

Ingratitude

*And Joash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest.
II Chronicles 24:2*

The words of this verse exactly reflect the character of Joash king of Judah, and are very similar to the same summary of his reign in II Kings 12:2. However, Chronicles supplies more details that explain how Joash did not own his right behavior. It was only right when Jehoiada was his mentor, as II Kings clarifies, "all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him." It was in those days that Joash and Jehoiada planned and completed repairs of the temple that were needed because of its pilfering by wicked Athaliah, Joash's grandmother, who would have killed him along with the rest of the sons of Ahaziah, if he had not been rescued by his aunt, the wife of Jehoiada. Young king Joash learned to do right and promote the worship of the Lord in the land, as he began his reign at the age of seven under the influence of the godly Jehoiada.

Yet, after the death of Jehoiada, the princes of Judah did not take long to convince Joash to forsake the Lord and serve the idols of the heathen, probably reinstating the evil that had been eliminated with the destruction of Athaliah. And even though the Lord sent prophets to warn them of their evil, Joash and his new influencers ignored the warnings, to the point where Joash commanded that Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, be stoned in the temple because he prophesied against them. So Joash exhibited the height of ingratitude toward all that Jehoiada and his wife had done to preserve and enrich his life spiritually.

While such an account seems unfathomable, it illustrates the power of influence upon a heart that will not own the truth and be truly thankful for the grace of God. It is not enough to simply do right because of the influence of another person. That may be a good start, especially for young people, but it will have no permanence unless the motive transcends the superficial and becomes truly owned by one who is surrendered to the supreme influence of the Spirit of the Lord. Otherwise, a heart not owned by the Lord can be influenced by any other person when the godly mentor is removed. Yet, when the spirit is truly thankful to receive the gift of God's grace, He is the true and permanent influencer of the good works (Ephesians 2:10), which are borne by gratitude: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17).