

General Church Education



Family Lesson: I Kings 3

The Wisdom

of Solomon

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Family Lesson 10 - A

The Wisdom of Solomon
I Kings 3

Family Talk:
THE WISE CHOICE OF SOLOMON

Rev. Donald Rose

What an interesting story! The Lord appeared to Solomon and told him to **ask**. The Lord said, “**Ask, what shall I give you?**” (I Kings 3:5). And you can see from the story that this started Solomon thinking. He spoke quite a few words to the Lord as he thought, “**And the speech pleased the Lord**” (I Kings 3:10).

What if you were told to ask? What if it were you to whom the Lord said, “What shall I give you?” Would you be able to answer in a few seconds? No, you would want to be careful that you asked for something really good. We might say that we all know what we want, but if at a most important moment of our lives we were asked by the Lord, “What shall I give you?” we might not ask for things we want right now.

Solomon might have wanted some unimportant things. Perhaps he wanted riches or long life or the death of his enemies, but when it came to saying what the Lord should give him he did not ask for those. The Lord was pleased that Solomon did not ask for less important things, but turned his mind to something of greater importance.

Just think if at a certain moment you want a glass of water. Or maybe at a certain time of your life there is some article of clothing or some thing you are wishing you could buy or could receive as a present. What if it were then put to you, “What shall I give you?” Would you answer, “I want a glass of water?” Or would you answer, “I want a sweater, or a watch, or some other object”? No, you would not waste that important moment on some unimportant thing that you happened to want. At such an important moment you would turn your thoughts away from unimportant things and start to think of what is more important. Suppose someone were given a wonderful chance to ask the Lord for something, and that person said, “Well, I will not just ask for something that will last a short time. I will ask for enough money to cover my needs for food and clothing for the rest of my life.” Would it be wise to ask for that?

A person could have all the food and clothing he would ever need and still not be happy. A person could have a life of ease and not be happy. A person could have riches in this world and then after death have nothing to show for it.

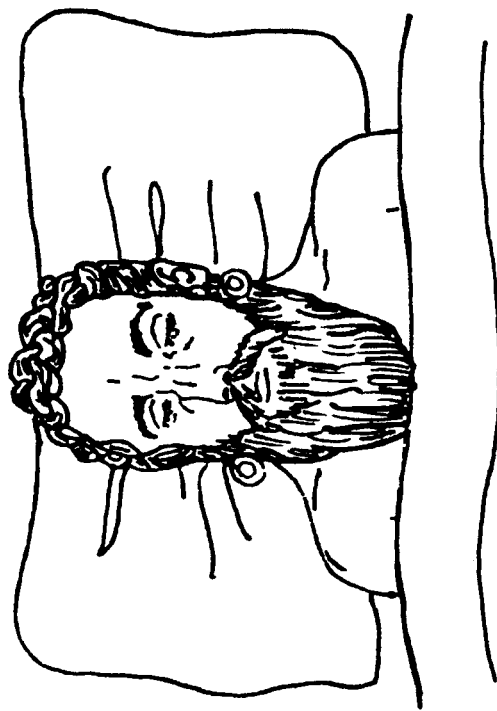
Which would be better to ask for, money or happiness? What good is money if you are not happy? And what is it that makes happiness? Is it not the good qualities of love and wisdom from the Lord? Is it not the great feeling of being useful and having the satisfaction of having your talents be helpful to other people? It is so useful to pause and think of this question: “What shall I give you?”

Isn't it interesting that the question made Solomon start thinking of how lucky he was? He started to think of what good things the Lord had already done for him. He was thankful to the Lord for what the Lord had done for David, his father. And now as he prepared to become king himself, he asked the Lord to help him to be a really good king. And that did not just mean a king with lots of money. It meant a king with an understanding heart — a king with the wisdom to be of real help to people. The story is a great story, for it tells of someone who could have asked that others should serve him, but who instead asked to be given the wisdom to be able to serve others. This speech pleased the Lord.

