

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF SOLOMON

STUDY NUMBER FIVE – 2 CHRONICLES 1:1-12

INTRODUCTION:

Robert Fulghum is one of my favorite authors. You know he is the one that wrote *All I Ever Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, which is his famous work. Several other books that he has written are a delight because the stories are so philosophical and filled with humor and I was reminded of this story when I recognized where Solomon is tonight in the study:

(From Beginning to End: The Rituals of Our Lives by Robert Fulghum)

In the spring of my twelfth year, my mother thought I was finally old enough to be trusted to go downtown and back on the bus alone. She didn't know I was already way beyond buses. I had been driving her car around the neighborhood when she was away from home.

The rite of passage was that scary moment--the first time I started the car, shifted into gear, and rolled off down the street thinking: *I am going to die. And: She is going to kill me. And: Ohmygod I'm driving!*

I went around the block only once. But that was enough. When I had safely parked the car in

the driveway, I sat very still in the driver's seat, holding on to the wheel for a long time. A scared kid got into the car when this adventure began. When the door opened next, a *driver* got out--one who was driven to go on to whatever came next in the passages of autonomy.

I had passed over from one stage of life to another.

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You see for Solomon it is:

- Oh, I am driving.
- David is gone.
- There is nobody to turn to now.
- The kingdom is his.
- He is in the hands of God.
- He is on the stage.
- It is time for life to begin to really make meaning and for him to make his dent in history.

Those are all the feelings.

The passage we come to tonight is a passage that you probably have heard in Sunday school if you have studied the Bible at all. It is the passage where Solomon asks for wisdom, right. You have heard that story.

There are two records of this. There is a record of this in 1 Kings 3 and there is a record here in the Chronicles passage. I have chosen for our study to do

the passage here in Chronicles but I want to refer back to the Kings passage every once in a while and you can just jot in the verses that I will give you.

The reason I am doing that is something very significant happened in the Kings passage that is not in the Chronicles passage so I want to start with that tonight.

1 Kings, chapter 3 and verse 1. Let me read it to you. Now listen carefully.

1 Kings 3:1

Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh, King of Egypt and married his daughter. He brought her to the City of David until he finished building his palace as well as the Temple of the Lord, and the wall around Jerusalem.

Solomon is following in the steps of his father. David in a political alliance with the king of Geshur married Maacah, the daughter of King Talmai, in order to have political peace between Geshur and Israel.

The first thing Solomon does is he marries one of the princesses of the Pharaoh so the southern boundary is secure. And they did not bring Egyptian princesses away from Egypt when they married in situations like this so you recognize how important Solomon is that he

has this privilege of bringing this princess into Jerusalem.

Now there is nothing in the biblical record at this point that says anything yea or nay with regard to this marriage, okay. So hold your judgments but be wise would you and just sow this little thought in the back of your mind because a lot of times little careless actions early in our lives can affect our total destiny. And that those decisions that are made way back there come to the inviolable law of whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Hang onto that because you are going to have to know something about that several episodes down the road.

v. 1 Solomon son of David established himself firmly over his kingdom, for the Lord his God was with him and made him exceedingly great.

Solomon son of David “established.” That word in the Hebrew means “to strengthen your hold.” It means “to do things that establish your hold on the authority of the kingdom and to bring it into stability.”

Now we know from our last study all those things he did only ministered to that. I mean:

- Adonijah is history.
- Abiathar has been dismissed from the priesthood.
- Joab is out of here.
- And Shimei is out of here.

So all of those steps were taken to help strengthen Solomon's hold upon the throne as this young leader who feels his inadequacy and his sense of being overwhelmed as you are going to see in the passage.

But would you notice please that all of these things tell us that God made the choice. It was not any of the other sons of David; it was Solomon that God chose. It was not the other seven sons of Jesse; it was David, the youngest, that God chose. And God is in the business of choosing instruments and vessels to bring glory and honor to Him by what they are able to do.

