

April Questions

- 1) [April 1] Israel's first civil war. It began when a _____ and his _____ decided to spend the night in the _____ city of Gibeah. The Levite turned aside from Jebus (_____ of the Jebusites; cf. Deut 7:1), only to find that the men of Gibeah were as bad or worse than the "_____" he wanted to avoid (Judges 19:12). What happened that night teaches us that when we compromise, we begin to _____ (we begin turning into the very thing God hates). It also shows us how _____ a society can degenerate into moral depravity (Judges 20:28—Phinehas was still priest in those days!). Gibeah had become like _____, and years later, _____ would allude to "the days of Gibeah" to expose the moral rot of his own day (cf. Hos 9:9; 10:9). How sobering to realize that when we refuse to _____ ourselves to God, we share a stubborn and rebellious heart with the sexual perverts of Gibeah. The Levite took his concubine home and used her dismembered body to call for retribution. The Benjamites refused to give up the perpetrators, and a bloody civil war began. This teaches us that we set a _____ for our own feet when we _____ those God says to destroy (Deut 7:16; cf. Deut 13:12–16). At the beginning of the war, the other tribes _____ of God at Bethel, but it wasn't because they loved God or were committed to doing His will. They were just going through the religious _____. It wasn't until they lost _____ men that they noticed God never said He would go _____ them or _____ the Benjamites into their hand (compare Judges 20:18, 23, 28). We should take heed, for this can happen to us if we ask God to bless our plans with _____ without first giving God our _____ and allegiance. Summary: The people rightly condemned the wickedness of the men of Gibeah, but *not* because they loved God and respected His law. They took action against Gibeah because _____ thought it was the right thing to do. When we do what is right in our own eyes, the result is a confusing _____ of virtue and vice that shames God and dead-ends in disaster.
- 2) [April 2] The _____ of the judges (Jdg 2–3). Joshua's generation died, and their children "did not _____ the LORD." (Jdg 2:10). The problem wasn't _____, for the next generation certainly knew *about* God and His works. The real issue was that they refused to honor and _____ God (like Eli's sons in 1 Sam 2:12). This led to a cycle of _____, retribution, _____, and restoration that Israel experienced over and over. Each generation _____ to convince the next to love and serve God, yet this task was at the very center of the Law (Deut 6:4–9). This teaches us how crucial it is to _____ our families. God has made it clear that it's _____ job to train our children (not the church's or the government's). They learn the most from our example, and the _____ is the most effective place to pass on the faith to the next generation. Knowing the people would disregard His covenant, God _____ some of the Canaanites to remain in Israel's territory. He did this for several reasons: (1) To _____ Israel for their apostasy (Jdg 2:3); (2) To _____ their loyalty and love for Him (Jdg 3:4); and (3) To _____ the next generation to depend on Him to fight their battles (Jdg 3:2). This teaches us that we can't live off a _____ generation's faith. We must demonstrate our own _____ loyalty and commitment to God.
- 3) [April 3] The judgeship of Deborah. Deborah, who was a _____, was judging Israel during the time of _____ tyranny. While women did on rare occasions rise to prominence in Israel, Deborah was unique in that she was the _____ and _____ woman to exercise civil authority at God's direction (Judges 2:18). This shows us that God sometimes uses women to highlight the _____ of men to shoulder the responsibility of _____. Indeed, the commander of Israel's forces, Barak, was presented as a man whose faith was _____. God told him to go and assured him of victory, but he wouldn't budge unless Deborah went with him. Deborah agreed to

go, but she told Barak that the honor of victory would not be his—it would go to a _____. And that’s exactly what happened. Sisera fled to the home of an ally, Heber, only to have Heber’s wife, _____, put a tent peg through his skull. This teaches us that we should never put _____ on our obedience. If we do, God may give the _____ to someone else, and we won’t _____ all that we could have for God’s glory. There can be no “_____” in a response of obedient faith.

