



GOD'S ROUTE 66, PART 5: 3 KINGS

Most people spend a lot of time managing appearances. We want others to think we're successful, spiritual, strong, and put together. But God is far less concerned with our image than He is with our heart. The stories of Saul, David, and Solomon reveal that the greatest victories and failures in life are not determined by talent, appearance, intelligence, or success. They are determined by the condition of the heart. A proud heart can lose a kingdom. A devoted heart can change a nation. A divided heart can destroy a legacy. Before we evaluate anyone else, this study invites us to ask a much more important question: How is my heart?

BIG IDEA: God doesn't care what people see on the outside. He cares what's happening in your heart.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When you first meet someone, what are the kinds of things people usually notice first? What are the things that take longer to discover?
2. With your Bible or Bible App, [read 1 Samuel 8:4-5](#).

⁴ Finally, all the elders of Israel met at Ramah to discuss the matter with Samuel. ⁵ "Give us a king to judge us like all the other nations." [1 Samuel 8:4-5 \(NLT\)](#)

3. Israel wanted to be like all the other nations. Why is it so easy to compare ourselves to others, and want what others have?
4. What pressures do Christians face today to fit in with culture? Can you think of a time when wanting to be accepted led you toward a poor decision?
5. With your Bible or Bible App, [read 1 Samuel 9:1-2](#).

¹ There was a wealthy, influential man named Kish from the tribe of Benjamin. ² His son Saul was the most handsome man in Israel—head and shoulders taller than anyone else in the land.

[1 Samuel 9:1-2 \(NLT\)](#)

6. Saul looked like a king. He was tall, impressive, and attractive. Why are people often drawn to outward appearances? What are some ways we evaluate people by the wrong standards?
7. Have you ever discovered that someone wasn't who they appeared to be?
8. With your Bible or Bible App, [read 1 Samuel 16:6-13](#).

⁶ When Jesse's sons arrived, Samuel took one look at Eliab and thought, "Surely this is the LORD's anointed!" ⁷ But the Lord said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." ¹⁰ All seven of Jesse's sons were presented to Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these." ¹¹ Then Samuel asked, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse replied. "But he's out in the fields watching the sheep and goats." ¹² So Jesse sent for him. He was dark and handsome, with beautiful eyes. And the LORD said, "This is the one; anoint him." ¹³ So as David stood there among his brothers, Samuel took the flask of olive oil he had brought and anointed David with the oil. And the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David from that day on. Then Samuel returned to Ramah. [1 Samuel 16:6-7, 10-13 \(NLT\)](#)

9. God chose David while everyone else overlooked him. What stands out to you about God's choice of David?
10. Why do you think God values the heart more than outward appearance? How does this passage encourage people who feel overlooked or underestimated?

11. *God doesn't care what people see on the outside. He cares what's happening in your heart.* What does a healthy heart toward God look like? What are some warning signs that a person's heart is drifting away from God?
12. Why do heart issues often go unnoticed until much later?
13. *With your Bible or Bible App, [read 1 Kings 11:1-6](#).*

¹ Now King Solomon loved many foreign women. Besides Pharaoh's daughter, he married women from Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon, and from among the Hittites. ² The LORD had clearly instructed the people of Israel, "You must not marry them, because they will turn your hearts to their gods." Yet Solomon insisted on loving them anyway. ³ He had 700 wives of royal birth and 300 concubines. And in fact, they did turn his heart away from the LORD. ⁴ In Solomon's old age, they turned his heart to worship other gods instead of being completely faithful to the LORD his God, as his father, David, had been. Solomon did what was evil in the LORD's sight; he refused to follow the LORD completely, as his father, David, had done. [1 Kings 11:1-6 \(NLT\)](#)

14. Solomon loved God, but he also loved other things. What does it mean to have a divided heart?
15. What are some modern-day rivals that compete for our devotion to God?
16. Why are divided hearts often harder to recognize than rebellious hearts?
17. *A divided heart always creates a divided life.* Saul had no heart for God and lost a kingdom. David had a whole heart for God and changed a nation. Solomon had a divided heart and divided a kingdom.

Take a moment to honestly evaluate your own heart.

Is there an area where pride is creeping in like Saul?

Is there an area where God is calling you to deeper devotion like David?

Is there something competing for first place in your heart like Solomon?

18. What is one step you can take this week to move closer to wholehearted devotion to God?

MOVING FORWARD

This week, spend time asking God to examine your heart. Don't focus on your image, your accomplishments, or what others think about you. Ask Him to reveal any areas of pride, compromise, or divided loyalty. Remember: God can do extraordinary things through an ordinary person whose heart fully belongs to Him.

WEEKLY READING

This week, spend some time reading and reflecting on 1 Samuel 16-17, 2 Samuel 11-12, Psalm 51, 1 Kings 11.