The guy that is going to go down in history with regard to Israel at this point is Solomon. He is chosen.

The kingdom has been established. The strengthening of Solomon's hold has taken place. But for two reasons. Do you see them?

- 1. "The Lord his God was with him" and**
- 2. The Lord God "made him exceedingly great."**

You know when you can count on the presence of God there is an awareness that God is at work and His presence is there authenticating the decisions that you are making.

"God was with him."

And secondly, the Lord was the One who “made him exceedingly great.” The Lord was there to provide the power and to give every provision to make it all happen. You can trust Him.

You know I got to thinking about that. You know when the Lord isn't with you; you sure are in deep yogurt, aren't you? I mean you can get in some pretty big messes when you are not aware of His presence.

That is why Zephaniah 3:17 ought to be your prayer every morning.

Zephaniah 3:17

**The Lord your God is with you,
he is mighty to save.
He will take great delight in you,
he will quiet you with his love,
he will rejoice over you with singing.”**

Take Him with you.

Psalm 118:24

This is the day He has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Count on His presence. He said He would not leave you nor forsake you (Deuteronomy 31:6, Deuteronomy 31:8, Joshua 1:5, 1 Chronicles 28:20). He will go with you through the day.

And here we have right at the beginning of the exposition of this episode in the life of Solomon two incredible things you can count on if you are walking with God:

1. You can count on His presence.
2. And you can count on His power and provision to sustain you in what you are doing and the project that you are carrying out for the glory of God.

Look at verse 2. Oh man, this is so good.

v. 2 Then Solomon spoke to all Israel—to the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, to the judges and to all the leaders in Israel, the heads of families—

This is Solomon's first state of the union address.

You notice that nothing he said made the record. Almost all of David's speeches are recorded in the text. But here is this young fledgling king and he gives this state of the union address and none of it makes the record. And I am saying boy I sure would like to know that. I mean:

- you have the military
- you have the judges
- you have the house
- you have the senate

- you have all the leaders and
- you have the heads of all the families.

And yet anything that he said on this occasion is not in the record.

Now notice verse 3.

What do we always do after the inaugural address? What is going to happen in January? We are going to have the inaugural ball. We have a big blast.

Don't you wish that just for once in the United States of America, in the history of America, we would do what Solomon does here? He goes to worship and his first act in the kingship after he gives his inaugural address is he leads the people in religious observance. Can you imagine what would happen in America if we fell on our faces after our president is finally elected and he gives his inaugural address and we ask God to pour out His blessing on this country?

You know that is not too far from the truth when you go back 200 years and you see our founding fathers and what they did when they were put in elected positions. Go back and look at it and see what these men believed and what they said and what they stood for.

v. 3 and Solomon and the whole assembly went to the high place at Gibeon, for God's Tent of Meeting was

there, which Moses the Lord's servant had made in the desert.

You know you look at that verse and it is kind of confusing a little bit. You wonder why in the world Gibeon. Gibeon is seven miles northwest of Jerusalem so this is a pretty good little trip. So after the inaugural address they are going up there to Gibeon to worship the Lord. But Gibeon was taken as the place after the massacre at Nob. Under Saul's administration remember he killed those 85 priests and Abiathar was the only one that escaped and went to David and we talked about Abiathar last week. He has been stripped of his responsibilities now. Well after that massacre they moved the center of worship to Gibeon. And they put up the old tabernacle that was out in the wilderness. There was the instructions given to Moses at Sinai but they missed one thing. When the Philistines overran the place they stole the Ark for a period of time. And after they stole the Ark David, remember under his administration, brought the Ark back to Jerusalem and put the Ark in a tent in anticipation that his dream would come true and the temple would be built. Well because God did not have it in his plan for David to build the temple, as we learned in our first study, it is still in the tent.

