

Calvary Chapel  Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

Kindergarten

Sunday Morning

Study 35

Solomon Asks for Wisdom

Solomon Asks for Wisdom

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective The goal of this lesson is to demonstrate the value of wisdom and explain that we, like Solomon, can ask the Lord to give it to us.

Key Verses

1 Kings 3—Main Teaching Passage

1 Kings 2:10-12

Proverbs 2

Proverbs 16:16

James 1:5-6

Memory Verse - James 1:5 NIRV (May Memory Verse)

"If any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it. He will give it to you."

Hook

On your cart will be a "mystery envelope." Tell the class that inside, there is a card that describes a fabulous prize. Have the students guess what that prize might be. Ask what they would want if the prize could be anything in the world. Reveal the card inside, which reads, "wisdom."

In today's story, one of the characters gets a chance to receive whatever he wants. Let us see what he chooses.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

David would reign as king of Israel for 40 years. While we know that he was not perfect, he reigned well, won many battles, and mostly pleased the Lord. Eventually, he died, and his son Solomon became Israel's new king (1 Kings 2:10-12). One night, the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream and offered to give him whatever he might ask. Solomon reflected on the mercy the Lord had shown both to him and to his father David and asked the Lord to grant him wisdom to help him rule over the people. The Lord was pleased with this answer because Solomon did not ask for something selfish like long life or great riches. To reward Solomon for his good choice, the Lord granted him not only wisdom, but riches and honor as well.

Solomon would become both the richest and wisest king in Israel's history. This wisdom was put to the test when two women came to him with a baby. One of these women's newborn child had died, and each of them claimed that the living child was theirs. Solomon ordered the living baby to be brought before him and cut in half. Each woman would receive half of the child. While one woman was okay with that arrangement, the other begged Solomon to spare the child and give the baby to the other woman. Solomon declared that this was the true mother, for she cared more about the baby's life than her own desires. This display of wisdom proved that God had blessed him.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK

Put yourself in Solomon's shoes for a moment. You have just been crowned king of Israel. The Lord has come to you and offered to grant you whatever you ask. You could ask to live longer than any king before. You could ask for victory in every battle. You could request riches, fame, or the greatest empire the world has ever known. Solomon could have chosen all of this and more, but instead he chose wisdom. He thought it was more important to be a wise ruler than to be rich, famous, or powerful. How many of us would have made that same decision? Refer back to the hook to remind the students what they would have picked in the same circumstance.

Solomon chose wisdom. Why? Well, a life without wisdom would have made all those other things worthless. A long life without wisdom is a long life of foolish choices. Great riches without wisdom would be spent foolishly and quickly vanish. One only has to look at some of our celebrities today to know how miserable fame without wisdom can be: you can easily become famous for being foolish. Solomon understood that without wisdom, anything else he could ask for would be meaningless.

LOOK (Continued)

The Bible talks about a lot how important wisdom is. In fact, Solomon wrote most of the book of Proverbs, a book that is filled with wisdom. In particular, in Proverbs 2 Solomon discusses how important it is for us to seek wisdom. Wisdom is something more valuable than silver or gold according to Proverbs 16:16. As Solomon observed, wisdom is really important.

Thankfully, Solomon was not the only one the Lord has offered wisdom to. James 1:5-6 says that anyone who lacks wisdom can ask for some from God, and if we ask in faith, He will give it to us. What a wonderful promise! If the Lord promised anyone who asked would receive \$1,000,000 or a mansion, we all would be sure to ask. He has offered something much more valuable than money or a mansion, yet we give up this great privilege! Encourage the class to ask for wisdom from the Lord, knowing that he graciously will give.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

Review the lesson by asking the class what things Solomon could have asked for. What did he actually ask for and why did he ask for that?

Pray: Ask the Lord to give each student and teacher wisdom to live for Him. Thank God for so graciously and freely offering that wisdom.

Parent Question: Read Proverbs 2:1-15. What do these verses tell us about wisdom?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on 1 Kings 3 by David Guzik

SOLOMON IS GIVEN GREAT WISDOM

A. God gives Solomon wisdom.

1. ([1 Kings 3:1](#)) Solomon marries an Egyptian princess.