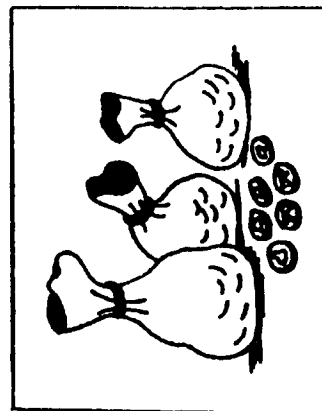
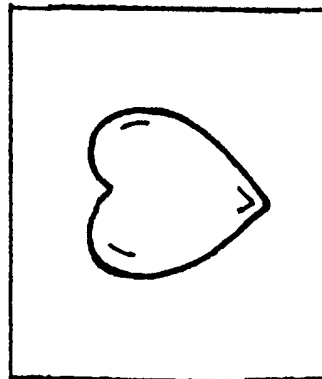
The Lord has created each one of us to have the ability to find an everlasting happiness in a life that is helpful to others. It is pleasing to the Lord when we come to realize that this is what we really want. When we think deeply enough we will make the prayer to Him that we may be part of His kingdom, the kingdom of joy and use. Make this story a treasure. Think of it at your present age and in your thinking begin to learn what is really worth wanting and what is really worth asking for. And in the years to come in your life, turn again to this story to enter more fully into the destiny which the Lord offers you.

The Wisdom of Solomon
I Kings 3
LEVEL 1 – SOLOMON'S DREAM

THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON



Solomon saw the Lord in a dream. The Lord told Solomon that he could have whatever he wanted. Look at the bottom of this page. Find what Solomon asked the Lord for. Then cut it out and paste it on Solomon.

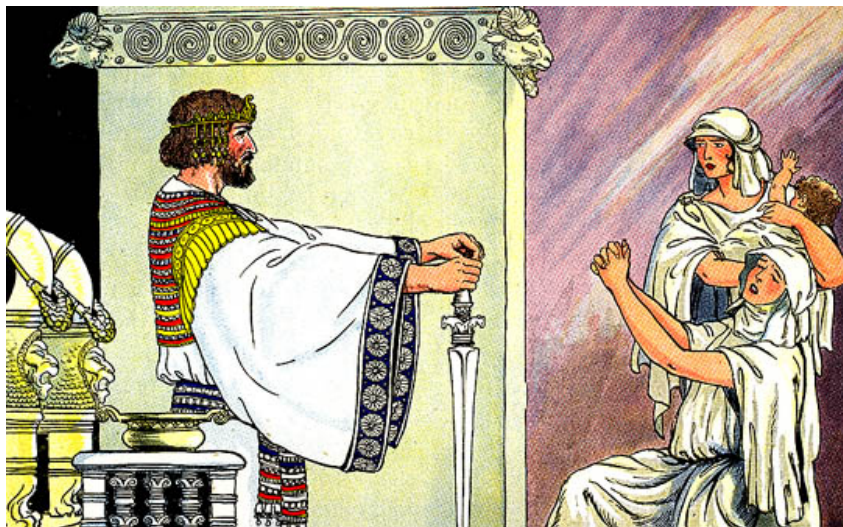


The Wisdom of Solomon

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LEVEL 2 – SOLOMON’S GIFT

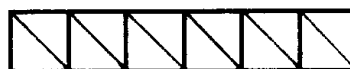
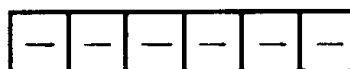
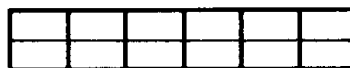
The Lord offered Solomon any gift he wanted. Did he choose to be rich? Did he choose to be famous? Did he choose to be handsome or smart? No. He chose none of these things. He asked the Lord for an understanding heart.

