

Solo Mon



THE WISDOM AND FOLLY
OF THE SON OF DAVID



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In the West, where wealth and consumption are the language that people speak everyday, it is important to remember the difference between wisdom and folly. King Solomon is known even by non-Christians for his wealth and wisdom, and his story within the pages of the Bible is both amazing and cautionary. Solomon's father, King David, had unified Israel and received promise from God that one from his line would always be on the throne, a King forever, and the Book of Kings tells the story starting with Solomon. It may not be what you expect, but it reveals Israel's present longing and it points forward to Israel's and ultimately, humanity's greatest need – the One True King.

ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

This study booklet is intended to be worked through in a group. Each session is structured with INTRODUCTION, READ, and DISCUSS sections to help navigate and dig into the Biblical text.

The READ section is extensive per session. To get the most from it, take time to read each session's scripture ahead of time. Read it out loud and also read it quietly. Prepare your heart and mind to study and apply it with your group.

There is also a section entitled LIVE IT OUT. It is designed to help you take a specific action step towards Jesus in regards to the passage you just studied. When sharing about yourself in group, be honest and don't hesitate to be vulnerable, ensuring you always protect each other's confidence. After going through each session, pray for one another, and use the answers shared to encourage, strengthen, and care for each other not just in your group time, but between your meetings.

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Session 1

THE TRANSITION OF POWER: DAVID TO SOLOMON

2 Samuel 7, 1 Kings 1-2



INTRODUCTION

For the last 40 years, King David has ruled with justice and has established Israel and Judah as a united kingdom. As he nears the end of his life, David expresses his desire to build a permanent home for the LORD, the Temple. However, God reveals to the prophet Nathan that He has a different plan for the building of the Temple and how He will fulfill His promises to David.

Nathan recounts the LORD's covenant to King David: "The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (2 Samuel 7:11b-13). In the midst of this enduring promise from the LORD and rest from his enemies, an internal power struggle arises between his two sons as David lays on his deathbed. Jump into 1 Kings 1-2 to discover the drama that occurs during the shift of power from David to Solomon. Watch for how God's commitment to David remains faithful and Solomon's rule is established despite many human efforts to thwart it.

READ

Read 2 Samuel 7 and 1 Kings 1-2

DISCUSS

1. Read Genesis 3:15. From the offspring of Adam and Eve, all the way to King David and Solomon, God's people placed hope that a redeeming Savior King was just on the horizon. Why was Solomon a captivating character and why do you think so many people placed hope in him?
2. Read 1 Kings 2:2-4. What must Solomon do to prosper and retain the throne of a unified kingdom?
3. Read 2 Samuel 7:12-16. How is God's covenant with David different from the agreement made with Solomon?
4. Refer to 2 Samuel 7:5-28. How does the LORD respond to King David's desire and aspiration to build a temple? How did David respond? When is the last time you felt like God said no to one of your own dreams and aspirations? How did you respond?
5. What did God promise to establish for David's descendants?
6. How would you define God's command to "walk in his ways" for Christians today? How well are you doing at this "walk"?

