

1  **How to Fight For the Hearts of Your Family**

1 Kings 15:9-24; 2 Chronicles 14:1-16:14

2  **Review**

- The kingdoms of Israel and Judah are divided after Solomon's death because of Solomon's sin.
- Three Negative Examples:
 - Rehobam – Masculinity out of Control
 - Jeroboam – Our Worship vs. God's Worship, Why Lions Don't Eat Donkeys, Three Ways You Can (Try) To Fool God
 - Abijah – Four Things That Will Get Your Kids Into Hell

3  **Asa (905-874 B.C.)**

4  **Meet Asa**

- Asa is the son of Abijah (who reigned as king for 3 years) and the grandson of Maachah, the favorite wife of Rehoboam and granddaughter of Absalom.
- Asa is the first truly good king of Judah since David, and he institutes substantial religious and social reforms.
- He is also the last Judean king to get major treatment in the book of 1 Kings.
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5  **Asa's Fight**

- In Asa's beginning we see the example of a king who realized Judah's precarious teetering on the brink of national idolatry and fought for the hearts of the people of Judah.
- The same things that threatened Asa's nation threaten our families today, and we can learn from Asa's example how to fight the battle for the hearts of our family.

6  **Asa's Enemy**

- The enemy of the nations of Israel and Judah throughout the divided kingdom period is idolatry.
 - Idolatry is when we look to people, possessions, or positions to fulfill a need that only God can meet.
 - Idolatry is when we substitute creaturely things for our creator.

7  **Idolatry**

- *Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.* (Rom 1:24-25)
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8  **Idolatry**

- Idolatry is referred to literally in the Hebrew as "The Evil" in 1 Kings 15:26.
- In contrast, "what was right" is literally translated "The Right Thing" in 1 Kings 15:11.
- These two phrases are used throughout the books of 1 King and 2 Kings to summarize for us the final evaluation of a king's reign. Did he engage in "The Evil", or did he do "The Right Thing"?

9  **The Situation**

- Since Solomon, three generations of Judean kings have been bringing in pagan idols and encouraging the promulgation of false religions.
- "High places" (which represent religious compromise in the worship of Jehovah) are common even in the very cities of Judah.
- Asherim (groves) are everywhere.

10  **Asherah Poles (Asherim, Groves)**

- This was essentially a sacred pole, often carved with the likeness of Ashtoreth/Asherah. This is also sometimes a planted tree that has been somehow stylistically cut.
- These poles were used in worship of the pagan fertility goddess Asherah and sought to

combine pagan worship with the worship of Jehovah by associating the worship of Jehovah and Asherah.

11 **The Situation**

- Asa's grandmother Maccah has made a "detestable image" (literally a "horrid thing") to worship Asherah.
 - This term is used throughout Scripture to refer to an unspecified object of idol worship that is horrible beyond imagining – a "thing to shudder at."
- Thus, idolatry has corrupted even the royal household.

12 **The Situation**

- Sodomy and various forms of religious prostitution are running rampant throughout the land.

13 **HOW TO PREPARE FOR BATTLE**

2 Chronicles 14:1-8

14 **2 Chronicles 14:2-5**

- *And Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God. He took away the foreign altars and the high places and broke down the pillars and cut down the Asherim and commanded Judah to seek the LORD, the God of their fathers, and to keep the law and the commandment. He also took out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the incense altars. And the kingdom had rest under him.*

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15 **1. Get Rid of External Distractions**

- When Asa ascends to the throne, he recognizes immediately that he's going to have to make some changes.
 - He removes the foreign altars
 - He takes away the high places out of the cities of Judah
 - He tears down the Asherim
 - He commands Judah to follow the Lord

16 **1. Get Rid of External Distractions**

- Ultimately, making only outward changes will not fix problems stemming from an inward attitude.
- Getting rid of the obvious sins in your life (or your family's life) is only helpful in that it makes it easier for you to now focus on heart issues.
- Assuming that outward obedience and compliance in your children is enough is a fatal flaw that will result in your losing the hearts of your family.

17 **2 Chronicles 14:6-8**

- *He built fortified cities in Judah, for the land had rest. He had no war in those years, for the LORD gave him peace. And he said to Judah, "Let us build these cities and surround them with walls and towers, gates and bars. The land is still ours, because we have sought the LORD our God. We have sought him, and he has given us peace on every side." So they built and prospered. And Asa had an army of 300,000 from Judah, armed with large shields and spears, and 280,000 men from Benjamin that carried shields and drew bows. All these were mighty men of valor.*

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18 **2. Arm Yourself**

- Asa takes advantage of a few years of peace in the beginning of his reign to fortify his cities and build up his military might.
- Asa can field an army of 580,000 men, 180,000 more than his father only a few years prior.
- He makes a point to have diversity in his ranks, with a good mix of both regular infantry and ranged troops.