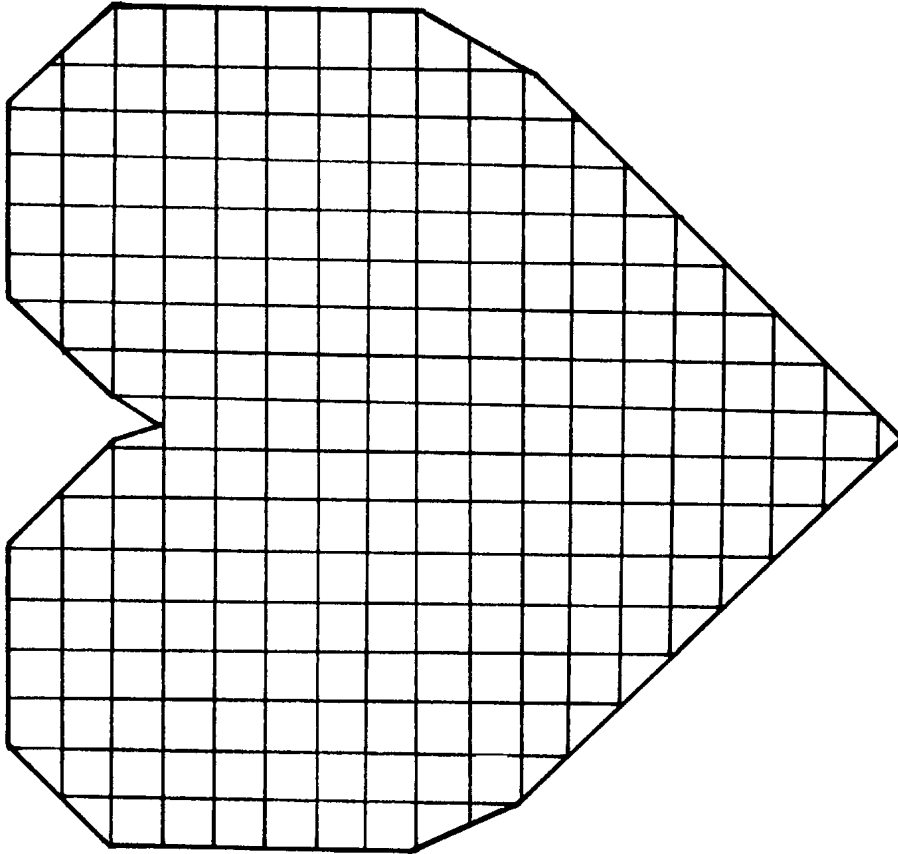


On the next page is a picture of what Solomon chose. You may color it any way you like:

- ❖ You may want to make it red.
- ❖ You may want it to look like stitching. To make it look like embroidery, make an “x” in each square of the heart.
- ❖ If you like, instead of making “x”s, you can make straight lines, dotted lines, or slanted lines in each square of the heart (see below).
- ❖ Then color the letters underneath.

Examples





UNDERSTANDING HEART

The Wisdom of Solomon, Level 2

Solomon's Gift

The Wisdom of Solomon
I Kings 3
LEVEL 3 – USING THE LORD’S GIFTS

Read carefully verse 9 of I Kings Chapter 3.

What did the new king ask the Lord for? _____

Why did he ask for this? _____



The Word tells us that it “pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing.” The Lord gave it to him, and gave him riches and honor as well.

Do you think the Lord would have been so generous if Solomon had asked for “an understanding heart so everyone will admire me?”

The Lord gives each person a special set of gifts. Think about the special gifts the Lord has given you—the things you are good at or love to do. Think about how you could use these gifts to help other people.

Application

1. Complete the chart on the following page.
2. If you would like, color the picture on this page.

In the chart below, write some good qualities or talents you or someone else has received from the Lord. Next to each quality or talent, write down ways it could be used to help others.

A few examples are filled in for you. Try to fill in the rest of the chart with examples from your own life or from the life of someone you know.

GIFT FROM THE LORD	HOW TO USE IT FOR GOOD OF OTHERS
Solomon received an understanding heart.	He used his wisdom to judge the people fairly.
The Lord gave Moses the ability to lead.	He freed the children of Israel from Pharaoh and led them to Canaan.
Abraham Lincoln received from the Lord a great love of other people.	He loved the people so much that he freed the slaves and saved the unity of the country.

The Wisdom of Solomon

I Kings 3

LEVEL 4 – WISDOM

You have just learned about Solomon, one of the sons of King David of Israel. Solomon was very young when he became king himself, and he turned to the Lord for help. When the Lord said to Solomon in a dream, “**Ask what I shall give thee,**” Solomon asked for an understanding heart so that he could judge between good and evil.



The Writings of the New Church have many pages and “numbers” about wisdom. One of the numbers says:

Intelligence consists in coming to know and understand God’s truths, and afterwards believing in them, while **wisdom** consists in willing and loving them, and consequently living in accordance with them.”

(Arcana Coelestia 9943)

Application

You probably know a few adults you feel are very wise—perhaps a teacher, a coach, a relative, a minister, a neighbor, or someone you have read about.

Your assignment is to interview one or more of these people, or just to think about some of them. Ask yourself, or them, what helps them live their lives. What are their beliefs? Did someone special help them? Did something unusual happen to them that helped them? Where do they go for help?

No doubt you will get a variety of answers! Write a short paragraph about what you learned from talking to or thinking about them. How did they become **truly** wise?

[illegible]

The Wisdom of Solomon
I Kings 3
LEVEL 5 – SOLOMON'S WISDOM

You have just read about the wisdom of Solomon. The story began with the Lord inviting him to “Ask what I shall give thee,” and ended by showing Solomon’s wisdom as he judged between the two mothers.



Application

Your project will be to reflect on the following questions, and to use your judgment in answering them. You will need to look up certain verses in the Word before you answer them. *(See page 6 for answers if you get stuck.)*

1. I Kings, Chapter 10 tells about the wisdom of Solomon. The Queen of Sheba came to see if Solomon was equal to his reputation. She exclaimed how “blest,” or how lucky, the servants of Solomon were.

