

The Great Foil
Big Story: Solomon, 1 Kings 9:1-9
Small Group Guide

Icebreaker questions:

- What do you think about or do when you need a sense of peace? Is there some scene or activity to which your mind turns?
- Did you have some form of “security blanket” when you were a child?

OPTIONAL BACKGROUND READING/INTRO:

We’ve seen over the last few weeks that one of the most persistent security blankets in the nation of Israel was the desire for a human king. God’s people were convinced that if they could just have a king like all the other nations, who would fight their battles for them, all would be right with the world. God conceded, and gave them human kings, and last week we saw how God made a promise to King David—a promise to carry out his rescue plan through one of David’s descendants, who would sit on the throne of an everlasting kingdom. God was faithful to this promise even though David was not faithful. As we come back to the story today you’re going to see what exactly it takes to get all those things that we’ve been searching for—a safe homeland, complete peace, and an unblocked relationship with God and with other people.

READ 1 Kings 3:1-14 for some background on Solomon

1. Why was the Lord pleased with Solomon and as a result how did God bless him?
2. Are there any hints of sinful weaknesses in Solomon within this passage? Discuss.

READ 1 Kings 9:1-9

3. In his interaction with the Lord, what does Solomon learn about the way God’s kingdom works in regards to the land, the people, and his kingship?
4. What do you learn from this passage about having perpetual access to God and his blessings?
5. God uses Solomon’s father, David, as a positive example to follow.
 - a. Knowing the great failures in David’s life, why does God use David as an example? Is this encouraging at all to you? Why?
 - b. How would you like to be remembered in your own children’s lives? (If you don’t have any, substitute other relatives, or friends, or try to imagine the situation.)

READ Deuteronomy 17:14-20. Note that Moses spoke these words, from God, more than 400 years prior to Solomon’s reign.

6. List out all of God’s requirements for a good and faithful king. Discuss some of them—why would they be important?
7. How does Solomon measure up to each of these?

READ Ch. 11:4-6 to see the end of Solomon’s life.

8. God has personally appeared to Solomon twice. God has blessed him immeasurably. God has used Solomon to write timeless proverbs.

- a. How does Solomon fall so far? What brings about his downfall?
 - b. Does this observation offer us any wisdom about who we allow access to the secret places of our lives?
9. From all you've learned, how is Solomon's kingship similar to and different from David's? Why does David receive a favorable rating in God's "memory," as opposed to Solomon?
10. How does Solomon serve as a "foil" to Jesus? Think of as many points of comparison as possible.
 - a. Read Matthew 12:42. What does Jesus' allusion to Solomon here say about Jesus as compared with Solomon? In what way is he "greater?" Below are some specific areas to consider: Solomon's ability to finish faithfully vs. that of Jesus; the Temple Solomon built vs. the "temple" that Jesus built; Solomon's relationship to wealth vs. that of Jesus; Solomon's relationships with his wives vs. Jesus' relationship to his bride.
11. Last week Pastor Josh highlighted from David's life how **"the seeds of the worst sins imaginable live in every human heart."** One counter to this that Pastor Josh mentioned is to acknowledge small sins before they become big ones. Another solution is to repent thoroughly.
 - a. How did Solomon fail in both of these?
 - b. In what way can you improve in either acknowledging sin or repenting of it thoroughly?
 - c. Can you commit to talking to someone this week about small sins that you allow in your life that one day can turn into big ones?
12. Pastor Josh made the point that Jesus, the true king, was/is the good and faithful king who delivers what we need and long for. With that point in mind, reflect on and discuss these two statements.
 - a. "The birth of Jesus separates us from our fears. The birth of Jesus frees us from the habits we are unable (or unwilling) to break ourselves. The birth of Jesus allows us to simply drop the false security we have been grasping so tightly, and learn to trust and cling to him instead." (Jason Soroski, Gospel Coalition).
 - b. "As the king goes, so go the people. And when you allow Jesus to come and rule your heart as king, by the presence of his Spirit, he will reproduce his character in you. Your life will gradually take on striking resemblance to him. Your heart will value the things that his heart values. Your version of success will look less and less like the world's version of success, and more like his." (Pastor Josh)
13. Share prayer requests and pray for each other.