

BELONG

Starter Questions: What's one app, game, hobby, or activity that can easily make you lose track of time? Ask your students if they would like to share their highs and lows from the week.

Become Challenge Check-In: Ask students how they allowed God to use them in their circle of impact this week. Celebrate any wins. Did they make their trust in God visible to the people around them?

BELIEVE

Scripture: 1 Kings 11:4-13; Proverbs 4:20-27

Main Idea: God wants our whole heart.

Focus Question: Does God have my whole heart?

Context:

Solomon was the son of David and the king of Israel. When he became king, he asked God for wisdom so he could lead God's people well, and God graciously gave it to him. Under Solomon's leadership, Israel experienced peace and prosperity, and he built the temple in Jerusalem. Solomon also wrote many of the Proverbs, which teach God's wisdom for everyday life.

Although Solomon was wise, he did not always obey God. God had warned Israel's kings not to marry women who worshiped false gods because they would turn their hearts away from Him (Deuteronomy 17:17). Over time, Solomon ignored God's command and married many foreign women who did not worship the Lord. Today's passage reveals where those choices eventually led.

Summary:

As Solomon grew older, his heart gradually turned away from the Lord. Instead of remaining fully devoted to God, he allowed other loves and influences to lead him into idolatry. Solomon, the king who once wrote, "Guard your heart," failed to guard his own. His life reminds us that wisdom and outward success are not enough to keep us close to God if our hearts begin to drift. God desires more than outward obedience alone.

Read 1 Kings 11:4-6

- As you read these verses, what word or phrase does the author repeat? Why do you think it's repeated? (*The word **heart** appears three times in verse 4. Repeated words often point us to the main idea of a passage. The author wants us to see that Solomon's greatest problem wasn't simply his actions. His heart was no longer fully devoted to the Lord.*)
- According to these verses, what happened to Solomon's heart? What does it mean that his heart was "not fully devoted" to the Lord? (*Solomon's heart gradually turned away from God. He didn't completely reject the Lord, but he no longer loved and obeyed Him above everything else.*)

Read 1 Kings 11:7-13

- How does the author organize these verses? What comes before Solomon's actions? (*Before describing Solomon's actions, the author tells us that Solomon's heart had already turned away from the Lord. By arranging the story this way, the author shows that Solomon's actions were the result of what had already happened in his heart.*)

- What do you learn about God from His response to Solomon? *(God takes sin seriously because He is holy, yet He also remained faithful to His covenant with David. Even in judgment, God showed mercy by delaying the consequences and preserving one tribe. God's character never changes, even when His people are unfaithful.)*
- What does Solomon's story teach us about ourselves? *(Wisdom, success, and even years of following God don't guarantee that we'll remain faithful. We all need to guard our hearts because every one of us is capable of drifting when we love other things more than God.)*

Read Proverbs 4:20–27

- What stands out to you about the fact that Solomon wrote Proverbs 4 before the events of 1 Kings 11? *(Solomon understood the importance of guarding his heart because he taught others to do it. Yet knowing God's wisdom wasn't enough if he didn't live by it. His life reminds us that knowing God's wisdom isn't enough by itself. God wants our whole hearts.)*
- Proverbs 4:23 says, "Guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." Based on everything we've read today, what do you think it means to guard your heart? *(Guarding your heart means paying attention to what is shaping your thoughts, desires, and love for God. We all become more like what we continually treasure. God calls us to protect our hearts from anything that would pull us away from Him.)*

Read Matthew 22:34–38

- How does Jesus' teaching help us better understand what God wanted from Solomon all along? *(Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind. God has always desired wholehearted devotion, not just outward obedience or knowledge. Jesus perfectly loved the Father, and through Him we can know God and grow in wholehearted love for Him.)*

Final Reflection

- What do you enjoy most about knowing God? If that's difficult to answer, what might God be inviting you to grow in? *(Students may mention God's love, answered prayer, worship, serving others, learning from Scripture, or simply spending time with Him. Others may struggle to answer, and that's okay. Emphasize that this question isn't about feeling guilty or measuring their emotions. It's an invitation to honestly consider what captures their hearts. Like any healthy relationship, our love for God grows as we spend time with Him. Invite students to ask God to help them know Him more deeply and to shape their hearts so that their greatest joy is found in Him.)*

BECOME

Circle of Impact Challenge:

People are more likely to see that God is worth knowing when they see someone who genuinely loves Him. This week, pray for one person in your Circle of Impact by name and ask God to give you an opportunity to share what He's been teaching you or invite them to church. Help someone take one step closer to knowing God personally.