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**“Manasseh: The Significance of Influence”**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 21; 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 33**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Good Evening, ladies and gentlemen! What a privilege it is to be fellowshiping with you as we dig into God’s Word once again! Today has been one of excitement and anticipation as we held our first round of services within the building after what seemed like an eternity of quarantine! Although we are still in need of precautions, I am thankful for our church leaders and safety team going above and beyond to ensure the health and wellbeing of our church. Thank you to all involved. I would also like to extend an additional thank you to our custodian, Bro. Bill Lippelmann, for his sacrifices in keeping our church sanitized and clean, not just during the restrictions, but long before Covid-19 was a thought to comprehend. Bro. Bill, though you see yourself merely as the “man who cleans the toilets,” you are a great example of giving your all for the glory of God. Thank you.

How many of you have had, in some point of your life, a role model you look toward for influence or inspiration? I imagine we all could say there have been multiple people who left an impact in our journeys. Speaking from personal experience, I am thankful for the various men and women God has placed in my life whose testimonies have shaped me into the man I am today. One such man went home to be with the Lord

recently: our church’s former Associate Pastor, Rev. Tim Banks. Bro. Tim was a tremendous influence for me, and it is still a humbling thought to have taken up the mantle of the children’s ministry here at Hillside after it was in his care for so many years. And not only him, but his wife Debbie has been paramount in helping Bethany and me understand how to serve our church with love. I could say more about our other ministers, particularly Pastor Bingham and Pastor Tolbert, but I do not believe time would allow it, so we shall leave them for another sermon!

Of course, there may have been some individuals in our lives who have had negative influences, people who we could consider “cautionary tales,” and advise others to avoid. I wonder, which influence would you consider yourself? Tonight’s message may help you answer that question.

As we open our Bibles to the books of 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 21 and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 33, we will be studying the life of a man who influenced, and was influenced, by those around him. For those who may not be familiar, the Old Testament books of Kings and Chronicles record a portion of Israel’s history known as the Divided Kingdom Era; it was a period when the region was split into the northern kingdom of Israel, and the southern realm of Judah. Unfortunately for the north, none of the kings were faithful to God, which lead to years of oppression, idolatry, and eventually, slavery. The southern kingdom did not fare much better; though they did have a handful of godly kings, they were few and far between, and many fell into sin near the end of their rule. But there was one king who, though starting as a wicked man, found redemption in the Lord; his story is our

emphasis tonight. The king's name was Manasseh, and it is his life we can learn the significance of influence. But before we begin, let us pray...

### **QUESTION: What Can We Learn from Manasseh Concerning the Significance of Influence?**

#### **INCOMPLETE SENTENCE: The Life of Manasseh Teaches...**

##### **I. The Significance of a Father's Example**

A. As we study the life and reign of Manasseh, it would be beneficial to take a brief survey into the life of his father, Hezekiah, to understand his influence on his son.

B. How important is a father's influence?

According to research from a 2011 article published by Focus on the Family, fathers play a vital role in the raising and development in their children; examples include:

- 82% of studies on father involvement and child well-being published since 1980 found "significant associations between positive father involvement and offspring well-being..." Paul R. Amato and Fernando Rivera, "Paternal Involvement and Children's Behavior Problems," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 61 (1999): 375-384.
- In an analysis of over 100 studies on parent-child relationships, it was found that having a loving and nurturing father was *as important* for a child's happiness,

well-being, and social and academic success as having a loving and nurturing mother. Some studies even indicated father-love was a *stronger* contributor to some important positive child well-being outcomes. Ronald P. Rohner and A. Veneziano, "The Importance of Father Love: History and Contemporary Evidence," *Review of General Psychology* 5.4 (2001): 382-405.

- According to child psychiatrist Kyle Pruett, a father's more active play style and comparatively slower response to a toddler or infant experiencing frustration serve to promote problem-solving competencies and independence in the child. Kyle D. Pruett, *Fatherneed: Why Father Care is as Essential as Mother Care for Your Child*, (New York: The Free Press, 2000), p. 41-42.
- In the words of Dr. Pruett, "positive father care is associated with more pro-social and positive moral behavior in boys and girls." Pruett, 2000, p. 52. This is borne out by research from the University of Pennsylvania which indicates that children who feel a closeness and warmth with their father are twice as likely to enter college, 75 percent less likely to have a child in their teen years, 80 percent less likely to be incarcerated and half as likely to show various signs of depression. Frank

Furstenberg and Kathleen Harris, "When and Why Fathers Matter: Impacts of Father Involvement on Children of Adolescent Mothers," in *Young Unwed Fathers: Changing Roles and Emerging Policies*, R. Lerman and T. Ooms, eds. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993).

