

## WHAT'S YOUR SECRET?

### 2 Chronicles 28-32

#### What's the secret of your success?

If someone were to stop you and ask you, what would your answer be?

Some of us would probably respond: "What success?"

If you've been successful, how did you get there?

If you've never been successful, what would it look like if you did?

How would you get there?

The secret of success is seen the same way, whether you've ever been there or not!

Hezekiah was a successful king by any standard.

He had everything going for him!

Again we see how that "**prosperity cycle**" works.

Even God's blessing can awaken the pride that leads to a fall.

Israel was ready to start another cycle of blessing/judgment.

They had to learn that God requires faithfulness.

Will they learn the lesson this time around?

#### **THE EVIL REIGN OF AHAZ 28**

**In spite of the example of a father blessed by God for his faithfulness,**

**Ahaz rejects that way and imitates the pagan practices of his neighbors.**

His reign is a tragic story of degeneration and destruction.

Instead of walking in the way of David and his father Jotham,

Ahaz walks in the way of the kings of Israel.

**28:1-2**

Ahaz didn't just imitate Jeroboam's ways

–that would have been bad enough since they went against God's commands!

But, worse yet, Ahaz imitates the pagan customs of the Canaanites, worshiping the baals, and imitating their worst customs, including child sacrifices. **28:3-4**

[Long term implications of a mixed marriage

–of marrying someone on a different spiritual plane.

We deceive ourselves into thinking it doesn't really matter!

Jehoram married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.

He killed all his brothers—she eventually usurped the throne.

6 generations later, their influence is still felt.

Ahab and Jezebel continue to affect the people of Judah.

The story of the kings of Judah demonstrates that a bad marriage affects not just *your* family, but *future* generations also.

Ahaz' character is shaped by Ahab's union with Jezebel.

It DOES matter whom we marry!

–maybe not so dramatically–but it DOES matter!

Loida—a vibrant teenager from our church in Costa Rica—

Her Christian mother married an unbeliever who eventually left her.

Loida always said: “Sometimes it works out; sometimes it doesn't!”

Years later we heard she married an unbeliever, now she's divorced and alone.

It does make a difference whom you choose and how you choose them!

Jezebel was beautiful! I'm sure Athaliah was too! But they were *poison!*

Choose someone who's on the same page spiritually as you are! Then you can hold on to each other and live godly lives together, in the midst of a pagan world. ]

God allows Syria, Israel, Edom, the Philistines, and Assyria to attack and conquer him. **28:19**

Even after the warnings, Ahaz never returns to the Lord.

God continues to afflict him to the end. **28:22-23-26**

They don't even bury him with the kings of Israel.

28:27

## **THE GOOD REIGN OF HEZEKIAH 29-32**

### **Purification and dedication of the temple 29**

Having watched the example of his father, Hezekiah decides that his reign will be different. He saw the contrast and the consequences and makes his choice.

His grandfather = Jotham = consistently faithful and blessed by God. 27:6

His father = Ahaz = consistently unfaithful and disciplined by God. 28:1-2, 25

He desires to follow the Lord faithfully in the footsteps of David. **29:1-2**

= committed to God; makes only one notably bad decision.

Hezekiah introduces important reforms at a crucial moment in Judah's history which ends up saving them from destruction.

He repairs, purifies, and rededicates the temple to God's service.

*This makes him a hero from the chronicler's viewpoint.*

Hezekiah calls the Levites and reminds them how the people left the Lord and the tragic consequences that caused them.

He makes a covenant with the Lord to remove His wrath and judgment, and to restore communion with Him.

He calls on the Levites to sanctify themselves and to return to His service **29:5-6, 8, 10-11**

He leads the people in worship **29:27-31; 35b-36**

They play their instruments and *sing praises*.

They worship God spontaneously, *with gladness!*

### **Celebration of the Passover 30**

Hezekiah calls all Israel and Judah to celebrate Passover. 30:1

They demonstrate their submission to the Lord by celebrating Passover 30:6-9

The majority of Israel (N) makes fun, but some humble themselves and join the celebration 30:10-11

In Judah people respond positively; a great multitude shows up. 30:12-13

They tear down the altars and high places in Jerusalem and all over Israel 30:14; 31:1

They commit themselves to follow Yahweh.

Even in cases where they aren't able to carry out every detail of the law as God prescribed it, He accepts their offering because

**THEY SEEK THE LORD WITH ALL THEIR HEART!**

### 30:18-20

God blesses them because they're seeking Him.

### 30:25-27

None of the participants has ever seen anything like this!

***GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS LOYAL LOVE  
TO ALL WHO PREPARE THEIR HEART  
TO SEEK HIM.***

Under Hezekiah's leadership the people turn their heart back to God and spontaneously break out in praise. They worship Him in spirit and truth.

As a result, God is pleased with their worship!

### **Contributions to God's priests 31**

Hezekiah and all the people bring offerings to support the priests.

The offerings are so generous that the high priest affirms they're stuffed! –with lots of leftovers!

#### **31:10**

[Sounds like Thanksgiving! –stuffed with left overs!]

Hezekiah's attitude concerning the offerings is an indicator of his attitude toward God, in every area of his life. **31:20-21**

In everything he does, he tries to do what's right, just, and true before God.

#### **Hezekiah seeks the Lord**

**and serves Him *wholeheartedly!***

Due to Hezekiah's enthusiastic worship, God blesses his kingdom.

He enjoys great personal prosperity.

