

TEXT 1 Kings 3:5-14; 4:29-34

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE 1 Kings 3:16-28

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain that Solomon made a wise choice when he asked for wisdom from God, and that it was granted to him. They will recognize the importance of seeking godly wisdom in their own lives.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad. — 1 Kings 3:9

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding. — Job 28:28

ANSWER TITLE: **God Still Gives the Answers**

SEARCH TITLE: **Solomon**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

About seven or eight years before the birth of Solomon, David had purposed to build a house for the Lord and had conveyed his thoughts to Nathan the prophet. Nathan wholeheartedly agreed, at first, but God sent word to Nathan that same night that David should forego the privilege in favor of a son who was to be born to him, of whom, God said, "I will be his father, and he shall be my son" (1 Chronicles 17:13). According to the word of the Lord, David confined his temple activities to amassing vast stores of gold, silver, timber, and stones for the future building while charging his son Solomon, about twenty-five years later, "Now, my son, the LORD be with thee; and prosper thou. . . Only the LORD give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel, that

thou mayest keep the law of the LORD thy God. Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfil the statutes and judgments which the LORD charged Moses with concerning Israel: be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed" (1 Chronicles 22:11-13). David's admonition to Solomon here was given about two years prior to Solomon's final confirmation as the new king of Israel. God was preparing his heart for the job ahead.

Just before his death, King David admonished Solomon again (1 Chronicles 28:9-10) to build the house of the Lord and serve the Lord "with a perfect heart and with a willing mind."

YOUR OPENER

Solomon

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KEY VERSE: And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding. — Job 28:28

RESPONSES

1. Solomon loved the Lord. The discussion here should center on the fact that we can gain necessary spiritual wisdom and understanding only if we love the Lord. Love for God, brought about by a regenerated heart (being born again), is the beginning point. Only then can we be trusted with God's great storehouse of blessings to be used unselfishly for Him.

2. In verse 6, Solomon had a thankful heart. He recognized that his godly heritage and present kingship were gifts from God. In verse 7, his statement, "I am but a little child," shows genuine humility (1 Peter 5:5). In verse 8, Solomon classes himself as a servant. He was willing to serve (Matthew 23:11). In verse 9, he showed a love for others, one of the greatest evidences of love for God (1 John 4:21). Again in verse 9, Solomon showed a deep desire to do right, to discern between good and evil, to work justice. He desired righteousness (Matthew 5:6). Discuss how these traits helped Solomon obtain the answer to his prayer for wisdom and an understanding heart. How are these traits essential in Christian lives today? Help the students see that these qualities should be in evidence as they serve the Lord. Show also that these attributes are helpful in obtaining answers to their prayers.

3. God promised a special gift of wisdom and understanding excelling all others, riches and honor in abundance, and long life if he continued to serve Him. God's answer to Solomon is an excellent opportunity to amplify the truth, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

4. It is possible that Solomon would have reigned without either riches or honor, because he would have asked amiss (selfishly). Ask the students to compare Solomon's attitude at this time of wanting to serve and please God to Jeroboam's attitude of not serving the Lord for fear that he would lose the kingdom (1 Kings 12:26-33). Because Solomon asked aright God gave him more than he asked. Because Jeroboam tried to plan and live without God, he lost all—his kingdom and his life. Reinforce the thought that we should not look upon prayer as a selfish means of getting things for ourselves, but that God's wise purposes and His plan might be accomplished in our lives.

Shortly before he died, King David established his son Solomon as king over Israel, as God had ordained. In so doing, David charged his son to serve the Lord "with a perfect heart and with a willing mind" (1 Chronicles 28:9). Earlier, David had admonished Solomon to build a house for the Lord, desiring that the Lord would give him wisdom and understanding (1 Chronicles 22:12). David's desire for his son was granted in that Solomon requested from God the necessary wisdom and understanding to judge and guide the Children of Israel. The Bible gives encouragement for all to seek God's wisdom.

1. In 1 Kings 3:3 what was the attribute in Solomon that allowed God to trust him with the limitless offer, "Ask what I shall give thee"? Why is this attribute important in our lives also?

2. By carefully studying Solomon's answer to God's question, how many Christian traits can you find in verses 6,7,8, and 9?

3. List those things which God promised Solomon in answer to his request.

4. Read James 4:3, then write what you think might have been God's answer to Solomon had he asked for riches and honor instead of wisdom and understanding.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

5. What evidence do we have that Solomon's request for wisdom was answered (1 Kings 3:16-28)? Was Solomon's wisdom limited only to matters concerning righteous judgment?

6. What did the Queen of Sheba think of Solomon's wisdom? See 1 Kings 10:1-9.

7. When we think of wisdom, we think of the ability to make right decisions and discern between good and evil, but godly wisdom extends beyond these characteristics. List some other characteristics given in James 3:17.