- In a 26-year-long study, researchers found that the number one factor in developing empathy in children was father involvement. Fathers spending regular time alone with their children translated into children who became compassionate adults. Richard Koestner, et al., "The Family Origins of Empathic Concern: A Twenty-Six Year Longitudinal Study," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 58 (1990): 709-717.

C. Returning to the Scriptures, according to 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 18:2-6, Hezekiah was,

*v.2 Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Abi, the daughter of Zachariah.*

*v.3 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did.*

*v.4 He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and*

*brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan.*

*v.5 He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.*

*v.6 For he clave to the LORD, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses.*

D. Hezekiah was a faithful man of God through the majority of his reign. However, in 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 20 (and its parallel chapter in 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 32), we read that God healed Hezekiah from a deadly illness, gifting him with 15 additional years; it was in these years Manasseh was born, and it was in this time that

*v.25 But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.*

*v.26 Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah.*

--2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 32:25&26

E. It would appear that for Manasseh, he might not have known the previous version of his father the God-fearing king, but a proud and boastful man who relied on his own wealth and fame; this example given by his father may have influenced Manasseh to pursue the world rather than the Lord when he became king.

## II. The Consequence of an Individual's Choice

### A. Manasseh's Choice to Sin

i. Regardless of his father, Manasseh still had to make his own independent, individual choice whether or not to seek the Lord, to the which he did not, for we read in *2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 21:1-3*,

*v.1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzibah.*

*v.2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.*

*v.3 For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.*

ii. Even when God sent His prophets to convict Manasseh to repent, he would not

heed their words (*2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 21:10-15*; *2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 33:10*); in fact, there is a theory that Manasseh ordered the death of the prophet Isaiah by being sawn in half (as referenced in *Hebrews 11:37*).

iii. *2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 21:16* summarizes Manasseh's reign graphically:

*v.16 Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the LORD.*

iv. But as *Galatians 6:7&8* remind us,

*v.7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

*v.8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

### B. Manasseh's Choice to Repent

i. Our God is a patient God, but even He has His limits in regards to sin! A time arrived when the Lord had enough with Manasseh's wickedness; we read in *2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 33:11-13*,

*v.11 Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon.*

*v.12 And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers,*

*v.13 And prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he was God.*

- ii. Although it took extreme measures, Manasseh humbled himself before the Lord, repented of his sins, and became a new man!
- iii. This conversion story has parallels to Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son in *Luke 15:11-32*.
- iv. How do we know this was a legitimate prayer of repentance? Through Manasseh's actions after the fact, as described in *2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 33:14-19*,

*v.14 Now after this he built a wall without the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entering in at the fish gate, and compassed about Ophel, and raised it*

*up a very great height, and put captains of war in all the fenced cities of Judah.*

*v.15 And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city.*

*v.16 And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel.*

*v.17 Nevertheless the people did sacrifice still in the high places, yet unto the LORD their God only.*

*v.18 Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and his prayer unto his God, and the words of the seers that spake to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel.*

*v.19 His prayer also, and how God was intreated of him, and all his sin, and his trespass, and the places wherein he built high places, and set up groves and graven images, before he was humbled: behold, they are written among the sayings of the seers.*

- v. Our actions can never save us, but they help in revealing our salvation.

*v.8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

*v.9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

*v.10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

*-- Ephesians 2:8-10*

Also, from *James 2:17&18*,

*v.17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*

*v.18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.*

### **III. The Influence for Posterity to Follow**

A. Manasseh had a wonderful conversion testimony, but it would appear his influence had no affect on his son Amon; as Amon took the throne, we read in *2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 33:21-25*,

*v.21 Amon was two and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned two years in Jerusalem.*

*v.22 But he did that which was evil in the*

*sight of the LORD, as did Manasseh his father: for Amon sacrificed unto all the carved images which Manasseh his father had made, and served them;*

*v.23 And humbled not himself before the LORD, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more.*

*v.24 And his servants conspired against him, and slew him in his own house.*

*v.25 But the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead.*

- B. The Bible does not give any details regarding Manasseh's relationship with Amon
- i. If I could present my opinion, I believe Amon might have seen his father's conversion as a sign of weakness since it happened while he was a prisoner, or perhaps he didn't believe his father could be converted, having witnessed his previous life.
  - ii. Whatever the case, though forgiven, Manasseh still reaped the consequences of former actions. However, it was still Amon's choice whether or not he himself believed in God and repented.
- C. But let us look at Manasseh's grandson Josiah to see what he did...

