



## Growth Group Curriculum Week 4 – January 30, 2022 – 1 Kings 3:1-14; 4:29-34

**Growth groups are one of the best and easiest ways to find community at church. Thank you for loving and caring for each other.**

This week we consider the first part of the story of Solomon, the king who was known throughout the world for his great wisdom. The king who wrote many of the Proverbs that speak about how to live a life that is marked by wisdom. The king who prayed for a wise and discerning heart so that he could carry out his duties and bring justice to the people.

The story of Solomon is an interesting one. In verse 3, we read that he showed his love for God by walking in accordance to the instructions that his father David had given to him. Yet, 1 Kings 3 also makes it sound like Solomon did some unwise things. He married outside of the faith. He made an allegiance with Egypt – the nation that had enslaved Israel for 400 years. He went to the high places to make sacrifices, even though Deuteronomy makes it clear that was not supposed to happen.

In spite of all of that, God appeared to him in a dream and told Solomon to ask for whatever he wanted. Solomon asked for wisdom. In humility he recognized that he did not have the skillset (I am only a little child) to lead the people of Israel. He asked that he might have a discerning heart to tell right from wrong. He asked that he might rule over his people justly and with justice. If you keep reading 1 Kings 3, you discover that his wisdom was quickly put to the test. (1 Kings 3:16-28)

It is interesting to note that reminders from Deuteronomy 4 and 6, about obedience (shema), are found in this text as well. The wise person doesn't just listen for the word of God, but they are obedient to the word of God. It is not enough to just hear from God, or have a vision from God, or read from God's word. Kings and non-kings have the same calling of being obedient to God's word if they want their life to go well (see verse 14).

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God not only gave Solomon wisdom, but also wealth and prestige. Our text from 1 Kings 4:29-34 shows the influence that Solomon had and the legacy he left behind. There was no one wiser than Solomon.

## Exploring the Text

1 KINGS 3:1-14; 4:29-34

**3** Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt and married his daughter. He brought her to the City of David until he finished building his palace and the temple of the LORD, and the wall around Jerusalem. **2** The people, however, were still sacrificing at the high places, because a temple had not yet been built for the Name of the LORD. **3** Solomon showed his love for the LORD by walking according to the instructions given him by his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places. **4** The king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, for that was the most important high place, and Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. **5** At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.” **6** Solomon answered, “You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day. **7** “Now, LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. **8** Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. **9** So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?” **10** The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. **11** So God said to him, “Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, **12** I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. **13** Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. **14** And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life.”

**4** **29** God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. **30** Solomon’s wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. **31** He was wiser than anyone else, including Ethan the Ezrahite—wiser than Heman, Kalkol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. **32** He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. **33** He spoke about plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also spoke about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. **34** From all nations people came to listen to Solomon’s wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.



## Questions

*If you are answering these questions alone, we would urge you to try journaling. Rather than just pondering the answers, try writing them out along with a prayer to the Lord.*

- 1) Do you find it difficult to ask for help? Why or why not?
- 2) Is there something you ask God for on a daily basis (parking, good weather, health for family, wisdom...)?
- 3) Why do you think God gave Solomon a choice of whatever he wanted?
- 4) If you were given the same offer that Solomon had in verse 5, what would you ask for and why?
- 5) Have you ever had a time when you felt like God or the Holy Spirit was audibly speaking to you? Were you asking for God to speak to you or did it just sort of surprise you? If you have had an experience like that, share about it with your group.
- 6) In verses 7-8, Solomon recognizes his own shortcomings. He feels like a little child who does not know how to carry out his duties. He doesn't feel prepared. Can you think of a time when you felt unprepared or not equipped and God gave you the insight and wisdom in knowing how best to respond?
- 7) The book of Kings makes it pretty clear that Solomon fell short of what God desired in many ways, and yet God still blessed him with wisdom. God did not wait for Solomon to live a perfect life before he blessed him. How do you make sense of that? Do you find that encouraging or discouraging?
- 8) In chapter 4, we catch a glimpse of the legacy of Solomon. He was wise and knew more than most people. He wrote proverbs and knew about all kinds of plants and animals. We will all leave a legacy. When you think about your own legacy what do you hope you leave behind in others? Is there something that you would like to work on changing about your legacy?