8. How is godly wisdom to be attained today? List two or more things that are required. See James 1:5,6,22-25.

Thought Provoker: How is godly wisdom related to Christian maturity? See Ephesians 3:17-19 and 4:13. Have you observed Christians who cannot be moved from their faith by the most adverse circumstances? Have you seen some stand when it seemed all was going against them? Have you heard soft answers given when harsh words have been spoken? Have you noted Christlike people who took no offense but rather prayed for those who had mistreated them? These people are mature Christians who have been given a good measure of "the wisdom that is from above." Paul's prayer for the church in Ephesus was that Christ would dwell in their hearts by faith, and that they might be rooted and grounded in love, so as to comprehend the breadth, length, depth, and height of the love of Christ, which exceeds all worldly knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fullness of God. So godly wisdom is manifested when we are filled with the love of Christ—and Christian maturity is really Christlikeness.

5. Solomon's wisdom in finding the true mother of the child is given, no doubt, as a typical example of how God endowed him with understanding so he could judge righteously. Your class should determine that Solomon's wisdom was certainly not limited to matters of righteous judgment. Help them ascertain that this wisdom God gave him encompassed very broad understanding of all nature, as well as of human nature, so that his wisdom surpassed that of the famed "East country" and Egypt. He was wiser than any living person. How many proverbs did he compose? How many songs? Ask which of Solomon's proverbs recorded in the Bible is the students' favorite.

6. She was so impressed that there was no more spirit in her—she was completely overwhelmed. She exclaimed, "Behold, the half was not told me." How did the wisdom of Solomon compare with the wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 12:42)? Solomon answered all the hard questions for the Queen of Sheba. Did the Lord Jesus leave any unanswered questions in His day? Did He not amaze all with His wisdom, even those who brought questions with which they thought to entrap Him? Help the class to further bring out the immensity of God's storehouse of wisdom, and the fact that they can draw on that storehouse for everyday needs such as wisdom to do a better job for their employers, to more wisely control their finances, and to more skillfully handle personal relationships.

7. Your students' lists will probably contain the characteristics of James 3:17 almost verbatim. Help the class to consider the meanings of these expressions: the need for having purity of heart, a peaceable spirit, being a true lady or gentleman, having consideration for others' ideas and thoughts, empathy with the poor and needy to the point of doing something about their needs, not playing favorites or pretending but instead showing fairness and genuineness in their dealings. All this will help to increase their concept of what godly wisdom really is. The student should realize that this kind of wisdom is given only through Jesus Christ himself. No other belief in all the world can provide this quality of wisdom.

8. First, we must ask for wisdom; second, we must ask in faith; third, we must continue to be doers of the Word of God. This question gives an opportunity for the class to talk about "receiving" faith. As Solomon did, we must love God before we ask for His wisdom. He "giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." With a spirit of prayer and worship coming from our hearts, God does answer our prayers for wisdom. The more fervently we serve Him, the more "the wisdom that is from above" is apparent in our lives.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

Why should we ask God for His will in our lives above our own desires?

When does God grant us things that we ask of Him?

Why was wisdom the best choice for Solomon?

How can you obtain wisdom from God?

In what ways do you think wisdom would benefit you?

Why is it important to seek God's wisdom in your life?

What did wisdom do for Solomon? What would God's wisdom do for us today?

Why do we need God's wisdom in our lives as Christians today? What are some things for which we need God's wisdom in order to be able to do them?

In our ANSWER story, what was Kerri's definition of true wisdom?

In our ANSWER story, what was Kerri's reward from Mr. Jackson for "hanging in there," as Jayme put it?

THINGS TO DO

On slips of paper, write out some hypothetical situations that require godly wisdom. Put the slips of paper into a basket or a hat. Pass the basket around and have each student select and read a situation. Have the class discuss each one.

Use a slide projector and show pictures out of focus. Liken this to one's life without Christ in control. Then focus the pictures so they are clear. Explain how God can bring into focus an out-of-focus life when He is in control. Life will take on a new perspective that will be clear.

Have the class do an acrostic using the letters of the word WISDOM. It should contain the things God will give to those who seek wisdom from Him. They may wish to

make their own or one that you have done for them. A simple way for you to do one is to have six cards with a letter on each (W on one, I on one, etc.). On the back of each card write a Scripture that contains the word you want. Have the class look up the Scripture and give you the word that fits the chart you have made. For example:

Wisdom (Proverbs 4:7)

understand I ng (1 Kings 3:9)

S trength (Isaiah 40:31)

knowle D ge (2 Peter 1:5)


j O y (Ecclesiastes 2:26)

M ercy (James 3:17)

Answers for ANSWER

A Wise Guy

We should seek God's wisdom in our lives. Read 1 Kings 3:5-14 to find the words that are missing below. Write the words in the acrostic puzzle. The name in the shaded area belonged to the man who asked God for wisdom before anything else.



1. S P E E C H

2. G O D

3. P E O P L E

4. G O O D

5. D R E A M

6. H O N O U R

7. U N D E R S T A N D I N G

1. and the speech pleased the Lord verse 10

2. and God said unto him verse 11

3. in the midst of thy people verse 8

4. discern between good and bad verse 9

5. a dream by night verse 5

6. both riches, and honour verse 13

7. an understanding heart to judge verse 9