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3. What obstacles did Hezekiah face early on his life?

*His culture was corrupt, he had a sinful father who ruled the nation before him, and he was a young ruler.*

**APPLICATION AND CONNECTION: DAILY DEVOTIONS**

Give students a Participant’s Guide. Discuss that they will not experience God’s power until they *personally* know God. This gives you the opportunity to ask about salvation. Also, encourage students to spend time in their devotions by using the participants guide daily.

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*We must identify our weak spots and strengthen the “walls” of our devotional life, our relationships, our service to God, and even our health. We also must make use of the spiritual weapons God has supplied us with (Ephesians 6:11).*

**APPLICATION AND CONNECTION: STOP THE WATER” CARDS**

Encourage students to search for Scripture verses that will help them in overcoming the tricks of Satan. Supply them with twenty index cards each. Instruct them to write a topic they struggle with on one side and a verse to combat that struggle on the other.

**EXAMPLES:**

*Fear*

Isaiah 41:10, Psalm 56:3, 1 John 4:18, Philippians 4:6-7

*Pride*

James 4:6, Proverbs 13:10, Proverbs 16:18, Proverbs 18:12

*Jealousy*

Proverbs 14:30, James 3:16, Philippians 2:3, 1 Peter 2:9

*Insecurity*

Philippians 4:6-9, Romans 12:2, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2:10, James 1:4

*Laziness*

Proverbs 13:4, Romans 12:11, Proverbs 6:6, Ephesians 5:16

*Anger*

James 1:19-20, Ecclesiastes 7:9, Proverbs 5:18, Proverbs 29:11























Well in our lesson today, we'll see that Hezekiah's struggles are definitely real. He is faced with some pretty tough challenges, and he doesn't get a choice in the matter.

## SCRIPTURE

Read the passage aloud.

2 KINGS 19:1-19

1 *And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD.*

2 *And he sent Eliakim, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz.*

3 *And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy; for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.*

4 *It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left.*

5 *So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.*

6 *And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.*

7 *Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.*

8 *So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish.*

9 *And when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee: he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah, saying,*

10 *Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.*

11 *Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered?*

12 *Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed; as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which were in Thelasar?*

13 *Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah?*

14 *And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.*

15 *And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.*









2 KINGS 19:17–18

17 *Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands,*

18 *And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men’s hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them.*

The other nations worshipped false gods who were powerless. Hezekiah acknowledged that the Lord was the only true God and that’s why Jerusalem was still standing.

**Aim**

Hezekiah’s motivation wasn’t fame and recognition. He simply wanted to glorify God. What motivates your prayers? Do you ask God for things that only benefit you or those closest to you? Or is your heart to show others the love of God, His grace, and the way to eternal life? The best part of Hezekiah’s prayer is found in 2 Kings 19:20.

2 KINGS 19:20

*Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard.*

The Lord heard Hezekiah! It’s amazing that we serve a God who knows everything about us yet still wants to hear from us.

*Illustration from book: Tell the story (pages 86–87) or show a clip of Grayson Clamp.*

Our Heavenly Father finds joy in hearing our voice. So why do we go days or longer without spending time communicating with God through prayer? Hezekiah knew that if he was going to have success through his struggle he needed to draw close to God through prayer.

We all have trials and difficult situations. And if you haven’t had them, you certainly will. So, it’s important to decide now who you will run to during those times—this will be the key to your victory or your defeat.