- 4) [April 4] The judgeship of Gideon (Jdg 6–8). The people cried out to God for help, and God sent a _____ to remind them that their plight was of their _____ making (Jdg 6:1–10). Then, in _____, God commissioned Gideon, an insignificant man from a _____ family in the tribe of west _____, as Israel’s deliverer. God’s choice of Gideon shows us that He uses “what is _____ in the world to shame the strong” (1 Cor 1:26–29). God does this so that no man may _____ before Him, for He alone is to be glorified (cf. Jdg 7:2). God greeted Gideon by saying, “The LORD is with you, O _____ man of valor” (Jdg 6:12), but Gideon, who was very aware of his shortcomings, completely missed the point: *If the LORD is _____ you, then you are indeed mighty*. God was trying to teach Gideon that it was not his inadequacy but God’s _____ that counted. It’s encouraging to see how God stayed with Gideon every step of the way, and how He patiently made _____ for his fleeces and his fears (Jdg 6:35–40; 7:9–11). God gave Gideon victory over the Midianites, and God used him to _____ the wayward Israelites of the Transjordan. Their scorn of Gideon and his men was an act of _____, for by refusing to give aid to Gideon, they were _____ the Midianites (cf. Jdg 5:23; Luke 11:23).
- 5) [April 5] Israel turned their back on God after Gideon’s _____. This time their idolatry was revealed as the fruit of an _____ heart. They weren’t thankful for the way God had delivered them from their enemies, and they didn’t show kindness to Gideon’s household (Jdg 9:16–18). This helps us to see wickedness and rebellion from God’s _____. When we refuse to obey God and insist on having our own way, we _____ the sacrifice of Christ and _____ on His precious blood. Abimelech conspired with the men of _____, and with their blessing and their money, he led a team of assassins to Ophrah and killed all but one of his half-brothers. If only Gideon had never taken a _____ in Shechem! A life of sacrifice and service can be ruined by the legacy of a _____ sin. How important it is to obey God in all things! Jotham escaped the slaughter and called down a _____ on Abimelech and Shechem (Jdg 9:20). Abimelech scoffed at Jotham’s curse, and he ruled over Israel for the next _____ years. His wickedness, however, did not escape God’s notice. Abimelech and the men of Shechem had _____ treachery, and God made sure they both _____ a bloody harvest. God sent an evil _____ to sow discord between them, and it wasn’t long before the Shechemites went up in smoke and Jotham’s curse came crashing down on Abimelech’s head (literally). This teaches us that no one ever gets _____ with doing evil. Even if the wicked go to their graves in peace, God’s fiery judgment will catch them in the end.
- 6) [April 6] Ruth showed true _____ for her mother-in-law Naomi by remaining faithful to her after the death of her husband. She also vowed to stay with Naomi and _____ God alone. As God’s chosen nation, Israel should have set the standard of high moral living for the other nations. Yet it was Ruth, a _____, who displayed genuine spiritual character in the days when the Israelites left God for other gods. This teaches us that God “desires _____ people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:4). Boaz treated Ruth with compassion when she and Naomi needed food, and he happily took her as his wife. God _____ her to bear a child who would be the forefather of _____, Israel’s greatest king. In this way Ruth was an ancestor of _____, the promised Messiah! Ruth was unaware of the role she played in God’s plan to save the world, and this teaches us that there may be great things that God will accomplish through us even after

we've completed our _____ service. If we remain _____ to God, our legacy will extend far beyond our lifetime, and the rewards will outweigh any sacrifice God calls on us to make!