Now Solomon made a treaty with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and married Pharaoh's daughter; then he brought her to the City of David until he had finished building his own house, and the house of the LORD, and the wall all around Jerusalem.

a. **Solomon made a treaty with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and married Pharaoh's daughter:** Marriage to fellow royalty was a common political strategy in the ancient world, and continues to the modern age. It was not only because royalty wanted to marry other royalty, but also because conflict between nations was then avoided for the sake of family ties.

i. This was not Solomon's first marriage. [1 Kings 14:21](#) tells us that his son Rehoboam came to the throne when he was 41 years old, and [1 Kings 11:42](#) tells us that Solomon reigned 40 years. This means that Rehoboam was born to his mother, a wife of Solomon named Naamah the Ammonite, before he came to the throne and before he married this daughter of Pharaoh.

ii. Solomon's multiple marriages, and marriages to foreign women, would cause great disaster in his life. Later in the Book of Nehemiah, Nehemiah was angry and frustrated because the people of Israel married with the pagan nations around them. In rebuking the guilty, Nehemiah remembered Solomon's bad example: *So I contended with them and cursed them, struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, "You shall not give your daughters as wives to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons or yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations there was no king like him, who was beloved of his God; and God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless pagan women caused even him to sin. Should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, transgressing against our God by marrying pagan women?"* ([Nehemiah 13:25-27](#)).

iii. The foreign wives made Solomon more than a bad example — they ruined his spiritual life. *But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites; from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David* ([1 Kings 11:1-4](#)).

iv. [1 Kings 11:4](#) says this only happened *when Solomon was old*, but the pattern was set with this first marriage to the Egyptian princess. It perhaps made political sense, but not spiritual sense. "Such arranged marriages were a common confirmation of international treaties, but this one was the beginning of Solomon's spiritual downfall" (Wiseman).

v. [2 Samuel 3:3](#) tells us that David married the daughter of a foreign king: *Maacah, the daughter of Talmi, king of Geshur*. Marrying a foreign woman was not against the Law of Moses — if she became a convert to the God of Israel. What did not ruin David *did* ruin Solomon.

b. **He brought her to the City of David:** Though this was permitted under the Law of Moses, it was not wise

or good for Solomon to do this. Later in his life, his foreign wives were the reason his heart turned away from the LORD ([1 Kings 11:4](#)).

i. Old legends from Jewish rabbis say that on their wedding night, the Egyptian princess cast a spell on Solomon and put a tapestry over their bed that looked like the night sky with stars and constellations. The spell was intended to make Solomon sleep, and when he did wake, he looked up and thought the stars were still out and it was still night, so he went back to sleep. He slept on past 10:00 in the morning and all Israel was grieved because Solomon kept the keys to the temple under his pillow and they couldn't have the morning sacrifice until he woke up. Finally, his mother Bathsheba roused him from sleep. (Cited in Ginzberg)

2. ([1 Kings 3:2-4](#)) Solomon's great sacrifice.

Meanwhile the people sacrificed at the high places, because there was no house built for the name of the LORD until those days. And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places. Now the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place: Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.

a. **People sacrificed at the high places, because there was no house built for the name of the LORD:** At this time, altars were allowed in Israel at various **high places**, as long as those altars were unto the LORD and not corrupted by idolatry (as commanded in [Deuteronomy 16:21](#)). When the temple was built, sacrifice was then centralized at the temple.

b. **Solomon loved the LORD... except that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places:** There is good and bad in this assessment of Solomon. There is good in that *generally* he walked **in the statutes of his father David**. There is bad in the word "**except**."

i. At the same time, it seems that God showed mercy to those who violated this law before the temple was built. "Could there be any sin in this, or was it unlawful till after the temple was built? For prophets, judges, the kings which preceded Solomon, and Solomon himself, sacrificed on high places, such as Gibeon, Gilgal, Shiloh, Hebron, Kirath-jearin, etc. But after the temple was erected, it was sinful to offer sacrifices in any other place" (Clarke).

ii. Solomon *did* love the LORD, yet he also loved foreign wives who eventually helped turn his heart away from the LORD ([1 Kings 11:4-10](#)). "The perils of mixed motives and a divided heart are terrible indeed" (Morgan).

c. **Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar:** This almost grotesque amount of sacrifice demonstrated both Solomon's great wealth and his heart to use it to glorify God.

i. This was an important event marking the ceremonial beginning of Solomon's reign. According to [2 Chronicles 1:2-3](#), the entire leadership of the nation went with Solomon to Gibeon.

d. **Now the king went to Gibeon:** Solomon made these special sacrifices at **Gibeon** because **that was the great high place**. What made it different was that the tabernacle was there, even though the ark of the covenant was in Jerusalem.

i. The course of the tabernacle and the ark of the covenant in the Promised Land:

Joshua brought both the ark and the tabernacle to Shiloh ([Joshua 18](#)).

In the days of Eli the ark was captured and the tabernacle wrecked ([1 Samuel 4](#), [Psalm 78:60-64](#), [Jeremiah 7:12](#) and [26:9](#)).

