair the damages of the temple.

2 Kings 12:17–18 (NKJV) ¹⁷Hazael king of Syria went up and fought against Gath, and took it; then Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem. ¹⁸And Jehoash king of Judah took all the sacred things that his fathers, Jehoshaphat and Jehoram and Ahaziah, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own sacred things, and all the gold found in the treasuries of the house of the LORD and in the king's house, and sent them to Hazael king of Syria. Then he went away from Jerusalem.

The story of King Joash is fascinating.

His reign was filled with promise.

Once again God had set someone up for greatness.

When you follow his story, God set Joash up for greatness, even though the land was filled with wickedness.

Joash's grandmother killed all of the royal family when her son the king died.

Then she set herself upon the throne. Can you imagine having a grandmother like that?

Joash's great-aunt hid the infant Joash and his nurse and smuggled them out of the palace.

They hid for six years in a secret place in the Temple of God.

When Joash was seven years old, Jehoiada the priest staged an uprising against the wicked and idolatrous grandmother.

Jehoiada placed the boy Joash upon his rightful throne.

The temple of Baal in the city was destroyed. The priest of Baal was put to death.

The covenant with God and temple worship was reestablished.

It looked like another golden age was coming to the kingdom of Judah. The plans had been laid, and the process was started.

It looked like God's best was about to spring upon them.

You have to see the hand of God on Joash.

Then something went wrong.

What kept God from pouring out His blessing?

What did Joash do wrong?

In the story of Joash, four things stand out as obstacles to God's best.

1. The first obstacle to receiving God's best was... "follow the leader" faith.

2 Kings 12:2 (NKJV) ²Jehoash did what was right in the sight of the LORD all the days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him.

2 Chronicles 24:17–18 (NKJV) ¹⁷Now after the death of Jehoiada the leaders of Judah came and bowed down to the king. And the king listened to them. ¹⁸Therefore they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served wooden images and idols; and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem because of their trespass.

Of Joseph it was said, "Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?"

Joash was not that man.

- *He did what was right as long as Jehoiada showed him what to do.*
- *He had very little personal conviction.*
- *He was following the faith of Jehoiada.*
- *He was walking in the shadow of the priest.*

As soon as Jehoiada was gone, Joash was easily led astray.

Joash reinstated idol worship and mixed it with the worship of the One True God.

Joash was a follower.

It is amazing to watch Joseph.

- *He had every opportunity to compromise his convictions.*
- *He faced one obstacle after another.*
- *He refused to give up on his faith and trust in God.*

Joash seemed to be a follower primarily because He had no convictions.

It was easier to follow than to develop his own character and relationship with God. Joash did some amazing things as long as someone else told him what God wanted him to do. Jehoiada continued showing him the right way, but Joash never had a complete change of heart.

2. The second obstacle is... neglecting the strongholds.

2 Kings 12:3 (NKJV) ³But the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

The high places were centers of idol worship on mountains and hilltops.

Poles to the goddess Asherah were erected in the high places. They offered animals and human sacrifices on their altars.

When Joash was old enough to do something about this, he was not willing to do it.

Idol worship was more prevalent than the worship of God.

There is an amazing difference in Joseph and Joash.

Both men were surrounded by idols to false gods. Joseph continued holding on to his faith in God. Joash never developed that personal deep relationship with God.

Those high places became an obstacle that Joash would not challenge.

What does this have to do with us?

- *Do you have any high places?*
- *Do you have places in your life that God has no access to?*
- *Are there habits in your life that you refuse to address?*
- *Are there sins that you have not turned from?*

This child came to school filthy every day. The teachers were appalled that anyone could let their child come to school that way. One teacher said "that mother doesn't love her child." Another replied, "I think she loves her, she just doesn't hate dirt."

Do you really love the Lord more than the dirt?

Joseph refused to let go of his relationship with God. Joash never got that far.

3. The next obstacle to God's best is... the surrender of the sacred.

2 Kings 12:17–18 (NKJV)¹⁷*Hazael king of Syria went up and fought against Gath, and took it; then Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem. ¹⁸And Jehoash king of Judah took all the sacred things that his fathers, Jehoshaphat and Jehoram and Ahaziah kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own sacred things, and all the gold found in the treasuries of the house of the LORD and in the king's house, and sent them to Hazael king of Syria. Then he went away from Jerusalem.*

When faced with a crisis, Joash did not turn to the Lord.

He did not call the nation to fast and pray. When he faced a crisis, Joash surrendered all the things that had been dedicated to the Lord. He used them as a bribe to get his enemy to leave him alone.

When Joseph was confronted with Potiphar's wife, he refused to sin against God.

You should know that it never pays to compromise with evil. It is amazing to see how easy it is for some people to surrender the things that have been dedicated to God.

When push comes to shove in your life, what gives way?

If we are earnestly seeking God's best in our lives, all of our resources, time, talent and treasure must belong to Him first.

If we surrender the sacred for the sake of convenience, we should not expect God's best.

The last obstacle to God's best comes from 2 Chronicles... ignoring the call to repentance.

In 2 Chronicles 24:15, Jehoiada died.

After his death, the leaders of Judah came to Joash the king and the king listened to them. Therefore they abandoned the house of God and served wooden images and idols.

The Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada who said: “Thus says God: ‘Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He also has forsaken you.’” (2 Chronicles 24:19–21)

We can see what kind of spirit was in Joash.

“At the command of the king they stoned Zechariah with stones in the court of the house of the LORD.”

Joash strayed far from the path that the Lord had marked out for Him.

In mercy, God sent messengers to warn him, to invite him back, to offer a return and restoration.

Joash did not want to hear that what he was doing was wrong.

So, he killed the messenger. God was offering the king mercy and grace. He gave him an opportunity to repent. God wanted to bless Joash and His people.

That is always God’s will for His people.

Genesis 41:38 (NKJV) ³⁸And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?”

When Pharaoh looked on Joseph, he saw a man in whom the Spirit of God was.

Joseph had gone through so many things that could have made him bitter and mad at God. He had ample opportunity to forsake the heavenly vision.

Joash had every opportunity to respond to God.

Every obstacle that he faced was an opportunity for him to turn to God.

The Holy Spirit is working on this with great convicting power.

Joash constantly refused. God kept bringing him back to the place of decision.

It is amazing to watch how Joseph overcame the obstacles in his life.

- *He didn’t let the ridicule of his brothers stop him.*
- *He didn’t get bitter at God when he was sold into slavery.*
- *He didn’t lose his faith when he was attacked in Potipher’s house.*
- *He didn’t quit when he was thrown in prison.*
- *He didn’t stop when he was abandoned by the chief butler.*
- *He stood strong in the Spirit of God through every obstacle.*

How are you going to respond to the obstacles in your life?

Think about the opportunity that Joash was given.

If he would have moved on into the deep relationship that he saw in Jehoiada, he could have led the whole nation into a golden age of blessing. Is your faith in God going to remain true and strong? Are you going to give up as soon as you walk away from people of faith?

If you are going to receive God’s best, you must become that man and woman of God that is full of the Spirit of God.

God is ready to take you into a higher level of blessing.