19 **2. Arm Yourself**

- As a Christian we have a wide variety of weapons available to us in the fight for the hearts

of our families:

- The Word of God
- The teaching & support of the local church
- An abundance of curricula, books, videos, and other training materials specifically designed to teach and communicate a Christ-centered world view

20  **2. Arm Yourself**

- Not taking advantage of the opportunities that God gives you to take care of your own family is specifically forbidden by Scripture:
- *But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.* - (1Ti 5:8)
- The mistake that many Christians make is to trust the tools instead of the one who provided them.

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21  **2 Chronicles 14:9-11**

- *Zerah the Ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million men and 300 chariots, and came as far as Mareshah. And Asa went out to meet him, and they drew up their lines of battle in the Valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. And Asa cried to the LORD his God, "O LORD, there is none like you to help, between the mighty and the weak. Help us, O LORD our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this multitude. O LORD, you are our God; let not man prevail against you."*

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22  **3. Acknowledge the Threat**

- In the midst of what appears to be Asa's apparent success (though he does not realize it is merely preparation for the real religious reforms), he is suddenly attacked by an army of over 1 million men.
- Asa is outnumbered by almost 2:1 and does not have any cavalry to counter Zerah's chariots.

23  **3. Acknowledge the Threat**

- Asa's reaction is not to trust in his own efforts to save his nation, or is it to fall back on the measures he has already taken to prepare and hope that they are enough.
- Instead, he acknowledges the threat to his nation's existence and acknowledges that he cannot save Judah on his own.

24  **3. Acknowledge the Threat**

- You cannot possibly prepare enough to deal with the assault that the world, the flesh, and the devil are going to level against you and your family.
- Our enemies have us outnumbered, outclassed, and outgunned. They can communicate their message more effectively and over a wider scale than we could ever hope to.

25  **What This Doesn't Mean**

- 1) That preparations are senseless or hopeless – because they're not. That would be like trusting in God to feed your family and then refusing to go to work to provide for them.
- 2) That we should be despairing or just simply give up – because despite everything, the odds are actually still in our favor.

26  **4. Meet the Enemy**

- *And Asa went out to meet him, and they drew up their lines of battle in the Valley of Zephathah at Mareshah.* – (2Ch 14:10)
- Despite the overwhelming odds with which he was faced, Asa went out to take the fight to the enemy.

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27  **4. Meet the Enemy**

- It's not enough to simply sit at home and expect to deal with problems in your family

when/if they arise.

- Exposure to evil – of even the most hideous nature – is rapidly becoming an inevitability in our society. It's not IF your family will be exposed – it's WHEN.
- Your children need to learn about difficult things in life from you – not from the world.

28 **Do You Need to Have a Talk With Your Children?**

- Almost 100% of boys will be exposed to pornography in some form by the age of 9.
- 1 out of 5 girls and women suffer from an addiction to pornography as of 2006.
- 1 out of every 3 persons accessing online pornography is female.

29 **2 Chronicles 14:12-15**

• So the LORD defeated the Ethiopians before Asa and before Judah, and the Ethiopians fled. Asa and the people who were with him pursued them as far as Gerar, and the Ethiopians fell until none remained alive, for they were broken before the LORD and his army. The men of Judah carried away very much spoil. And they attacked all the cities around Gerar, for the fear of the LORD was upon them. They plundered all the cities, for there was much plunder in them. And they struck down the tents of those who had livestock and carried away sheep in abundance and camels. Then they returned to Jerusalem.

30 **4. Adjust Your Priorities**

- Asa's trust in God results in the complete and utter defeat of Judah's enemies.
- God gives the victory to Asa because Asa was more concerned about God's reputation than his own:
- "*And Asa cried to the LORD his God, "O LORD, there is none like you to help, between the mighty and the weak. Help us, O LORD our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this multitude. O LORD, you are our God; let not man prevail against you.* (v. 11)

31 **4. Adjust Your Priorities**

- WHY do you want to have a godly family?
- WHY do you want to have successful kids?
- Asa wanted to see his nation preserved first and foremost because he was concerned for the reputation of God.
- Love for his country and a desire for self preservation were secondary motivations – and these are good motivations.

32 **Preparedness Checklist**

- 1) Are there distractions in your life right now in the areas of entertainment, finances, or morality that are preventing you from fighting the battle against idolatry?
- 2) Do you spend time in God's Word daily and spend your free time arming and equipping yourself to do battle for your family?

33 **Preparedness Checklist**

- 3) Are you actively having conversations with your children to prepare them for the evil that they are going to encounter as they grow into adults?
- 4) Do you want to have disciplined, well-behaved children because you are concerned about your own reputation, or because you truly desire for God to get glory out of your family's testimony to the world?