So you have the tabernacle up at Gibeon minus the Ark. And you have the Ark in a tent in Jerusalem. Now this is very instructive by the way. Where does Solomon go to worship the Lord? You see in humility and

brokenness he goes to the place of sacrifice not to the Ark, which is by itself here in Jerusalem. He could have contented himself to do that and pray in the presence of God there at that tent. But he goes by the prescribed sacrifice by the prescribed way.

Now let's understand one thing at this point shall we. God really loves Solomon. We know that from his birth announcement don't we? Remember when Solomon was born in that first study, what did God say? No, no, no, don't call him Solomon; call him Jedidiah, the one whom the Lord loves. And there is an intimacy right now. I mean do not think that we have come so far in his life that he has grown cold. No, there is an intimacy and tenderness here.

v. 4 Now David had brought up the ark of God from Kiriath Jearim [*that is from the Philistines*] to the place he had prepared for it, because he had pitched a tent for it in Jerusalem.

In anticipation of building the temple.

v. 5 But the bronze altar that Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made was in Gibeon in front of the tabernacle of the Lord; so Solomon and the assembly inquired of him there.

v. 6 Solomon went up to the bronze altar before the Lord in the Tent of Meeting and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.

Solomon wants to start the kingdom right so he starts the kingdom at the sacrificial altar.

v. 7 That night God appeared to Solomon and said to him, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.”

Now in the Kings passage in 1 Kings 3:5 it says he had a dream and in the dream God spoke to him.

1 Kings 3:5

At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.”

Doesn't matter, the Lord spoke to him and the question is the same. “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.”

Now the word “whatever” is a blank check. You can put anything in there you want to. You say, boy, I wish God would say that to me. Well He did. If you have been reading your Bible John 16:24 says:

John 16:24 (King James Version)

Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

It is just you have not been checking in and asking, that is all. The problem is with us, not with Him.

1 John 5:14-15

And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

The question is are you praying?

Romans 12:1 (King James Version)

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice

I will take that.

And then I want all the blessings from your lips.

“The sacrifice of praise” (Hebrews 13:15, Jeremiah 33:11).

Praise me.

And then I want all of your belongings because they are not yours, they are Mine anyway, I have just been loaning them to you.

Are you ready to get that serious in your walk with God? You see when you have a true, healthy relationship you can trust the Father.

And Solomon needs to know that right now. So when God says whatever you want I am ready to give you, that is a test.

Does God test us?

And you and I get hung up on a lot of tests sometimes.

Solomon, if you could have anything you want, what would you like to have? That is the question. What would you like to have if you could have it?

Now let me ask you this? Have you been talking to the Father today about what you would like to have? You know Psalm 37 says:

Psalm 37:4

Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Do you really believe that? That He does answer prayer when we talk to Him.

Look how Solomon answers. Oooh, he is so good. He answers by praising the Lord rather than petitioning Him with the request right at the moment.

v. 8 Solomon answered God, [*don't you love that?*] "You have shown great kindness to David my father and have made me king in his place."

What a humble heart that is here in the initial phases. He praises the Lord for two things:

- 1. "You have shown great kindness to David my father"**
- 2. "And [you] have made me king in his place."**

v. 9 Now, Lord God, let your promise to my father David be confirmed, for you have made me king over a people who are as numerous as the dust of the earth."

Does that just pop you as a Bible student when you see "dust of the earth"? What does that remind you of? The Abrahamic Covenant when God said Abraham you do not have any kids and 25 years later little Isaac is

born and now the seed has grown to the dust of the earth (Genesis 13, Genesis 28). God is faithful to keep his promises (Genesis 22:17).

And Solomon says I am overwhelmed. Man they are “as numerous as the dust of the earth” and I am the king.

Now what I want to do at this point is I want to switch gears for just a second. I want to go back to the Kings passage because you understand a little bit of the emotion of Solomon but there is also one little phrase that occurs in the Kings passage that does not occur here and it will set the stage for what we are getting ready to look at. So that is why I am going there.

Listen carefully:

1 Kings 3:7-9

“Now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people

The thing I want to land on that is not in the Chronicles passage is the term “discerning heart.”

