

2 Chronicles 12:13-14

13] Thus King Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jeruslaem and reigned. Now Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king; and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the Lord had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there. His mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess.

14] And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD.

We prepare for a lot of things.

But do we prepare our hearts?



The 2 Chronicles 12:13-14 is speaking of Rehoboam, the king of Israel, who was the grandson of David.

He inherited the throne when he was 41 years old, at the death of his father Solomon.

In the beginning of his reign, his heart was sensitive to the Lord.

However, his commitment to seek the Lord only lasted for three of the **17 years** of his reign.



THE
PREPARED
HEART

1. A Fixed Heart

2. A Following Heart

3. A Focused Heart

Relatively few people are determined to do evil.

They fall into sin because they have not prepared their hearts to seek the Lord.

The word **prepare** means: *establish, fix, or apply*.

It conveys the idea of deliberate effort over a prolonged period of time.

1. A FIXED HEART

Rehoboam did not fix his heart. He was always ready to shift and change.

Fixed is defined as: *firmly in position; stationary; not subject to change or variation; firmly attach or securely fasten.*

David used the word “fix” twice in Psalm 57:7.

Psalm 57: 7 -“My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise”

David's men tried to get David to kill Saul and seize the throne which was rightfully his, but David wouldn't do it.

Why? David had already fixed his heart that he would not take the kingdom by killing Saul.

One of the keys to preparing our hearts is to fix our hearts on what we will and will not do before we encounter the temptation.

No one can accomplish preparing their heart on their own.

God must be involved in preparing our hearts.

I. Trust God to Strengthen You

Psalm 10:17 says, “Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart.”

Only when we trust in the Lord and depend on Him can we find the strength to keep our hearts fixed and prepared to resist temptation.

Humility is an essential ingredient in the preparation of our hearts.

Proverbs 16:18 says, “*Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.*”

A humble heart is a soft, sensitive heart.

II. Remember God's Faithfulness

Our imaginations and our memories also play an important role in preparing our hearts.

1 Chronicles 29:18, “O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee.”

David is talking about the concept of memory and the influence of imagination on what we remember.

David had just given so much in offerings toward the building of the temple in Jerusalem:

1 Chr. 29:4 - namely, 3,000 talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and 7,000 talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the buildings;

Then the elders of Israel did the same:

1 Chr. 29:6-7-Then the leaders of families, the officers of the tribes of Israel, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of the king's work gave willingly. They gave toward the work on the temple of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze and a hundred thousand talents of iron.

The proper application of memory is a vital aspect of preparing our own hearts.

The Lord warned the children of Israel not to forget the mighty works God had performed for them lest they turn away from following Him.

No one who is dominated with thoughts of the goodness and faithfulness of the Lord will turn their back on the Lord.

2. A FOLLOWING HEART

God called the people to prepare to come into His presence, or near His presence.

Then the Lord said to Moses, *“Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.”*(Exodus 19:10–11)

God wanted the people of Israel, before they came near to Him, to get ready to come near to Him, to prepare themselves for an encounter with Him.

God gave Israel two days to prepare. He required them to be consecrated and to wash their clothes.

These preparations were appropriate for what was about to happen.

Exodus 19:14 tells us that Moses did exactly as God commanded; He went down and sanctified the people. The people also obeyed by washing their clothes. They took the time to prepare for worship.

Part of our preparation for worship ought to be reminding ourselves of who God is— **the Holy, Sovereign Lord.**

Exodus 19: 16 - Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.

When the trumpet sounded and the moment arrived for the people of Israel to draw near to God, every person in the camp trembled.

Unfortunately, few people respond to God in worship like that anymore. Many have forgotten how to tremble before Him because they do not regard God as holy.

Over and over again God invited the people, *“Come near to Me.”*

“By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy.”

We are commanded by God to come into His presence—to come near to Him.

Hebrews 4:16 - Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

When we come boldly into His presence and draw near to Him, we must always remember that we are to **regard Him as holy.**

We also must remember that we have no right to come into God's presence on our own.