The ark came back to Kiriath-Jearim ([1 Samuel 7:1-2](#)).

Saul restored the tabernacle at Nob ([1 Samuel 21](#)).

Saul moved the tabernacle to Gibeon ([1 Chronicles 16:39-40](#)).

David brought the ark to Jerusalem and built a temporary tent for it ([2 Samuel 6:17](#), [2 Chronicles 1:4](#)).

ii. There were several reasons to explain why David did not bring the tabernacle from Gibeon to Jerusalem:

- He may have believed if the tabernacle was there, the people would be satisfied with that and they would lose the passion and vision for the temple God wanted built.
- It may be that the tabernacle was only moved when it was absolutely necessary — as when disaster came upon it at Shiloh or Nob.
- David simply focused on building the temple, not continuing the tabernacle.

3. (1 Kings 3:5-9) God's offer and Solomon's response.

At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask! What shall I give you?" And Solomon said: "You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this day. Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I *am* a little child; I do not know *how* to go out or come in. And Your servant *is* in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"

a. **The LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream:** This remarkable visitation from God happened **in a dream**. This is one of the more significant dreams in the Bible.

b. **Ask! What shall I give you:** This was an amazing promise. God seemed to offer Solomon whatever he wanted. This wasn't only because Solomon sacrificed 1,000 animals; it was because his heart was surrendered to God, and God wanted to work something in Solomon through this offer and his response.

i. The natural reaction to reading this promise of God to Solomon is to wish we had such a promise. We do have them.

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. (Matthew 7:7)

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. (John 15:7)

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. (1 John 5:14)

c. **You have shown great mercy:** Before responding to God's offer and asking for something, Solomon remembered God's faithfulness to both David and now to Solomon himself.

d. **But I am a little child:** Solomon was not really the age of a child. He came to God in great humility, especially considering the job in front of him.

i. "The statement is actually Solomon's poetic way of expressing his inadequacies as he faced the awesome tasks of leadership." (Dilday)

ii. Solomon didn't have the false humility that said, "I can't do this, so I won't even try." His attitude was, "The job is so much bigger than me; I *must* rely on God."

d. **Give to Your servant an understanding heart:** Solomon asked for more than great *knowledge*; he wanted **understanding**, and he wanted it in his **heart**, not merely in his *head*. Actually, the ancient Hebrew word translated **understanding** is literally, "hearing." Solomon wanted a *hearing heart*, one that would listen to God.

i. In [Ephesians 1:18](#), the Apostle Paul prayed for Christians, asking that *the eyes of your understanding being enlightened*.

f. **To judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil:** Solomon already understood that a key component of leadership is wise and just discernment. Many leaders do not have this discernment or the courage to use it.

4. ([1 Kings 3:10-15](#)) God's great promise to Solomon.

The speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing. Then God said to him: "Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you. And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days. So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days." Then Solomon awoke; and indeed it had been a dream. And he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, offered up burnt offerings, offered peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

a. **The speech pleased the LORD:** God was pleased by what Solomon *asked for*, in that he knew his great need for wisdom, discernment, and understanding. God was also pleased by what Solomon *did not ask for*, in that he did not ask for riches or fame or power for himself.

i. Solomon's request was *not* bad. We are specifically told that **the speech pleased the LORD**. Yet we can also ask if this was *the best* Solomon could ask for. "Was this the highest gift that he could have asked or received? Surely the deep longings of his father for communion with God were yet better" (Maclaren).

ii. Solomon did his job well, as well or better than anyone. Yet as his falling away in the end showed ([1 Kings 11:1-11](#)) there was something lacking in his spiritual life. "There is no sign in his biography that he ever had the deep inward devotion of his father. After the poet-psalmist came the prosaic and keen-sighted shrewd man of affairs" (Maclaren).

b. **I have done according to your words... I have also given you what you have not asked:** God not only answered Solomon's prayer, He also answered it beyond all expectation. Solomon did not ask for **riches and honor** or a long life, but God gave him those also.

i. In [Ephesians 3:20](#), Paul honored God saying, *Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think*. Solomon *experienced* God's ability to do far beyond *all that we ask or think*.

ii. Solomon wisely asked God regarding his character, not his possessions. What we *are* is more important than what we *have*.

c. **Then Solomon awoke:** It was a dream, but it was at the same time also a message from God. God answered Solomon's prayer and made him wise, powerful, rich, and influential. His reign was glorious for Israel.

i. At the same time, his end was tragic. We can fairly say that Solomon *wasted* these gifts God gave him. Though he accomplished much, he could have done much more — and his heart was led away from God in the end ([1 Kings 11:4-11](#)).

ii. "Instead of being the *wisest* of men, did he not become more *brutish* than any man? Did he not even lose the *knowledge of his Creator*, and worship the abominations of the Moabites, Zidonians, and [so forth]? And was not such idolatry a proof of the *grossest stupidity*? How few proofs does his life give that the gracious purpose of God was fulfilled in him! He received *much*; but he would have received *much more*, had he been faithful to the grace given. No character in the sacred writings disappoints us more than the character of Solomon." (Clarke)

B. An example of Solomon's great wisdom.

1. ([1 Kings 3:16-22](#)) Two women claim the same child as their own.

