

The Books of 1 and 2 Chronicles, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 19: Amaziah, Uzziah, and Jotham

2 Chronicles 25:1–27:9

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

Doctrinally, this lesson confronts three perennial dangers: half-hearted obedience, the pride that hides in success, and presumption against God's appointed order in worship. Amaziah shows that partial obedience is no safe middle ground; it slides toward idolatry. Uzziah shows that strength untethered from humility breeds the pride that destroys, and that God will not tolerate worshipers who substitute their own preferences for His revealed will. His intrusion into the priest's role is a vivid Old Covenant illustration of the abiding principle that we must worship God in His way, by His authority, not ours (Colossians 3:17; 1 Samuel 15:22–23). The teacher should be careful not to bind Old Covenant priestly regulations on Christians, but should draw the enduring truth that God defines acceptable worship.

The transformational aim is to drive each student to honest self-examination about whole-heartedness. Most believers are not in danger of abandoning God outright; they are in danger of Amaziah's reservation, holding back one corner, and Uzziah's pride, letting blessing make them self-reliant. Jotham offers the quiet, hopeful alternative: ordered, consistent faithfulness that grows mighty over time. The aim is to call students away from a spirituality of dramatic highs and reserved corners toward steady, whole-hearted, humble obedience that orders every area of life before the LORD.

Press the class to name the specific corner they have withheld and the specific success that has subtly made them proud, so that the call to whole-hearted devotion becomes concrete, personal, and actionable rather than admired in the abstract.

Question 1

Student Question:

Chronicles says Amaziah did right "yet not with a whole heart" (25:2), then describes his slide into idolatry. What does this teach us about the difference in God's eyes between partial obedience and whole-hearted devotion?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Chronicles introduces Amaziah with a telling assessment: he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, yet not with a whole heart (25:2). This is one of the most penetrating character summaries in the book. Amaziah was outwardly correct but inwardly divided, and the rest of his story shows how that division eventually broke him.

Early on Amaziah did obey God's word. When he executed the servants who had murdered his father, he refused to kill their children, citing the Law that fathers shall not be put to death for children, nor children for fathers, but each for his own sin (25:4; cf. Deuteronomy 24:16). This is a beautiful affirmation of personal accountability and an obedience to Scripture worth noting.

Amaziah also obeyed a prophet who told him to send home the hired Israelite mercenaries and trust God instead, even though it cost him a hundred talents of silver (25:6–10). God can give you much more than this, the prophet said. So Amaziah's obedience was real. The tragedy is that it was not whole.

The teaching point is that God looks at the heart, not merely outward conformity. Partial obedience is not a stable resting place; the unsundered corner becomes the foothold for ruin. Jesus summed up the whole Law as loving God with all the heart, soul, and mind (Matthew 22:37). Anything less leaves a door open. Amaziah's half-heartedness soon led him into outright idolatry.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God weighs the heart, not just outward conformity.
- Partial obedience is not a safe middle ground.
- Personal accountability: each dies for his own sin (25:4).
- Whole-hearted devotion as the heart of the great commandment.

Discussion Prompts

- Why is doing right "yet not with a whole heart" so spiritually dangerous?
- How can outward obedience mask an inwardly divided heart?
- What is the difference between obeying God and loving God with all your heart?

Question 2

Student Question:

Identify one area where your obedience to God is real but partial, where you are giving Him most but not all. What is holding back the rest?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question turns Amaziah's diagnosis on the student. Most believers can identify areas of real but partial obedience: generous but not sacrificial, honest but not entirely, forgiving most people but not one, devoted on Sunday but divided on Monday.

The aim is specificity. The danger of half-heartedness is that it feels acceptable because so much is right. Amaziah looked obedient. The unsundered corner is easy to ignore until it becomes the entry point for something worse.

Help the class identify what is holding back the rest: fear, comfort, an idol, an unhealed wound, a love of approval. Then call them toward giving God that specific corner (Romans 12:1).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Identifying real but partial obedience in our own lives.
- The unsundered corner as a future foothold for sin.
- Naming what holds back full surrender.

Discussion Prompts

- What is the one corner of your life you have kept back from God?
- What fear or love is holding back your full surrender there?
- What would change if you gave God that area this week?

