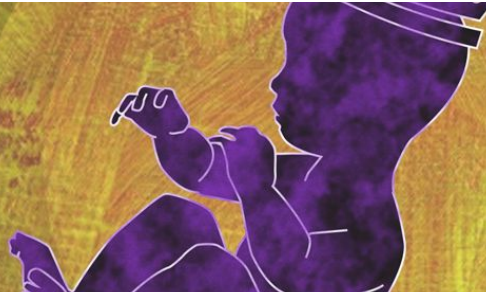


GREAT EXPECTATIONS



The narrative of scripture is punctuated with stories of birth. Every new life is special, but God's Word tells us about a number of babies who entered the world under remarkable or even miraculous circumstances, each carrying with them the hopes of others, and each ushering in the next chapter in the story of God. Their lives and ministries foreshadowed the birth of another, one who would assume the expectations of all. "Chains shall He break, and in His name, all oppression shall cease."

LIFEGroup Gathering Guide

Week 4 - Solomon

Getting Started

- *Larger LIFEGroups may consider splitting into same gender groups in order to facilitate more meaningful discussion.*
- *Groups will not have enough time to discuss every question. Leaders are encouraged to skip questions and make substitutions based on what's best for their group.*

Warm Ups (15 Min)

- Everyone share a "High" from the week and a "Low" from the week.
- Who is the most wise person that you know? What makes a person wise?

Scripture Study (30 Min)

- 2 Samuel 7 has a lot of language placing great importance on the descendents of David, and his son Solomon starts his reign impressively. 2 Chronicles 1 records how Solomon famously asked for the wisdom to govern God's people diligently. Solomon recorded much of that wisdom into proverbs, which are small, bite-sized sayings that teach a point. Open to the book of Proverbs and see if there's one that catches your interest.
- You would think that all of that wisdom would keep you on the straight and narrow, but only if you use it! Read 1 Kings 11:1-13. Many heroes of scripture are also deeply flawed, and Solomon was no exception.

- Solomon was mostly a great leader, but one flaw was that his succession plan was not adequate, and the country split apart into two separate countries upon his death. From the most wise man that ever lived, we are left wanting more.
- Ultimately, even the most amazing wisdom ever wielded by a mortal was not enough to deliver God's people from their struggles. It would take the wisdom of God! Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-31. What's the difference between the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God? What are the priorities or characteristics of the wisdom of world and the wisdom of God?
- Jesus' death had the opposite effect of Solomon's - it united people. It took fractured people and made them a body. A church. A group of people united around the purpose of sharing God's message with the world. Sharing that message effectively and making a difference takes wisdom.
- Do you lack wisdom, or some other necessity? How would you go about gaining it?

Group Prayer (15 Min)

Trios (20 Min)

Same gender groups of three. If numbers are uneven, go to groups of two.

- **Spiritual Velocity:**
 - How did you see God at work in your life this week?
 - What has God been teaching you in His Word as you've encountered it in this week's Life Journal readings, Sunday message, or LIFEGroup study?
 - What's an area of your life in which you know you need to repent or grow? How can we encourage you?
- **Joining Jesus on His Mission:**
 - What kind of conversations are you having with non-Christians? How's your 3-2-1 challenge going? Share about connections you're building and spiritual conversations you're having with non-believing neighbors and friends.
 - List the names of non-Christians in your life that you can pray for:

 - What good can we do around here? (Missional party? Service project?)
 - How can we help each other, our neighbors, and our city in prayer?



LIFEGroup Relational Guidelines

TIME: Please be sensitive about the amount of time you share. Group time is limited.

I will seek to avoid conversation dominating.

LISTENING: We seek to cultivate a group culture in which everyone can be real and open about their struggles and celebrations. If we feel like we must normally “wear a mask,” this is an environment in which we are encouraged to “take it off.”

I commit to being an understanding listener. I will not hold side conversations while you are sharing. Before responding; I will first seek to listen to you all the way through. If your struggles are emotional, financial, legal, medical, relational, spiritual, sexual, or any other, I endeavor not to be surprised. I endeavor not to offer advice without your permission.

CONFIDENTIALITY: What is said in the group stays in the group.

I promise to hold your words in confidence. They stay with me.

“I” STATEMENTS: It’s easy to talk about the issues of others, but for our purposes, we want you to put yourself on the table. Try to use “I” statements rather than “you”, “them”, “they”, etc.

SELF-AWARENESS: Be aware of how you are personally affecting the environment through your words, actions, and non-verbal communication.

SILENCE: Can play an important role in group discussion as it allows for people to process the topic or question being considered. Don’t always jump right in - give people a moment.

CONFLICT: We will resolve conflict biblically. When conflict or sin issues between group members arise, we make sure to honor God and each other in the ways that resolve issues. The following are a few key Scriptures in this regard:

- If someone sins against you - *Matthew 18:15-20*
- Restoring someone in sin - *Galatians 6:1-5*
- Forgive a sinner - *Colossians 3:12-13*

Reconciling differences - *Matthew 5:23-24, Matthew 7:1-5*