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# David and Bathsheba

*Scripture: 2 Samuel 11:1-12:25*

**Theme: Sin has devastating consequences, but God's grace is greater**

*4th-6th Grade (Ages 9-11)*

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Free curriculum for small and rural churches

## Lesson Overview

Lesson Overview: The Kingdom Divided , When We Turn Away (1 Kings 11:1, 13, 12:1, 24) Introduction (Engage): Start by asking: "What's one thing you've done lately that you wished you could take back?" Hold up a simple example (like eating too much candy or forgetting to share). Explain that even heroes like Solomon sometimes make choices that lead to trouble, but God always loves us enough to call us back! Lesson Breakdown: 1. King Solomon's Golden Days... and Downfall Solomon was known for wisdom and faith, but after he married too many foreign wives, he began worshiping their gods (1 Kings 11:1, 3). This choice wasn't just disobedient, it split God's kingdom into two: Judah (where God's people lived) and Israel (the northern tribes). Why does this matter? Because God's love isn't conditional on our perfection. He's patient, but when we chase idols (like pride, distractions, or even "good enough" habits), we lose connection with Him. Deeper question: "What's one 'foreign god' you're tempted to worship this week, money, fame, or even comfort?" 2. The Kingdom Splits... and God's Promise When Solomon's sons, Rehoboam, took over, he made unfair decisions (1 Kings 12:4, 6), sparking rebellion. Yet God's Word tells us He always keeps His promises! In His kindness, He let Israel go, but not to destroy them. Instead, He waited to restore them. Personal application: God doesn't give up on you, even when you wander. Like Solomon, you may have messed up, but His love is bigger than your mistakes. 3. Brokenness and a Chance to Turn The lesson ends with a reminder: "The Lord had said, 'If you turn away from me, you will be torn to pieces... but if you return to me, I'll restore you'" (1 Kings 11:14, paraphrased). This is good news! God doesn't want brokenness, He wants us to repent (turn back) and find healing. Challenge: Ask: "Where in my life could I turn back to God today?" (Example: A grudge, a habit that hurts others, or just choosing Him over convenience.) 4. Our Volunteers' Call to Heart For teachers: Share that this story shows God's mercy and His holiness. We can't force others to return, but we can model surrender (e.g., prayer, kindness). End with a prayer: "Lord, help us to choose You today, even when it's hard." Closing Activity: Write "1 Thing I'm Turning Back to God Today" on slips of paper. Let kids fold and put them in a "Repentance Jar" to read later! Encouragement for Teachers: Remember, kids this age need hope, not guilt. Focus on God's faithfulness, not their mistakes. Use Solomon's story as a mirror: "See how much He loves us, even when we wander?"

## Bible Story

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Title: "A King's Broken Heart and God's Warning"

Long ago, in the land of Israel, there was a king named Solomon. He was known for his wisdom, and God had given him many beautiful gifts, including the ability to make wise decisions. But one day, Solomon made a mistake. While he was at home with his many wives, one woman named Chereh (who was not even a real Israelite) came to him and asked, "Give me my husband!" Solomon, who was kind but also tired and distracted by all the women, gave her her husband, even though he knew this was wrong. The Bible says, "After this, Solomon loved many foreign women... who caused his heart to turn away from the Lord." (1 Kings 11:1-3) These foreign wives taught him to worship other gods, and soon, he started following them instead of trusting God fully.

One time, Solomon called all the elders of Israel together to ask them what they wanted. The people wanted to be like the other nations, with their own kings and leaders. They even suggested making two kings, one for the north (the tribe of Israel) and one for the south (Judah). Solomon, who had grown proud and less loyal to God, agreed to their idea. He took away the gold and silver from the Temple and gave it to himself and his foreign wives. But God, who sees all our choices, spoke to Solomon in a dream and said, "I will tear the kingdom from you and give it to someone else, because you have not followed me with all your heart." (1 Kings 11:12) Even though Solomon tried to explain that he still loved God, God's warning still stood.

Soon, Solomon's son, Rehoboam, became king. He was young and not as wise as his father. The people of Israel complained that their king was too hard on them, and Rehoboam said, "If we're tired of carrying these heavy burdens, I'll make it even harder!" (1 Kings 12:4) The northern tribes (10 tribes) refused to obey him and picked a different leader, Jeroboam, to rule them. This split the kingdom into two, Judah in the south and Israel in the north, just as God had warned. The people of Israel worshipped other gods, and things got worse and worse.

Deeper Questions for Discussion: 1. What happens when we make choices that aren't God's way, even if it feels good at first? 2. How did Solomon's mistake affect Israel? Why was it so serious? 3. What can we learn from this story about how God sees our choices?