- 7) [April 7] Israel once again left God for the Baals, and God sold them into the hands of the _____ and the _____. They cried out to God for help, but He refused to listen to them: "Go and cry out to the _____ whom you have chosen; let them save you in the time of your distress" (Jdg 10:14). God's rejection was designed to _____ their sincerity (cf. Matt 15:21–28). Would they genuinely _____ and turn away from their idols? Sure enough, they did! The people "put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD; and He could bear the misery of Israel no longer" (Jdg 10:16 NASB). How great is God's _____! It was no coincidence that God used Jephthah to bring peace to the Transjordan. The man they had _____ aside was the one who became their savior. Jephthah was not perfect; in fact, he is a sobering example of someone who made a _____ vow (cf. Deut 23:21–23). His daughter, his one and _____ child, ended her life in either permanent service to the _____ as a _____ sacrifice (cf. Num 3:12–13; Exod 38:8; 1 Sam 2:22) or in _____ as a burnt offering. While we aren't certain of the girl's fate, we *are* certain that Jephthah's mistake stands as a _____ to us against making foolish vows (cf. Ecc 5:4–6). It also shows us that people have a tendency to make _____ promises in order to realize _____ benefits. We need to watch out for this tendency in our own lives.
- 8) [April 8] The birth of Samuel and the judgment of Eli's house. Hannah was barren because God had _____ her womb, but she did not become _____ or turn to other _____ for help. Instead, she poured out her heart to God and asked Him to look on her misery. This teaches us that we should always bring our problems to God. He said, "Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will _____ you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved" (Ps 55:22). Little did Eli know as he watched Hannah's earnest yet silent prayer, that God was about to raise up a prophet and judge whose life would be a _____ to the wickedness of his own sons. God called Samuel to speak for Him, and Samuel responded in obedience. "Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and He let none of his words _____ to the ground" (1 Sam 3:19; Josh 21:45). This shows us how much God longs for those who will say, "Speak, LORD, for your servant _____" (1 Sam 3:9). God warned Eli twice, once through a man of God and once through Samuel, that his house was about to be _____. Eli _____ his sons, but he did not _____ them or _____ them from service. If we coddle our children and excuse their sin, we _____ God and set the stage for their ultimate destruction. The ark was captured, Eli's sons were killed, and his own neck was broken. Eli refused to honor God above his children, and his life ended in tragedy.
- 9) [April 9] God allowed the ark to be captured in order to teach both the _____ and the _____ a lesson about who He really is. The Israelites learned that God couldn't be used like a _____ charm, and the Philistines learned that God was greater than their false god _____. Both sides were shown that God can _____ His own battles and that He will be treated as _____ before men (cf. Num 20:12; 1 Sam 6:19–20). The judgeship of Samson is a study in _____: (a) he would not cut his hair, but he ate honey from the _____ of a lion, (b) he was devoted to Israel, but he _____ after Philistine women, (c) he had faith in God's power (Heb 11:32), but he lived a dissolute and _____ life, (d) he was self-centered and vengeful, but he was willing to give his _____ to destroy the Philistines. Perhaps the story of Samson is meant to teach us more about _____ than about Samson. God stirred his spirit (Jdg 13:25), and his desire for the woman in Timnah was "of the _____," for God was seeking an occasion against the Philistines (Jdg 14:4). This shows that God can _____ even the sinful desires of a flawed individual to accomplish His purpose. The fact that God used Samson shows that God's _____ does not equal His _____. How much _____ could have been achieved if

Samson had been faithful to God? He died with his enemies, and once again, sin brought a tragic end to a life of great potential.

- 10) [April 10] The elders of Israel came to Samuel at Ramah and complained that his sons, whom he had appointed as judges, did not walk in his ways. They said, “Give us a _____ to judge us” (1 Sam 8:6). Their request sounded _____, but their hearts were full of _____ (1 Sam 12:17). God told Samuel that their rejection of his sons (and thus of Samuel himself) was actually a rejection of _____. This teaches us that if we reject the leader God places over us, we’re rejecting Him and committing _____ (1 Sam 8:7–8). The elders’ true motives were _____. Instead of obeying God’s command to be salt and light to the pagan peoples around them (cf. Exod 19:6; Deut 4:5–8), they wanted to be “_____ all the nations” (1 Sam 8:5, 20). This teaches us that we should not resent the _____ that separate us from the world; rather, we should _____ them and use them to reach the lost. God warned Israel of the consequences of demanding a king, but they insisted, and He finally gave them what they wanted. God chose Saul as a man to meet their _____, a man who truly _____ like a king. But did Saul have the _____ to match his grand appearance? Only time would tell.
- 11) [April 11] Saul passed the first _____ to his kingship with flying colors. The fact that he was still out working in the fields shows that he was _____ and _____. The Spirit empowered him, gave him wisdom and helped him lead the people into battle. God gave him a decisive victory, and instead of seeking _____ on those who had rejected him as king, he was merciful and _____. Saul seemed to be everything a king should be. Samuel took the opportunity of the kingship renewal at _____ to warn the people not to forget God. Their request for a king had been an attempt to gain _____ from their enemies without true _____ (1 Sam 12:12), but now that they had a king, they should _____ themselves to following God. This teaches us that God’s will for our lives is _____. Sinful choices in the _____ need not keep us from getting back into the _____ of His will. At each decision point, we have the ability, through God’s grace, to “_____ the LORD and _____ him and _____ his voice” (1 Sam 12:14–15). Sadly, Saul _____ the next challenge to his kingship. This shows us that a person’s true character is only revealed under intense _____. Instead of repenting, Saul _____ himself to Samuel (1 Sam 13:12), and his refusal to humble himself cost him the perpetuation of his kingly _____.
- 12) [April 12] Jonathan’s daring attack on the Philistines was motivated by his _____ that God’s power was what mattered, not the _____ of Israel’s army (1 Sam 14:6 NIV). This produced a great _____: “Perhaps the LORD will act in our behalf.” Jonathan was convinced that God could save “by many or by _____,” and so he placed himself at God’s disposal. What an inspiring example of true faith—a faith that is founded on God’s _____! Jonathan chose a specific _____ as a way to discern God’s will, and then he acted _____ when God confirmed his plan. In this way, Jonathan’s “_____” was *part of his faith* (1 Sam 14:6 NIV). He believed in God’s ability, but he didn’t presume to _____ to God. True faith recognizes its degree of _____ and bows its knee to God’s sovereignty. Yet faith also retains its _____ at the thought of what God can do on behalf of His people (D. R. Davis, “1 Samuel,” *FOBC*, p. 147). God gave Jonathan a great victory that was sadly _____ by his father’s rash actions. Saul’s penchant for making oaths and vows is telling, for those who harbor _____ in their heart often compensate with displays of _____ and _____. Moreover, Saul’s foolish and self-centered behavior foreshadowed his disobedience in the matter of the Amalekites. There it is clear that Saul placed his own _____ of what should be done above God’s clear command. When confronted by Samuel, Saul _____ his actions and _____ to humble himself before God. Once again, he showed that he was more concerned about his _____ than he was about obeying God.