“Happy are your men and happy are these your
servants, who stand continually before you and hear
your wisdom!” (I Kings 10:8)

There is a passage in the *Arcana Coelestia* that quotes this verse, and then asks:

“Who at this day would call himself blest for this reason?”

What did Solomon’s men and servants have that made her call them fortunate?

2. Read the following passage from the *True Christian Religion*:

“In order that the Lord might operate upon these things of nature, as He does upon spiritual things, he created the sun to be in the natural world as a father, and the earth, as a mother...This is the reason why many plants turn to the sun by day, and turn away when he sets; and why some flowers open when the sun rises, and close when he sets. Hence also song-birds sing sweetly at early dawn, and also after being fed by their mother earth...All this is evidence that the Lord, by means of the sun and the earth in the natural world, provides all things necessary for animate and inanimate creation.”

True Christian Religion 308

The Lord creates and sustains all things. In the Book of Job we read:

But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you;
And the birds of the air, and they will tell you;
Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you;
And the fish of the sea will explain to you.

Just as the plants seem to turn their faces to the sun, so should we turn ourselves to the Lord. Just as the birds seem to sing praises after they have enjoyed earth’s bounty, so should we praise the Lord for His creation, “for the hand of the Lord has done this.”

With this in mind, read the last six verses (29-34) in I Kings 4 about Solomon's wisdom. Compare verse 33 with the verse from *Job* (above).

List some things Solomon spoke about with great wisdom.

3. In *Divine Providence* 220:8 we read about a selfish man who looks just to himself in his life:

“He is like a king who thinks that the kingdom and all the people in it exist for his sake, and not he for the sake of the kingdom and the people.”

Now look at verse 9 of I Kings 3, and write what the key was of Solomon's wisdom as a king.

4. In *Divine Providence* it tells what a selfish person is like:

It is the nature of the love of self to regard self only, and to regard others as insignificant or of no account.

Divine Providence 206

...the love of self wishes well to itself alone...it considers itself alone, and others scarcely as men, whom in heart it values less than its horses and dogs. Moreover, as it regards them as of so little value, it thinks nothing of doing evil to them...”

Divine Providence 276

From your study of history, can you think of a leader who seemed to behave in the selfish ways described above. Tell something he did that makes you think he cared only for himself and not for the welfare of those he ruled:

5. In *The True Christian Religion* 666, we are given examples of “conscience.”

“A judge whose only regard is justice, and who administers it with judgment, has conscience.”

“If any man has in his possession another’s property without his knowledge, and can, therefore, enrich himself by it without fear of the law, and the loss of his honor and reputation; and if he restores it to its owner because it is not his own, he has conscience.”

A person could care about a use so much that if he knew someone else could do a certain job better than he, he would step down and let the other person have the job:

“If a man has it in his power to attain an office, but knows that another who is also a candidate would be more useful to society; and if he gives place to the other for the good of society, he has a good conscience.”

This would be a contrast to someone who seemed to care about that use, but did not really. How does such a contrast fit with what is said in verse 26 of I Kings 3?

6. Solomon’s choice of wisdom is a story of being told to “ask.” In the talk going along with this lesson we are told that we would not just ask for the first thing that came into our heads.

Now read the 4th chapter of the Gospel of John, verses 7-14. What does the Lord tell the woman she should ask for? Compare what the woman came to draw from the well, and what the Lord was encouraging her to ask for—*What are the uses of each? What part of our lives would they affect? Which would have eternal value?*

[illegible]

7. Think about the Lord's Prayer. This prayer contains the things the Lord Himself told us to pray for. In your own words, write about your understanding of some of the things we are asking the Lord for when we say this prayer.

[illegible]

SOME SUGGESTIONS for ANSWERS

1. They had the benefit of Solomon's wisdom
2. He spoke 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs. He spoke about the cedar trees of Lebanon and the hyssop that springs out of the wall. He spoke about animals, birds, creeping things, and fish
3. An understanding heart to discern between good and evil
4. *(different answers)*
5. A good and caring mother is concerned more for the welfare of her child than for her own happiness. The mother who would rather have the child divided so that he would be "neither mine nor yours" certainly showed that she did not value the child, but rather her own wishes.
6. First the woman asks about how to get the natural (physical) water from the well. The Lord encourages her to ask instead for "living water"—water for the *spirit* (truth). Water serves many uses in our natural lives, but the living water of the Lord's truth feeds our minds and spirits, teaches us how to love our neighbor and the Lord, and leads us to eternal happiness and uses in heaven.
7. *(different answers)*