*v.1 Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years.*

*v.2 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left.*

-- 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 34:1&2

- D. Again, the Bible does not provide details into the relationship, but I believe, because Josiah was able to know his grandfather in the first six years of his life, he possibly could have remembered the testimony of Manasseh as one being honoring to the Lord, which encouraged him to pursue God as well when he became king, even at the young age of eight.
- E. If I may once more speak from personal experience, I know the power of a grandparent's influence in a grandchild's life.
- i. From the time I was seven years old, my grandparents were my legal guardians, and they were instrumental in my upbringing here at Hillside.
  - ii. My grandfather, Frank Arnall, was one of the chief role models in my life who taught me what it means to be a faithful man of God.
  - iii. Both of grandmothers, Betty (grandpa's first wife, who died before I was old enough to really know her), and Virginia (grandpa's second wife, who helped raise

me), were charter members of the church when it was founded as Prospect Baptist.

- iv. And it was grandma Virginia who led me to the Lord when I was nine.
- F. To the grandparents listening, you have more of an impact in the lives of your grandchildren than you realize; make the effort to share Christ with them as often as you can. If I may speak to the grandparents at church who bring their grandkids to as many services as possible, thank you for your devotion! Your influence is nurturing the precious seed of the Gospel in their lives!
- G. And for the parents who may be thinking, "I'm just like Manasseh before getting saved; I've messed up my relationship with my kids, and I don't think I have a chance to influence them for the Gospel." If I could offer this piece of encouragement: Don't Give Up. Pray for your kids. Reach out to them. Show them the Love of Christ which knows no bounds. And if necessary, be humble enough to apologize for any past hurts that may have been inflicted prior to your salvation; as said previously, show your faith by your works, and let them know what great work the Lord has done in your life! Don't Give Up!

## **Conclusion:**

**QUESTION: What Can We Learn from Manasseh Concerning the Importance of Influence?**

**INCOMPLETE SENTENCE: The Life of Manasseh Teaches...**

- I. The Significance of a Father's Example**
- II. The Consequence of an Individual's Choice**
- III. The Influence for Posterity to Follow**

### **APPLICATION:**

I recall a quote I once heard, though I do not know the source, which said “When we arrive in Heaven, we will see people we did not expect, and will look for others who will not be there.” Based on the Scriptures, I believe king Manasseh will be one of those individuals many will not expect in Heaven. Why say that? It is not because of his amazing track record in righteous living, but because there was time in his life when he repented of his sins, and sought the Lord for forgiveness. When he did that, his sins, though they were as scarlet, were made white as snow (*Isaiah 1:18*). The salvation of God has the power to cleanse any and all who call upon His name! It reminds me of another man from the New Testament who, after hunting, imprisoning, and executing countless individuals for their faith, had a miraculous encounter with Jesus Christ, and became one of the principle proclaimers of the faith – we know this man as the Apostle Paul. The testimonies of these men give evidence to the truth that if God is willing to save

people like them, He is able and willing to save anyone, including you and me.

Christian author and apologist C.S. Lewis, himself a former atheist, once said, “*Now is our chance to choose the right side. God is holding back to give us that chance. It won't last forever. We must take it or leave it.*” Every person on the earth has a choice whether or not to accept God's gift of salvation through the death, burial, and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ. What is stopping you from receiving Him as your Savior? The steps to salvation are simple; all that is required of you is...

A – ADMIT you are a sinner. God's Word makes it clear that all have sinned.

*Romans 3:10 “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:”*

*Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”*

B – BELIEVE Jesus died and rose again to pay for your sins. Put your total trust in Jesus as your only hope of salvation. Realize that Jesus paid the price for your sins on the cross.

*John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

C – CONFESS Jesus is Lord of your life. Confess Jesus by your mouth and believe in Jesus with your heart.

*Romans 10:9 “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”*



If you would like to know more about what it means to be saved, or would like someone to lead through the Scriptures the way of salvation, please do not hesitate to contact our church at 417-865-7286; you can also send us an email at [info@Hillsidebc.com](mailto:info@Hillsidebc.com).

Influence is a powerful tool with consequences that can affect not only a moment, but a lifetime. And for the Christian, our influence can have an impact which lasts for eternity. My dear brothers and sisters, pursue a testimony which will allow others to say, "I wish to know more about that Jesus they serve." Thank you for joining us this evening. Until next time, God Bless.