We're living in the last days, things are changing in the world and we will face challenges to our faith. We need to prepare our hearts so we'll be ready to follow God no matter what.

3. A FOCUSED HEART

The focus and direction of our hearts is of vital importance.

We are responsible for preparing, establishing, and determining the direction our lives will go and how we respond to God's word.

If we're not taking action to be “good grounds,” it is very easy to slip into living lives that do not glorify God.

Rehoboam did what was evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord.”

“did what was evil.”

We are told, “Rehoboam’s mother’s name was Naamah the Ammonite” —one of Solomon’s numerous wives.

But she was an idolatrous woman, an Ammonite.

But the Scripture does not give this as the reason Rehoboam did evil. It was *“because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord.”* He did not focus his heart on the Lord. His heart did not become a good ground.

God will judge each one according to his own deeds; and if we should have been born of the most ungodly parents who ever lived, there is no reason God’s grace should not begin to work in our family with us.

He did evil because of something he did not do. He did not begin life by seeking God; and, therefore, he began it foolishly.

Rehoboam went first toward God, then toward idols, and then back again toward God. He was always ready to shift and change.

He worked no great reforms in the land. There was nothing real and permanent in his belief; it did not hold him. He held it sometimes, but it never held him.

In contrast to Rehoboam's example, we have someone like Ezra.

Ezra 7: 10 - *For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.*

We need to be careful and diligent to “*break up the unplowed ground*” in our lives and hearts; to be sure we never forget God's word or let it “*depart from our hearts*”.

Hosea 10: 12 - Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the Lord, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you.

Deut. 4: 9 - Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren,

Our hearts need breaking and cleaning. There are so many distractions going around that enter and harden our hearts.

We need to “break up the unplowed ground” and “seek the Lord,” cultivating a heart where God’s word can sink in, take root, and grow. We need to weed distractions out of our lives to make room for God’s character to flourish in us.

We must dig ourselves into His truths and cultivate a relationship with Him that will sustain us through trials.

How we start does not usually matter; it is how we end. And the end is often determined by how we live. Rehoboam failed in the end because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord.

And our human tendency is to become evil because we also do not prepare our hearts to seek the Lord.

We would rather seek other things and pleasures. That is because we are humans and are sinners. We have heart issues.

***“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—
every one—to his own way;” Isaiah 53: 6a***

**Is it possible for our hearts to seek the Lord? Though
difficult because our hearts can fail us, but possible!**

The Bible mentions Ezra, who had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel because he purposely prepared his heart to observe the law.

But we have one Greater than Ezra, who in himself is the law and in Him all the law is fulfilled.

He did not have to be guided by the law because in Him was no sin.

Jesus, the Son of God came 2,000 years ago as the fulfilment of the law for the sake of man. He went about doing good and not evil.

“And you know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.” Acts 10: 38

He came to teach man how to seek God and He himself did not fail to seek the Father.

He offered Himself to die on the cross, so that when He said, *“It is Finished”*, the issue of man is done because it is paid.

“... and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”
Isaiah 53:6b

But Jesus rose from the dead on the 3rd day, therefore, the issue of being evil can be overcome. And we can have a change of heart.

For our sake, He has fulfilled what we cannot fulfill.

And He gives us the power to overcome.

CONCLUSION:

Sin is in the heart of man. Our deeds can become evil when we do not prepare our hearts to seek the Lord. We have a natural tendency to fail because we are easily distracted.

The bible says, “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. **Isaiah 55: 6-7**

We need to fix our hearts, keep it following God and His Word, and we need to focus on God in the midst of all distractions around.

We have Someone Who came in to fulfill what we have failed to fulfill and He gives us the power to overcome evil.

Jesus the Son of God who loves us and gave Himself for us.

Allow the Holy Spirit to take over our hearts.

Today, the grace of God to forgive is here.

If you think you failed to seek God, now is the time to start or restart.

If you feel like evil is trying to overtake you, now is the time to seek refuge.

Come to the One who overcame – **Jesus.**