Personal Application: Sometimes we might feel tempted to follow our own way, like Solomon did with his wives, or think we know better than God. But God's Word reminds us that He always sees our hearts and loves us best when we turn to Him. Just like Solomon's kingdom was divided because he wandered away, our relationship with God can be weakened if we turn our backs on Him. What's one way we can choose to stay close to God this week?

Why This Story Matters: This is a reminder that God doesn't just punish us for mistakes, He cares about our hearts. Solomon's choices didn't destroy him completely, but they showed how serious disobedience is. The good news is that even when we make mistakes, God is faithful to forgive and restore if we repent (turn back to Him). Let's choose today to listen to God's voice and follow Him fully!

## Key Verse

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### 2 Samuel 12:13

God's Love and Our Choices The Bible tells us about a king named Solomon who was very wise and loved learning. One day, though, his heart started to wander, not just in big ways, but in little ways that made him turn away from God's love. Even though God had shown him great kindness, Solomon's choices began to change, and that made God sad. What Happened Next? God wasn't angry because Solomon was bad or disobedient, it was because Solomon chose to love other things more than he loved God. He let his heart be drawn toward foreign gods, family, and even power, instead of always trusting God to guide him. This wasn't about big sins like cheating or hurting others, but about small choices that made his heart harder to love God fully. Why Does This Matter? God's love is like a big, warm hug, it's always there, but sometimes we forget to hold on to it. Solomon's story shows us that even when we get close to God, our hearts can wander if we don't remember to stay connected. Just like a plant needs water to grow, our hearts need reminders to stay close to God's love. Personal

Questions to Think About - Have you ever felt like you turned away from God for a little while? What made you choose something else? - How can you remind yourself to stay close to God, even on days when you feel distracted? - What's one small way you can thank God for His love today? God's Invitation to Us This verse reminds us that God doesn't get angry because of our mistakes, He gets sad because He cares. Like Solomon, we might make choices that make us drift, but God always wants to bring us back. Can you ask Him today to help you stay close, just like He wants to be close to you?

## Activities

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### Activity 1:

1. Introduce the Story (2 min):
2. Read 1 Kings 11:1, 13 (or a simplified version for ages 9, 11) and explain that Solomon's heart wandered, leading to God's warning. Ask: "How did Solomon's choices affect his kingdom?"
3. Draw Your Kingdom (5 min):
4. Each student folds a sheet of construction paper in half (like a book) to represent the kingdom. On the left page, draw how the kingdom was united under God's rule (e.g., golden arches, justice symbols). On the right, illustrate Solomon's division (e.g., split into two countries, with idolatry represented by statues or broken lines).
5. Discuss Consequences (3 min):
6. Ask: "What did God say would happen if Solomon turned away?" (Write 1 Kings 11:10, 13 on the board.) Pair with prompts like:
7. "If you disobey God for 10 minutes, how might it affect your life later?"
8. "How can you 'turn back' today?" (Encourage prayer, repentance, or seeking God's help.)
9. Share & Reflect (2 min):
10. Have students share one thing they learned about consequences or a personal choice they're making today to stay close to God.

### Activity 2:

1. Divide & Assign Roles (3 min):
2. Split students into groups of 3, 4. Assign roles (e.g., Solomon, Queen Sheba, Rehoboam, a prophet). Read 1 Kings 12:1, 24 aloud, pausing for dramatic moments.
3. Act It Out (5 min):
4. Groups perform a short scene (e.g., Solomon arguing with Rehoboam, God's prophet warning Israel). Use props like crowns (for kings) or a "broken chain" (for division).
5. Tip: Guide them to focus on actions, not perfection.
6. Write God's Promises (4 min):
7. After acting, discuss: "What did God say would happen if the kingdom divided?" (Reference 1 Kings 12:7, 10). Write down key promises (e.g., "Even when we stray, God's love never fails!") on index cards.
8. Each student picks one promise to take home and pray about.
9. Personal Application (3 min):
10. Ask: "How can we be like the prophet who reminded Rehoboam to listen to God's people?" (1 Kings 12:7, 8). Encourage them to share one way they'll "listen" to God this week.
11. Notes:
12. For

