

Solomon Asks For Wisdom

1 Kings 3:3-14

MEMORY VERSE

1 KINGS 3:3a

“And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Small sheets of paper and pencils for each child.

Five index cards, a chalk or dry erase board and chalk or dry erase markers.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

What Would You Ask For? (Part One)

To begin today’s lesson give each child a small piece of paper and a pencil. Ask them the following question, “If you could ask the Lord for anything in the whole world, what would you ask for?” Have them write their answer on the small sheet of paper. Give the children a few minutes to write down their answer. Next, collect the answers and hold onto them to use later.

Explain that today we are going to learn about a king who was given the same opportunity one day. What will his answer be? Let’s find out...

LESSON TIME!

In today's lesson we see that God appears to Solomon in a dream and says, "Ask! What shall I give you?" That is an awesome question God asks Solomon. Basically God is saying, "Solomon, ask from Me whatever you want." What if God asked you the same question? How would you answer it? It is something for us to consider. Today we will learn about Solomon's answer and learn some valuable lessons for our lives. **God will give us wisdom when we ask for it.**

1 KINGS 3:3,4

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.

The first thing that we see in our lesson today is that "Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David, his father." The word "love" here is defined as, "the kind of love in which a man delights, or which he earnestly desires; it implies ardent and vehement inclination of the mind, at the same time tenderness and fullness of affection..." (Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies, page 260). In other words, the love that Solomon had for the Lord was very deep. He thought about the Lord constantly, only desiring to please Him and to grow in His relationship with Him. Solomon had a very good start as king.

Then we are told that "he walked in the statutes of David his father." David instructed Solomon in 1 Kings 2:3, "And keep charge of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His ordinances, and His

testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do, and wherever you turn yourself.” Solomon took his fathers advice and walked with the Lord; therefore, the Lord blessed Solomon.

Yet, even though Solomon loved the Lord and walked in the statues of his father, he sacrificed and burnt incense upon the high places, or altars that were dedicated to false gods. This was against God’s law. This was something David would never have done. They were only supposed to bring offerings to the place God had instructed, which was the tabernacle. So although Solomon obeyed most of the way, he didn’t obey all of the way.

Sometimes we might feel like we are pretty good and obey most of the rules we are given. However, we must be careful of what is in our hearts; for even if we disobey a little bit, we are guilty of disobeying. God is more interested in what is in our hearts. If we have disobedience in our hearts then that can be a danger to us. Someday that disobedience might grow and lead us away from the Lord. So we have to be careful to confess any hidden sin in our heart and obey fully everything that the Lord wants us to do.

1 KINGS 3:5

At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask! What shall I give you?"

Here we have an account of a visit that God graciously pays to Solomon. What an honor that God would come to Solomon and speak to him in a dream. God comes to him in the quiet of the night, appearing to him as he sleeps. God speaks to him saying, “Ask! What shall I give you?” What a wonderful question to be asked by God? All Solomon had to do was ask and God would give him anything he asked for.

Have you ever heard the story of the man who finds the magic lamp and out pops a genie to give him three wishes? How many times have we thought about what we would wish for if we could wish for anything? Of course God is far greater than any make believe genie, but it helps us to imagine what Solomon may have been thinking. Maybe he would ask for a lot of money, maybe he would ask for all the power in the world, maybe he would ask for a big palace and lots of servants to wait on him. What do you think Solomon would ask for? What would you ask for? **God will give us wisdom when we ask for it.**

1 KINGS 3:6-9

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?"

In verse 6 Solomon looks back at his father. David made a lot of mistakes with his children as we have seen in the lives of Absalom

and Adonijah, but there must have been something that Solomon saw in his father King David. He saw how the Lord had shown him mercy, how the Lord was always faithful to him and all the kindness He showed to David. He also saw that David was a man who loved the Lord very much. It is neat to see David's son giving the Lord thanks for all the Lord did in His father's life. Children should give God thanks for all He does for their parents.

