

Lesson 7: The Wisdom and Blessings of God

1 KINGS PROFILE



Genre: Narrative History

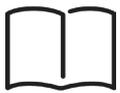
Author: Traditionally, Jeremiah

Passage: 1 Kings 3:3-15

Where Is It: The Old Testament: 2 Samuel, **1 Kings**, 2 Kings

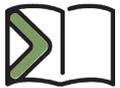
Key Characters: God, David, Solomon, Elijah

Main Plot: 1 Kings narrates the history of Israel from David's death to King Solomon's reign to Israel's division into two kingdoms (Northern Israel and Southern Judah)



THE WORD

1 Kings 3:3-15



ENGAGE THE WORD

Lesson Overview: Cultural Dimension

Our students are receiving “wisdom” from a myriad of voices. This lesson will take the next step in teaching ourselves and our students what it means to be filled with the wisdom of God and how to ask God for gifts and blessings.

King Solomon prayed and asked the Lord for wisdom, and the Lord gave it to him. Solomon is traditionally noted as the writer of the book of Proverbs, which we know as the book of wisdom. Solomon asked for wisdom and received it, but his heart went to other gods near the end of his life. If someone like Solomon could fail, then how much more are we prone to stray from God’s heart? This lesson will teach your students what wisdom is, to remind them to stay near to God’s very heart, and to pray like Solomon.



Wesleyan Snapshot Blessing

“Blessing’ is a biblical term with rich resonances, implying the reversal of sin’s curse and the restoration of creation’s fullness... Blessing restores all the good that God had generously bestowed on the creation in the beginning (e.g., Genesis 1:22,28) and thus anticipates his subsequent redemptive work for the flourishing of human beings, in relationship with God, with one another, and with the nonhuman creation.”

—Michael W. Goheen, *A Light to the Nations*

Biblical Commentary

This passage of Scripture tells us that Solomon demonstrates his love for God by imitating his father, David, who was faithful to the Lord. The Lord appears to Solomon in a dream and tells him, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you” (1 Kings 3:5). Can you imagine having God tell you to ask him for whatever you want?

Solomon highlights that God has been committed to his father, David. Solomon acknowledges his own lack



THE MAIN IDEA

GOD IS PLEASED WHEN WE COME TO HIM IN PRAYER WITH A HUMBLE AND REVERENT ATTITUDE.

of experience, wisdom, and knowledge. He recognizes his own limitations and pleads that God would give him “a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong” (1 Kings 3:9). Solomon needs God’s help.

God grants Solomon four gifts, which is more than Solomon asks for. He gives to Solomon a wise and discerning heart, riches, honor, and a long life. God is pleased that Solomon humbly asks. God sees what is in Solomon’s heart and character through his request. We can also interpret God’s pleasure with Solomon’s request because Solomon asks for wisdom for the benefit of God’s people. After the dream, Solomon wakes up and goes to the meeting place of God in Jerusalem where the Ten Commandments are located.

This passage teaches us many truths about God. First, God sees the heart and character of Solomon when he prays. Second, God is faithful to his promises like he was faithful to Solomon’s father, David. Solomon recognizes that God has been faithful to someone else, and he is confident in asking God to be faithful to him just as he was faithful to his father. Third, Solomon bows before the Lord physically, emotionally, mentally, experientially, and spiritually. Solomon knows *who* he is talking to, and he is in awe of who this God is. Fourth, God blesses Solomon above and beyond what he asks for the sake of the people. God’s heart is for his people and the witness that these people bring to God’s holy name.

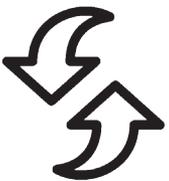
REFLECT ON THESE THEMES:

How would you define *wisdom*? When has God given you wisdom?

Solomon was blessed and gifted by God. How have you been blessed and gifted by God? Why do you think God blessed and gifted you with those things?

REFLECT ON YOUR STUDENTS:

How have your students received blessings, gifts, and graces from the Lord? How can you affirm God’s blessings in their lives?



Proverbs 9:10

The fear of the LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Wisdom

Biblical wisdom acknowledges that the Lord God is in charge and that he grants wisdom. Wisdom comes from God and it helps us navigate our ordinary lives faithfully.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

LESSON OUTLINE



Main Idea: God is pleased when we come to him in prayer with a humble and reverent attitude.

Resources: Bibles, copies of handout, writing utensils, paper, newspapers, masking tape, small toy cars or empty soda cans, white t-shirts, permanent markers, marshmallows, toothpicks

Connect to My Experience:

Welcome and Prayer
Strong Bridge Activity

Connect to the Word: Read and Reflect on 1 Kings 3:3-15

Connect to My Life and the World: Prayer Exercise

Closing: Prayer



CONNECT TO MY EXPERIENCE

Student Goal: Youth will understand the significance of building a solid foundation.

Welcome your students and open in prayer.

STRONG BRIDGE ACTIVITY

Separate your students into two groups (or more if necessary). Give the groups five to ten minutes to build a bridge using only newspaper and masking tape. Place two chairs about two feet apart and use the bridge to connect the two chairs together. Place small toy cars, soda cans, or something else of your choosing on the bridges. The strongest bridge will be the one that can hold the most items.

SAY: We played this game about building a strong bridge, and we are going to be reading about how to build a strong foundation in our lives. Building a strong foundation requires wisdom.

ASK: What did you learn about building a newspaper bridge?

How did you work together?

Did some of you wish you had the wisdom to build a bridge?

