A gold crown on a white background

Description automatically generated**Session 5**

***Trustworthy, Lecture 3***

**Jereboam**

**1-2 April 2024**

**High Places and Wrong Decisions –** A “high place” was a large raised platform that was used in worship rituals throughout biblical times. Jereboam had high places constructed in both Bethel and Dan, and he placed on each of them a golden calf idol. He didn’t wait on the Lord, but tried to build his own solution to keep the people loyal to him. Such a lack of patience can position us to depart from God’s ways and manipulate things to get what we want. Lysa shared an example from her own life that illustrates how she lost patience, got tired of waiting for God’s best, and stopped trusting God to provide the future that she wanted. But the decision she made at that time only multiplied heartbreak upon heartbreak in her life. We’ve probably all made decisions at some point when we didn’t want to wait on God and decided to take matters into our own hands…decisions that we wish we could go back and redo. But for believers, those seasons can teach us lessons that will keep us from making the same mistakes today. Sometimes a little checklist can help us evaluate decisions we are faced with:

* Would it cause me to go where God told me not to go?
* Would it cause me to look at something God told me not to look at?
* Would it cause me to partake in something God told me not to partake in?
* Would it cause me to say things God told me not to say?
* Would it cause me to be impatient with something God told me to be patient with?

A true sense of worth can never come from other people. Only God can give us worth.

**Two Examples from the Kings of Israel –** We can see how these things played out in the lives of two kings, Rehoboam and Jereboam. First let’s look at how Rehoboam’s actions revealed his lack of *patience*, lack of *humility*, and lack of *true trust in God*. When his new subjects requested that he lessen their harsh forced labor, his young contemporary advisors told him to say, “My little finger is thicker than my father’s thigh (or waist)!” This showed his proud assumption that he would be even more wealthy, more important, and more powerful than his father Solomon had been. But his proud attitude only resulted in his losing most of his kingdom, with just two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, remaining loyal to him. The other ten tribes chose Jereboam as their king…but he also showed great distrust of God and a radical departure from God’s ways. He set up new places of worship to prevent his people from returning to Jerusalem and perhaps being persuaded to renew their allegiance to Rehoboam. Not only did he devise an entirely new system of worship, he also named his sons after the sons of Aaron (e.g. Nadab), giving the appearance of the priestly lineage.

**The Heart and the Will –** Scripture records that Jereboam said “in his heart” that the people would turn away from him and go back to Judah. But the Hebrew concept of the heart was that it was the seat of the will. So Jereboam made decisions based on what his heart was saying that eventually led to his ruin. And what is true of Jereboam is also true of us: ultimately our ability to trust God originates in the *will*: in any given situation, we make the *decision* to trust God or not with our will.

**Jereboam’s Bad Example –** Because Jereboam led the way into idolatry, the people followed and were led into sin. He—and they—went where God had told them not to go. They looked at what God had told them not to look at. They partook in activities that God had told them not to do. They said things God had told them not to say. And they were impatient with things that God had told them to be patient with. In fact, Jereboam’s life became a sort of proverb, equated with evil. Just as King David was often pointed to as a model for good kings, Jereboam would be referred to repeatedly as setting the example for doing evil in God’s sight.

**Takeaway –** Just as Jereboam did, we also tend to stop trusting God whenever we think too lowly of Him and too highly of ourselves. But when we think highly of God, we will think rightly of ourselves, and then we are free to simply trust God for whatever we are facing in our lives. Let us daily choose to do God’s will and verbalize our trust in Him.