

A Heart for God
Study 1 – Walking with God - Jehoshaphat
2 Chronicles 17

Message Mate

- The more influence you have the more your words and actions are amplified. Your words and actions flow from the thoughts of your mind which are influenced by the beliefs of your heart. King Jehoshaphat, a king of Judah, had a heart devoted to the Lord (2 Chron 17:6). He followed the ways of his great, great, great grandfather, King David, who was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:14).
- King Jehoshaphat led from faith as he sought to know God and follow God's ways, in contrast to the people of Israel who worshipped the idols Baal and Asherah. Jehoshaphat got rid of the Baals, high places and Asherah poles. What does it look like for you to have a heart for God, to devote your heart to God? What do you need to get rid of (places, thought patterns, emotional responses) so that you won't keep succumbing to temptations?
- King Jehoshaphat was in a position of influence, so his words and actions affected the whole nation. He used his position to release the Kingdom of God throughout Judah by leading others to faith. He removed the Baals, high places and Asherah poles, yet removal creates a vacuum unless it is filled with something better. King Jehoshaphat commissioned five officials, eight Levites and two priests to travel throughout the land to teach people the Law of God and how to worship God. If you are willing to remove the causes of temptations and the idols in your life, what will you replace them with? Will you replace them with a willingness to know and worship God. Are you willing to allow a heart change so that your heart is devoted to the ways of God?
- The Books of 1 and 2 Chronicles focusses on what to learn from the past to have hope for a better future. 2 Chronicles 17-21 provide the story of King Jehoshaphat and includes a focus on fear of God. It seems that Jehoshaphat was like King David who had a fear of the Lord and wrote various Psalms about the fear of the Lord (e.g. Ps 34). Jehoshaphat may have also followed the requirements of Kings outlined in Deuteronomy 17:18,19 commanding kings to learn to fear the Lord.
- The fear of the Lord fell on the kingdoms surrounding Judah causing them to seek peace with Jehoshaphat, bringing his gifts and tribute that allowed him to build the resources of the kingdom, build forts and store cities and establish a large army. The fear of the Lord coming from Jehoshaphat's life had a huge flow on effect for the whole nation.
- The life of Jehoshaphat from 2 Chronicles 17 tells us that as we devote our hearts to the Lord, it leads to decisions to follow the ways of God. It means getting rid of evil and replacing it with God's Word and ways. It means sharing God's Word with those we lead so that their lives are blessed through our leadership and in some cases the presence of God and fear of God can positively impact others around you. Are you willing to pray for the fear of the Lord in your life, your church and your community?

Some Questions to Consider

1. "The more influence you have the more your words and actions are amplified." Who is someone in your life whose words or actions have had an "amplified" effect on you, for better or worse?
2. Jehoshaphat led from faith with a heart for God by following God's commands. What does it look like to you to have a heart for God and devote yourself to Him?
3. Jehoshaphat got rid of the Baals, high places and Asherah poles. Are there things you need to get rid of in your life so that you are less likely to keep succumbing to temptation? What gods or places need to be removed from your life so that you will walk with God more closely?
4. If you remove one area of sin but don't replace it with something else godly, it can create a vacuum that will fill with more of the same or something worse. If you were to remove a persistent temptation, negative thought pattern or "idol" from your life, what specific godly habit would you need to replace it with?
5. What does this passage teach us about the "fear of the Lord" and how did God use that fear to protect and prosper the nation of Judah?
6. Knowing that our influence and faith can positively impact those around us, how can we pray to experience a "heart change" and a deeper fear of the Lord in your sphere of influence?

Pray –

Pray with thanks for the example of Jehoshaphat as a godly leader.

Pray are led by your response to question 6. If you are willing, pray for the fear of the Lord in your life, our church and community.

If you are interested in knowing more about the Invisible Gorilla Experiment, a short summary is provided on YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UtKt8YF7dgQ>