Question 3

Student Question:

After his victory Amaziah brought home the defeated nation's idols and worshiped gods that could not even save their own people (25:14). What does this absurd choice reveal about the irrational nature of sin and idolatry in the human heart?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

After defeating the Edomites, Amaziah did something almost beyond belief: he brought back the gods of the people of Seir, set them up as his own gods, bowed before them, and burned incense to them (25:14). He worshiped the very gods who had failed to save their own people from his army.

The Chronicler underscores the absurdity, and the LORD's anger burned against Amaziah. A prophet asked the unanswerable question: why have you sought the gods of a people who could not deliver their own people from your hand? (25:15). Amaziah's response was to threaten the prophet with death (25:16). Pride had hardened him against the truth.

This reveals the irrational nature of sin and idolatry. Sin does not make sense; it is a kind of madness of the heart that exchanges the living God for things that cannot save (Romans 1:21–25; Jeremiah 2:11–13). Amaziah had just seen God give him victory, and he turned to powerless idols.

The teacher should help the class see that idolatry is not a quaint ancient mistake but a present reality of the human heart. We too are tempted to bow to things that have demonstrably failed to satisfy or save. Recognizing the irrationality of sin is part of guarding against it.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The irrational, self-defeating nature of sin and idolatry.
- Bowing to gods that have proven they cannot save.
- Pride that responds to rebuke with hostility instead of repentance.
- Exchanging the living God for powerless substitutes.

Discussion Prompts

- Why would a victorious king worship the defeated nation's gods?
- How does Amaziah's reaction to the prophet show the hardening power of pride?
- Where do we see the same irrational pull toward things that cannot save?

Question 4

Student Question:

What are the modern "idols that cannot save" that you find yourself bowing to when life seems to be going well?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question presses the reality of idolatry into modern life. Amaziah turned to idols at the height of success. We too often reach for false saviors precisely when life is going well: money, status, comfort, achievement, approval, the very things that promise security and cannot deliver it.

The point is that idols are not always obvious. They are whatever we trust, treasure, or turn to for the security and identity only God can give (Matthew 6:24; Colossians 3:5 calls covetousness idolatry).

Help the class name their specific modern idols and recognize, as the prophet pressed Amaziah, that these things cannot save. The cure for idolatry is whole-hearted devotion to the God who can.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Identifying the modern idols we turn to in times of success.
- Idolatry as trusting anything for what only God can give.
- Recognizing that our idols cannot save.

Discussion Prompts

- What do you tend to reach for when life is going well?
- Which of your "idols" have already proven they cannot truly satisfy?
- How does whole-hearted devotion to God displace our idols?

Question 5

Student Question:

Uzziah “was marvelously helped till he was strong,” then his heart was lifted up to his destruction (26:15–16). What does this reveal about the spiritual danger that hides inside success and strength?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Uzziah’s reign is summarized in one of the most memorable lines in Chronicles: he was marvelously helped, till he was strong (26:15). As long as he sought God, in the days of Zechariah who instructed him in the fear of God, God made him prosper (26:5). He built, farmed, invented, organized a great army, and his fame spread far because he was marvelously helped.

Then the turn: but when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction (26:16). The very success God gave became the occasion for the pride that ruined him. Strength, untethered from humble dependence, is spiritually dangerous.

This is a crucial pattern to teach. Adversity often drives us to God; prosperity often lulls us away from Him. Moses warned Israel that when they were full and prosperous, their heart would be lifted up and they would forget the LORD (Deuteronomy 8:11–18). Uzziah is the case study.

The teacher should help the class see that success is a test as searching as suffering. The question in every season of strength is whether it makes us more grateful and dependent or more proud and self-reliant. Uzziah failed that test, and it cost him everything.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The spiritual danger hidden inside success and strength.
- Prosperity as a test as searching as adversity.
- Pride that turns God’s gifts into the occasion for our fall.
- The need for ongoing humble dependence in seasons of blessing.

Discussion Prompts

- Why is success often more spiritually dangerous than suffering?
- How does “marvelously helped till he was strong” capture a common pattern?
- What guards a person from pride in seasons of strength?