“I am only a little child” in other words I am very young and inexperienced if you translated that literally from the Hebrew.

And he says this: “give your servant a discerning heart.” Do you know what that Hebrew word is? That is the Hebrew word for “hearing.” It is kind of like when you study this word in the Hebrew it is “hearing and obeying.” It is hearing and obeying. It is the hearing heart that obeys and it is the obedient that is blessed.

Question is are you hearing anything from the Lord tonight?

See every time the Word of God is spoken you should hear something that is if you have ears to hear.

Whenever the Lord has spoken and you are sensitive to the Spirit of God you ought to be hearing something. Something that will feed and nourish the spiritual man and cause you to be aware of why you are here in this study.

“He who has ears.”

Solomon says I need a hearing heart.

Isaiah 30:21 (King James Version)

Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying,
This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the
right hand, and when you turn to the left.

Lord, as I come to You, I need a discerning heart. I
need a hearing heart so I can hear Your message and I
can know what You want me to do.

But Hebrews 5:11 is in the Bible isn't it? There are a lot
of things I would like say to you, but it is hard to
explain, because you have become dull of hearing.

Hebrews 5:11

Concering him we have much to say, and it is hard
to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

**v. 10 Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead
this people, for who is able to govern this great
people of yours?"**

So I would like to ask you Lord to give wisdom and
knowledge.

Now do not make the mistake of thinking that Solomon
is spiritual here. He is not praying for spiritual
wisdom and insight. He is asking for just common,
everyday, good judgment to be able to lead the
kingdom. So do not give him any more credit than he

deserves at this point. Because he says the reason is “who is able to govern this great people of your?”

You know Dan Bolin the other day gave me a book on leadership from a secular perspective and this book had some great quotes in it but it also had a list of all the reasons why many CEO’s who have all the potential in the world botch up and blow it. Do you want to hear a few of them?

Source: J. K. Van Fleet, *The 22 Biggest Mistakes Managers Make*
(West Nyack, N.Y.: Parker, 1973), pp. 9-17.

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And the list goes on and on and on.

It was Henry David Thoreau who said:

“It is a characteristic of wisdom not to do desperate things.”

If you are desperate tonight, if you are under stress and you are just out, so spent, it is a good indication that you are not walking in the wisdom that God can provide to well-order your life to accomplish His purposes.

Robert Frost confessed:

“The brain is a wonderful organ; it begins working the moment you get up in the morning and does not stop until you get to the office.”

You know certainly that is often the case is it not.

Listen to John Piper, in *Future Grace*. I have quoted from him several times. I love this book and I hope you will read it.

(*Future Grace* by John Piper)

In Jeremiah 9:23 God says, “Let not a wise man boast of his *wisdom*, and let not the mighty man boast of his *might*, let not a rich man boast of his *riches*.” In those three phrases God names his great competitors for the boast of the human heart. Each one—wisdom, might, and riches—tempts us to take satisfaction in ourselves—our intelligence, our strength, our material resources. Each one lures us away from trusting God as the superior satisfaction above them all. It is radically humbling to confess that the source of all our joy resides outside ourselves.

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“Wisdom is the ability to make sense out of what is going on!”

And in view of that to also make a good decision.

Now there are times when you cannot understand what is going on. I love this little cartoon of Schulz:

(I'm So Glad You Told Me What I Didn't Wanna Hear by Barbara Johnson)

[insert cartoon]

The four characters are all side-by-side and they are having this very, very intelligent discussion.

First little guy says “So I had to tell the teacher that I just didn’t know.”

And Charlie Brown says “Maybe some questions don’t have an answer.”

And Lucy says “Like what!”

And Snoopy says “Like did Jesus ever own a dog?”
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You know maybe there are. Maybe there really are some questions that do not have an answer and we need the wisdom that Solomon prays for to be able to relate to what is going on.