- 13) [April 13] When God chose Saul as Israel’s first king, He gave the people a king according to _____ desires. This time God chose a king for _____, one who would do His _____ (cf. 1 Sam 13:14; Acts 13:22). When Samuel saw _____ he thought, “Surely the LORD’s anointed is before Him,” but God told Samuel not to judge a man’s worthiness to be king on the basis of his _____ appearance. This teaches us that _____ character is more important than _____ appearance. However, this *does not mean* that God doesn’t care about our physical appearance. The Bible is filled with commands that relate directly to _____ (e.g., Exod 28:42–43; Deut 22:5; 1 Pet 3:3–5; 1 Cor 11:4–6). Rather, it means that people are more than how they _____ on the outside, and that proper judgment always takes a person’s _____ into account. Further, since our physical appearance is the only part of us that many people ever see, our outward appearance plays a significant role in our _____ to the world. We should dress in clothing that is _____ for a Christian, with a godly sense of _____ and self-control (cf. 1 Tim 2:9). Samuel anointed David as king, but for the moment, things remained _____—he still kept his father’s sheep. This teaches us that God’s _____ is often different than ours. We need to _____ patiently on Him for direction. Eventually God honored David in the sight of all Israel by giving him a great victory over Goliath of Gath.
- 14) [April 14] Saul’s appreciation for David turned to _____ when the people began to applaud David’s exploits. Under the influence of an _____ spirit, Saul tried twice to kill David with a spear. This teaches us that jealousy is a deadly sin—it is one step short of _____. God helped David escape, and he continued to serve Saul and defeat his enemies. This is an inspiring example of returning _____ for evil (cf. Rom 12:17–21), and it teaches us the importance of _____ those who mistreat us (cf. Matt 5:43–48). David’s success and popularity did not make him _____; he remained humble, even when the entire nation praised him (1 Sam 18:16). His humility came from a deep sense of his _____ on God. He understood that he was prospering in all his ways because God was _____ him (1 Sam 18:14). When Saul sent men to David’s house to kill him, David turned to God in _____ (Ps 59). He called out to God to _____ him and _____ his enemies, and he dealt with his feelings of frustration and fear by _____ himself of God’s unfailing love and kindness. David’s _____ in Psalm 59 shows us how to transform our emotions by _____ our minds on God and _____ to trust Him in spite of negative circumstances.
- 15) [April 15] Saul and Jonathan both recognized that it was God’s _____ for David to be the next king of Israel, yet their _____ were completely different. Saul tried to kill David (extreme _____) while Jonathan helped David (cheerful _____). Jonathan could have stepped aside and done nothing, but instead he actively _____ and defended the man who would one day be king in his place. This teaches us that commitment to God’s will means obeying in spite of personal _____. After leaving Jonathan, David went to Ahimelech the priest in Nob. David _____ Ahimelech to gain his help, and while his motive may have been good (he no doubt wanted Ahimelech to be able to honestly claim _____ of the truth), his deception was _____ at best and _____ at worst. This shows us how easy it is to rely on our own _____ instead of on God in times of need. David knew that Saul wouldn’t rest until he was dead, and he decided to take refuge with Saul’s enemies, the _____. The idea of David defecting was exciting at first, but then prudence prevailed (“Is this not David the _____ of the land?”), and they seized him. David saved himself by acting insane, and Achish threw him out of Gath in disgust: ‘Do I lack _____ around here? Get him out!’ Once again God had delivered David from death.
- 16) [April 16] After his escape from Gath, David hid in the cave of _____. Those who were in

