

Devotional Guide

August 10–15, 2026



The Choice to Stay

Speaker: Mike Kleven, Lead Pastor

The message explores how God's loving-kindness (hesed) seeks out the broken and forgotten, restores the undeserving, and seats them as family at the King's table. Through the story of Mephibosheth in 2 Samuel 9, we see a clear Old Testament picture of grace: a lame man living in desolation is brought to the king's table not because of his worthiness but because of the king's covenant kindness. The same King Jesus seeks us in our Lo-Debar, removes our fear, restores what was lost, and gives us a permanent place at His table—limp and all. This truth invites every listener to make the choice to receive the grace already offered.

How to Use This Guide:

Set aside 10-15 minutes daily. Read the Bible, reflect on the thought, answer questions, pray, and take the action step. Commit to this for growth—journal insights and share with a friend for accountability.

Day 1: The Pressure Point Appears

Bible Reading: 2 Samuel 15:17-20

Devotional Thought:

David is fleeing Jerusalem because his own son Absalom has stolen the hearts of Israel and is marching on the city with an army. At the last house, the king pauses. Six hundred Gittites—Philistine warriors from Goliath’s hometown—march past him. David turns to their commander, Ittai, and essentially says: “This is not your fight. You are a foreigner and an exile. Go back. Make the best deal you can with Absalom. May the Lord show you steadfast love.”

Ittai stands at a classic pressure point. An easy exit has just been offered by the very king he came to serve. The path of least resistance is clear. Yet something deeper holds him. The sermon reminds us that moments like this—when what we believe and value collide with real risk—are the places where true allegiance is forged or abandoned.

Reflection Questions:

1. What pressure points in your life right now feel like David’s words to Ittai—“this doesn’t have to be your fight”?
2. How does David’s concern for Ittai actually highlight the cost of staying?
3. Where have you recently felt the quiet pull to “say nothing, let it slide, take the easy path”?
4. What does it mean that Ittai had only “come yesterday” yet was already facing this decision?
5. How does the Big Idea speak into the pressure you face this week?

Prayer Prompt: Lord, when the easy exit appears and the cost of loyalty rises, give me the courage of Ittai. Help me see the pressure points for what they are—invitations to deeper allegiance. Amen.

Action Step: Name one current “easy exit” invitation in writing. Bring it to God in honest prayer today.

Day 2: “As the Lord Lives”

Bible Reading: 2 Samuel 15:21

Devotional Thought:

Ittai’s answer is stunning: “As the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king shall be, whether for death or for life, there also will your servant be.” The key phrase is “As the Lord lives.” This Philistine commander has watched the evidence for decades: David’s victory over Goliath in the name of the living God, the Lord’s guidance on the battlefield, the establishment of David on the throne. Ittai is not merely loyal to a man; he is loyal to the living God who has clearly chosen and sustained this king.

His declaration is a confession of faith. The only wise choice is the Choice to Stay—because the Lord lives, and this king is still the Lord’s servant.

Reflection Questions:

1. Why is the phrase “As the Lord lives” the most important part of Ittai’s answer?
2. What evidence of the living God’s work in David’s life would Ittai have known?
3. How does recognizing that Jesus is the living King change the way you face pressure to leave?
4. In what area of your life do you need to declare, “As the Lord lives... I will stay”?
5. How does this truth shift your view of loyalty from duty to worship?

Prayer Prompt: Living God, thank You that You are not a distant idea but the God who acts. Help me see Jesus as the King You have established. Give me Ittai’s settled resolve. Amen.

Action Step: Write out 2 Samuel 15:21 and place it where you will see it several times today. Pray it each time.

Day 3: The Parallel with Peter

Bible Reading: John 6:66-69

Devotional Thought:

Many disciples found Jesus' teaching hard and "turned back and no longer followed him." Jesus asks the Twelve, "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Peter's answer echoes Ittai: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God."

Both men had seen enough evidence. Both faced a moment when the crowd was peeling away. Both chose the King who alone holds life. The sermon locks this in: When circumstances scream "Flee," the wise remain loyal to King Jesus.