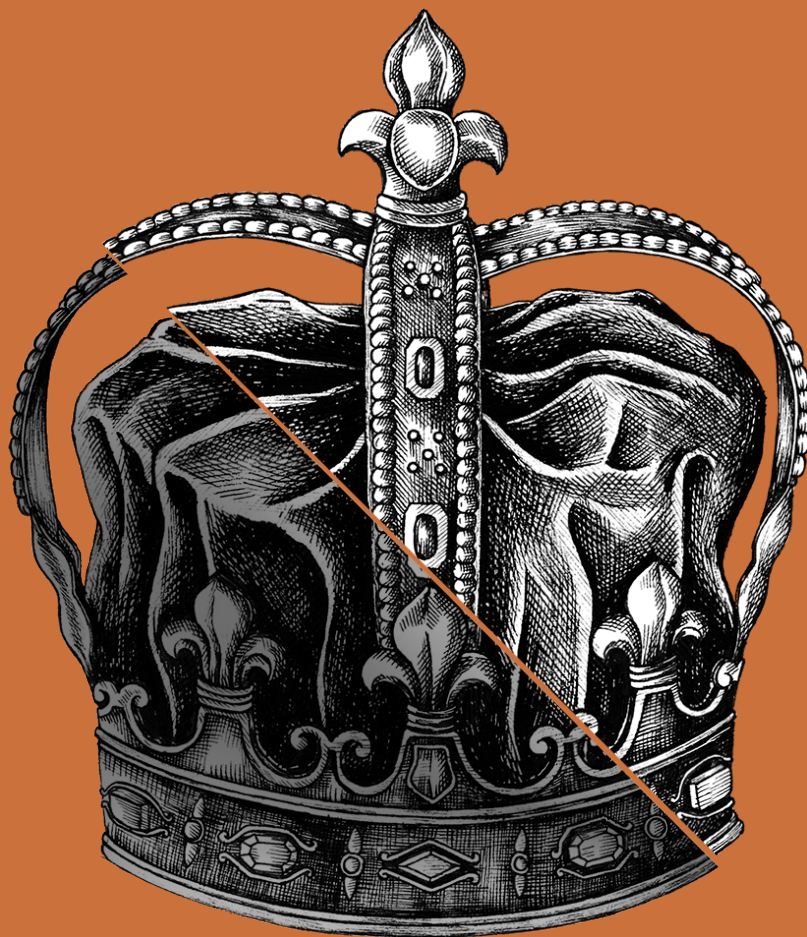


LIVE IT OUT

Like David, we also aspire to build wealth, buy a home, move to a different state, build a legacy for our children, and accomplish things—even in the name of the LORD. Yet, sometimes God is not aligned with those aspirations.

Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.” - James 4:13-15

What’s one aspiration you’re struggling with right now that you can surrender to God?



Session 2

THE GREATEST REQUEST

1 Kings 3



INTRODUCTION

In 1 Kings 3, Solomon, the newly appointed king of Israel, travels to Gibeon to offer sacrifices to God. During the night, God appears to him in a dream, granting him the opportunity to ask for anything he desires. Recognizing his own youth and inexperience in leading the nation, Solomon humbly requests wisdom and discernment to rule justly. Impressed by Solomon's request, God not only grants him wisdom but also promises to bless him with riches, honor, and a long life if he remains faithful.

Solomon's wisdom is brought to light when two women appear before him, both claiming to be the mother of a baby. Dive into the text to discover how Solomon uses the wisdom granted by God to reveal the true mother of the baby. This encounter is one of the many that made Solomon's wisdom spread throughout the land, establishing him as the fair and just king of Israel.

READ

1 Kings 3

(Take note of how many times the verb, “ask” is used)

DISCUSS

1. Why do you think King Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter? What does this maneuver say about his political and diplomatic ability?
2. What seems unusual about 1 Kings 3:3? Before the Temple was built, where did the Israelites go to worship? Now read 2 Chronicles 1:1-6 to clarify.
3. What words does Solomon use to describe himself when he speaks with the LORD? What does this tell us about his relationship with the LORD?
4. Read the very words of Solomon about how to get wisdom in Proverbs 1:7, 2:1-11. Based on Solomon's example in 1 Kings and in his writings, how do you receive wisdom from God?
5. Who came to King Solomon to ask for his ruling wisdom? What do you think about Solomon's ruling to cut the baby in two pieces? Do you think he would have done it? Why/why not?
6. How does God respond to Solomon's request for wisdom? What does this tell us about God's generosity?
7. How would you define wisdom today? Do you find yourself to be wise? In what ways?



LIVE IT OUT

Life can be extremely complicated and challenging—think about marriage, children, in-laws, work and finances. These challenges can often appear as losing propositions without the right wisdom to guide us. God says in James 1:5-8 that He gives wisdom to those who ask, just like He did for Solomon. But there is a condition to this promise. That condition is faith and obedience.

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do. - James 1:5-8

What area of your life do you need abundant wisdom to navigate? Where do you need to be obedient for God to bestow this wisdom?