distress, in debt or were discontent joined him, and he became captain of about _____ men. David _____ out his heart to God at Adullam and told Him how _____ he felt (Ps 142:1–3). This teaches us to bring our feelings of grief, anger and discouragement to God in _____. Saul soon got word that people were allying with David, and he accused his servants of betraying him (1 Sam 22:6–8). Doeg, seeing an opportunity to curry favor with Saul, told him that Ahimelech had helped David in Nob. Saul sent for Ahimelech, ignored his protest of innocence, and ordered all the priests to be _____. Saul's servants refused, but Doeg was only too pleased to obey. When _____ escaped and told David, David was heartsick and angry. To comfort himself, he wrote a song that contrasted the _____ of evil with the _____ of godliness (Ps 52:1–9). This psalm teaches us that it's appropriate to call for God's _____ on the wicked and to take _____ in the fact that righteousness will triumph over evil (Ps 52:5–7). David continued to evade Saul and even managed to save Keilah from the Philistines. Sadly, his only thanks was treachery and _____. When the Ziphites alerted Saul to David's presence among them, David asked God for _____ and _____ (Ps 54:1, 5). This teaches us to make room for God's _____. God will exalt those who wait on Him!

- 17) [April 17] David had the chance to kill Saul on two different occasions: in the cave in the wilderness of En Gedi and in the wilderness of Ziph. Both times, David's closest friends advised him to kill Saul. The first time, David said, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the LORD's _____" (1 Sam 24:6). Even cutting off the _____ of Saul's robe bothered David's conscience, for the robe was a _____ of Saul's kingship, and cutting it off was an affront to Saul's _____. This teaches us that, apart from God's direct command (cf. 2 Kgs 9:2–10), we must never raise our hand (_____ or _____) against those whom God has put in authority over us. We must also keep our conscience _____ (1 Sam 24:5). The second time, David said, "Do not destroy him, for who can put out his hand against the LORD's anointed and be _____?" (1 Sam 26:9). God had anointed David as king, yet David refused to become king by killing Saul. This teaches us that the _____ we use to accomplish God's work are just as important as the work itself. David's attitude toward Nabal (" _____ ") was quite different, and only Abigail's wisdom kept him from bloodguilt. Her speech is a model of how to _____ to a powerful person who is filled with wrath. When she was finished, David said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who _____ you this day to meet me" (1 Sam 25:32). David perceived God's hand behind Abigail's words, and he was _____ to God for keeping him from "working salvation with my own hand" (1 Sam 25:33). How wonderful to serve a God who does all He can to keep us from sin!
- 18) [April 18] David once again sought refuge with the Philistines. His feigned attacks on Israelite territory were so convincing that Achish invited him to join the Philistines in their final showdown with Saul. When Saul realized how _____ the Philistine army was, he panicked. He sought God's guidance and direction, but God was _____. Saul discovered to his dismay that "The Lord is far from the _____, but he hears the prayer of the _____" (Prov 15:29). In desperation, Saul sought for a _____ who could bring Samuel up from the dead. This further _____ showed that he was still unwilling to repent. Saul told Samuel, " _____ has turned away from me and answers me no more" (1 Sam 28:15). Yet Saul was not the victim, for Samuel made it clear that _____ had first turned away from God. Those who _____ to do what they know is right should not be surprised when God refuses to hear their cries for help. Samuel told Saul that he and his sons would soon be dead. Saul could have _____ then, but instead he confirmed a parable Jesus told many years later: "They will not be convinced even if someone rises from the _____" (Luke 16:31 NIV). God _____ allowed Samuel to speak to Saul one last time before the end, for God is not willing that any should perish. How tragic that Saul would throw away this precious chance to humble himself before God!

