

Solomon's Wisdom

(1 Kings 3:4-28)

Introduction

Imagine for a moment what would run through your mind if God told you that you could have whatever you asked for! If you could have anything you wanted, what would you ask for?

Today in our lesson we will learn that God loves to give good things to his children.

Opening Prayer

Father, teach us this morning how important it is for us to make wise decisions in life. We want our lives to please You in every way. Don't let us forget that we can always ask You for wisdom—any time and any place we need it. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God. (James 1:5a NKJ)

Lesson

David, the king of Israel, had lived to be a very old man. He had been king for a long time. Before he died, he chose one of his sons, Solomon, to be the next king. Solomon loved God and wanted to please Him in every way.

One night while King Solomon was sleeping, something very wonderful happened. God spoke to him in a dream.

1 Kings 3:5

That night the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream, and God said, "What do you want? Ask, and I will give it to you!"

God said, "Ask Me for whatever you want Me to give you."

Anything?! That meant Solomon could ask for all the money in the world. He could ask to be the most powerful king ever! He could ask God to get rid of all his enemies! All kinds of thoughts must have gone through Solomon's mind. He could have said, "Give me lots of gold and riches, and large, beautiful houses, and much land, many servants, and lots of cattle." But he didn't. What do you think Solomon asked God to give him?

1 Kings 3:7

"Now, O LORD my God, you have made me king instead of my father, David, but I am like a little child who doesn't know his way around.

Solomon was probably about 20 years old. He knew he did not have the experience or the wisdom to govern a nation of people.

1 Kings 3:9

Give me an understanding heart so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong. For who by himself is able to govern this great people of yours?"

Now, Solomon could have been filled with pride. He could have thought, "I'm King David's son" and had a cocky attitude about becoming the King of Israel. But he didn't. He was humble. He told God, "I'm just a kid. I don't know how to be King. Please give me wisdom so that I'll know what is right and what is wrong. I need Your help to rule your people wisely." Solomon humbly asked only for wisdom to do his job.

1 Kings 3:10

The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for wisdom.

God was very pleased with Solomon's humility.

1 Kings 3:11-12

So God replied, "Because you have asked for wisdom in governing my people with justice and have not asked for a long life or wealth or the death of your enemies— I will give you what you asked for! I will give you a wise and understanding heart such as no one else has had or ever will have!"

God was pleased with Solomon's request, and said, "Because you have asked for wisdom, I will give it to you. You shall be the wisest man who ever lived. And, I am going to give you the things you did not ask for..."

1 Kings 3:13

And I will also give you what you did not ask for—riches and fame! No other king in all the world will be compared to you for the rest of your life!

And then God says that He'll give Solomon a long life, too.

1 Kings 3:14

And if you follow me and obey my decrees and my commands as your father, David, did, I will give you a long life."

Solomon could have asked God for money, power or fame. But, because he asked for wisdom, God gave him even more than he had asked for! God is eager to do what is best for you, too.

Solomon's chance to find out if God really did give him wisdom came along soon. One day, two ladies who were having a terrible fight came to ask King Solomon to settle their disagreement.

1 Kings 3:17-18

"Please, my lord," one of them began, "this woman and I live in the same house. I gave birth to a baby while she was with me in the house. Three days later this woman also had a baby. We were alone; there were only two of us in the house."

Here's what happened: Two women, living together in the same house, both had babies within three days of each other. Then one night one woman's baby died and while the other woman was sleeping, she switched the babies. When the second woman woke up, she had the dead baby in her arms. Instantly, she realized it wasn't her child! But when she accused the other woman of switching babies, the first woman denied it. So, the two women came to King Solomon to settle their argument.

1 Kings 3:22

Then the other woman interrupted, "It certainly was your son, and the living child is mine." "No," the first woman said, "the living child is mine, and the dead one is yours." And so they argued back and forth before the king.

How would you settle this argument? [Teacher, let the children respond.] Let's read on to see how King Solomon solves this problem...

1 Kings 3:24-25

All right, bring me a sword." So a sword was brought to the king. Then he said, "Cut the living child in two, and give half to one woman and half to the other!"

Woe, that sounds pretty drastic, doesn't it?! Let's see if this was a wise thing for King Solomon to do...

1 Kings 3:26

Then the woman who was the real mother of the living child, and who loved him very much, cried out, "Oh no, my lord! Give her the child— please do not kill him!" But the other woman said, "All right, he will be neither yours nor mine; divide him between us!"

The idea of seeing her baby die was too much for the true mother. She cried, "Let the other woman have him! Don't kill the child."

But the woman who switched the babies said, "Yes, cut the child in half! Neither of us should have him."

So, now Solomon knew for sure which mother was the truly the mother of the living child. He knew that the real mother was the one who would rather let someone else have the baby than to let him be hurt.

1 Kings 3:27

Then the king said, "Do not kill the child, but give him to the woman who wants him to live, for she is his mother!"