Next we see that Solomon recognizes that he is not able to rule God's people well (verse 7), stating that he was an inexperienced youth (he was about 20 years old at this time). Could you imagine becoming king at such a young age? He was very humble at this time and realized that he needed help in order to be a good king. He did not know how to act as a king, or to govern the people. Solomon knew he was totally inadequate to govern God's great nation.

Sometimes people will think they know a lot and try to serve God without recognizing their weaknesses. We need to be people that are humble before the Lord. The Bible says that if we humble ourselves before the Lord that He will exalt us in due time. Solomon was doing something very wise here. He was humbling himself before the Lord.

Now in verse 9 we hear Solomon's request. He did not ask for lots of money or a big palace. He first calls himself God's servant, not the great king of Israel, thus establishing the relationship he had with God. Solomon asked God for "an understanding heart to judge your people, that I may discern between good and bad." Solomon asked God for wisdom. **God will give us wisdom when we ask for it.**

Solomon wanted a hearing heart, a heart that would give heed to God's word. He wanted understanding, not to impress people, but to rightly judge God's people. He wanted to be able to rightly discern between good and bad, right and wrong, sin and duty, truth and lies. He knew the awesome responsibility he now had as king and he wanted to do a good job. He knew he needed God's help. What a wonderful example Solomon gives for us today to follow.

Now think of what you would have asked for, and compare it to what Solomon asked. We may be tempted to ask for something selfish. Perhaps Solomon had this same temptation, but he knew that if he was going to be a good king he needed God's wisdom. It is always good to examine our own hearts. **God will give us wisdom when we ask for it.**

What Would You Ask For? (Part Two)

Explain to the class that you will take out the responses they had given earlier in the class to the question, "If you could ask the Lord for anything in the whole world, what would you ask for?" Read a few to the class. Don't embarrass anyone, but use it as an example of the kinds of things that we naturally think of when given this kind of opportunity.

Encourage the children to pray and ask the Lord for wisdom. Remind them of James 1:5 which talks about how that we can all ask the Lord for wisdom when we need it.

1 KINGS 3:10-14

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."

This prayer pleased God! Solomon showed that in his heart he had more of a desire to be good than be great, and to serve God rather than himself. We must remember that it is better to desire spiritual blessings rather than earthly ones. Matthew 6:33 tells us, "But seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

God tells Solomon, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life, nor riches, nor the life (the destruction) of your enemies (which are all things that the world might try to obtain), but understanding to hear judgments, behold I have done according to your word." In other words, God is saying that He is answering Solomon's prayer and will give him the wisdom that he is asking for.

Not only did God graciously grant his request, but He also gave him the things he did not ask for. God would give to him riches, and honor. How God wants to bless those who have a right heart. God also promised that he would exceed all those who have gone before him and all those after him in wisdom. If Solomon would faithfully obey God's commandments, he would give him long life also. This was the one blessing with a condition. Oh, that our hearts would always desire wisdom. **God will give us wisdom when we ask for it.**

Again we must always, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto us." That is an awesome promise from God for each one of us.

Following Wise Advice

Explain to the children that it is important to listen to our parents. It is the wise thing to do. King Solomon had to listen to his father's advice in order to be a good king.

Before King David died he gave some wise advice to Solomon. Turn to and read to the class 1 Kings 2:1-4. Contained in these verses is some wise advice. Here are some key words:

strong

walk

statutes (law, word or Bible will also do)

prosper

heart

Choose five volunteers from your class. Without sharing with the rest of the class give one word to each child on an index card. Tell them that they are need to draw the word on the chalk or dry erase board and have the rest of the class guess what the word is. Give them a hint: They were all found in 1 Kings 2:1-4. Continue until all 5 words are guessed. Share with the class that these 5 words represent 5 wise phrases given to him from his father to help him to be a good king. Here are the 5 phrases:

Be strong.

Walk in the ways of the Lord.

Keep His statutes, commandments and judgments as written in His law.

That you may prosper (be blessed).

Do these things with all your heart.

Use this game to show how that Solomon needed great wisdom and how he needed to find that wisdom in the Lord.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer to ask the Lord for wisdom in their lives. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.