Question 6**Student Question:**

Recall a season when things were going well for you. Did your strength draw you closer to God in gratitude, or did it quietly make you more self-reliant and proud?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question turns Uzziah's pattern into self-examination. Everyone has experienced seasons of strength: a raise, a recovery, a success, a stretch when things simply worked. The revealing question is what that strength did to the heart.

Did it produce gratitude and deeper dependence, or quiet self-reliance and the slow assumption that we no longer need to seek God as desperately? Uzziah sought God in his early years under Zechariah's instruction, but strength eroded that dependence.

Help the class recognize the subtle drift that prosperity produces and cultivate the gratitude and humility that keep success from becoming a snare (1 Timothy 6:17; James 4:6).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Examining whether our strength drew us toward or away from God.
- The subtle drift from dependence to self-reliance in good seasons.
- Cultivating gratitude and humility in prosperity.

Discussion Prompts

- Recall a season of strength: did it deepen your dependence on God or weaken it?
- What are the warning signs that success is making you self-reliant?
- How can gratitude protect you from the pride that ruined Uzziah?

Question 7

Student Question:

Jotham "became mighty because he ordered his ways before the LORD his God" (27:6). What does this teach us about the kind of steady, ordered faithfulness that God honors over time?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

After two cautionary tales, Jotham is a model of quiet faithfulness. The Chronicler says he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, and then the key verse: so Jotham became mighty because he ordered his ways before the LORD his God (27:6). His strength came not from dramatic moments but from steady, ordered obedience.

Jotham built, fortified, and prevailed over his enemies, but Chronicles makes a point of noting that, unlike his father, he did not enter the temple presumptuously (27:2). He learned from Uzziah's fall. His was an obedience that respected God's order and walked consistently before Him.

The phrase ordered his ways before the LORD describes a life arranged, day after day, around God. It is the unglamorous, consistent faithfulness that the New Testament calls walking by the Spirit and not growing weary in doing good (Galatians 5:25; 6:9).

The teacher should hold Jotham up as the hopeful alternative to Amaziah's half-heartedness and Uzziah's pride. God honors steady, whole-hearted, ordered faithfulness over time, even when it never produces a dramatic story. Faithfulness, not flash, is what God rewards (Revelation 2:10; Matthew 25:21).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Steady, ordered faithfulness that God honors over time.
- Learning from the failures of those who went before us.
- Strength that flows from consistent obedience rather than dramatic moments.
- Faithfulness over flash as the pattern God rewards.

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean to "order your ways before the LORD" day by day?
- Why does God honor quiet consistency over dramatic but unstable zeal?
- How did Jotham apparently learn from his father Uzziah's mistakes?

Question 8

Student Question:

What would it look like this week to "order your ways before the LORD," to build steady, consistent habits of walking with God rather than living from spiritual high to spiritual high?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question makes Jotham's pattern practical. Ordering one's ways before the LORD is not mystical; it is the concrete arranging of life around God: regular time in His word, consistent prayer, faithful worship, deliberate obedience in the ordinary.

Many believers live from spiritual high to spiritual high, from one emotional peak to the next, with valleys of drift in between. Jotham models the alternative: steady, daily faithfulness that grows mighty over time precisely because it is consistent.

Help the class identify one or two concrete habits they could build this week to order their ways before God, and encourage them that small, consistent faithfulness compounds into spiritual strength (Luke 16:10).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Building steady habits rather than living from high to high.

- The compounding power of small, consistent faithfulness.
- Arranging ordinary life deliberately around God.

Discussion Prompts

- What is one habit you could build this week to order your ways before God?
- Why do consistent small disciplines outlast occasional dramatic efforts?
- Where does your spiritual life most need steadiness rather than intensity?

Question 9

Student Question:

Uzziah, proud in his strength, forced his way into the temple to burn incense, a role God had reserved for the priests, and was struck with leprosy for usurping it (26:16–21). In light of his presumption and Amaziah's half-heartedness, what does the whole passage teach about whole-hearted obedience versus pride, and about respecting God's appointed order and authority in worship?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the heaviest doctrinal block of the lesson, drawing together Uzziah's presumption and Amaziah's half-heartedness into the great theme of whole-hearted obedience that respects God's appointed order. When Uzziah was strong, his pride drove him into the temple to burn incense on the altar of incense, a role God had assigned exclusively to the consecrated priests, the sons of Aaron (26:16–18).

