

The Tale of Three Kings 1 Samuel 16:7

People look at waist sizes, wheels and wallets; God looks for a willing heart

"But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees...'" 1 Samuel 16:7a

The people of Israel saw the outward successes of the three kings

"...for man looks at the outward appearance." 1 Samuel 16:7b

- **Victorious Military and Prosperity**
 - Saul's Victories (1 Samuel 14:47-48)
 - David's Triumphs (2 Samuel 8)
 - Solomon's Power, Wealth and Wisdom (1 Kings 4)
- **Expanded Territory**
From the Red Sea in Egypt to the Euphrates River in Syria
- **United Kingdom - 12 Tribes come together** (2 Samuel 5:1-5)

God saw the spiritual heart conditions of the three kings

"...but the Lord looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7c

- **Each of the three kings were undone by sinful choices**
 - Saul: Lack of Faith (1 Samuel 13:8-14)
 - David: Lust and Murder (2 Samuel 11)
 - Solomon: Idolatry (1 Kings 11)
- **Each of the three kings' attempts at repentance revealed their heart condition**
 - No heart - King Saul (1 Samuel 15)
 - Half Heart - King Solomon (1 Kings 11:4)
 - Full Heart - King David (Psalm 51)

Read King Saul's full story: 1 Samuel 9 - 31, 1 Chronicles 8 - 10

Read King David's full story: 1 Samuel 16 through 2 Samuel, 1 Kings 2, 1 Chronicles 11 - 29, book of Psalms

Read King Solomon's full story: 1 Kings 1 - 11, 1 Chron. 23 through 2 Chron. 9, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon

In 2017, what will you focus on? Outward Appearance or Spiritual Heart Growth?

- **How can we determine our spiritual heart condition?**
 - Examine our words (Matthew 12:34 and 15:18-19)
 - Ask God to search, test and reveal our hearts (Psalm 139:23-24)

"If our heart is covered with layers of fear, bitterness, unforgiveness, jealousy or even indifference, the heart will be uglier than any imaginable disfigurement of our outward appearance." - Jan Cline, Author

NEXT STEPS

- **Place your faith in Christ:** Get a new heart by trusting in Jesus as Savior and turning from your sins to follow Him as Lord.
- **Re-commit your heart to Christ:** Create in me a clean heart O God – Psalm 51
- **Be intentional about developing your spiritual heart:**
 - **Take part in these Calvary ministries to help you grow as a follower of Jesus:** LifeGroup, Discipleship/Mentoring, Alpha Course, Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Equipping Class, Spiritual Direction, Prayer, and Care Ministries. For more about these ministries, see details in Today's Current or visit calvarylife.org/grow
 - **Start a Bible reading plan to intentionally read the Bible in 2017.** Recommendations: YouVersion Bible: bible.com; 5 Day Reading Plan at bibleclassmaterial.com, Ligonier Bible Reading Plan: ligonier.org/blog/bible-reading-plans
 - **Receive daily or weekly text message prayer prompters to develop a heart of prayer:** Sign up at echoprayer.com
 - **Come worship through the Psalms:** Save the date for the *Sons of Korah* concert on February 26 at 6pm in the Chapel. Discover the musical journey through the Psalms by this acoustic band from Australia at sonsofkorah.com
 - **Practice a new spiritual discipline in 2017:**

Below are some main disciplines of abstinence and engagement that have been helpful to Christ-followers over the centuries. (by Bill Gaultiere, soulshepherding.org, adapted from writings by Dallas Williard and Richard Foster.)

Solitude - Refraining from interacting with other people in order to be alone with God and be found by Him. Solitude is completed by silence.

Silence - Not speaking in a quiet place in order to quiet our minds and whole self and attend to God's presence. Also, not speaking so that we can listen to others and bless them.

Fasting - Going without food (or something else) for a period of intense prayer— fast may be complete or partial.

Sabbath - Doing no work so that you can rest in God's person and provision; praying and playing with God and others. (God designed this for one day a week. We can practice it for shorter periods too.)

Secrecy - Not making our good deeds or qualities known, so that God or others receive attention, and to find our sufficiency in God alone.

Submission - Not asserting ourselves in order to come under the authority, wisdom and power of Christ as Lord, King, and Master. (If you think of this as submitting to a person as unto Christ then it's a discipline of engagement.)

Bible Reading - Trusting the Holy Spirit-inspired words of Scripture as our guide, wisdom and strength for life.

Worship - Praising God's greatness, goodness, and beauty in words, music, ritual, or silence.

Prayer - Conversing with God about what we're experiencing and doing together. (As we see in the Lord's Prayer the main thing we do in prayer is to make requests of our Father for one another.)

Soul Friendship - Engaging fellow disciples of Jesus in prayerful conversation or other spiritual practices.

Personal Reflection/Journaling - Paying attention to our inner self in order to grow in love for God and others.

Service - Humbly serving God by overflowing with his love and compassion to others, especially those who are overlooked and in need.

LIFEGROUP DISCUSSION:

1. Why do people naturally place more value and spend more energy on outward appearances rather than on growing their spiritual hearts?
2. What are some ways our spiritual heart conditions are revealed in our day to day life?
3. Consider the list of next steps above. What is an intentional step you want to take in 2017 to grow and develop a whole and willing spiritual heart?