- 19) [April 19] David and Saul both faced a deadly crisis in their lives. Their reactions were completely different: David “strengthened himself in the _____ his God,” while Saul turned to a _____, and finally to _____. The contrast between David and Saul teaches us that when we’re overwhelmed by the challenges and difficulties of life, we should turn to God for help in time of need. No matter how hopeless the future may seem, the answer is to _____ God and _____ in His loving arms. Saul’s suicide was a tragic end to a man of great potential. He had all the qualities that people look for in a leader, and God personally established his kingship with a mighty victory (cf. 1 Sam 11). Yet Saul had a fatal flaw. He was _____ and sensitive about his _____, and his insecurity caused him to be more concerned about himself than about following and obeying God’s will. As long as circumstances were favorable, Saul stood strong, but when _____ came, he gave in to temptation instead of trusting God. Then, in place of true _____, Saul tried to please God with displays of _____ and _____, never understanding that true spirituality is the result of a _____ of consistent obedience. Christian character is built one _____ at a time. Like a brick, each act of obedience is small in itself, but over time those decisions pile up to form a _____ of courage and integrity that can withstand the attacks of the enemy.
- 20) [April 20] David became king of _____ while Ish-bosheth became king of _____. David showed remarkable _____ after Saul’s death. He did not proclaim himself king; instead, he asked God what he should do next. God told him to go to _____, and he stayed there for 7½ years. This teaches us the importance of _____ God before we make a decision. Even if we know something is God’s will for us, we need to wait on His _____ instead of taking matters into our own hands. The years passed by, and even though the house of Saul was at war with the house of David, David made no effort to _____ his men into battle against his fellow Israelites. David’s attitude here is amazing. Saul hounded him for years and tried over and over to kill him, yet David was not consumed with hatred or a desire to destroy Saul’s house. This is in sharp contrast with _____, who was obsessed with avenging his brother’s death. Joab murdered _____ the first chance he got, and his selfish act put David’s patient negotiations in jeopardy. Only David’s sincere and heartfelt _____ at Abner’s death saved Israel from more bloodshed. This shows us how crucial it is to promote peace and reconciliation and leave _____ in God’s capable hands. David rebuked Joab for what he had done and forced him to weep over Abner’s grave, but he did not punish his nephew according to the _____ (cf. Num 35). Are we willing to obey God’s will even when it concerns the sin of our own family or relatives?
- 21) [April 21] The murder of Ish-bosheth and David’s coronation ceremony at Hebron. This was the _____ time David was anointed king: first he was privately anointed by _____ (1 Sam 16:13), then he was crowned king of _____ (2 Sam 2:4), and finally he was anointed king of all _____. It had taken almost _____ years for God’s promise to be fulfilled, and during those years, David waited patiently on God. This teaches us the importance of _____ in Christian ministry and the need for _____ before we can be successful in the tasks God has given us. God’s promises are worth waiting for, even when His timetable doesn’t match our _____ or desires. David’s success as king was due in no small part to the _____ men who supported him. Within his army were two elite groups: the “_____” and the “_____” (2 Sam 23; 1 Chr 11). These men showed _____ in battle as well as _____ in leadership. This should motivate us to seek out strong believers who will hold us _____ and help us be successful in our Christian walk. David _____ his men to achieve the impossible and fulfill their true potential. His example is a model for us to follow in our homes, our churches, and our communities.

- 22) [April 22] The Philistines tried to kill David after he became king. David _____ God's guidance in each battle, _____ God's instructions, and gave God the _____ for the victory (2 Sam 5:19–25). This is an excellent example of how we should fight our own battles. David's decision to capture _____ showed political and military wisdom. The fortress of Zion was located in neutral territory on the border of Benjamin and Judah, and it was still occupied by the _____, a Canaanite tribe that had never been expelled (Jdg 1:21). By making Jerusalem the capital of Israel, David avoided giving _____ to any tribe, which was very important given the recent civil war. This teaches us that a wise leader understands his people's feelings and makes prudent decisions to _____ people together. God gave David great honor and success, and he recognized that God had prospered him, not for his own sake, but for the sake of _____ (2 Sam 5:12). This reminds us to always use our _____ and _____ to further the cause of God's kingdom. David also showed his love for God's name by trying to bring the _____ to Jerusalem. He consulted with his advisers but he neglected to consult God's _____ (1 Chr 13:1–4; cf. 1 Chr 15:13). This led to humiliation and death, for God had told Israel exactly how the ark should be moved (Num 4:5–15). David learned an important lesson from this disaster, and he was careful to follow God's law the next time he tried to move the ark.
- 23) [April 23] David brings the ark to Jerusalem. David asked the Levites to prepare a musical procession that would be a worthy accompaniment to this great occasion. The cymbals, harps, lyres, trumpets and singing _____ the people's hearts and minds, _____ their attention on God, and helped them _____ their feelings of joy and praise. It also helped seal this moment in their _____ for years to come. This teaches us that it's good to begin a task by _____ God, for it will inspire us to give Him our best. David was right there in the middle of the procession, "dancing before the LORD with all his _____" (2 Sam 6:14). He was not _____ about what people would think of him, and he did not allow his position as king to keep him from whole-hearted celebration. In contrast, Michal was so disgusted by his undignified behavior that she could not rejoice in the ark's return. She looked out the window and saw David, but she did not see _____. How tragic that her pride caused her to miss out on God's glorious presence. One of the songs that was sung at this joyous event was Psalm 105. This psalm is a celebration of God's "wondrous _____" for Israel, from the sojourn in Egypt to the conquest. It teaches us that true praise delights to _____ what God has done and rejoices to _____ others of His mighty deeds. The psalm ends with a call for obedience: "And he gave them the lands of the nations, and they took possession of the fruit of the people's toil, that they might _____ his statues and _____ his laws" (Ps 105:44–45). This reminds us that we serve God out of _____ for all that He has done for us!
- 24) [April 24] Psalms for returning the ark to Jerusalem. In Psalm 96, the writer proclaimed God's glory and strength, and he called on the _____ to come and worship God. This teaches us that the desire to _____ naturally flows from a heart that is full of appreciation for God's blessings. As we _____ on God's goodness to us, we will find ourselves wanting to tell others about Him! In Psalm 106, the writer remembered Israel's ingratitude and _____ from the Exodus until the present time. The fact that the people turned away from God and worshiped idols after all the great miracles they had seen teaches us that we're very susceptible to _____ God and giving in to the pressures of the world (Ps 106:13, 21). We must _____ on what God has done for us so we won't be drawn away by temptation. The writer went on to say that God allowed Israel's enemies to oppress them in order to _____ them for sin (Ps 106:40–41). This teaches us that we can expect to be _____ when we stray from God's will. When this happens, we should _____ His discipline and _____ and _____ ourselves to a life of covenant faithfulness. The psalm ends with praise for God's lovingkindness, for He always keep His promises. David returned home to _____ his family, only to be met by Michal's caustic