Now notice this. This gets so good.

v. 11 God said to Solomon, “Since this is your heart’s desire and you have not asked for wealth, riches or

honor, nor for the death of your enemies, and since you have not asked for a long life but for wisdom and knowledge to govern my people over whom I have made you king,

Since this is your heart's desire....

I want to ask you what is your heart's desire? If the Lord was speaking to you now that the statement has been made and you have filled in the blank "whatever," how would He acknowledge that? Would He say since this is your heart's desire (and He knows what it is), you have told Him what you want, He says there are five other things that you did not ask for and those five things we will tell you that is probably a lot of the majority of people would ask for isn't it?

1. Wealth
2. Riches
3. Honor
4. Death of your enemies
5. Long life

You have asked for "wisdom and knowledge to govern my people over whom I have made you king," therefore, verse 12.

v. 12 therefore wisdom and knowledge will be given you. *[That is what you asked for, that is what you are going to get. But don't you love the next one? God's fingerprints are all over it. Ephesians 3:20*

(King James Version) “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,”] And I will also give you wealth, riches and honor, such as no king who was before you ever had and none after you will have.”

Psalm 37:4

Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.

All right before we stop there, what is the difference between that list and the list that He gave before? There are two things missing, isn't there? He put down there that He was going to give him wealth, riches and honor but He does not say anything about death of your enemies or long life, does He? Why?

Well last week we already saw the death of all of his enemies, I mean that has all been taken care of pretty much as far as the kingdom is concerned.

But what about this long life deal? Why does he leave that off as a promise since the Lord mentioned it earlier? Let me give you an instructive verse.

1 Kings 3:14

And if you walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life.”

Why is it absent? He does not walk in the statutes of his father David and he is not obedient and the Lord is not going to give him anything that has to do with this because the Lord knows the future. You see you finally reap what you have sown. And Solomon the day is coming when you are going to be out of here prematurely, man, simply because you were disobedient to the laws and the precepts. So He will not mention that now. But in the blessing that He is going to provide, He says I am going to give you wealth and riches and honor and all those things.

Bob Beltz, he is a Bible teacher in Denver, Colorado, he has written a little book called *The Solomon Syndrome* and he said he tried to figure out how much annually so he could verify this fact. Do you know what he came up with? He said:

(The Solomon Syndrome: For Men Who Want More Out of Life by Bob Beltz)

I discovered that Solomon's annual income was somewhere, conservatively speaking, in the range of one-half billion dollars a year, tax free. In 1000 BC that kind of cash went a long way! That flow of income continued for over forty years, giving Solomon a net worth of over twenty billion dollars, not counting his real estate holdings.

He was truly the wealthiest man on earth.

God did for Solomon what He said He would do. He not only gave him what he asked for but “exceeding abundantly.” He gave him the other things that he could have asked for.

CONCLUSION:

LESSON #1: Matthew Henry said: “God’s presence will be our strength.”

LESSON #2: The Lord’s Presence, Power and Provision established Solomon over his kingdom.

LESSON #3: Solomon, at the beginning of his kingdom, leads the whole nation in worship.

LESSON #4: 2 Chronicles 7:14: 7 says: “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

LESSON #5: Instead of the Inaugural Ball, they went to worship.

LESSON #6: Because Solomon worshipped, God responded by appearing to him in a dream.

LESSON #7: How would you respond to the Lord if He spoke to you in this way: “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.”

LESSON #8: Your response will tell a lot about your values, affections, and priorities.

LESSON #9: It delights the heart of God when we request of Him wisdom and knowledge.

LESSON #10: What is your heart’s desire?

LESSON #11: The Lord delights to do exceeding abundant above all we ask or think.

LESSON #12: “It is a characteristic of wisdom not to do desperate things.”

—Henry David Thoreau

This little story comes out of *Chicken Soup* the third edition.