Session 3

CRACKS IN THE FOUNDATION

1 Kings 4-7



INTRODUCTION

In 1 Kings 4-7, the wisdom granted to Solomon is displayed magnificently as he establishes an efficient government structure, partnerships, work force, and the administration required to build the Temple. Israel prospers under the rule of Solomon and it is at God's appointed time and based upon His promise to David that His Temple will be built.

The construction of the Temple takes years and involves crafting various elements—inner sanctuary, main hall, outer courtyard and so forth. Up until this point, Israel's God has not had a permanent place for His presence to dwell and His people to worship.

In the midst of Solomon's success and building of the Temple, God reminds Solomon of the importance of his fidelity and commitment to obey God's commandments for His presence to dwell in the Temple with His people (1 Kings 6:11-13). Will he be able to follow through?

READ

1 Kings 4-7

DISCUSS

1. Why are all of the details about Solomon's officials, governors and daily provisions important? What do they imply about his wisdom, authority, and intentionality? (1 Kings 4)
2. Re-read 1 Kings 4:29-34. How is Solomon's wisdom described here? Discuss the breadth of topics related to his wisdom, great and small. Why do you think kings were attracted to this wisdom?
3. When constructing the Temple, countless details describe the interior carvings and decorations, and the amount of gold that was overlaid within it. Since the majority of Israel would not be able to enter the inner courts of the Temple to see it, why do you think God wanted them to go to such lengths for the interior of the Temple? To what does the imagery point?
4. Look at 1 Kings 6:11-13. Discuss the promises God gave to Solomon. Are they conditional or unconditional?
5. How long did it take Solomon to build the Temple? How long did it take Solomon to build his palace? (see 1 Kings 6:38, 1 Kings 7:1) What might this reveal about Solomon's priorities?
6. Read Acts 7:42-53. In the New Testament, Stephen recalls Solomon's work, but what point is Stephen making and to whom is he making it (see Acts 7:1)?



LIVE IT OUT

Walking in wisdom requires having our priorities in order. Even during the most iconic build of the century with the Temple, we're hinted at distracting priorities with the construction of his own palace which took Solomon twice as long to build. Though we're not building an iconic temple, we can be distracted with the construction of our own businesses, side-hustles, home renovations, even treating our kids like projects.

“But seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” - Matthew 6:33

“But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.” - James 3:17

Where have you been distracted to build your own palace instead of prioritizing the LORD's will? Where have you spent double the time on your own agenda as opposed to another agenda God may have for you?



Session 4
THE TEMPLE DEDICATION
1 Kings 8-9:9



INTRODUCTION

The construction of the Temple is finally complete. It has been thoughtfully carved, coated in gold and bronze and every inch of it has been constructed with intention. But it is simply still a common Near Eastern building until the LORD's presence fills it and puts His Name there to dwell.

In 1 Kings 8-9, Solomon hosts a major gathering of all Israel to bring in the last articles from the Tent of Meeting and bring in the most important item: the ark of the covenant. Thousands of offerings are brought to the altar and Solomon prays over the Temple culminating with a dark cloud coming upon the Temple revealing the LORD's presence with them.

At this point in time, the people rejoice that God has fulfilled His promises to David that a son would build Him a Temple, but will it last forever? Discover what is needed for the Temple to remain the centerpiece of Israel, and what will happen if idolatry creeps in. Each of these encounters in Scripture beckons us to look beyond to another Son of David.

READ

1 Kings 8-9:9

DISCUSS

1. What was the importance of the Tent of Meeting or Tabernacle when the Israelites traveled to the Promised Land?
2. Why is the ark of the covenant so important? What is included inside of it and what is the history of those items? Discuss stories you remember that include the ark of the covenant.
3. Look back to Exodus 40 when the God of Israel fills the Tabernacle with His glory. What does it look like? How does this compare with how His presence is manifested at the Temple dedication with Solomon?
4. Review Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings 8:22-53. What themes do you find recurring? What are the seven petitions that Solomon makes for the people of Israel?
5. After reviewing Solomon's dedication and prayer for the Temple, what does Solomon see as the purpose of the Temple?
6. Look over the LORD's response to Solomon's dedication of the Temple. What does the LORD require? What are the specific failures that are in view? Can you recall similar failures written about earlier in the Old Testament?
7. How did Jesus—who was often called the “Son of David”—speak about the Temple?



