

Uncommon: Different on Purpose

Uncommon Wisdom

1 Kings 3:3-15

Intro: One of our deepest human desires when we are young is to fit in, and if we were honest with ourselves, even as adults we desire to be comfortable in our surroundings and find our place in the world. It's only natural! Yet...

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed..." Romans 12:2a

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession..." 1 Peter 2:9a // We are to be different, on purpose! Uncommon

We are starting a new 8-week series at Salem Church entitled "Uncommon: Different on Purpose" which will examine people from the Bible who exhibited an uncommon trait in their relationship with God. Your pastors pray that it will do two things: 1) Inform greater awareness of Biblical narratives, 2) Inspire greater passion for being Different on Purpose in our walk with the Lord!

Today, we will kick off this series talking about Uncommon Wisdom and looking at a powerful passage describing King Solomon in 1 Kings 3.

Years ago, I was watching a football game with Eli (who was probably 4 years old) and our beloved UGA Bulldogs were losing. He said, *"Dad, if Jesus was on our team we would win every game."* *"Yeah, son. You are probably right."* *"I mean, he could just fly right over everybody else and score a touchdown every time!"* *"That's true, I guess."* *"I wish Jesus was on our team!"* That was 4-year-old Eli's wish!!!

What's MY Wish? Forget a genie, if God himself shows up and agrees to answer any prayer you pray in the affirmative...what are YOU asking for? Physical beauty? Financial wealth? Perfect spouse? Some super-power (flying, perpetual youth, etc.)?

Today, we are going to study someone in the Bible who was given such an open door of opportunity. Pray for anything, Solomon, and God will grant it! Let's read the passage, making observations and applications as we go...

"Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father, only he sacrificed and made offerings at the high places. 4 And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place. Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. 5 At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, 'Ask what I shall give you.' 6 And Solomon said, 'You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father; because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. 7 And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. 8 And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. 9 Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?'

10 It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. 11 And God said to him, 'Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, 12 behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. 13 I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. 14 And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.' 15 And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream. Then he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants." **1 Kings 3:3-15**

Main Idea: God Gives Uncommon Wisdom when His People Seek It

1. Our Hearts Must Be Positioned for Uncommon Wisdom

Observation: Solomon was king David's son and was the newly appointed heir to the throne. In one sense, he was quite privileged but in another he had a mess of a family! 1) Son of Bathsheba the stolen wife, 2) Revolting older brother Absalom, 3) Disgusting older brother Amnon, and 4) Conniving older brother Adonijah. **Messed up families do not prevent us from Uncommon Wisdom!**

How to Position our Hearts for Uncommon Wisdom:

- 1) **Obedience** to what has been revealed (sacrifice in worship, vs. 4)
- 2) **Trust** in a Covenant relationship (promise fulfilled, vs. 6)
- 3) **Dependence** in God for Everything (little child, vs. 7)
- 4) **Selflessness** with Uncommon Wisdom (chosen people, vs.8)

Solomon wasn't asking for wisdom to write the next great best-selling book, or to make himself wealthy, or impress people at parties, or for any selfish purpose.

"Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?" 1 Kings 3:9 // So-That test that should accompany every prayer!

Trans: Five times in this passage the word *ASK* is found, and five times the word *GIVE* is found. God is inviting us to ask for Uncommon Wisdom because he loves to give uncommon wisdom as our hearts are positioned for it!

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2. Our Minds Must Understand the Nature of Uncommon Wisdom

Observation: We've seen some of "why" Solomon asked, now we're going to consider "what" Solomon asked of God. Again, he could have asked for anything!

Uncommon Wisdom: Hearing and Obedient Heart (*Understanding mind* -vs. 9, *understanding to discern* - vs. 11, and *wise & discerning mind* - vs. 12).

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!" Proverbs 11:10

“Solomon is saying, ‘Give me the ability to know what you want even when it’s not clear.’” **J.D. Greear**

“Wisdom is knowing how to navigate the realities of life when the rules don’t help.” **Timothy Keller**

I am the least musical person in my family (obviously), but I love my family members who are which has resulted in two types of experiences: 1) Kids recitals, concerts, and performances as well as 2) Taking the people I love to Jazz clubs from time to time. Now, in both the kids concerts and the jazz clubs there will be lots of notes played that are not in the melody of the song. Kids miss the melody because they don’t know it very well and are limited in their ability. Professional jazz musicians RIFF off the melody BECAUSE they know it so well and have a greater ability to improvise in a way that fits the melody when an opportunity presents.

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3. Our Commitment Must Always Be to Uncommon Wisdom

Observation: God was eager to provide Solomon wisdom, and all the things that he did not ask for in favor of wisdom. He did not trick God into giving him everything he *REALLY* wanted by asking for wisdom but was sincere at this point in his life. But, God’s blessing on Solomon’s life based on the covenant he made with his father David was CONDITIONAL. Notice...

“And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.” **1 Kings 3:14**

Like Solomon, we are prone to desperately ask God for wisdom when we think we need it and go our own way when we think we’ve “got it.” Uncommon wisdom is a lifelong pursuit and can easily be missed in moments of pride!

“The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight.” **Proverbs 4:7 // Uncommon Wisdom is a lifeline pursuit!**

Conc: Solomon’s life is a cautionary tale of someone who was sincere and hungry for Uncommon Wisdom, only to drift away foolishly to his own temptations to sexual immorality (700 wives, 300 concubines), greed (performative wealth) and idolatry (built altars to foreign gods for his foreign wives). So, before we try to make a hero out of Solomon we need to be reminded of his failures and faults, but...

“...behold, something greater than Solomon is here.” **Matthew 12:42b**

“But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” **1 Corinthians 1:23-24 // Uncommon Wisdom is found in Christ**

Don’t wish for wisdom, seek Jesus! THAT is Uncommon: Different on Purpose!

Song: Holy Spirit (There’s Nothing Worth More)

Sources and Further Reading Opportunities

- **Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the OT** – Warren Wiersbe (1993)
- **CSB Study Bible** – Trevin Wax, Ed. (2017)
- **New American Commentary: 1-2 Kings** – Paul R. House (1995)
- **Solomon: The Man Who Had it All** – J.D. Greear (2017)
- **Exalting Jesus in 1&2 Kings** – Tony Merida (2015)