

But the boy becomes a man, so lets think about Josiah the King who became a reformer.

Josiah: the King who had to remove: all the shrines and other places of false worship. He tore them down and destroyed them. He couldn't simply close them down because otherwise the people would have just gone back to them. He was systematic, thorough, relentless and ruthless. And so must we. Before we become Christians, self and other things are at the heart of our lives instead of God. This makes us idolaters, given to false worship. When we become Christians we put the Lord at the centre, where he ought to be. And how hard it is to keep him there. We must be constantly dealing with our remaining sin; all those things which challenge his Lordship must be dealt with thoroughly and ruthlessly. (Colossians 3: 5-6)

Josiah: the King who had to repair: The temple had been neglected for over 50 years and a lot of work was needed to get it back into shape and then maintain it. Our bodies are described as a spiritual temple, the place where the Lord dwells (1 Corinthians 3:16) and so we must build up our spiritual lives and maintain them. Paul writes of the fact that though the outer man, the body is decaying, the inner man is being renewed every day.

Josiah: the King who had to restore: Proper worship and true obedience. In Josiah's day it was the Feast of the Passover; in our day we restore true worship by becoming Christians and worshipping our loving heavenly father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, our true Passover (1 Cor. 5:7) As we come to the Lord we see that he is to be loved, worshipped and obeyed.



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Our Past Does Not Have To Define Our Future

2 Kings 22. Josiah was king in Judah 639 – 609 B.C. He was the son of Ammon and the grandson of Manasseh who were both very wicked. When his father was assassinated Josiah came to the throne aged just eight years. In the eighth year of his reign he personally rejected the corrupt polytheistic religion of his father and grandfather. So he's now 16yrs of age, and sets about bringing in Godly reforms to his people. It wasn't easy and it happened in stages. One thing which did help was that the Lord raised up Jeremiah the prophet. Another was the fact that the Assyrians to the north, who had dominated the country of Judah, lost control when, in 632 B.C., their king died. This cleared the way for Josiah to get rid of the Assyrian gods. And the third phase was when a scroll of the law was found in the temple, and they began to follow its instructions, especially with regard to the keeping of the Passover Feast.

JOSIAH: a boy with a name: the Lord (Yahweh) Supports. And the Lord was with him the whole of his life; he was upheld in all that he attempted for the Lord. And the Lord is with all those who belong to him. There is grace sufficient for all our needs. "I will never leave you or forsake you".

JOSIAH: a boy who set an example: He sought the Lord from a very early age. It's never too soon to seek the Lord. Isaiah says "Seek the Lord while he may be found". Josiah began well but also he continued well all his days; he did not turn to the right or to the left. This is so challenging, we say well begun half done, and Josiah sets us a good example. We should all want to say with Paul "I have finished the course".

JOSIAH: a boy with a background. His father and grandfather were two of the most wicked kings the country ever knew; they were cruel and violent, they were murderers and they led the whole nation into idolatry. *This tells us that our past does not have to define our future.* I think of two other men I know, their home lives were terrible and they missed out on all kinds of things growing up including a normal education. Yet they heard the gospel, repented of their sins and turned for forgiveness and cleansing. They studied hard and in due course were called into the Christian ministry. This reminds us that we never need to say "if only" with God. We are never at a disadvantage because of who we are, where we've come from or what we've done. God has no disadvantaged children. He can and does take us all on and gives us new lives now and a real hope.

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1. We pray for Mr M, that he may be healed of the pain from his childhood that is still affecting him
2. D has been released after completing his sentence; we pray that he will find a place in his local church and will find family there
3. G is due to be released this month; we pray that he will find accommodation
4. Give thanks for the provision of the SORI course at Styal, and pray that the women who recently completed it will continue to benefit from all that they learned and reflected on
5. Pray for T, who has recently suffered a setback and has been transferred to a more secure setting
6. Pray for Mr B, who has been through terrible things in life and has been left with feelings of self-hatred, and for the chaplaincy team as they try to support him
7. Pray for J, recently released, that the job opportunities presented will work out and that he will continue in his walk with God
8. Pray for M, who is struggling with thoughts of harming himself as the anniversary of his crime approaches, that God will surround him with love
9. Pray for A, giving thanks for his faithfulness to God despite difficult circumstances
10. Pray for all families of prisoners, especially children who are missing their parents
11. Pray for S, as he works to rebuild his relationship with his father
12. Pray for Mr G who has become a Christian while in prison, as he prepares for his release
13. Pray for J, who is struggling with an addiction to spice, that he will experience God's healing to overcome it, and that through this he will be able to share his testimony with others, and live in freedom from drugs
14. Pray for M, as he struggles with doctrines such as the virgin birth and the resurrection; may his struggles bring him into a deeper relationship with God, and may his faith and understanding be strengthened
15. Give thanks and praise for R, who received Jesus as his Saviour and Healer and is now attending a church in Bolton and in full time employment
16. Pray for J, that he will recognise the seriousness of his offending and move from defensiveness to a place from which he can learn and grow
17. Pray for A, for deliverance from his depression

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18. Pray for D, that he may know a deeper walk with God
19. Pray for M, that he might come to terms with the crime that he committed and know the forgiveness of God
20. Pray for A, who is desperately seeking God, that he will come to Faith
21. Pray for D, as he struggles to cut down his drinking, for strength and perseverance
22. Pray for P, that he will receive the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome his addictions and will be able to serve the Saviour
23. Pray for S, that she may come to terms with her offence and know the love and grace of God
24. Pray for R, as he explores scripture; that he will come to know and trust in God
25. Pray for D, as he settles into his new life in a different area, that he will find those there who can continue to support him, and that he will feel secure and able to move on in a positive direction
26. Pray for N, who is showing real interest in the Christian faith, and for those he talks to about this that he will hear God's word to him and will follow in faith
27. Pray for R, who has recently been released, that he will find accommodation and be able to make a positive new start
28. Pray for S, growing in faith during his sentence, that this may continue and lead to a changed life
29. Pray for volunteers who work across our prisons and in the community, giving thanks for all they do to help people to make a new start
30. Pray for all those who have recently completed the "Truth Unlocked" programme: W, S, P, I, D, N, M, J, B, S, E, J and N, giving thanks for the growth in faith that has been shown by all of them
31. For J, who has recently been released; that he will continue to seek help and support and to turn his life around