

This Solid Foundation Gives You What Good Intentions Never Could

The following statement will sound utterly misguided to many, but sometimes good intentions and a right heart are not enough.

Obviously, who you are on the inside is vital. The essence of your soul affects so many other things in your life. I would never want to minimize that.

Nevertheless, your actions and responses will ultimately have as much of a bearing on your future as anything else.

What you do can often be as significant as what you feel.

Allow me to share a story from the Old Testament that illustrates this.

Asa, descending from the Davidic line, was the third king of Judah. In many ways, he could be described as a good man who sincerely loved the Lord.

“Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father David had done. ... Asa’s heart was wholly devoted to the Lord all his days” (1 Kin. 15:11, 14).

Even though Asa sincerely wanted the things of God, there was a tragic weakness in his life. This breakdown showed itself in three specific areas:

1. A hesitancy to remove the wicked things

God called Asa to remove the idols and the wicked things that were gripping the hearts of Judah. He made progress in this,

even removing the unrighteous things from his own home. Yet Asa didn't go all the way. Unwilling to rock the boat, he decided to ignore some of what was going on.

"But they did not remove the high places from Israel. Nevertheless the heart of Asa was wholly committed all his days" (2 Chron. 15:17).

Asa's love for the Lord was not in question, but sadly, he wasn't willing to completely uproot what was shaping the attitude and value systems of his nation.

2. Improper relationships

In the midst of everything else, Asa also gave in to people in whom he should never have placed his trust.

Earlier in his reign, an invasion by Ethiopia threatened Judah's existence. Fortunately, Asa kept his eyes on God. The marauding forces were crippled as the Lord stepped into the middle of this tumultuous situation. In this instance, everything worked out well for Asa and his people.

However, because of a fear of man, Asa would later come into an ill-advised alliance with the armies of Aram—one of Judah's greatest enemies. This improper agreement would drastically hinder the purposes of God and contribute to countless problems.

Then Asa removed silver and gold from the storehouses of the house of the Lord and palace of the king, and he sent it to Ben-Hadad king of Aram in Syria, who lived in Damascus, saying, "There is a covenant between me and you ... And at that time Hanani the seer came to King Asa of Judah saying, "Because you depended on the king of Aram and did not depend on the Lord your God, therefore the army of the king of Aram escaped from your hand. Were not the Cushites and Libyans a very large army with chariots and horses, but when you

depended on the Lord, He gave them to your hand. For the eyes of the Lord move about on all the earth to strengthen the heart that is completely toward Him. You have acted foolishly in this, and from this point forward you will have wars (2 Chron. 16:2-4, 7-9).

I know that many don't believe this, but the right kind of people operating in the wrong kind of relationships could find themselves entangled in inexplicable issues.

3. A struggle to trust in the power of the Lord

Later in his reign, Asa, the good-hearted king, had to face his greatest battle. He was blindsided with a terminal affliction that gripped his feet. Rather than placing his confidence in the power of the Lord, like Hezekiah (2 Kings 20), he embraced the feeble approach of the masses. Multitudes consulted witch doctors and magicians, and the good-intentioned Asa passively followed suit.

In the thirty-ninth year of the reign of Asa, he had a sickness in his feet until his sickness became grave. Even in his disease he did not seek after the Lord, but the physicians. So Asa slept with his fathers; he died in the forty-first year of his reign. (2 Chron. 16:12-13).

Rather than relying on the supernatural outworking of God, Asa trusted in the forms, structures and limited means of men. Although he knew better, he embraced a pathway that led to destruction.

Conclusion

Like many of us, Asa was rather apprehensive as he faced challenging situations. He meant well, but when push came to shove, he often took the easy way out. Although he loved the Lord, he refused to boldly advance with confidence and faith.

In a pivotal early encounter, God had graciously exposed Asa's weaknesses. He sent the prophet Hanani to speak to him and guide him in the right direction:

"Listen to me, Asa! he shouted. "Listen, all you people of Judah and Benjamin! The Lord will stay with you as long as you stay with him! Whenever you seek him, you will find him. But if you abandon him, he will abandon you. ... But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded!" (2 Chron. 15:2, 7, NLT).

God is still saying, "Be strong and don't let your hands be weak." He wants us to remember that destinies are established on more than well-meaning intentions. Despite what all the blogs, books, and songs are boldly proclaiming, it's never only a matter of the heart.

Whenever a good man or woman's hands are weak, the future remains uncertain. {eoa}

J.D. King, director of the World Revival Network and co-pastor at World Revival Church, is writing *Regeneration: Healing in the History of Christianity*. King is a sought-after speaker, writer and author.