Reflection Questions:

1. What made Jesus' teaching so difficult that many disciples left?
2. How is Peter's question "To whom shall we go?" similar to Ittai's refusal of the easy exit?
3. Where do you feel the pull of the crowd turning back from costly loyalty to Jesus?
4. What "words of eternal life" keep you staying when other voices call you away?
5. How does this parallel strengthen your resolve this week?

Prayer Prompt: Jesus, when many turn back, keep me with the Twelve. You alone have the words of eternal life. I chose to stay. Amen.

Action Step: Read John 6:68-69 aloud twice today. Let the question "To whom shall we go?" settle into your heart.

Day 4: Easy Exits Are Always Dangerous

Bible Reading: Proverbs 14:12; 2 Samuel 15:22

Devotional Thought:

David accepts Ittai's decision: "Go then, pass on." Ittai, his men, and their families commit themselves to the Lord and the Lord's king. The sermon warns that easy exits are almost always available: conforming to culture, family expectations, or the comfort of this world. Yet Proverbs 14:12 stands as a sober marker: "There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end, it leads to death."

The easy path that avoids the pain of loyalty to Jesus is a dead end. Ittai's choice positions him for a role in God's plan; the easy exit would have written him out of the story.

Reflection Questions:

1. What "ways that appear right" are most tempting for Jesus-followers today?
2. How have you seen an easy exit lead to regret or spiritual loss in someone's story?
3. Why does the sermon say easy exits are always dangerous dead ends?
4. What would Ittai have lost if he had taken David's offer to return?
5. Where do you need to reject an easy exit this week?

Prayer Prompt: Father, open my eyes to any path that looks right but leads away from life. Give me courage to stay with Your King even when the cost is high. Amen.

Action Step: Identify one cultural or personal "easy exit" and replace it with a concrete act of loyalty to Jesus today.

Day 5: Public, Costly, and Rewarding

Bible Reading: 2 Samuel 18:1-2

Devotional Thought:

David musters the army and places one-third under the command of Ittai the Gittite. A foreigner, a recent arrival, is trusted with a third of the force. The Choice to Stay is rewarded with trust and an opportunity to serve the living God and His king. Absalom is defeated. David returns. The kingdom advances.

Following Jesus is not a private affair. Staying is public. It is costly. And it is rewarded—not always with immediate comfort, but with deeper participation in the King’s work and the joy of remaining where life is found.

Reflection Questions:

1. What does Ittai’s promotion to commander of one-third of the army reveal about the fruit of loyalty?
2. How is loyalty to Jesus both public and costly in your current season?
3. Where have you seen God entrust greater responsibility to those who stayed when others left?
4. What “reward” of staying with Jesus have you already tasted?
5. How will you make your allegiance more public and less private this week?

Prayer Prompt: King Jesus, I choose the public, costly path of staying with You. Use my loyalty for Your kingdom purposes. Amen.

Action Step: Take one visible step of loyalty to Jesus that costs you something (time, reputation, comfort) today.

Day 6: Locking In Loyalty to King Jesus

Bible Reading: 2 Samuel 15:21; John 6:68-69

Review the week: pressure points, the living Lord, the parallel with Peter, the danger of easy exits, and the public-costly-rewarding nature of staying. The line of kings runs from David to the final King, Jesus. Ittai's wise choice advanced God's kingdom agenda. Peter's choice kept him in the story of eternal life.

The invitation is clear: When circumstances scream "Flee," the wise remain loyal to King Jesus. Jesus is the only choice that leads to life. Lock this in. Stay.

Reflection Questions:

1. What is one key insight you are taking away from this guide?
2. How has your view of "loyalty under pressure" changed over these six days?
3. Where will you apply the Choice to Stay in the coming week?
4. Who is one person you could encourage with this truth?
5. How will you keep the momentum of staying with King Jesus going?

Prayer Prompt: Loving Father, thank You for the example of Ittai and Peter. Keep me connected to King Jesus every day. Use my loyalty to bring Heaven's life into this world. Amen.

Action Step: Memorize 2 Samuel 15:21 this week. Share one takeaway with a friend or family member today. Review this guide as needed for ongoing strength.



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