

## Long Story Short: A Heart for God

### Reflect

1. What does being favored, or chosen, mean to you?
2. What do you think is the most important factor for being favored by God?
3. Do you believe you can be favored by God? Why or why not?

### Read Your Bible

- 1 Samuel 16:1-13
- Mark 7:1-8

### Apply God's Word to Your Life

1. In Jewish culture the eldest son was the favored son receiving twice the inheritance of the father. That's why Samuel thought, "surely this is the Lord's favored one" when Eliab stood before him. What does our culture look at when we think of a person that is favored?
2. Throughout the biblical story God chooses people for certain situations that are surprising for everyone. He chooses the youngest, or an outsider, or a woman, and on and on. Based on the scripture lessons what do you think God is looking for in His chosen ones?
3. David wasn't perfect. If you read his story in 1 & 2 Samuel you will see he had an affair, tried to cover it up by killing the husband, and his family fell apart around him. Yet he was known as a man after God's own heart. What does it mean to be a man or woman after God's own heart?
4. Jesus had harsh words for the teachers of the law of God who focused exclusively on the rules. Quoting the prophet Isaiah, He said, "To honor God with your lips is worthless if your heart is far from God." Describe in your own words what having a heart far from God looks like.
5. Describe what it looks like to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength."
6. Apply scripture to your life: In what ways does your heart reflect who you are called to be as a son or daughter of God? Another way to think about it is how do you specifically love God with your heart, soul, mind and strength?

To be favored in God's eyes is a matter of your heart. From a biblical perspective your heart is the reflector of who you are at the deepest level of YOU. If your heart yearns to have a relationship with God, to be made right with God, to passionately pursue the commands and promises of God, you will have a heart that beats in unison with God's heart and the favor of God will rest upon you. Even when you are challenged by the brokenness of this world or the sin of your own life, your heart can stay true to God's call upon your life. So, tend your heart, that it might beat for God, through regular worship, prayer, and by seeking to join with God's work in this world and you will make God smile.

### Pray

Lord, I lift my heart to You this day asking You to make it Your throne. Fill my heart with Your passion and Your promises that they might guide me through the day and through my life. Break my heart, O God, for what breaks Yours that I might be used by You to bring hope and healing into my world of influence. I want to be chosen by You to be used to bring You glory. My heart is Yours! In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.