**STUDY QUESTIONS (TAKEN FROM PARTICIPANTS GUIDE)**

1. Why did Hezekiah tear up his clothes?

*He was showing humility and he was grieved that Sennacherib was blaspheming God.*

2. Who did Hezekiah run to when He needed help?

*He called for the prophet Isaiah and they prayed to God.*

3. What was Hezekiah’s motivation in winning the battle?

*Hezekiah’s had pure motives—he just wanted to bring glory to God.*







28 *Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.*

29 *And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof.*

30 *And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.*

31 *For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this.*

32 *Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it.*

33 *By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.*

34 *For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.*

35 *And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.*

36 *So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.*

37 *And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.*

## TALKING POINTS

Have you ever been at the point where you feel you've been pushed to your limit and you want your difficulties to just leave you alone? I imagine that's how Hezekiah was feeling. The king of Assyria wanted to destroy Jerusalem, Sennacherib sent his friend Rabshakeh with his trash talk of all the nations they'd conquered, then Sennacherib sent a letter mocking God and trying to shake the faith of Hezekiah. Assyria and Sennacherib were a problem that would not go away.

There will be times in your life when it seems that the struggles you face just won't go away. The longer we struggle, the more tired and frustrated we get, and the more we're tempted to give up. But Hezekiah would have never had the victory he was about to have if he had caved in to his struggles.

God heard Hezekiah's prayer, and He was about to show him that He is always in control.

PSALM 115:3

*But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.*

Sennacherib was one of the most powerful kings in the world, but he was going to find out that he was still no match for the power of God. Look at verse 28 of our passage. God was comforting Hezekiah by

saying He was going to “put my hook in [Sennacherib’s] nose.” He was saying, “I got this. I’m in control.” When it seems that trials in your life are never going to end and you’ve run out of strength, remember these four statements and be comforted that God is in control.

## OUTLINE

### DON’T BECOME PROUD OVER WHAT GOD MADE POSSIBLE

Sennacherib thought he was all powerful and that no one could stop him. The problem with arrogance is that Bible says that people who love to be exalted are guaranteed to be demoted.

PROVERBS 16:5

*The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.*

*Illustration: Chick Bank Robber (see pages 94–95).*

Sennacherib had a problem with boasting, but he was about to get a wake-up call. God was telling Sennacherib, “Everything you think you accomplished? I did it all. All of the chariots and the soldiers you possess? I gave them to you.”

May times we get caught up in accomplishments and start feeling as if we “deserve” and have “earned” good things. You may have worked hard for something, but your intelligence, your talent, your ability to work, and especially your life all come from God. Don’t become proud over what God made possible.

### NOT ONLY IS GOD AWARE, HE IS ACTIVE

God has been relatively quiet up until this point. And Hezekiah had been hoping for a sign, any sign. But then God spoke.

2 KINGS 19:27

*But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.*

God had been listening and He knew exactly what was happening. God doesn’t just know the existence of our problems, He knows the full extent of our problems. He is always working behind the scenes, well aware of what’s going on.

And this is what happened with Sennacherib. In 2 Kings 19:28, we see God had a plan for how to deal with him:

2 KINGS 19:28

*Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.*

The hook and the bridle were tools that were used to tame or control an animal, to let it know who was master. God uses this example here to show He intended to demonstrate that He was in control.

The Bible never tells us that we are supposed to figure out our trials on our own. Over and over it tells us that we need to trust God. Why? Because He already has it all figured out.

**TO BEAR FRUIT UPWARD, TAKE ROOT DOWNWARD**

Now, God uses Isaiah to say something very interesting.

2 KINGS 19:30

*Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.*

He was telling Hezekiah that the kingdom of Judah would one day be built back up and would bear fruit again. But first, the people had to take root downward. They'd have to get rooted and established in in order to grow. The same applies in our lives. If we want spiritual blessings, we have to start with a good foundation.

COLOSSIANS 2:7

*Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.*

2 TIMOTHY 2:15

*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

Sometimes we want the blessings that come with doing right, but we're not willing to do the work. You don't see a strong, fruit bearing tree with no root system—and you won't bear fruit without spending time in the Word of God and in prayer.

The people of Judah needed to rededicate themselves to the Lord and then they would start to see the blessings.

Is your life fruitful? Are you growing and progressing? Check your foundation.

**OUR GRIEF SETS THE STAGE FOR GOD'S GLORY**

*Illustration from book: Dr. Paul Brand and lepers (see pages 102–103)*

There was a reason why Hezekiah had suffered under Assyria for years; God was setting the stage for great delivery of His people.

