

October 1 Adult Spiritual Growth Class Synopsis

Life Worth Living Study – Week 4 – 1 Kings 3:3-15 - What do you want? / Life Inventory Questions

Part 1 Chapter 1 of Life Worth Living asks the question “What’s worth wanting?” The story of Solomon provides Scriptural context to this question.

Solomon was the second son of King David and Bathsheba. His name means "peaceable." His alternative name was Jedidiah, meaning "beloved of the Lord." Even as a baby, Solomon was loved by God.

King David encouraged his son Solomon to walk with God with all his heart and soul. He did not say “obey” but “walk with.” David’s focus was the success of the kingdom, but he was also trying to encourage Solomon to develop a relationship with God – not just sterile obedience. This was wise instruction from a father. David knew God and Solomon did not. Solomon was a young man, and a personal relationship with God did not exist. David’s charge to Solomon is given in 1 Kings 2:3-4:

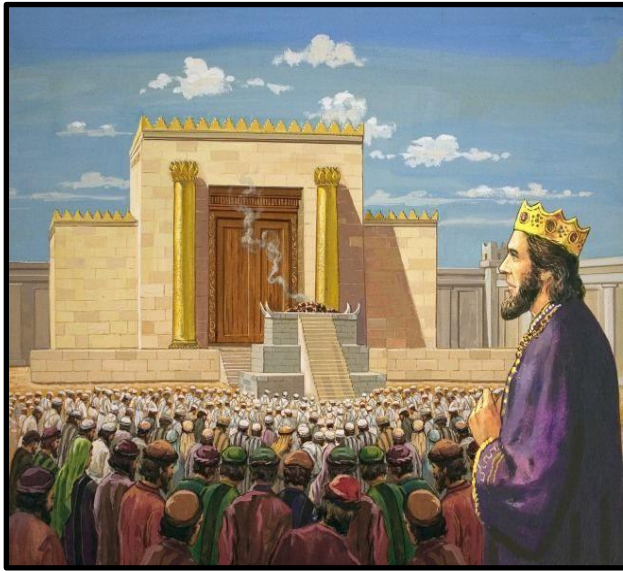
3 *Observe the requirements of the LORD your God, and follow all his ways. Keep the decrees, commands, regulations, and laws written in the Law of Moses so that you will be successful in all you do and wherever you go. 4* *If you do this, then the LORD will keep the promise he made to me. He told me, ‘If your descendants live as they should and follow me faithfully with all their heart and soul, one of them will always sit on the throne of Israel.’*



Overcoming a conspiracy by Solomon's half-brother Adonijah and Joab, David’s general, Solomon's kingship was firmly established. God appeared to Solomon in a dream and asked, “What do you want?”, which mirrors that which Jesus asked Bartimaeus in Mark 10, “What do you want me to do for you?” Solomon chose understanding and discernment, asking God to help him govern his people well and wisely. God was so pleased with the request from Solomon that he granted him very great wisdom, discernment and breadth of mind “like the sand that is on the seashore”, along with great riches, honor, and longevity (1 Kings 3:3-14, 1 Kings 4:29-30).

Solomon at first used these gifts very well and made the Kingdom of Israel very prosperous. The greatness of Solomon’s empire drew the greatest rulers of other nations to come and see for themselves its glory. The Queen of Sheba heard of Solomon’s fame and visited him to test his wisdom with hard questions. After seeing with her own eyes all that Solomon had built in Jerusalem, and hearing his wisdom, the queen blessed the God of Israel, saying: “The report was true that I heard in my own land of your words and of your wisdom, but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes

had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report that I heard." (1 Kings 10:6-7)



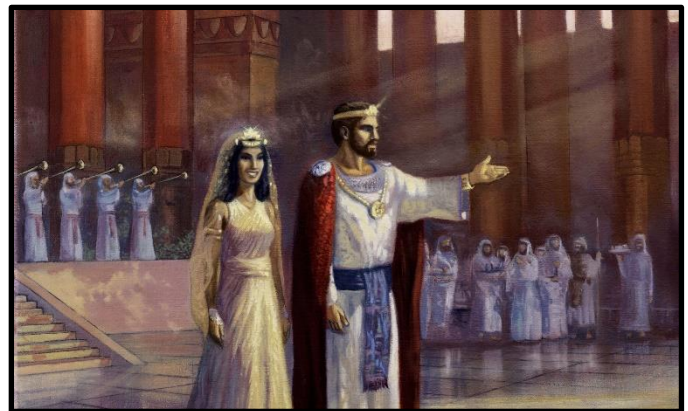
Most importantly, God granted Solomon the privilege of building the Temple - a seven year task resulting in one of the wonders of the ancient world and the first permanent dwelling place of the Lord on earth. At the dedication of the Temple, Solomon had these words to say to the people.