SAY: Today, we are going to see how a man named Solomon knew he needed to ask God for wisdom. Solomon was asked by God for something, and Solomon asked God for something as well!

CREATIVE OPTION: MARSHMALLOW TOWER

Instead of a bridge, another option for an opening activity is a marshmallow tower. Divide your group into two or more teams and give them marshmallows and toothpicks. The group that builds the highest tower wins!

CREATIVE OPTION: WHITE T-SHIRTS OF GOD'S BLESSINGS

If possible, bring a white T-shirt for each student or ask students to bring a plain old shirt of their own. Have each teenager write their name on the T-shirt with permanent marker, then pass out the T-shirts to everyone. Have everyone write a good quality or gifting on the shirt that they see in the person.

Once everyone has finished writing on the shirts, have each of your students put on their own shirt. Ask them to read the words to themselves. Remind them that this is just a glimpse of how God sees them. The words that their peers wrote to describe them just scratch the surface of how God sees them.

**CONNECT TO THE WORD**

Student Goal: Youth will learn about the story of God and Solomon, and how Solomon encountered God through his dream.

READ 1 Kings 3:3-15.

ASK: What does God tell Solomon to ask for?

What would you ask for if God told you, "Ask for whatever you want, and I'll give it to you?"

SAY: Solomon was the son of David, one of the greatest kings in the history of Israel. God loved David, and David loved God. God promised David that he would be faithful to him, and David committed himself to God.

Solomon tells God that God has been faithful to David, so Solomon is confident that God will be faithful to him because he is David's son. God replies, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you."

ASK: How does Solomon respond?

SAY: Solomon acknowledges that he is inexperienced, young, and that he has no knowledge at all about how to be a king. He does not ask God for wealth, power, honor, or beauty. Instead, Solomon asks God for a wise and discerning heart to govern God's people. Solomon acknowledges his need for God, and he asks God to give him wisdom for the sake of God's people.

ASK: What are some of the differences between what we would like to ask for and what Solomon asks for?

SAY: God responds to Solomon's prayer request by saying that he is pleased with the way that Solomon has asked for things. Since Solomon asks with such humility, reverence, and honesty, God gives



Facilitator Note:

When we ask, “What would you ask for if God told you to ask for anything?” teens might give selfish answers. Be careful to love and guide your students, not shame them.

Prayer

As Christians, we ultimately believe that we pray in the Spirit through the Son to the Father. Prayer is an event that involves all three persons of the Holy Trinity.



Facilitator Note:

The prayer exercise for Solomon’s prayer is meant to teach students a different way to pray. Hopefully this can evolve into a deeper prayer practice for them.

him what he asks for *and more!* God gives him wealth, honor, a wise and discerning heart, and promises to give him a long tenure.

Solomon is honest about who he is. He is humble, and he makes his requests for his people. Solomon asks for wisdom, not so he can go and brag to his companions, but *so he might help God’s people be faithful to God.* He asks God for a gift that will also be a gift to others. He is not just thinking about himself. Solomon is thinking about the people of Israel, God’s chosen people.

The God of Solomon and Israel is the same God today. God wants to give us wisdom, to bless us, to give us gifts. But God is pleased when we use our wisdom, blessings, and gifts for the sake of others. God wants us to bless other people. God wants us to give gifts to other people. God wants us to give wisdom to our friends and family.

When we pray and ask God for something, let’s practice being honest and acknowledge who God is.



CONNECT TO MY LIFE AND THE WORLD

Student Goal: Youth will practice a form of prayer that reflects Solomon’s prayer to God.

Distribute the handout that is included in this study.

Instruct them that you are going to practice a prayer like the one that Solomon prayed. You can go through each part of the prayer together as a group *or* instruct them to go at their own pace. If you go through it together, you can spend two to three minutes on number 1, then ring a bell to indicate to them that you are moving on to number 2. Going through the prayer exercise as a group will force your teens to slow down and pay attention to each number rather than rushing through it just to get it done.

Tell them that these sheets of paper are for their eyes only. If they want to talk to you about what they wrote, they can do so individually after the session is over.

After you finish the prayer time, ask your students to consider the questions below. You can ask your students to answer the questions aloud as a group or to just consider them quietly, depending on your group’s dynamic.

ASK: What did you experience?

How is this different from how you normally pray?

What did God say to you?

What are some of the takeaways from this exercise?

CREATIVE OPTION: PRAYER AFFIRMATION CIRCLE

At the beginning of Solomon's prayer, he acknowledges that God was faithful to David and that David walked after the Lord's heart. Solomon prays a prayer of affirmation, which you can teach your students to do as a group.

Ask the students to sit in a circle. Have everyone write their names on a piece of paper. Place the names in a cup and have students choose a name blindly out of the cup. (If anyone gets their own name, they should put their name back and choose again.) Everyone should have a piece of paper with someone else's name on it. Tell them that we are going to go into a prayer time, and they should pray for the person whose name they drew out of the cup.

They are supposed to pray only positive things about the person. Pray and thank God that this person follows God. Thank God that this person has a friendly personality. Thank God that this person is smart and gentle. Thank God that this person reveals the face of Jesus.

You can conclude this prayer time by thanking God for this time of affirmation.



CLOSING

SAY: We have learned how to pray with an awareness of who God is and in a humble and honest posture. I hope you can adopt a form of prayer like this for your own life.

Close in prayer, acknowledging God's favor upon your students and thanking God for allowing all of you to learn about his Word today.