**God's Passion**



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Examples: Parent's separated, family moving, personal illness or an illness within their family, feeling lonely, unanswered prayer, etc.

Have students write down struggles they are facing, and as a class look up verses on trusting God.

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# LESSON 6

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## THE HEART OF THE DARK HORSE

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2 Kings 19:21–37

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will learn the key to true success behind every dark horse: God and a heart of humility.

**OVERVIEW:** Hezekiah’s fourteenth year of reign was a year filled with trials and difficulties. And when he is finally able to reap from the blessings of God, he misses an opportunity to give Him the glory. In this last chapter, Hezekiah teaches us about the most important characteristic of a dark horse: humility.

### GAME: I’M THE BEST

Divide students into groups.

Explain the rules: You will be announcing a contest category for the group (for example, “The Tallest”). Each group needs to select one person who they think will win the category. There’ll be a category contest and if a person has “the best” within the category, his or her team gets a point.

Each group needs to select one person from their group who they think will win the category.

Reveal the specific action or measurement the selected people have to do to win the contest (example: whoever has the “The Tallest” thumb). The person with the best action or measurement wins a point for their team. The team with the most points wins the game.

#### *Categories:*

- The Tallest....Thumb
- The Fastest....Crab Walker
- The Highest....Jumper
- The Longest.... Staring Contest (They can’t blink!)
- The Fastest....Alphabet Song Singer
- The Smallest....Shoe Size
- The Farthest....Length to Throw a Paper Airplane
- The Largest....Bubble to Blow with Chewing Gum
- The Strongest....Thumb for a Thumb War
- The Fastest....Paper Cup Stacker

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- The Longest....Thrower and Catcher (two people per team)
- The Longest....Hair
- The Fastest....Paper Cup Stacker
- The Best....Coin Spinner
- The Fastest....Word Looker in Dictionary

## ICEBREAKER TRANSITION

Some of you are pretty talented! But does anyone have a real hobby or talent that they would say they are pretty good at? *Allow students to share.* Well God has certainly blessed us, and we'll see in a moment how God blesses and gives grace to Hezekiah when he certainly did not deserve it. In this final lesson, we will learn the most important characteristic of being a dark horse.

## SCRIPTURE

Read the passage aloud.

2 KINGS 19:21–37

21 *This is the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.*

22 *Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel.*

23 *By thy messengers thou hast reproached the LORD, and hast said, With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, and into the forest of his Carmel.*

24 *I have digged and drunk strange waters, and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places.*

25 *Hast thou not heard long ago how I have done it, and of ancient times that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps.*

26 *Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded; they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the house tops, and as corn blasted before it be grown up.*

27 *But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.*

28 *Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.*

29 *And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof.*

30 *And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.*

31 *For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this.*

32 *Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it.*

33 *By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.*

34 *For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.*

35 *And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.*

36 *So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.*

37 *And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.*

## TALKING POINTS

*Illustration from book: 1986 Freighter Collision (pages 107–108).*

We've learned many valuable lessons from the life of Hezekiah on what it means to be a dark horse. It means turning obstacles into opportunities. It means not letting fear eliminate the fight. It means going to God to find strength when challenges arise and trusting that He's working even when things look darkest.

But one of the most important dark horse qualities we'll learn from this study is this: the heart of a dark horse is a heart full of humility, not pride.

Here are some steps we must take if we're going to develop a heart like Hezekiah:

## OUTLINE

### EVALUATE YOUR TIME

Some people pay fortune tellers or psychics who pretend to know the future or who claim lines in your palms can tell them how long you have to live, but we know that only God knows the length of your life and the time of your death because He's the one that appointed it.

HEBREWS 9:27

*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*

JOB 14:5

*Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;*

But let's imagine that someone could tell you when you were going to die. And like Hezekiah, you were very sick and only had a few weeks to live.