Azariah the priest and eighty others, valiant men, confronted him: it is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated. Go out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed (26:18). Uzziah raged at them, and while he raged, leprosy broke out on his forehead, and he was a leper until the day of his death, cut off from the house of the LORD (26:19–21).

The doctrinal principle is profound and enduring: God defines acceptable worship, and we are not free to alter it according to our preference, status, or reasoning. Uzziah no doubt felt that as king he had the right; God said otherwise. Worship must be offered God's way, by His authority, not ours. This is the same principle behind Nadab and Abihu's unauthorized fire (Leviticus 10:1–3) and Saul's presumptuous sacrifice, where Samuel declared that obedience is better than sacrifice and rebellion is as the sin of divination (1 Samuel 15:22–23).

Apply this carefully and without anachronism. We do not bind the Old Covenant Aaronic priesthood or its incense regulations on Christians; those belonged to the Law of Moses and have been fulfilled and set aside in Christ, our great High Priest (Hebrews 7–10). But the abiding principle remains binding: God, not man, determines how He is to be worshiped, and we act only by His authority. The New Testament directs us to do all, in word and deed, in the name of

(that is, by the authority of) the Lord Jesus (Colossians 3:17), and to worship according to the apostolic pattern He has revealed.

Tie the two kings together for the class. Amaziah's half-heartedness and Uzziah's presumption are two failures of the same root: a heart not fully surrendered to God's lordship. Whole-hearted obedience submits both the inner heart and the outward forms of worship to God's revealed will. The opposite of Uzziah's proud intrusion and Amaziah's divided heart is Jotham's humble, ordered, whole-hearted walk. The lesson calls us to worship and obey God on His terms, with all our heart, in humble submission to His authority.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God, not man, defines acceptable worship; we act only by His authority.
- Pride drives presumption against God's appointed order.
- Obedience is better than sacrifice; rebellion is as the sin of divination (1 Samuel 15:22–23).
- Half-heartedness and presumption share the root of an unsundered heart.
- We do not bind Old Covenant priestly law on Christians, but the principle of worshiping by God's authority abides (Colossians 3:17).
- Whole-hearted obedience submits both heart and worship to God's revealed will.
- Christ as our great High Priest fulfills and sets aside the old priesthood (Hebrews 7–10).

Discussion Prompts

- What does Uzziah's leprosy teach about presuming to worship God on our own terms?
- How do half-heartedness and presumption both flow from an unsundered heart?
- What does it mean to do all in worship and life by the authority of the Lord Jesus?

Question 10

Student Question:

Looking across the lives of Amaziah, Uzziah, and Jotham, name one specific way the Lord is calling you toward whole-hearted, humble, ordered faithfulness, and how Jesus is forming that in you.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This capstone sets the three kings side by side one last time: Amaziah, who did right but not with a whole heart and slid into idolatry; Uzziah, who was marvelously helped till he was strong, then fell through pride and presumption; and Jotham, who became mighty because he ordered his ways before the LORD. Together they form a searching mirror.

The contrast is the lesson's call. We are confronted not with whether we will serve God at all, but whether we will serve Him with our whole heart, in humility, by His authority, and with

steady consistency to the end. Jotham shows it can be done, and his quiet faithfulness, learned in part from his father's failure, is held up as the pattern to follow.

Invite each student to name one specific way the Lord is calling them toward whole-hearted, humble, ordered faithfulness, and to consider how Jesus, our faithful High Priest and the perfectly obedient Son, is forming that in them. The aim is a concrete, personal step toward the undivided, humble, steady walk these chapters commend.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Three kings as a mirror: half-heartedness, pride, and steady faithfulness.
- The call is not whether but how we will serve God.
- Christ forming whole-hearted, humble, ordered faithfulness in us.

Discussion Prompts

- Which of the three kings most resembles your current walk with God?
- What is the one concrete step toward whole-hearted, ordered faithfulness for you?
- How is Jesus, the perfectly obedient Son, shaping your obedience right now?