

WISE COUNSEL FOR TROUBLED TIMES

STUDY FOUR

Thinking Biblically

2 Chronicles 34

Who are the people that take God seriously? They're the people who say God's Word is not just another book. These people see the Bible as a life-giving text and guide for the priorities they choose, the decisions they make, the way they handle things at home, the way they conduct themselves in business, the close friends they select, and the way they spend their money.

—Charles R. Swindoll

REMEMBER when you first discovered the truth of God's Word? How it came alive and spoke into your life with the gale-force winds of relevance. How it created such awe before the majesty of God the Father, imparted such clarity of vision of God the Son, and sparked such joy through the Holy Spirit.

From time to time, we should purposefully recall those special seasons of God's fresh activity in our lives. If you have not done so recently, use this study to do just that. Chuck Swindoll takes us to a rare scene in ancient Israel's history where God's Word kindled repentance in one king's soft heart igniting a nationwide revival in God's people.

That king was Josiah, who serves as a model for us today on how to think biblically.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

Thinking Biblically

2 Chronicles 34



PREPARE YOUR HEART

We depend on God to soften our hearts so we might receive His Word like Josiah did. For that reason, we always need to pray that God help us not only understand what He preserved in the Scriptures but also receive His Word into hearts and minds. Do that now.

Father, how I greatly depend upon You. I sit in desperate need of Your continued presence and involvement in my life through Your Spirit. Do not let me run past You. Do not let me run away from You. I still myself before You. I open my heart and hands to receive all the good things You have given and promised me through Your Word. In the strong name of Jesus, I pray, amen.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

First, let's review Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study method.¹ This [overview chart](#) lists the four steps we use to study God's Word and the function of each step. Take a moment to read the chart to understand how Chuck gleans truths from the Word and how you can too!

We engage in very serious work when we gather before God's Word to hear what the Spirit has set forth through the printed page. Learn now, if you have never before, to take God seriously. To listen when He speaks. —Chuck Swindoll

Now let's begin with the first phase of Bible study: observation.



Observation: In Ancient Days, a Man Who Made a Difference

Read the account of Josiah recorded in [2 Chronicles 34](#) and summarize what happened.



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What did Josiah remove from Judah and Jerusalem, and what did Josiah decree that led the author of 2 Chronicles to praise him?

Second Chronicles 34:33 summarizes the spiritual impact of Josiah's accomplishments:

So Josiah removed all detestable idols from the entire land of Israel and required everyone to worship the LORD their God. And throughout the rest of his lifetime, they did not turn away from the LORD, the God of their ancestors.

Because of the actions of one man, thousands of people lived fulfilled, meaningful lives in close connection with God's presence and in ways which promoted the peace and welfare of the entire nation. Amazing!



Interpretation: Why He Did It

Let's calculate Josiah's age by referencing 2 Chronicles 34.

Josiah became king at age _____ (2 Chronicles 34:1).

Josiah sought the God of David at age _____ (34:3).

Josiah purified the nation at age _____ (34:3).

Josiah began repairing the temple at age _____ (34:8, 14).



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Second Kings 22:1–2 provides a complementary panorama of the reign of this righteous king.

Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. His mother was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah from Bozkath. He did what was pleasing in the LORD's sight and followed the example of his ancestor David. He did not turn away from doing what was right.

What can we infer from the short statement of Josiah's mom and her influence in his life? What important principle can we draw from this?

How does 2 Chronicles 34:19 indicate Josiah's soft heart toward God?

It's no longer the faith of his mother; it's now his faith. —Chuck Swindoll

According to 34:23–28, how did God view Josiah's response and change His plans for Judah?



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What principles can we derive from 2 Chronicles 34:19–28 today? Principles are truths that can be applied to all people, in any culture, and at any time in history.

Talk about taking God seriously! Only once did Josiah have to hear from God to enact radical life-change in himself and promote it among his people. Josiah took God at His Word and believed God would do what He says. Josiah is a model of the faith we can emulate today.



Correlation: Be Transformed in Your Thinking

Paul's writings contain many such exhortations to take God at His Word. To believe what's promised, do what's commanded, and heed what's warned. All of this requires a change in perspective, the next step after placing our faith in Christ. Look at what Paul wrote:

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (Romans 12:1–2)

How does Paul's command complement Josiah's response of doing away with the old and embracing the new?



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The Greek word for “customs of this world” is *aion*. One commentator offers a classic expression of how Paul used this word in Romans 12:2:

All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitute a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral, atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale—all this is included in the αἰών, which is, as Bengel has expressed it, the subtle informing spirit of the . . . world of men who are living alienated and apart from God.²

Don't rush past that important quote. Reflect on it. What worldly streams of thought most influence your thinking? How can you be more aware of them and combat them with the truth of God's Word?

Don't let your mind absorb the thinking of the majority. Don't get lost in the horrendous propaganda of the times in which you live—all the politically correct information, all the STUFF of our society. —Chuck Swindoll



Application: Making a Difference in Today's World

To close this study on biblical thinking, Chuck wants you to ask yourself three simple questions. They provide a road map for applying to your life the truth of 2 Chronicles 34.

- 1) *Where do I start?* Pick one thought-pattern you want to change.
- 2) *What should I ignore?* The enemy always puts something or someone in our lives to lead us to think wrongly about God or wrongly about life.
- 3) *How do I proceed?* An open Bible. A tender heart. A willingness to change. Decisive action.



Thinking Biblically

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Think over the questions carefully and record your road map for improving your biblical thinking.

Jedidah prepared Josiah to have a heart like David's. One that was responsive to God. Josiah eliminated the idolatry of Judah and then heard the words of the covenant for the very first time. God's Word stopped Josiah in his tracks. He repented and God blessed him and the nation of Judah. Just imagine what God can do through His Word in your life!



A FINAL PRAYER

Record a fitting prayer in response to what you learned from God's Word.

ENDNOTES

1. We recommend you purchase Chuck's *book Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* if you do not already have a copy. You can also read Chuck's *Searching the Scriptures* introductions on sts.insight.org.
2. Richard Chenevix Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament* (London: Macmillan, 1880), 217–18.



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SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY

Thinking Biblically

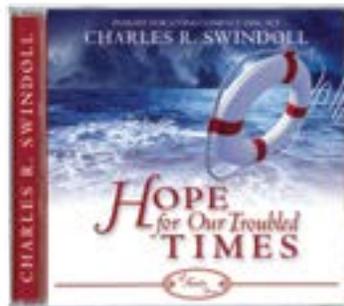
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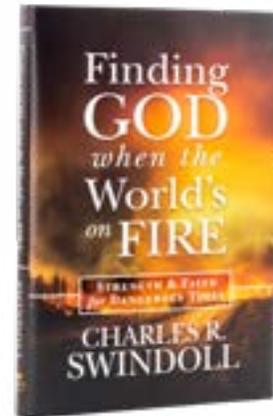
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For the 2020 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Pastoral Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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