

## April 23 — Audience of One

### READ

2 Samuel 6:12-23

1 Chronicles 15:1-29

1 Chronicles 16:1-43

1 Chronicles 15:29, *“But as the Ark of the LORD’s Covenant entered the City of David, Michal, the daughter of Saul, looked down from her window. When she saw King David skipping about and laughing with joy, she was filled with contempt for him.”*

2 Samuel 6:20-23, *“When David returned home to bless his household, Michal ... said, ‘How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, going around half-naked in full view of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would! David said to Michal, ‘...I will celebrate before the Lord. I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honor. And Michal, daughter of Saul, had no children to the day of her death.’”*

### THINK

It was a day of celebration! The ark had been lost in battle, then kept in a remote place. Now it was finally returning to its rightful place in the tabernacle. It was a big deal, and David pulled out all the stops to make it a momentous occasion. This was vitally important because it represented God’s presence and glory in Israel. So, the people flooded the streets for this one-float parade and enjoyed a time of fellowship, singing, dancing, and feasting.

But, every party has a pooper, and Michal, David’s wife, proved to be the spoiler. Thinking David’s response to God’s presence was undignified, she was far more concerned with appearances than glorifying God. As she fixated her negativity on David’s style of worship, David performed for an audience of One — God. In fact, in a display of humility, he put aside his royal robes to dress in a simple priestly garment so that he could join in worshipping the King of kings. His expression of worship wasn’t a display to show others how spiritual he was; it was sincere outrageous, contagious joy.

Michal’s negativity that day became her greatest burden. Although she remained David’s wife, she never had a child — a HUGE disappointment for someone wanting to birth the successor to the throne. Her physical barrenness became a reflection of her spiritual barrenness. Her concern about appearances kept her from fully worshipping God.

So, we can either be a David or a Michal in our approach to God. Choose the former without worrying what others might think about your devotion and heartfelt desire to worship your King. Remember, you are playing for an audience of One!

### PRAY

Heavenly Father, I adore You. The presence of Your Spirit floods my heart with joy and ushers in a peace that transcends all understanding. May You be glorified in me. Amen.

## April 24 — God’s House, Our Home

### READ

2 Samuel 7:1-29  
1 Chronicles 17:1-27  
2 Samuel 8:1-14  
1 Chronicles 18:1-13  
Psalm 60

1 Chronicles 17:10-14, “*...I declare to you that the Lord will build a house for you: When your days are over, and you go to be with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. I will never take my love away from him, as I took it away from your predecessor. I will set him over my house and my kingdom forever; his throne will be established forever.*”

### THINK

As David sat about in his beautiful home, it bothered him that the Ark of God resided inside a tent. Why should he live in a nicer place than the Lord? So, he decided to build a temple to house the ark. God was pleased but declined the offer. Why? David had been a man of war, and God wanted a man of peace to build His house. But because David made God’s House a priority, God made David’s house a priority.

God would allow David’s son, Solomon, to build a magnificent temple as a place of worship when he became king. Then, God went a step further. He promised that He would establish David’s family on God’s eternal throne – and He did that through Jesus Christ, a descendant of David. When Jesus died on the cross and then rose again, the Bible tells us that he was seated on the eternal throne in heaven.

But there’s more! Because of Jesus’ sacrifice, it is possible for us to have a relationship with God and to look forward to our heavenly home. David’s family made an impact throughout history that we still benefit from today.

When we choose to make God and His House a priority, He will take care of our house. He will work to carry out His purposes in our homes and families. Through the ups and downs we may experience, we can trust that God is working on our behalf. And, He will use our house to make an eternal impact in the lives of the people around us.

Are you making God and His House a priority today?

### PRAY

Heavenly Father, Thank You for using David’s family to impact mine. Please use my family to impact the world around me. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

## April 25 — A Seat at the King's Table

### READ

2 Samuel 8:15-18

1 Chronicles 18:14-17

1 Chronicles 6:16-48, 50-53

2 Samuel 9:1-13

2 Samuel 10:1-19

1 Chronicles 19:1-19

2 Samuel 9:1,3,6-7, *‘David asked, ‘Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan’s sake?’ ... Ziba answered the king, ‘There is still a son of Jonathan; he is lame in both feet.’ ... When Mephibosheth ... came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor. ‘Don’t be afraid, David said to him, for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father, Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table.’*”

### THINK

One day, King David inquired if there were any surviving relatives of the former king, Saul. He wanted to show God’s kindness to honor his friendship with Jonathan, his former enemy’s son, who’d died in battle.