LIVE IT OUT

If we think about the glory cloud that moved with the Tabernacle and the glory that came into the Temple when Solomon dedicated it, it is clear that God's presence is not only awesome but absolutely essential as the center of life for the people of God.

Have you thought about what this means now? Consider two claims in the New Testament. Jesus claims He is the new temple:

Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken. - John 2:19-22

And consider what the Apostle Paul says about those who are in Christ:

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple. - 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

Being in right relationship with the True King, Jesus Christ, means reclaiming the our intended role as royal priests, reflecting his glory into all creation. What is one simple thing you can do this week to reflect this glory either in your workplace, school, or at home?



Session 5
SOLOMON FALLS AWAY
1 Kings 9:10-11:43



INTRODUCTION

Like watching a movie when the dark ominous music begins to build in the background, we experience the story of Solomon. Consider his request for wisdom, his great wealth, and the temple being filled with the glory of the LORD after Solomon builds it and dedicates it. But under the surface we can't miss the undertone. Is Solomon great because of God or because of Solomon? Are his decisions truly as wise as the reader of Kings might have lead us to believe? Is Solomon living up to the wisdom literature attributed to his name?

READ

1 Kings 9:10-11:43, Deuteronomy 17:14-20

DISCUSS

1. Have you ever watched a close relationship separate? What caused it? How did it affect other relationships involved?
2. Why did the Queen of Sheba travel such a distance to meet with Solomon? If you think about 1 Kings 10:1-13, what are the things that seemed most impressive to the Queen? How much of the draw was about Solomon's God?
3. After reading 1 Kings 11:1-8, it is clear that Solomon was affected by his foreign wives. Read Proverbs 9 and talk about the differences between the two women depicted. What is the irony?
4. List the different enemies that the LORD incited against Solomon for his folly. Where did each come from?
5. In Deuteronomy 17:14-20, why did the LORD warn against many wives, excessive wealth, and even horses from Egypt? What do you think the main point is?
6. Reflecting on the story of Solomon, what are the things that draw your heart away from God? What are some strategies you can use to help avoid them?
7. Have you ever had a relationship that drew your heart away from Jesus? Why do you think it happened?

