

THE STORY

READ THE STORY. EXPERIENCE THE BIBLE.

Chapter 13: The King Who Had It All

Key Question: What were Solomon's mistakes, and how can we keep from making them ourselves?

Solomon's Wisdom

Pages 175–178

Soon after Solomon became king, the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you."

1. (a) What did Solomon say God had already done (1 Kings 3:6)? (b) What does this tell us about Solomon's attitude? (c) According to Solomon, why was God kind to his father, David (3:6)? (d) Solomon was married and had an infant son.¹⁶⁰ Yet how does he describe himself (3:7)? (e) What does this tell us about his character at this point in his life?

2. (a) Solomon could have asked for anything. What was his request (1 Kings 3:9)? (b) What does this tell us about Solomon's priorities? (c) What was God's reaction (3:10–13)?

3. (a) If God came to you in a dream and asked what you wanted from him, what would you request? (b) What would your request reveal about your attitude and character?

¹⁶⁰ First Kings 11:42 says Solomon reigned 40 years, while 1 Kings 14:21 tells us his son Rehoboam became king at 41.

Solomon's Proverbs

Pages 178–181

At the beginning of Proverbs, Solomon explains why he has collected these wise sayings.

4. (a) In Proverbs 1:1–3, Solomon lists attributes he wanted to help others gain. What two attributes would you like to grow in most? Why? (b) There are 31 chapters in the book of Proverbs, making it easy to grow in wisdom by reading a chapter a day according to the day of the month. If you have done this in the past, describe one practical way Proverbs helped you. (c) If you've never done this, consider beginning now and continuing for at least six months.

Some proverbs instruct us about walking with God.

5. (a) According to Proverbs 3:5–6, if you want the Lord to direct your paths, what three things should you do? (b) How are these three things related? (c) We follow this proverb when we obey God, even though it might seem better not to. We also follow it when we choose to trust God, even when we can't see how any good can come out of our hardships. How can you apply this proverb to a current situation?

Many proverbs say something similar in two ways, emphasizing the point and rounding out the meaning.

6. (a) In Proverbs 3:11, what two things does Solomon say not to do? (b) Proverbs 3:12 gives the reason not to do these things; what is it? (c) Why do parents discipline children they love and delight in? (d) Why does God discipline you, whom he loves and delights in?

More Proverbs

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Some proverbs require a bit of thought.

7. (a) In Proverbs 21:2a, how do our ways seem to us? Why? (b) In Proverbs 21:2b, what does the Lord do? (c) When we think our ways are right, why might the Lord find something different when he weighs our hearts? (d) What can we do so our opinion of our ways matches his?

8. (a) In Proverbs 21:3, what is more acceptable than what to the Lord? (b) In Solomon's time, someone who sinned sacrificed an animal to receive God's forgiveness. Why is doing right more acceptable to the Lord than doing wrong and asking for forgiveness? (c) What insight does this proverb shed on this attitude: "It doesn't matter if I obey God because he will forgive me anyway"? (d) How do Proverbs 21:2 and 21:3 relate to each other?

Proverbs often explain the benefits of living God's way and the hazards of not doing so. The benefits and hazards are general truisms—there might be the rare exception, but for the most part, these wise sayings accurately reflect real-life consequences. Consider these proverbs about finances.

9. (a) According to Proverbs 21:5, what should and shouldn't be a part of your life if you want financial success? (b) Why is Proverbs 21:6 true? (c) What does Proverbs 21:20 teach about finances?

The Temple

Pages 185–189

Solomon built a temple to God in Jerusalem, just as David instructed.

10. (a) What did Solomon realize about the inadequacy of building a temple for God (2 Chronicles 6:18)? (b) What did Solomon ask God to do (verse 6:20)?

When Solomon finished praying, he blessed the people gathered before him.

11. (a) What did Solomon say had not failed (1 Kings 8:56)? (b) Summarize the blessings Solomon pronounces in verses 57–59. (c) What is the purpose for these blessings upon Israel (8:60)? (d) What reminder does Solomon give the people of what was needed for this purpose to be accomplished (8:61)? (e) God will never leave or forsake his children,¹⁶¹ and he has promised to work in us to help us walk in his ways.¹⁶² For God's full purpose to be accomplished in our lives, what do we need?

The Lord appeared to Solomon a second time.

12. (a) What did God tell Solomon in 2 Chronicles 7:12? (b) If the Israelites turned from God and he held back rain or sent a plague, what four things could the people do to receive forgiveness and healing for the land (7:14)?

¹⁶¹ Hebrews 13:5.

¹⁶² Philippians 2:13.

13. (a) If the Israelites instead rejected God, what would God do (7:20)? (b) What would be the reason for these actions against the nation (7:22)? (c) Should this have been enough warning for the people to heed forever? (d) Should this have been enough warning to keep Solomon firm the rest of his life?

Solomon & Women

Pages 189–192

During the time when Solomon was faithful to God, he helped others know God.

14. (a) What did the queen of Sheba do when she heard about Solomon’s fame, despite having to travel 1,500 miles¹⁶³ (1 Kings 10:1)? (b) What does this teach us about the importance of seeking truth? (c) Why did the queen of Sheba glorify God (10:9)?

But Solomon didn’t remain faithful.

15. (a) From where did many of Solomon’s wives come (1 Kings 11:1–2)? (b) Why had God forbidden such marriages (11:2)? (c) What resulted from these marriages (11:3–6)?

¹⁶³ Nearly 1,000 years later, Jesus gave miracles as a sign that he came from God. The unbelieving Jewish leaders discounted them, slandered their source, and demanded more proofs. Jesus said, “The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon’s wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here.”¹⁶³ The Queen of Sheba’s costly pursuit of truth condemned the Jewish leaders who refused to believe Jesus was sent from God, despite their having seen even greater evidence than she.

16. (a) Why did it particularly anger God that Solomon turned from him after he had appeared to him twice (1 Kings 11:9)? (b) Disobeying a smaller command led to disobeying what big command (1 Kings 11:10)? (c) Sometimes people discount the importance of obeying commands they consider small. How does disobeying God in small things lead to disobeying in larger things?

Solomon was wise enough to know the best way to live, but he didn't always do it. In the end, he ignored his own advice: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding."

17. How can you keep from making Solomon's mistake?