

What Are You Known For?

Jehoshaphat said, “The word of the LORD is with [Elisha].” So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him (2 Kings 3:12).

Scripture: 2 Kings 3:9-17

Song: “Known”

My daughter loves to sing. In fact, she sometimes sings so loud as she worships that the leader onstage can pick out her voice. I am known as “the mom of the girl who sings.” She is known in our church for her desire to worship because of her love for God.

Think about the things you are known for. Elisha was known for listening to God and speaking His message. These kings (2 Kings 3:9) recognized that through Elisha they could hope to hear direction from God.

Elisha wasn’t known for speaking the word of the Lord by his own power. He placed himself in a position to wait on God, and then spoke for Him alone. That is why “the hand of the LORD” came on Elisha (v. 15).

Become known for your relationship with God and for obeying Him alone.

Father, I want to be known for speaking Your Word and for my love for You. Show me the areas of my life that don’t point toward You. Convict my heart to change my life to honor You more. In Jesus’ name, amen.

April 26-May 2. **Danell Steffen** is a wife to Ken and a stay-at-home mom of three girls. They love to hike the Sandia Mountains, play family games, and eat Mexican food. Danell is passionate about women’s ministry and discipleship at church and home.

Prayer First, Then Act

Jehoshaphat also said to the king of Israel, “First seek the counsel of the Lord” (1 Kings 22:5).

Scripture: 1 Kings 22:1-6

Song: “Once and for All”

Once the weather turns cold in the fall, I hardly take a step in our house without my slippers on. I hate having cold feet! On a few occasions, however, I have found myself in my car, ready to go somewhere, only to look down and see that I am still wearing those slippers. They are so present in my life, I almost forget I’m wearing them.

When I get into my car without proper footwear, I’m getting ahead of myself. I’m not really prepared for whatever errands I need to run that day. I need to make my preparations before I ever get into my car. Jehoshaphat remembered what the king of Israel did not. Jehoshaphat knew that whatever they did together, they needed to consult God first to see whether they were following Him.

Like me with my slippers, the king of Israel was so used to the presence of sin in his life, he forgot that it was there. It didn’t occur to him to consult the Lord. Sin is repulsive at first, but becomes commonplace if it isn’t dealt with. Our eyes have to open again to sin, once we have gotten used to it.

Father, make me hungry for Your presence in my life. Please show me the sin I’ve gotten used to and convict me accordingly. Break my heart for the times that I forget to call on You before I act. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Head in the Sand

The king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat, “There is still one prophet through whom we can inquire of the LORD, but I hate him because he never prophesies anything good about me, but always bad. He is Micaiah son of Imlah” (1 Kings 22:8).

Scripture: 1 Kings 22:7-14

Song: “Fat Baby”

Reading today's passage, I can't help but picture the cartoonish image of an ostrich with its head stuck in the sand. It's almost comical to imagine the king of Israel refusing to consult a prophet because he is sure he won't like what the prophet has to say.

The king of Israel wasn't very concerned with what God wanted him to do. He surrounded himself with people who would tell him exactly what he wanted to hear. At the same time, he had distanced himself from Micaiah so that he could avoid God's truth. Micaiah would not pay lip service to the king at the expense of the truth.

Today it is easy to stick my head in the sand. I can fill my ears with music, television, and advice from unbelievers. There is so much noise in life that it is easy to miss God's direction if I don't seek it. I can miss the chance to be used by Him as a tool for His kingdom and to be blessed by Him.

Father, help me to hear even the hard things You have to say. Help my heart want to obey You. I pray that I will always be ready to hear and do what Your Word commands. In Jesus' name, amen.

Read Your Map!

“The LORD has put a deceiving spirit in the mouths of these prophets of yours. The LORD has decreed disaster for you” (2 Chronicles 18:22).

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 18:18-22

Song: “One Pure and Holy Passion”

I love to hike, but I always bring a map so I don’t get lost. Some trails are marked better than others, so I keep a paper map with me and use a GPS trekking app on my phone. As long as I have service, I can see a small dot on my phone that tells me where I am. If I step off the path, by even a few feet, the dot shows my wayward direction. Trust me, I get back on the path.