"Let your heart therefore be wholly devoted to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and to keep His commandments, as at this day." (1 Kings 8:61)

Through the wisdom that God had given, Solomon authored much of the book of Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes and Psalms 72 and 127. First Kings 4:32 tells us he wrote 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs.

Solomon ruled over Israel for 40 years being the last king of the full kingdom of Israel with all 12 tribes. He secured stability through treaties with foreign powers. He built a majestic palace, gardens, roads, and government buildings. He accumulated thousands of horses and chariots. After securing peace with his neighbors, he built up trade and became the wealthiest king of his time.

Solomon's kingdom grew along with his fame with *1 Kings 10* and *Ecclesiastes 2:1-11* describing the great wealth of Solomon. Solomon amassed 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines (*1 Kings 11:3*). Unfortunately, Solomon's excessive prosperity eventually became his downfall. Solomon used his wisdom to make his kingdom prosperous, but eventually his incredible riches, along with his hundreds of foreign idolatrous wives, led him away from God. He began to build pagan temples for his wives, which were an abomination that would afflict the Israelites for numerous generations to come. His gift for making extremely large, lavish, and beautiful buildings, at first used for the glory of the Lord, was then used for his own purposes. He oppressed the people by making them labor extensively making his architectural marvels, including pagan temples.



Solomon's forsaking of God caused God to become angry, resulting in the separation of the ten northern tribes of Israel from the rule of the house of David, eventually leaving only the tribe of Judah to be ruled by Solomon's descendants (*1 Kings 11:9-11*). This did not take place in Solomon's lifetime because of God's promise to David. God's judgment fell on Israel during the rule of Solomon's son Rehoboam. Once King Solomon had died King Rehoboam took the throne and people despised his rule leading to the split in the kingdom.

As we peruse the life of Solomon, what more could a man have wanted? The answer lies in what Solomon had forgotten in his dedication of the Temple - a lasting relationship with God! His father had warned him to walk with God. God had even visited him! He saw the blessing of God on his life. Yet, he sinned greatly. He forgot God and went after other gods.

Solomon writes near the end of his life, describing his search for meaning in life. From Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, Solomon came to this realization:

13 That's the whole story. Here now is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey his commands, for this is everyone's duty. **14** God will judge us for everything we do, including every secret thing, whether good or bad.

Solomon had drifted away from the Lord because of his decisions and desires for the temporal. He eventually returned to God, but God had removed blessing from his life. The loss of God's blessing would not be undone. He made his decision, and God made His. Scripture seems to reveal that Solomon returned to the Lord, by God's mercy and faithfulness. The life of Solomon is a great reminder that God wants our hearts. He wants our love! He wants us to want Him!

The [Life Worth Living](#) introduction provides an extensive list of questions from which to reflect on your life inventory including the day-to-day physical, emotional, time, money and attention elements. Broader questions also include the following:

What are your greatest hopes for yourself? For your community? For the world?

What are your greatest fears? What brings you joy? What are your sources of peace?

What memories trigger responses of satisfaction or delight? What tends to make you feel embarrassed?

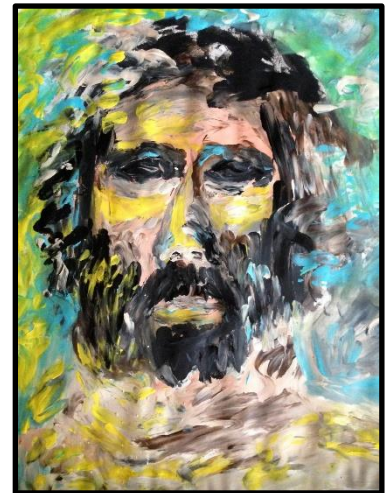
It is important to stop and take time to reflect on life for we too may find ourselves drifting. What are the barriers that prevent you from living a life of wholeness - physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually? Presently, what is your greatest personal need? While claiming *Psalm 121:1-2*, what is your answer to Jesus' question, "What do you want me to do for you?"

Psalm 121:1-2

I lift up my eyes to the mountains — where does my help come from?

My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.

To depend on God is to rely solely on him. When we trust in God, we release our worries and fears to Him and in return we experience a deep peace, that is beyond understanding. We are saved by trusting in Jesus' work on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. At the core of our faith, is a deep trust and dependence on God. Draw near to Him, delight in Him and let Him exchange your desires in your heart, for the desires that He has for you.



Looking ahead – Sunday October 8

Answer “Your Turn” questions at end of ‘What’s worth wanting’ on Page 17

Read Part 1 Chapter 2 - ‘Where are we starting from’ Pages 17-30

Answer “Your Turn Questions” on Page 31-32