### **Sennacherib's invasion 32:1-23**

Hezekiah's reign comes at a critical time.

The Assyrians have just captured Israel (N) and, due to Judah's sin, are starting to conquer the cities of Judah.

Sennacherib has been God's instrument to judge the degenerate people of Israel (N).

Now Assyria has become proud; they have no respect for Yahweh.

At the same time, Judah repents and returns to the Lord.

Sennacherib's challenge to the people of Judah raises a key question: **32:13-14**

*"What god is there, among all the gods of those nations that my father destroyed that has been able to save their people from my hands? What makes you think your God will be able to save you?"*

They dare to line Yahweh up with *pagan* gods made by *human* hands **32:17, 19**

**Yahweh isn't just another man-made God!**

They're challenging the living God of the universe!  
***ISRAEL HAS A GREATER POWER THAN ASSYRIA***  
***ASSYRIA IS COUNTING ON HUMAN STRENGTH.***  
***ISRAEL IS COUNTING ON THE LORD. 32:7-8***

When Hezekiah calls on the Lord, God sends an angel to kill the leaders of Sennacherib's army  
**32:20-21**

He returns home embarrassed; he can't believe it! When he gets home, his sons turn on him and kill him in the temple of his god.

His god can't save his own servant, let alone the nation.

He's made with human hands, just like the other pagan gods.

God demonstrates His faithfulness to His covenant.

**32:22-23**

When they obey Him, He is faithful to bless and protect them.

Personally, too, Hezekiah is blessed.

He receives gifts from the surrounding nations and enjoys their respect.

**Pride, the product of blessing 32:24-33**

In addition to fame and prosperity, Hezekiah receives another blessing.

The author assumes we're familiar with 2 Kings 20 (or Isaiah).

Hezekiah becomes seriously ill and is about to die. God answers his prayer and heals him supernaturally **32:24**

Instead of learning to depend on God for everything, his fame, prosperity, and miracle awaken pride: *"Look what God did for ME!!"*

He begins to feel proud of his abilities and stops giving God glory for his triumphs **32:25, 27-30**

When the Babylonians send a commission to find out how he got free from Assyria, Hezekiah takes them around and shows them all the great things in his kingdom.

It appears he's taking credit for his victories.

**32:31; 2 Kgs. 20:12-19**

God threatens to destroy his kingdom.

When Hezekiah realizes his mistake, he humbles himself.

God promises that the destruction will come to the *next* generation; not his.

**Hezekiah's faithfulness produces blessing during his reign.**

**Blessing leads to pride.**

**When he dies, he's honored by the entire nation.**

**32:33b**

## **HEZEKIAH'S NOTABLE TRAITS:**

**ON THE POSITIVE SIDE: He serves as an example of godly leadership**

**A godly leader:**

**1. He's personally determined to follow the Lord.**

29:2, 10; **31:20-21**                      **2 Kings 18:5-7**

*"He **trusted** in the Lord"*

*"He **held fast** to the Lord"*

*"He did not cease to **follow** Him."*

*"He kept His commands."*

**2. He motivates the people to follow the Lord.**

29-31

He leads them in authentic, spontaneous worship

He reestablishes all that has been destroyed

He destroys pagan symbols of worship

He purifies the temple and priesthood.

**3. He trusts the Lord to deliver them from their enemies.** 32:1-23 (**7-8**, 20-23; 2 Kg. 19:14-19)

**4. He trusts the Lord to heal him from a mortal illness. 32:24; 2 Kg. 20:1-11(1-5)**

It's too bad he lives so long!

In his old age he becomes an embarrassment to the cause.

Great servants of God sometimes live too long!

The problem isn't age—it's getting set in OUR ways!

Ironside's prayer: "Keep me from becoming a bitter old man!

My prayer: "Don't let me live long enough to become an embarrassment to you!"

*Will WE finish well?*

**BUT, ON THE NEGATIVE SIDE:**

**1. He isn't grateful and doesn't respond appropriately to what God has done.**

**He becomes proud 32:25**

When God's anger is revealed, he humbles himself and God postpones the judgment **26**

He's satisfied as long as it's his son that suffers and not him.

**2. He blows it with the envoys from Babylon**

**He takes credit for what God has done! 32:27-31**

Do WE ever do that?

Pride enters again.

He's proud of his treasures.

**WHAT'S OUR SECRET OF SUCCESS?**

Is it our great intellect? Our skills?

Businessman? Is it your great entrepreneurial skills?

Homemaker? Is it your great parenting skills?

Or, are we not so successful?

Are we worthless failures?

Viewing our success, or lack of it, based on OUR performance always leads to a mistaken focus!

“Well, they would never understand the “God” explanation anyway? Would they?”

Hezekiah has a great opportunity to give public witness of what God has done for him.

**Spurgeon:** “Why, Hezekiah, hadst thou been in thy right senses, and had grace kept thy wits about thee, what a sermon thou mightest have preached with death beneath thee and heaven above thee for the text, and the eternal power and Godhead for the theme! Brethren, he ought to have made the courts of princes ring with the name of Jehovah. He should have placed himself in the rear of the picture, and have filled the earth with his testimony to the glory of God.”

He filled his silence about *God* by boasting about *himself!*

He wants everyone to know about *HIS* great accomplishments!

*What about us? What’s OUR secret?*

Do we try to keep the glory for *ourselves*, so we can brag about how great *WE* are?

Or, **do we give God the glory that HE alone deserves?**