It is so evident in this passage that King Ahab should have known that he was not on the Lord’s path—because the people he selected to advise him were deceived. Yet even with the Lord’s declaration, he refused to listen, repent, and return to God. At his last chance to seek God, Ahab devised his own foolish plan for his protection, which failed (2 Chronicles 18:29, 33).

If I stop looking at my maps for guidance, I put myself in a dangerous situation. I rely on guidance to be safe and successful on my adventures. The Bible, my map for my life, has to be front and center if I want to walk in the center of God’s will.

Father, take away any hardness of my heart. Make me sensitive to Your will and keep me hungry for the direction of Your Word. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Ahab in Disguise

The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “I will enter the battle in disguise, but you wear your royal robes.” So the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle (1 Kings 22:30).

Scripture: 1 Kings 22:29-40

Song: “I Will Follow”

My twin girls have blonde hair, but the similarities in their appearance end there. When they were younger, they loved to dress alike, believing that no one could tell them apart. This is especially funny because one loves to keep her hair short while the other has always kept hers long, and now one twin is also four inches taller!

It seems ridiculous that a person might think he could trick God, but Ahab thought just that. Ahab hoped he would evade God's judgment of “disaster” (1 Kings 22:23) by disguising himself. A soldier shot an arrow “at random” (v. 34), but God guided that arrow. God can reach any of us, in any way He chooses.

God sees through our fake words, actions, and dress—even when people around us are fooled by the front we put forward. God is not fooled. He knows our thoughts and our innermost hearts. Coming to God means putting away our disguise to come to Him openly. We confess our superficial ways and commit to Him our full and open obedience.

Father, I'm sorry for days when I act as if You can't see me. I want every one of my actions to honor You just as though I could see You next to me. Grow in me a heart of integrity before You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Unqualified Praise

In everything [Jehoshaphat] followed the ways of his father Asa and did not stray from them; he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. The high places, however, were not removed, and the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there (1 Kings 22:43).

Scripture: 1 Kings 22:41-46

Song: “You Love Me Anyway”

Have you ever received praise that had a “but” in it? “I really like your story, but . . .” doesn’t feel quite as good as an unqualified compliment. When I hear such “praise,” I always wonder if they are only saying it in order to offer the criticism in a better way. Either way, I often wish they had kept their words to themselves.

Throughout this week we have watched Jehoshaphat be the king who follows God. He was said to do “what was right in the eyes of the LORD.” Yet look at the heartbreaking word in the next breath: “however.” God is “the God who sees” (Genesis 16:13). Nothing is hidden from Him, yet He still used a somewhat inconsistent Jehoshaphat to guide the nation.

We can go back to Scripture every day to know whether our lives are consistent with what honors God. Without a ruler to measure, we can easily lose sight of what God’s standard is.

Father, show me the “however”s in my life. Help me to see what is to be removed and help me do that so I can wholeheartedly worship and serve You. Make me hungry for Your Word so that I am consistently measuring myself by the truth. In Jesus’ name, amen.

The Cost of Obedience

The king of Israel then ordered, “Take Micaiah and send him back to Amon the ruler of the city and to Joash the king’s son and say, ‘This is what the king says: Put this fellow in prison and give him nothing but bread and water until I return safely” (1 Kings 22:26-27).

Scripture: 1 Kings 22:15-23, 26-28

Song: “Is He Worthy?”

I love pistachios and I hate pecans. Both nuts come in a shell that is somewhat difficult to open. For me, one of them is worth the work to get the prize, and the other just isn’t.

Micaiah suffers a strong consequence in this story for telling the truth. As a prophet of God, he felt that there was no option but to obey God in speaking the truth. There was really no way that he could have avoided being thrown into prison. The king asked; he answered. It raises a question: Is God worth obeying?

There are many things in life that aren’t worth the trouble. However, God is worth it. Regardless of the trouble I encounter in this life, I am assured that the King I serve is worthy. We serve a God who sent His Son to die so that we might be redeemed from our sin. Micaiah would answer the question with a wholehearted “Yes!”

Father, You are so worthy. I may be tempted to make life easier for myself by obeying You only some of the time. Yet You have proven to be worth my obedience so many times. Thank You so much for being worthy! In Jesus’ name, amen.