Now two women *who were harlots* came to the king, and stood before him. And one woman said, “O my lord, this woman and I dwell in the same house; and I gave birth while she *was* in the house. Then it happened, the third day after I had given birth, that this woman also gave birth. And we *were* together; no one *was* with us in the house, except the two of us in the house. And this woman’s son died in the night, because she lay on him. So she arose in the middle of the night and took my son from my side, while your maidservant slept, and laid him in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. And when I rose in the morning to nurse my son, there he was, dead. But when I had examined him in the morning, indeed, he was not my son whom I had borne.” Then the other woman said, “No! But the living one is my son, and the dead one is your son.” And the first woman said, “No! But the dead one *is* your son, and the living one *is* my son.” Thus they spoke before the king.

a. **Two women who were harlots came to the king and stood before him:** This in itself is a remarkable testimony to the goodness and generosity of Solomon. Not many kings would take the time to settle a dispute between two prostitutes.

i. However, some think that these were not **harlots** at all. “Hebrew *zonot*, could equally refer to inn-keepers” (Wiseman).

b. **The dead one is your son, and the living one is my son:** This seemed like an impossible problem to solve. It was surely one prostitute’s word against the other, and there was no independent witness to the events (**no one was with us in the house**).

2. (1 Kings 3:23-27) Solomon’s wise solution.

And the king said, “The one says, ‘This *is* my son, who lives, and your son *is* the dead one’; and the other says, ‘No! But your son *is* the dead one, and my son *is* the living one.’” Then the king said, “Bring me a sword.” So they brought a sword before the king. And the king said, “Divide the living child in two, and give half to one, and half to the other.” Then the woman whose son *was* living spoke to the king, for she yearned with compassion for her son; and she said, “O my lord, give her the living child, and by no means kill him!” But the other said, “Let him be neither mine nor yours, *but* divide *him*.” So the king answered and said, “Give the first woman the living child, and by no means kill him; she *is* his mother.”

a. **Bring me a sword:** Solomon’s solution to the problem at first looked foolish — even dangerous. The wisdom of his approach was only understood when the matter was settled.

i. In the same way, the works — even the judgments — of God often first seem strange, dangerous, or even foolish. Time shows them to be perfect wisdom.

ii. Trapp on **bring me a sword:** “For what purpose? Thought the standers by; wondering and perhaps laughing within themselves. The actions of wise princes are riddles to vulgar constructions: nor is it for the shallow capacities of the multitude to fathom the deep projects of sovereign authority” (Trapp).

b. **She yearned with compassion for her son:** The true parental relationship was proved by *love*. The true mother would rather have the child *live* without her than to *die* with her. She put the child’s welfare above her own.

c. **She is his mother:** Solomon knew that the offer to cut the child in two would reveal the true mother, and he rewarded the mother’s love accordingly.

3. (1 Kings 3:28) Solomon is highly esteemed in the eyes of the people of Israel.

And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had rendered; and they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice.

a. **All Israel heard:** Such a wise decision could not be hidden. The matter was soon known throughout the kingdom.

b. **They feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice:** The peo-

ple of Israel saw that Solomon had both the wisdom and the courage to do the right thing as a leader. This made them hesitant to disobey the law of the king.

i. The old Jewish rabbis loved to go beyond the Bible and spin legends about Solomon's wisdom. Ginzberg quotes one, telling of the time when a demon showed Solomon something he had never seen before, a Cainite, whom the demon brought up out of the ground, and Solomon immediately saw that he had two heads. When the Cainite wanted to return again, he could not go back to his dwelling place deep under the earth. So he married and had seven sons, one of whom also had two heads. When the two-headed father died, the two-headed son claimed a double share of the inheritance, but the other six brothers thought he should get only one. The Sanhedrin couldn't decide the case, so Solomon prayed for wisdom and finally poured hot water on one of the heads. When he did, both heads flinched and cried out, and from this Solomon deduced that they were one person, not two, and should have only one share of the inheritance.