



Week #4: God FOR Manasseh

Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. He did what was evil in the Lord's sight, following the detestable practices of the pagan nations that the Lord had driven from the land ahead of the Israelites. He rebuilt the pagan shrines his father, Hezekiah, had broken down. He constructed altars for the images of Baal and set up Asherah poles. He also bowed before all the powers of the heavens and worshiped them.

He built pagan altars in the Temple of the Lord, the place where the Lord had said, "My name will remain in Jerusalem forever." He built these altars for all the powers of the heavens in both courtyards of the Lord's Temple. Manasseh also sacrificed his own sons in the fire in the valley of Ben-Hinnom. He practiced sorcery, divination, and witchcraft, and he consulted with mediums and psychics. He did much that was evil in the Lord's sight, arousing his anger.

Manasseh even took a carved idol he had made and set it up in God's Temple, the very place where God had told David and his son Solomon: "My name will be honored forever in this Temple and in Jerusalem—the city I have chosen from among all the tribes of Israel. If the Israelites will be careful to obey my commands—all the laws, decrees, and regulations given through Moses—I will not send them into exile from this land that I set aside for your ancestors." But Manasseh led the people of Judah and Jerusalem to do even more evil than the pagan nations that the Lord had destroyed when the people of Israel entered the land.

The Lord spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they ignored all his warnings. So the Lord sent the commanders of the Assyrian armies, and they took Manasseh prisoner. They put a ring through his nose, bound him in bronze chains, and led him away to Babylon. But while in deep distress, Manasseh sought the Lord his God and sincerely humbled himself before the God of his ancestors. And when he prayed, the Lord listened to him and was moved by his request. So the Lord brought Manasseh back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh finally realized that the Lord alone is God!

After this Manasseh rebuilt the outer wall of the City of David, from west of the Gihon Spring in the Kidron Valley to the Fish Gate, and continuing around the hill of Ophel. He built the wall very

high. And he stationed his military officers in all of the fortified towns of Judah. Manasseh also removed the foreign gods and the idol from the Lord's Temple. He tore down all the altars he had built on the hill where the Temple stood and all the altars that were in Jerusalem, and he dumped them outside the city. Then he restored the altar of the Lord and sacrificed peace offerings and thanksgiving offerings on it. He also encouraged the people of Judah to worship the Lord, the God of Israel.

2 Chronicles 33:1-16 (NLT)

- The Story of The Prodigal Son - Luke 15:11-31

Lessons from the Prodigal King/Son:

1. God loves me _____ and _____.
2. God loves me enough to:
 - Let me _____.
 - Give me a _____.
 - Create a chance for _____.
3. God loves me and _____.

Discussion Questions

1. As you reflect on King Manasseh's story, what does it show you about God's capacity to love and forgive?
2. What do you believe about God's reaction to your mistakes and times of rebellion? Does your view of God cause you to draw near to him, or stay away?
3. How does this story provide hope for you or those in your life who have gone astray?

Recommended Resources

- *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, by Henri J. M. Nouwen
- *Relentless*, by Michele Cushatt
- *The Reason for God*, by Timothy Keller
- *The Problem of God*, by Mark Clark
- *Confronting Christianity*, by Rebecca McLaughlin

NLT (New Living Translation)

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- The Story of The Prodigal Son - Luke 15:11-31

Lessons from the Prodigal King/Son:

1. God loves me perfectly and patiently.
2. God loves me enough to:
 - Let me run.
 - Give me a warning.
 - Create a chance for change.
3. God loves me and restores me.

Discussion Questions

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