When David learned that Jonathan had a disabled son, Mephibosheth, living in hiding, he called for him. In those days, anyone connected with the former dynasty was killed to prevent uprisings. So, imagine how frightening it must have been for Mephibosheth when he received a summons from the new king! When he saw David, he immediately bowed face down. David told him not to fear. Then, David restored his family’s land to him and said, “You will always have a seat to dine at the king’s table.”

This story greatly applies to us. Why? Because we *are* Mephibosheth! Before our King, Jesus, called us, we lived apart from Him, hiding in our sin, weak and afraid — we were spiritually disabled. We, too, must humble ourselves before the King to receive His outpouring of kindness. As we accept His forgiveness, He ushers in life restoration — we gain more than we lost in hiding. And we always have a seat at His table as we enjoy a personal, all-access relationship with our Lord and Savior.

The story notes one final similarity between Mephibosheth and us. The Bible says that his disability remained, although his life had otherwise changed for the better. God doesn’t always remove our weaknesses. He sometimes allows them to remain so that we will fully rely on His strength. No matter where we’ve been or what we’ve done, God loves us unconditionally. Jesus is our King, so pull up a chair and feast at the royal table!

### PRAY

Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your lovingkindness and provision. Continue to work within me that I may grow and live out Your best. My aim is to please You today. Amen.

## April 26 — The Slippery Slope

### READ

1 Chronicles 20:1  
2 Samuel 11:1-27  
2 Samuel 12:15-25  
2 Samuel 5:14-16  
1 Chronicles 14:3-7  
1 Chronicles 3:5-9

2 Samuel 12:12, *“You did It secretly, but I will make this happen to you openly in the sight of all Israel.”*

### THINK

“A man after God’s own heart.” This was once how God Himself described David, the giant-slayer — His chosen king of Israel. But, David’s story took a hard turn the day he went from being “a man after God’s heart” to a man chasing after his own heart’s desires.

Watching from his palace roof, David gave in to his lust for Bathsheba, the beautiful wife of his military commander, as he saw her bathing. This led him to commit adultery and murder — two events that cascaded into a slippery slope of sin that would impact him for the rest of his life.

How could this seasoned warrior have been so weak? David found himself in a vulnerable position. He was supposed to be out with his men in battle, but instead, he remained behind. He was supposed to be leading Israel, but instead, he was pacing the rooftop of his palace. He was supposed to be in bed, but instead, he found himself staring at what was forbidden. David was supposed to be a man after God’s own heart, but instead, he found himself in a vulnerable position that led him to disobey the Lord.

Have you ever found yourself in a vulnerable position, doing something you knew God didn’t want you to do? What did it lead to as God gave you an out “but instead” you...

Maybe you think, “No one will ever know.” But God does! Nothing escapes His sight, and yet He still has an unfailing love for you. If there is a sin in your life that has gone unchecked, give it to God. Surround yourself with people who will encourage you to follow after God. Right now, choose to obey God’s commands – commands that He’s given you for your protection. Only then will you experience the life of purpose, peace, and utter joy that comes from seeking God’s heart!

### PRAY

Dear God, Thank You for Your unfailing love. Give me the wisdom and strength to stay out of vulnerable positions and help me recognize those in my life who can hold me accountable. I want to walk in Your will, to live our Your best. Amen.

## April 27 — No Small Sin

### READ

2 Samuel 12:26-31  
1 Chronicles 20:2-3  
2 Samuel 13:1-39  
2 Samuel 14:1-33

2 Samuel 13:2-5, *“Amnon became so obsessed with his sister Tamar that he made himself ill. She was a virgin, and it seemed impossible for him to do anything to her. Now Amnon had an adviser named Jonadab, son of Shimeah, David’s brother. Jonadab was a very shrewd man. He asked Amnon, ‘Why do you, the king’s son, look so haggard morning after morning? Won’t you tell me?’ Amnon said to him, ‘I’m in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom’s sister.’ ‘Go to bed and pretend to be ill,’ Jonadab said. When your father comes to see you, say to him, ‘I would like my sister Tamar to come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare the food in my sight so I may watch her and then eat it from her hand.’”*

### THINK

Yesterday, we read about David’s slippery slope into sin when he disobeyed God by committing adultery and murder. Today, we see the continual fall out within his children — the royal family. Sin after sin, we see the consequences subsequently piling up.

Amnon’s sin started seemingly small — lust. Marrying Tamar was forbidden according to law, yet he let his passion for her burn. Instead of taking his struggle to God, he took it to poor advisors and their evil advice led to sexual assault, Amnon’s death, and a family torn apart.