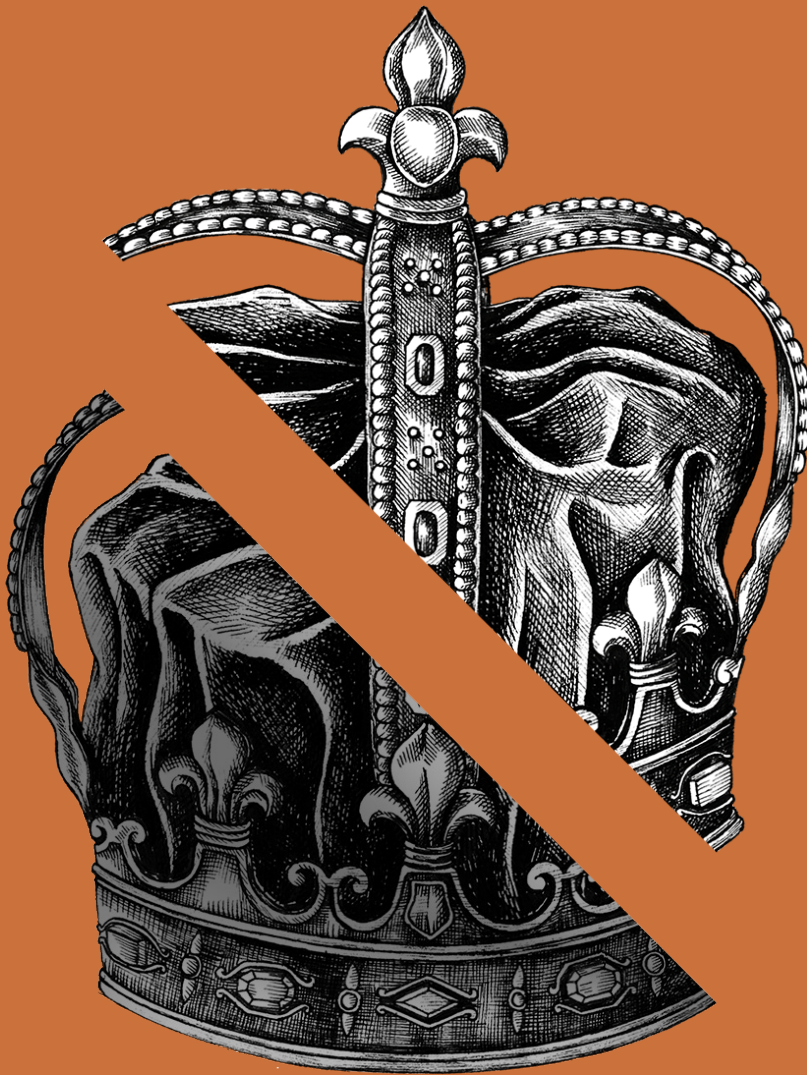


LIVE IT OUT

You may not have hundreds of spouses that confront your belief systems, or so much silver that it is unmeasurable, but you have tendencies that can make you put something in the place only God should be. Think of it like a great throneroom. You are invited in, but when you kneel down, instead of kneeling before the One on the great throne, you kneel before something else, something lesser. It is an irony like reading Solomon's words found in the Book of Proverbs. In Proverbs 9, we are called to imagine two women, Lady Wisdom, and Lady Folly, each representing a path in life's journey. Every decision is choosing a path. Sometimes we choose poorly because we don't know better, and sometimes we choose poorly simply because we want to.

Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness," and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile." 1 Corinthians 3:18-20

What decisions have you made lately that were obviously about your desires rather than God's will? Is now the time for confession and repentance?



Session 6
THE LEGACY OF FOLLY
1 Kings 12



INTRODUCTION

From the greatness of David and God's covenant with him, the story of Solomon seems headed to even greater heights. All the promise of the covenant is ready to land squarely on King Solomon. Isn't he the One? But after we experience Solomon's covenant failures, we see the rapid separation and demise of the unified kingdom that had come together under his father's reign. Now, all that is left is strife, turmoil, and an ancient version of civil war. This is only the beginning of the Book of Kings. Imagine a Jewish reader experiencing the story and the successive failures of the long line of kings, wondering what will bring Israel's throne back to glory.

READ

1 Kings 12, 2 Kings 18-20

DISCUSS ---

1. What is the first act that King Rehoboam made as king? Would you call it wise or foolish? Why? Who “brought about” the result of this act?
2. What was Jeroboam’s first act? What motivated him to do it? Was it motivated by a desire to worship? Discuss.
3. Proverbs 8:15 says, “By [Wisdom] kings reign, and rulers decree what is just.” Now read the surrounding verses in Proverbs 8:12-21. Describe how both Rehoboam and Jeroboam measure against this proverb.
4. As a later example, King Hezekiah in 2 Kings 18-20 seems to be a very good king. What made him a good king? What was his ultimate folly? How is he similar to King Solomon?
5. Consider the expectations of Israel regarding the covenant the LORD made with King David. It is yet to be fulfilled, because Jesus is not the Messiah. Have you ever received a promise, but never saw it fulfilled? What can be a natural human response?
6. Do you have expectations of what God should do for you that have not been fulfilled? How are you responding to it? Do you ever try to make those same things happen on your own?



LIVE IT OUT

The truth is that we all have some level of foolishness within us. It seems to be part of humanity's fallen state. But, if we look close enough, our own foolishness tends to happen when we take the True King out of our calculations. God has fulfilled His promises in Jesus, the Christ. He is King. He covers the multitude of our folly and failure.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. - Philippians 2:9-11

The One who made himself lower. The name above every name humbled himself. He is the exalted One. He is worthy of your bowed knee. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. He is wisdom.

In your mistakes and failures, do you still trust in King Jesus' work on your behalf? What parts of your life are you building that are not under the Lordship of Jesus?



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