



Leader tip: The “You Choose” game on DYM is a fun way to introduce the series on 1-2 Kings: <https://www.downloadyouthministry.com/p/you-choose/games/icebreakers-6620.html>

Leader tip: The Bible Project has put together a great overview video of 1-2 Kings: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bVFW3wbi9pk>

[Slide 1] What is the hardest choice you have ever made? [Leader tip: Don't tell my stories! Tell about a decision you made that was difficult.] I remember really freaking out over choosing a college. At the time, I was attending a Bible School in England, so it was too impractical to travel to visit different campuses. And on top of that – and this is going to make me sound really old – the internet wasn't even going to be a part of my life for another couple years, so I couldn't go online to look, either. All I could rely on was the flyers they sent me in the mail. It really scared me to make such a big decision on what felt like so little information. In the end, I had an amazing time at Gordon College. But you know what? I know people that have gone to the other schools I considered, and they had amazing times, too. I may have worried more than I needed to!

[Leader tip: Next, tell about a decision you made that had bigger ramifications than you anticipated.]

Have you ever made a small decision that had far bigger ramifications than you anticipated? Years ago, when I was living in Maine, I ran out to the store. This was Maine, which meant it was half an hour away. And while I was out, an ice storm hit. I tried driving back home as carefully as possible, but I lost control of my car on a small down slope and ended up rear ending another car. It was one of the most powerless moments in my life. I could not stop my car no matter what I tried. I thought I was just running out to a store for an errand and all these years later, I'm still afraid to drive when it's snowing!

What's the deal with all these choices? We are kicking off the next four weeks in the books of 1-2 Kings today which is just a fascinating pair of books. Basically, it's a history of the kings of Israel and Judah from King

David until the Babylonians conquered them in 586 BC.¹ I love title image for our series because I think it represents the choices found in Kings perfectly. If you were to read through the books from start to end, you would see something repeated about each king: they either did good in the Lord's sight ... or they did evil in the Lord's sight. There are many kings recorded in here, but each one is summed up in this simple assessment. Their lives, impact, and legacy boiled down to one choice: how they would be judged in the Lord's sight?

[Slide 2] Let me set the stage a little bit before we look at one of the kings²:

- It was written almost 2600 years ago. Yes, it is wildly old.
- It was originally one book simply called "Kings." Around 400 AD / a little over 1600 years ago, it was divided into two books.
- We have no idea who wrote it! Which is kind of a weird thought, but that doesn't mean that God can't use it to teach us something.
- The first couple chapters open with King David's final days, during which he appointed the son he had with Bathsheba, Solomon, as his successor.

Now, this wasn't drama free. In fact, David hadn't been the best father, and there was a lot of conflict and murder going on in the family. It took several years and some executions for Solomon to lock in his hold on the throne, which brings us to a moment in his life when he made a crucial decision.

[Slide 3] *1 Kings 3:5-14 (NLT) ⁵ That night the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream, and God said, "What do you want? Ask, and I will give it to you!" ⁶ Solomon replied, "You showed great and faithful love to your servant my father, David, because he was honest and true and faithful to you. And you have continued to show this great and faithful love to him today by giving him a son to sit on his throne.*

Solomon pointed out the "great and faithful love" God had shown to David; it was covenant language³, a reminder of the promise, that God had made with David. David had followed through with his side of the covenant by

¹ NIV Archaeological Study Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), Kindle location 28865.

² Ibid.

³ August H. Konkel, *1 & 2 Kings (The NIV Application Commentary)* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 80.

following God, and so God had given him an heir to the throne, Solomon, something the king before David (Saul) had not been given.

[Slide 4] *⁷“Now, O Lord my God, you have made me king instead of my father, David, but I am like a little child who doesn’t know his way around. ⁸And here I am in the midst of your own chosen people, a nation so great and numerous they cannot be counted! ⁹Give me an understanding heart so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong. For who by himself is able to govern this great people of yours?”*

This is incredible. Solomon had already been king for several years. It is so easy for that kind of power to go to someone’s head and the sad thing is, most of the kings recorded in Kings were selfish, power-hungry men that cared nothing for God’s people. But not Solomon. Solomon understood that a king’s role was meant to be a servant to God who cared for God’s people, and he had the humility to recognize that he couldn’t do it on his own.

This phrase, “give me an understanding heart,” which is translated from ancient Hebrew, could be written, “give me an instinct for the truth,” or “give me the ability to reason/understand.”⁴ He was asking for wisdom; not power, not wealth, not even knowledge. He was asking for wisdom so that he could lead well.

[Slide 5] *¹⁰ The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for wisdom. ¹¹ So God replied, “Because you have asked for wisdom in governing my people with justice and have not asked for a long life or wealth or the death of your enemies— ¹² I will give you what you asked for! I will give you a wise and understanding heart such as no one else has had or ever will have!*

We’re going to talk about this some more in a minute, but here’s the thing: God loves it when we ask for wisdom. He wants us to become more and more like Him, able to listen and evaluate things the way He would, not like imperfect human beings would.

[Slide 6] *¹³ And I will also give you what you did not ask for—riches and fame! No other king in all the world will be compared to you for the rest of*

⁴ Richard D. Nelson, *First and Second Kings: Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 32.



- What stands out to you about Ahab?
- Ahab had prophets like Elijah trying to point him in the right direction; why do you think he went so wrong?
- Why were his father and his wife such powerful influences in his life?
- Has there been a time where you have been influenced for good or bad by your friends?
- Read 2 Corinthians 6:14-16; why is choosing friends wisely so important to God?
- What do you think of the four questions to ask yourself about your friends? Do you have a friend that is a good influence for God? How so?
- Read Romans 12:2; why is it so important to be a godly friend? In what ways can you grow?
- What is one thing you can do this week to choose good friends and/or be a good friend?



Week Three | Ahab the Evil

1 Kings 16:30,33b (NLT)

³⁰ But Ahab son of Omri did what was evil in the Lord's sight, even more than any of the kings before him. ^{33b} He did more to provoke the anger of the Lord, the God of Israel, than any of the other kings of Israel before him.

2 Corinthians 6:14-16a (NIV)

¹⁴ Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? ¹⁵ What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God.

Romans 12:2 (NLT)

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

- **CHOOSE FRIENDS** _____
 - Do they love God?
 - Do they share my desire for the future?
 - Do they challenge me to be more like Christ?
 - Does their advice line up with Scripture more often than not?
- **CHOOSE TO BE A** _____



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