What can we learn from this horrifying story?

First, there are no small, secret sins. Whenever we feel the sway of temptation, we need to recognize it for what it is and lay it before God, repent, and not give it room to grow!

Second, we must be careful whose advice we take! So, consider your source — will they point you towards Christ? It’s crucial to surround ourselves with people who won’t just tell us what we want to hear but what we NEED to hear. If our friends don’t call us out on our sin, we must find someone who will!

What temptation needs to be eradicated from your thought process? Don’t let it fester! Instead, fix your focus on Jesus and rely on His strength to push through it. Ask Him to help you take your thoughts captive. When you do, you will find the reward much greater than giving in to sin — big or small!

### PRAY

Father, Although I'm not perfect, I am seeking You. My desire is that sin would have no place in my heart, mind, or life. I confess that I have been struggling with \_\_\_\_\_. I ask Your forgiveness, and I turn completely from it today. Thank You, Lord, for the forgiveness I have through Jesus. Amen.



## April 28 — Go with God

### READ

2 Samuel 15:1-17:14

2 Samuel 15:21, *"But Ittai replied to the king, 'As surely as the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king may be, whether it means life or death, there will your servant be.'"*

### THINK

David's son, Absalom, was all about creating an image that people would follow. He showed up at the right places, flattered the right people, and had the right look! Absalom was very handsome and became so popular that they considered him the most admired man in the kingdom.

But, underneath the outer shell of success, Absalom was driven by his desire to dethrone his father. He committed treason and divided the kingdom. And when Absalom's government gained more prestige, one of David's top aides defected to side with this young divisive and destructive leader.

Despite all this, David trusted God and put his fate in His hands. David was at peace knowing God was in control of Israel. David also had a loyal group of supporters, including Ittai, who chose to stick with David, no matter what.

When we find ourselves on the unpopular side, do we bail and follow the glamorous icons of our day or do we remain loyal to God? It's so easy to get caught up in the outward glitz and glamour of the rich and famous. It's tempting to buy into the social media images and soundbites. But God offers us so much more. Stick with those you know are seeking Christ and God's will above all else. Because all the things of the world will fade away, but God's kingdom will last forever. So, no matter what, go with God. Do so, and you'll always be on the winning side.

### PRAY

Lord, Help me be loyal to You in all things and in all parts of my life. Surround me with others who are committed to You so I can live out Your best. Amen.

## April 29 — Bad Hair Day

### READ

2 Samuel 17:15-19:30

Psalm 3

Psalm 63

2 Samuel 18:9,16-17, *“Now Absalom happened to meet David’s men. He was riding his mule, and as the mule went under the thick branches of a large oak, Absalom’s hair got caught in the tree. He was left hanging in midair, while the mule he was riding kept on going. ... Then Joab sounded the trumpet, and the troops stopped pursuing Israel, for Joab halted them. They took Absalom, threw him into a big pit in the forest, and piled up a large heap of rocks over him...”*

Proverbs 16:18, *“Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.”*

### THINK

Has a stylist ever talked you into making radical changes to the cut or color of your hair? And, at the end of the appointment, you stared into the mirror, mouth agape, thinking, “Oh, no! What have I done?” If not, congratulations! But chances are, you have had a bad hair day — those days that, no matter what you do, your hair has a mind of its own. Nonetheless, if you’re alive and reading this, you’ll never have as bad of a hair day as Absalom!

David's son, Absalom, was a mirror’s best friend. He had long, thick, flowing locks that, when cut, weighed five pounds! But as the saying goes, “Pretty is as pretty does,” and as handsome as Absalom was externally, he was ugly on the inside.

Absalom’s conceit and desire to usurp his father’s authority blinded him. As he hung by his hair from a tree, suspended between heaven and earth, surely he rethought his actions. He wished he hadn’t listened to his advisors. But it was too late! His enemies found him and killed him with javelins. And, instead of being laid to rest in a beautiful mausoleum, they threw his body into an unmarked grave.

We don’t wake up one day and decide to live a life marked by bad decisions. It’s a slow process that happens when selfish ambition keeps us from differentiating between godly wisdom and bad advice. Are you surrounding yourself with the right people? People with a proven track record, maturity in Christ, and the courage to be honest with you? People who will save you from a bad hair day?

### PRAY

God, Thank You for the gift of wisdom. Help me surround myself with the right people who can help guide my decision-making. And help me be that same friend to others. Amen.