## Discussion Questions

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- Here are four open-ended discussion questions based on The Kingdom Divided (1 Kings 11:1, 13, 12:1, 24) that encourage deep reflection, connection to the story, and personal growth for upper elementary students:
- 1. What Did Solomon's Many Wives Teach Us About Choosing God First?
- (Connecting the story to temptation and priorities)
- King Solomon loved many wives, including foreign women who brought him gods to worship alongside Yahweh. The story shows how easy it is to turn away from God when we chase after things like power, possessions, or relationships that don't align with His heart. How do you think Solomon's choices affected the kingdom? Do you see ways in your own life where you might be tempted to put something else (like distractions, habits, or even people) before God? What would it look like to "remain faithful" like Solomon tried to be, even when it was hard?
- 2. Why Did Rehoboam and Jeroboam Split the Kingdom? What Lessons Can We Learn About Leadership and Unity?
- (Exploring conflict, compromise, and following God's will)
- After Solomon died, his son Rehoboam ruled over Judah, while his son Jeroboam ruled over Israel. Instead of listening to Solomon's advisors (who suggested kindness), Rehoboam made his own harsh decisions, leading to rebellion. Jeroboam then made his own rules to keep his people loyal. The story shows how leaders' choices can either bring people together or tear them apart. Have you ever seen (or been part of) a group, like a class, sports team, or family, where people felt united or divided? How can you help build unity instead of causing division?
- 3. How Did God Use These "Bad" Kings to Teach His People?
- (Reflecting on God's purposes in history and our own lives)
- Even though Solomon and his descendants didn't follow God perfectly, He didn't abandon them. Instead, He used their struggles as lessons for His people. Sometimes, when we make mistakes, God doesn't punish us completely, He gives us a chance to learn and grow. Have you ever done something wrong that caused problems? How did God help you (or others) understand what went wrong? What would it look like to trust Him to use even your "failures" for good?
- 4. What Would You Do If You Were a Leader Like Rehoboam? How Could You Make Fairer Choices?
- (Engaging with decision-making and responsibility)
- Rehoboam was young and didn't know how to rule well, so he made choices that hurt his people. If you were in his position, what would you do differently? How could you listen to others' needs before making decisions? Sometimes, when we feel pressure (like from friends, teachers, or even God), we make quick choices without thinking. What's one way you could practice being more thoughtful and kind in your decisions this week?
- Why These Questions Work:
- Personal Connection: Each question invites students to relate the story to their own lives, habits, or dilemmas.
- Encourages Prayer/Reflection: Students can discuss with a partner, write in a journal, or pray about their answers.
- Balances Accountability & Grace: While naming mistakes (Solomon's, Rehoboam's), the focus is on growth, not blame.
- Would you like any of these adapted for small-group discussions or paired with a creative activity (like drawing Solomon's temptations)?

## Prayer Focus

*"Heavenly Father, You love us so much that You made us part of Your family, not just as leaders, but as children who can choose between good and bad choices. Sometimes, like King Solomon, we might turn our hearts away from You to chase things that feel fun or exciting, like playing video games, watching too many screens, or being too busy to pray. When we do that, we can feel a little lost or like we've left our best friend behind. But You always*

*wait for us to come back, and You promise to forgive us and help us grow. You also gave us rules, not because You didn't trust us, but because You want us to feel safe and know what's right. When we ignore those rules, like Solomon did with his many wives, it can mess with our relationships, make us feel guilty, or even make others not trust us. Have you ever turned away from God for a little while? What made you choose to do that? How did it make you feel when you realized you'd lost connection with Him? King Solomon's kingdom split because he chose to listen to the wrong people instead of God. What happens when we do the same? Do we turn to friends, social media, or even our own desires when we should be asking God first? How can we remind ourselves every day to trust Him, even when things feel hard? Father, help us to ask You every morning, 'What do You want me to do today?' and 'How can I stay close to You?' Sometimes we might make mistakes, but You want us to ask for forgiveness and keep trying. Teach us to be like little children who are always reaching out to You, not running away. Help us to be leaders, not just in our families, but in our hearts, and to remind others that no matter what happens, You're always there waiting for us to turn back. Help us to grow in faith, like the people of Israel did when they split in two. Let us learn that when we choose God, even in small ways, His kingdom grows in us. Amen." For deeper reflection after prayer: - "If you could ask God one question today about your heart, what would it be?" - "When was the last time you felt close to God, and when did you feel a little far away? How can you bridge that gap?" - "What's one 'rule' from God you're trying to follow this week?"*

### >> Missions Spotlight

The churches in Western Europe, once the heartland of Christianity, have largely turned away from God. Missionaries from the Global South are now returning to Europe to re-share the Gospel, proving that God never gives up on a people.

### -> To the Cross

Solomon's heart turned away from God, and the kingdom was divided. Humanity's heart turns away from God again and again. But God never gave up on His people. He sent Jesus to reunite what sin had divided, to bring us back to God forever.