



Small Group Discussion Guide
OCTOBER 1, 2017



PREPARATION

■ STUDY

Spend the week studying 2 Chronicles 25. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools to enhance your preparation..

■ DETERMINE

Many questions have been included in this guide. Read through this lesson to determine which questions will work best to encourage, push, and grow your group.

■ PRAY

As you prepare, pray for the preaching of God's Word this coming weekend. Pray also for your time in this week's study and your group's openness to God's Word.

■ LANDING POINT

God rewards those who give their whole heart to Him.



GROUP DISCUSSION

■ **CONFIDENTIALITY** | What's said in the group stays in the group.

■ **NO CROSS-TALK** | Be considerate of others as they share. Refrain from side conversations and texting during group time.

■ **NO FIXING** | We are not in the group to fix each other. Jesus does that part.

■ **SHARING** | Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Don't talk too much or too little. Every person brings something valuable to the group.



INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

The Bible says that Amaziah “did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, yet not with a whole heart.” The king’s heart was divided because he tried to serve God plus something else. Does Amaziah’s struggle sound familiar? Like Amaziah, we battle to live for God with a whole heart. We feel that inner tension to give less than everything to God. Unfortunately, doing this means we miss out on much God wants to give us. God rewards those who give their whole heart to Him. This week your group will discuss what it takes to win the Battle for an Undivided Heart. There are no half-ways with God. He wants all of us and nothing less.

Q: *How would you describe someone who’s half-hearted?*

Q: *What do we stand to lose by not giving our whole heart to God?*



LEARN

Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

AMAZIAH’S DIVIDED HEART

Like many of Judah’s kings, Amaziah’s reign started well, with a desire to do what was right. But Amaziah’s loyalty was divided. He wasn’t willing to give 100% obedience to God. At first, he made decisions based on God’s Law and listened to the warnings of God’s messenger. And his obedience resulted in blessing. Amaziah was victorious in battle. But this is where his story takes an unfortunate turn. Instead of offering thanks and worship to God for his success, he chose to worship the idols of the Edomites, the people he had conquered. When God sent another prophet to rebuke him, Amaziah refused to listen. His divided heart became hardened. The once-humble king had become proud and arrogant.

READ: *Read 2 Chronicles 25. What stands out to you in Amaziah’s story?*

Q: *In your own words, describe what it means to give 100% obedience to God.*

THE PRICE OF A DIVIDED HEART

After he defeated the Edomites, Amaziah challenged Jehoash (or Joash), king of the northern kingdom of Israel, to battle. This foolish decision ultimately cost Amaziah the throne. The battle between Judah and Israel took place at Beth Shemesh, located 15 miles southwest of Jerusalem. The battle wasn't even close. Judah was crushed, and its soldiers fled for the hills. Amaziah was taken prisoner, and he watched as Israel's army destroyed a portion of Jerusalem's wall, plundered the temple and also the king's palace. Like his father, Joash, Amaziah's life ended in a murderous conspiracy.

Q: *Why does pride lead us to make foolish decisions?*

Q: *Recall the last time your heart was divided about something. What did it feel like?*



LIVE

Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

PRESENCE AND PROTECTION

Amaziah didn't just lose in the battle against Jehoash. He lost much more. He lost God's presence and protection. His divided heart became hardened, and a hardened heart can't experience God's presence. God mercifully gave Amaziah chance after chance to turn from the path he was going down. But the king refused to listen. This resulted in Judah's defeat and his imprisonment.

Sin divides the heart, and it breaks our fellowship with God. God wants you to enjoy His presence to the full, but that cannot happen if you desire something else more than you desire Him. But God offers us protection in the battle. As a child of God, you have the Holy Spirit, who convicts you of sin and shows you a better path, the path of Jesus and how He gave His heart wholly to the Father and His mission.

Q: *Why can someone with a hard heart not experience God's presence?*

Q: *How would you like to experience more of God's presence in your life? What would need to change to get this?*

PEACE AND POSSESSIONS

Amaziah also lost peace and possessions. One can imagine the inner turmoil Amaziah felt because his heart was divided. He knew what was right, but he wasn't willing to follow through and act. The king's divided heart also made him forfeit the honor and wealth of a king. Instead of being celebrated, Amaziah became a warning to future generations of the dangers of a divided heart.

Sin takes away your peace and gives you worry, anxiety, unhealthy guilt, and shame in return. It makes you restless. Sin also saps your strength. It wears you down in the battle and tempts you to give up and give in. This leads you to make decisions that may cost you something. If you lack peace, don't look within, but look up. Jesus offers you His peace, which gives you confidence and composure in the midst of life's difficulties. It takes away fear and keeps you from falling prey to sin's deceptions.

Q: *Where are you experiencing worry, anxiety, unhealthy guilt, or shame? How does Jesus take these away?*

Q: *Corrie ten Boom once said, "If you look at the world, you'll be distressed. If you look within, you'll be depressed. If you look at God you'll be at rest." How do her words encourage you?*



LEAD

Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

THE DECISION

When Jesus came, He drew a line in the sand and told His followers, "You have a choice—to follow me or something else. You can't choose both." He calls for whole-hearted obedience. His presence, protection, and peace are the rewards God gives to those who walk in obedience with an undivided heart. Fix your eyes on Jesus and learn to walk as He walked in relationship with the Father.

Q: *Where in your life are you lacking whole-hearted obedience?*

Q: *How can you "fix your eyes on Jesus" more this week? Think practically.*



PRAY

Pray for an undivided heart that desires God’s presence, protection, and peace. Ask God to reveal areas in your heart where you’ve been reluctant to give Him. Pray for a heart that’s motivated to follow Jesus’ path of obedience.



FOLLOW UP

Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following:

- *Read Hebrews 12:3–17 and reflect on how God’s discipline helps us in the Battle for an Undivided Heart.*
- *Ask the group to share any stories or lessons learned where they see God at work in their life.*



COMMENTARY

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE HEART? The Bible describes the heart as the center of one’s physical, mental, and spiritual life. It is associated with one’s thoughts, actions, feelings, and affections. Even our conscience is connected to the activities of the heart. Because of sin, the heart has become depraved. Jeremiah 17:9 describes it as deceitful and sick. Therefore, our central problem is a heart problem, and this is where God focuses His work of redemption by giving us a new heart with new affections (see Ezek. 36:26). Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and God’s love are said to dwell in the hearts of believers (Rom. 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 3:17).¹

SHALOM The Hebrew word for ‘peace’ is shalom, which denotes a relationship of love and loyalty with God and others. Shalom is more than simply the absence of hostility. Its fuller meaning refers to welfare, prosperity, or wholeness in a relationship. To have peace in a relationship is to experience the friendship, care, and devotion of another. In the Old Testament, God promised to bring peace between Him and humanity through the Messiah. Jesus accomplished this peace through His death and resurrection in the New Testament. This reconciled people to God and to one another.²

PAUL’S BATTLE FOR AN UNDIVIDED HEART In Romans 7:21–23, Paul speaks of his battle with a divided heart. He understood well the inner struggle between desiring God and desiring sin. Paul experienced the same heart battle we do. But he didn’t despair, even when he failed. He looked to Jesus as his deliverer.

ENDNOTES:

1. Gerald P. Cowen, “Heart,” ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 731–32.
2. Joshua M. Greever, “Peace,” ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).