How would you respond? You would probably start to realize how precious time is and how much you've been wasting on things that don't matter.

*Use statistics of media usage; Netflix/Hulu (page 112).*

Studies have shown that in the average American lifespan, of seventy-eight years, twenty-five years spent sleeping; nine years are spent watching TV; and in some cities over three months, or about forty-two hours every year, are spent just sitting in traffic. And that's not even the worst of it. A late 2015 study found that teens spend between six and nine hours every day on social media, even checking their social media profiles up to one hundred times a day.

If you knew you were about to die? How much of that time would seem like a waste?

*Use examples of "buzzer beaters" in NBA history; show YouTube clip.*

Life doesn't have a visible game clock and we don't know much time we have left here on earth. Hezekiah knew his time was almost up because God sent him a message through Isaiah saying:

2 KINGS 20:1

*In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.*

He was telling him that he was going to die from sickness and he needed to prepare for his death. This meant he probably needed to get his finances in order to make sure his family was taken care of, training the next king of Judah, and, most importantly, preparing himself to meet God.

Are you prepared to meet God? If you died today, do you know for sure where you would spend eternity? There is a way to know for sure:

ROMANS 10:9-10

*9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

*10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

JOHN 3:16

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*





experienced. He could have responded with a bad attitude, but instead, he accepted the consequences with an attitude of humility.

2 KINGS 20:19

*Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?*

He repented of his pride. And from what the Bible tells us, he lived the rest of his life as a faithful man who gave God the glory for everything He had done. And not too long after this, God gave him a dark horse victory by delivering Judah from Assyria and Sennacherib and blessed the nation greatly.

Remember, whatever good we achieve in our lives is not in our own power, but is due to the greatness of God. The most important truth you should take from this lesson is that the heart of the dark horse is a heart of humility.

What have we learned from the story of Hezekiah?

Well Hezekiah surprised everyone with these victories. He was an unlikely candidate because of his family past, he was young and this nation was small. But he was also faithful, and he gave God the credit for the accomplishments in his life so he was equipped to be used by God. God was going to use him to deliver His people and to declare His power and glory to the surrounding nations.

You probably feel as if you're an unfit candidate for victory. You might come from a difficult home situation, you may not be the most popular or have the coolest friends—but God can still use you in a great way.

Let's read what God says to us in 1 Peter 2:9:

1 PETER 2:9

*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;*

He created us, chose us, set us aside for a specific purpose. That makes us extraordinary. But are you living as if you were created to be extraordinary? Or are you living for yourself?

Just like Hezekiah, he has some amazing plans for you. You may have experienced some trials (and there will probably be more in the future), but remember what we've learned from Hezekiah's life:

- Take every opportunity to overcome your obstacles.
- Don't let fear eliminate your fight.
- Don't let the enemy shake your confidence.
- Get strength from God's Word during times of struggle.
- Trust that God knows exactly what He's doing and that He's working behind the scenes.
- Be humble; give credit for your successes to the One who made it possible.

Remember, we have an awesome God with some awesome plans ahead for you. Don't settle for mediocrity when you could be extraordinary and you'll have amazing dark horse victories in your life. Surprise the world with what God can do through you!

**STUDY QUESTIONS** (TAKEN FROM PARTICIPANTS GUIDE)

1. We've learned quite a few important lessons from the life of Hezekiah. What is one of the most important qualities of a dark horse?

*The heart of the dark horse is a heart of humility.*

2. Why are we encouraged to redeem the time?

*We don't know when our life could end—we need to do all that we can for Christ while we have the time.*

3. What mistake did Hezekiah make after God healed him?

*Instead of giving God the glory for His blessings—he boasted about all of his possessions.*

**APPLICATION AND CONNECTION: REALITY CHECK**

Some of our greatest lessons in humility come through seeing life through the eyes of another person.

Have a class activity where you serve dinner at a local shelter or write and deliver notes to a retirement home. Explain to students that any blessings or accomplishments we have are because of the grace of God.