(*Chicken Soup for the Soul: 101 Stories to Open the Heart and Rekindle the Spirit* by Jack Canfield & Mark Victor Hansen)

I’m sitting in a quiet room at the Milcroft Inn, a peaceful little place hidden back among the pine trees about an hour out of Toronto. It’s just past noon, last July, and I’m listening to the desperate

sounds of a life-or-death struggle going on a few feet away.

There's a small fly burning out the last of its short life's energies in a futile attempt to fly through the glass of the windowpane. The whining wings tell the poignant story of the fly's strategy: *Try harder.*

But it's not working.

The frenzied effort offers no hope for survival. Ironically, the struggle is part of the trap. It is impossible for the fly to try hard enough to succeed at breaking through the glass. Nevertheless, this little insect has staked its life on reaching its goal through raw effort and determination.

This fly is doomed. It will die there on the windowsill.

Across the room, ten steps away, the door is open. Ten seconds of flying time and this small creature could reach the outside world it seeks. With only a fraction of the effort now being wasted, it could be free of this self-imposed trap. The breakthrough possibility is there. It would be so easy.

Why doesn't the fly try another approach, something dramatically different? How did it get so locked in on the idea that this particular route and determined effort offer the most promise for success? What logic is there in continuing until death to seek a breakthrough with more of the same?

No doubt this approach makes sense to the fly. Regrettably, it's an idea that will kill.

Trying harder isn't necessarily the solution to achieving more. It may not offer any real promise for getting what you want out of life. Sometimes, in fact, it's a big part of the problem.

Price Pritchett

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Somebody said it is insanity to maintain the status quo and think you are going to get different results. There has to come a time when you make decisions to change. Can I give you the invitation as believers to listen to James in James 1:5. If any of you lacks wisdom, ask of God who gives to all men liberally and He will not chide you often for coming. He waits to provide what you need.

James 1:5

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

And listen to Solomon one more time.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;

**In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make your paths straight.**

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF SOLOMON

STUDY NUMBER FIVE — 2 CHRONICLES 1:1-12

Notes

2 Chronicles 1:1-12

v. 1 Solomon son of David established himself firmly over his kingdom, for the Lord his God was with him and made him exceedingly great.

v. 2 Then Solomon spoke to all Israel—to the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, to the judges and to all the leaders in Israel, the heads of families—

v. 3 and Solomon and the whole assembly went to the high place at Gibeon, for God's Tent of Meeting was there, which Moses the Lord's servant had made in the desert.

v. 4 Now David had brought up the ark of God from Kiriath Jearim to the place he had prepared for it, because he had pitched a tent for it in Jerusalem.

v. 5 But the bronze altar that Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made was in Gibeon in front of the tabernacle of the Lord; so Solomon and the assembly inquired of him there.

v. 6 Solomon went up to the bronze altar before the Lord in the Tent of Meeting and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.

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v. 9 Now, Lord God, let your promise to my father David be confirmed, for you have made me king over a people who are as numerous as the dust of the earth.

v. 10 Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of yours?"

v. 11 God said to Solomon, "Since this is your heart's desire and you have not asked for wealth, riches or honor, nor for the death of your enemies, and since you have not asked for a long life but for wisdom and knowledge to govern my people over whom I have made you king,

v. 12 therefore wisdom and knowledge will be given you. And I will also give you wealth, riches and honor, such as no king who was before you ever had and none after you will have."

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 2 Chronicles 1:1-12 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What three things are said about Solomon and his kingdom in verse 1?

3. Why did Solomon go to Gibeon, according to verse 5?

4. What did God say to Solomon, according to verse 7?

5. How does Solomon respond to this opportunity in verses 8-10?

6. What are some of the things Solomon could have asked for, according to verse 11?

7. What does the Lord do for Solomon, according to verse 12?

8. Read Ephesians 3:20 and relate that verse to verse 12.

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

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LESSON #2: The Lord’s Presence, Power, and Provision established Solomon over his kingdom.

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LESSON #12: "It is a characteristic of wisdom not to do desperate things" (Henry David Thoreau).