_____. It's easy to condemn her harsh words, but how many times have we squandered a blessing because we were upset over some perceived offense by our spiritual authority?

- 25) [April 25] When Nahash of Ammon died, David reached out to Hanun in a gesture of kindness and friendship. Hanun listened to bad advice and believed the _____ of David's ambassadors. He humiliated them and sent them away in shame. This shows us how easy it is to be _____ of people and to question their motives. While we should be cautious and _____ in our dealings with others, we should not assume their motives are _____. When Hanun realized his blunder, he refused to _____ his mistake and spent an enormous sum of _____ preparing for war. This teaches us that it _____ more to cover up an error than to admit it honestly. Rather than _____ a mistake by being stubborn and defensive, we should seek forgiveness and reconciliation as soon as we realize our offense. After defeating Hanun's hired army of Arameans (Syrians), Joab besieged the Ammonite capital city of _____. David remained in Jerusalem during the siege, and one evening, as he was walking on the palace roof, he saw a _____ beautiful woman taking a bath. Instead of _____ away and resisting temptation, David _____ her and then _____ about who she was. This teaches us the importance of _____ temptation. We can't keep ourselves from being tempted, but we can refuse to _____ on those desires (2 Tim 2:22; Jam 1:14-15). David never dreamed that he would _____ one of his own mighty men, yet that's what happened when he tried to _____ his sin rather than confessing and repenting. Is there any sin in our lives that we've been trying to hide from God?
- 26) [April 26] Nathan confronts David for his sin. The story begins with the words, "And the LORD _____ Nathan to David" (2 Sam 12:1a). These are words of _____, for God seeks us out when we turn away from Him. How marvelous is grace that _____ us in our sin! Nathan approached David with tact and _____, and the method he used is an excellent example of how to _____ someone in authority. His story struck David to the heart, for when we see our sin from God's _____, we realize how twisted and hideous our self-centeredness really is. Unlike Saul, David repented in sorrow and _____. His prayer in Psalm 51 is a _____ of true repentance, a repentance that is founded on God's _____ (Exod 34:6-7). God forgave David, but He also told him that his son would die and the _____ would not depart from his house. David sowed adultery and murder in secret, and he would reap the same "before _____ Israel" (2 Sam 12:12). This reminds us that God will not be _____, "For whatever one sows, that will he also reap" (Gal 6:7). We can be forgiven, but we cannot escape the _____ of our actions. They will affect not only us, but also those under our authority. David spent an entire _____ fasting and praying and laying on the ground before God, begging Him to spare his child's life. But when the child was dead, he "went into the house of the LORD and _____" (2 Sam 12:20). Do we accept God's answer of 'No' with _____ and reverence? Do we come and worship God even when we don't get what we want?
- 27) [April 27] David's victory over all his enemies. The author of 2 Samuel summarized David's success this way: "The LORD _____ victory to David wherever he went" (2 Sam 8:14). This teaches us that the key to victory is found in God's enabling _____. If we remain dedicated and loyal to God, He will give us the grace we need to conquer our foes! Psalm 60 reveals that David experienced _____ during his battles. Instead of panicking and giving up, David brought his frustration and discouragement to God. He called out, "Save us and help us with your right hand, that those you _____ may be delivered" (Ps 60:5 NIV). He also recognized the true source of his success: "With _____ we shall do valiantly; it is he who will tread down our foes" (Ps 60:12). When every enemy had been subdued, David wrote a song of _____, thanking God for delivering him from all his troubles (Ps 18). This teaches us that the proper way to celebrate our achievements is to _____

