

Walk and Then Run

2 Samuel 2:18–21

Where is the Lord working in your life today?

Be on alert for spiritual sloth and pride.

You are in David's palace in Hebron. Surrounded by violence and foolishness, David remains steadfast, prioritizing God's glory above his own. We must resist being sucked into the vortex of confusion and continue to seek the Lord in prayer and work within his timing.

Pray that the Lord draws you out of sloth to embrace the kingly mission he has given you. Pray for the grace of freedom and humility for all Exodus Men, just as they are praying for you.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lord and Master of my life, spare me from the spirit of indifference, despair, lust for power, and idle chatter. Instead, bestow on me, your servant, the spirit of integrity, humility, patience, and love. Yes, O Lord and King, let me see my own sins and not judge my brothers and sisters; for you are blessed forever and ever. Amen.

A Reading from the Second Book of Samuel

And the three sons of Zeruiah were there, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. Now Asahel was as swift of foot as a wild gazelle; and Asahel pursued Abner, and as he went he turned neither to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner. Then Abner looked behind him and said, "Is it you, Asahel?" And he answered, "It is I." Abner said to him, "Turn aside to your right hand or to your left, and seize one of the young men, and take his spoil." But Asahel would not turn aside from following him.

Reflection

We have here another contrast between the man who asked the Lord first before he moved and the men who "went out" for their own glory. This time, the one who moves prematurely is a soldier from David's camp, Asahel. Asahel was David's nephew and one of the thirty "mighty men" who assisted David in his struggle against King Saul. Physically, he was "as swift of foot as a wild gazelle." Spiritually, he was hasty, for he challenges the seasoned commander Abner in hopes of ending the rivalry between David and Ish-bosheth before it ever really begins. But it is a case of a youthful, exuberant soldier looking to make a name for himself against a seasoned commander. Experience is on Abner's side, and Asahel falls.

German theologian Gabriel Bunge writes in his study on Evagrius' view of acedia that the devil "not only talks us into a lukewarm minimalism, but also drives us, on occasion, to a destructive maximalism." [3] While we should never be comfortable with our sin and should always be taking action against it, we also need to keep in mind that we cannot root out sin without God's grace. If we run after it prematurely or presumptuously, we might find ourselves defeated like Asahel. Remember, the devil has been at

this for millennia. Remember that he would like nothing more than to have you feel defeated and discouraged so that you give up on the spiritual life. We need to attack sin, not just with haste or zeal, but with prudence, patience, and diligence.

Where are you tempted to move too fast? Where are you indulging impatience with yourself and God? Guarding against such impatience and rashness is crucial for guarding against the exhaustion and frustration that will demoralize your soul and give it a distaste for the spiritual life—both of which are hallmarks of spiritual lethargy. Seek God's mercy today in prayer, not for self-pity, but for prudence.

Now place yourself before God, and converse with him.

#### Week 2 Action Items

Form a spiritual plan for vacation time.

Meditate on how sloth impacts your spiritual life.

Schedule fraternity time.

Mark Reading as Complete