Word of the king's decision spread quickly throughout the nation. All the people were amazed. They knew that God had given Solomon great wisdom.

God wants you to be wise in what you say and what you do. What kinds of problems do you face where you might need the Wisdom of Solomon? [Teacher, let the children discuss.] He will help you to know the right thing to do at the right time. All you need to do is ask Him for wisdom and he will give you all you need.

James 1:5 says, "If you want to know what God wants you to do, ask him, and he will gladly tell you, for he is always ready to give an abundant supply of wisdom to all who ask him; he will not scold you for asking."

Closing Prayer

Father, You know how hard it is for us to live a life that is well pleasing to you. Help us to remember to call upon You when we get confused and don't know what to do in life. Thank You that You are always ready and willing to give us the wisdom we need to choose the right thing to do. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Key Word Match

Preparation:

1. Make two sets of key words from the lesson on large squares of colored construction paper. For example:
 - Solomon
 - Ask
 - Dream
 - Riches
 - Babies
 - Little Child
 - Wisdom
 - James 1:5
 - Humble
 - Mothers
 - Sword
 - Understanding Heart
2. Tape the squares face down on the white board.

Play:

Form the children into two teams. The first player from the first team turns over two cards. If the cards match, the child (with the help of his team) must tell why that key word is significant in the context of the lesson. If the answer is correct, they get to keep the matched set. If the answer is incorrect, the other team has an opportunity to explain why that word is important to the story. If they get a right answer, they get the matched set. Whichever team has the most matched sets at the end, is the winning team. Let the winning team squirt the other team with silly string or bombard them with marshmallows.

Wisdom Game

Before class write one letter of the word "wisdom" on the front of six cards. On the back, describe situations such as the following:

- You're not supposed to wear your brother's clothes without asking first, but you want to borrow his blue sweater for school today, and he's already gone. What do you do?
- You're visiting grandmother. When no one else is in the room, you break a lamp. But no one saw you do it. What do you do?
- Your mom told you never to run in the house. You ran through the family room, fell, and cut your lip. Your mom is comforting you and asks you what happened. What do you say?
- You come home from school, it's a beautiful day, but you have a lot of homework to do. Your friends want to play. What do you tell them?
- Your mom and dad have told you that it is wrong to smoke cigarettes, but your friends want you to try it. What do you do?
- A stranger comes up to you as you walk home from school and asks you what time it is. What do you say?

PLAY:

1. Have children sit in a circle.
2. Say: *God appeared to King Solomon in a dream and told him that he could ask for anything he wanted! Wow! That sounds exciting. He could have anything he wanted. Are you wondering what Solomon asked for? We're going to play a game to find out. Before we do that, try and guess.* [Teacher, let the children guess but don't tell them the answer yet.]
3. Shuffle the index cards, and then read the situations to children. Discuss several options after each one. Ask kids to answer each

question, turn the card over and place it on the floor in order, spelling "wisdom."

4. After discussing all six of the situations, point out the word "wisdom" and say: King Solomon could have asked God for anything in the world – money, power, a beautiful palace. But instead, he asked for wisdom. In our game you chose wise solutions to your problems. King Solomon was a good king because he was wise. Wisdom is a gift from God, and it's a good thing for all of us to ask for!

Or, use the following questions in a game of your choice:

1. What kind of problems did Solomon face when he became king? (He was young and needed to know how to be a good king. He had to decide who the real mother of a baby was.)
2. What did Solomon tell God that he wanted? (Wisdom.) What else could Solomon have asked for?
3. How did Solomon become wise? (Asked God for wisdom.)
4. How did Solomon show wisdom in today's lesson? (He asked God for wisdom. He made a wise decision about the two mothers.)
5. How did Solomon use God's wisdom? (Solomon used wisdom to help him know who the real mother of the baby was.)
6. How did people know God had made Solomon wise?
7. When do you need help deciding what's right to do on the playground? At school? In your neighborhood?
8. What does the Bible say we should do if we need help deciding the right thing to do? (James 1:5)
9. What does the Bible tell us to ask for in James 1:5? (Wisdom.)

10. When might a child your age need wisdom from God? What kinds of problems do children your age face? (Have a lot of homework to do, but friends want to play. Friends want them to do something Mom or Dad said not to do. Accidentally broke something and are afraid to tell what happened.)
11. What can you do when you need wisdom? (Pray. Read the Bible. Talk to an adult.)
12. Tell me the name of someone besides God who you think is very wise. What do you think makes a person wise?
13. When is a time you need to act wisely by telling the truth?
14. What wise instruction has your mom or dad or teacher told you? (Look both ways when crossing the street. Don't talk to strangers. Don't touch the stove.)
15. How does God help us to become wise? (Gives us instructions in the Bible. Gives us parents and teachers to help us learn His commands. Helps us know the right thing to do.)

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