and glorify God. It's interesting that God gave David the very things He told Israel's kings not to multiply for themselves: _____, _____ and _____ (cf. 1 Chr 18:4, 10). David's reaction is telling. He _____ the horses and _____ the silver and gold to God. How tightly do we cling to the things God gives us?

- 28) [April 28] The Davidic Covenant. After God gave David _____ from _____ his enemies, David became concerned that the ark, the symbol of God's presence, sat in a _____ while he lived in a beautiful palace. David's desire to build a temple was pleasing to God, but God told him ' _____ .' This teaches us that there will be times when we want to do something good for God, but the _____ is wrong or _____ may not be the one God wants to perform the task. David's willingness to _____ to God's will is an excellent example of showing deference to His direction. David _____ his part in God's plan and did not try to go _____ it. Although God turned down David's request, He did not reject David himself. In fact, God took the occasion to establish a _____ with him. David wanted to build God a house (a _____), and instead, God promised to build David a house (a _____). Not only that, God also promised that his house would last _____! David's earthly dynasty ended four centuries later, but _____, a direct descendant of David, is the ultimate fulfillment of this promise (Acts 2:22–36). Jesus will reign for eternity. He reigns now in our _____, and one day He will reign here on _____ (Luke 1:30–33; Rev 20:4). David rejoiced in God's promise and was humbled at the thought of how God had taken him from following _____ to being the _____ of your people. This teaches us that the proper response to God's blessing is humility and _____.
- 29) [April 29] The famine occurred as _____ on the land for "Saul and his bloody house, because he put the Gibeonites to _____" (2 Sam 21:1 NASB; cf. Num 35:33). The Gibeonites were servants of Israel by covenant agreement (Josh 9:16–20), but Saul in "his _____" violated that covenant. This teaches us that it's never right to do _____, even to get a chance to do _____. The fact that David willingly gave seven of Saul's descendants to be executed as payment for this crime indicates that they had likely been _____ in this treacherous act (cf. Deut 24:16; 2 Sam 21:14). Amnon, David's firstborn son, was desperately "in _____" with his half-sister Tamar (Absalom's full sister). With the help of his cousin _____, he hatched a scheme to have her. This shows that if you can't wait, what you feel is *not* love—it's _____. Once Amnon violated her, he hated her and threw her out in disgrace (making it look as if _____ had made a shameful proposition to *him*). Absalom acted as though nothing had happened, but he was secretly seething with _____. When the time was right, he murdered Amnon in revenge. The judgment prophesied by the prophet Nathan was finally coming to pass in David's house (2 Sam 12:10). David was "very angry" about what happened to Tamar, yet he did _____. Solomon, who experienced these tragic events firsthand, later observed that when we refuse to discipline our children, we _____ them (Prov 13:24) and set the stage for their ultimate _____ (Prov 19:18 NIV).
- 30) [April 30] Absalom's rebellion. Joab realized that David still loved Absalom in spite of the murder of Amnon, and he used a clever _____ to convince David to allow Absalom to return. Unlike Nathan, whose story appealed to David's _____ over his feelings, Joab's story appealed to David's _____ over his conscience. David knew something should be done about Absalom, but he lacked the _____ and resolve to do it. Joab, rather than urging David to do the right thing, became an accomplice to David's _____ and indecision. This teaches us how important it is to surround ourselves with friends who will hold us _____ to the truth. Absalom was permitted to return to Jerusalem, but he was not allowed into David's presence. For _____ years Absalom waited, and finally, sensing the time was right, he put a _____ under Joab (literally) and was reconciled with his father. David embraced him in forgiveness, but Absalom's

heart was not _____ . Indeed, David was welcoming a deadly _____ into his home. Within _____ years, Absalom had stolen the hearts of the people and David was once again running for his life. This shows us that true _____ must be based on genuine repentance, for anything less is a prelude to _____ .