



Shaped to Serve

Sunday, January 15, 2017

Solomon: The Ambitious Son

Some Background

Following a father like David could not have been easy. As often as David screwed up, he was still known as “a man after God’s own heart.” That’s not to say David’s life was not with consequences. His warrior ways disqualified him from doing the one thing he most wanted to do—build a temple for God. This task fell to Solomon, the son of David and Bathsheba, whose reign included some great achievements and times of peace for Israel, but also great lows. Sadly, after Solomon, all hopes for the united kingdom of Israel were soon dashed.

To this day Solomon is well known for the wisdom he requested from God to become a great king. Solomon’s faith and wisdom is evident early on in his prayer of dedication for the truly magnificent temple he built for the God of Israel. The temple solidified the Israelites as a worshipping people, and it stood as a sign of God’s presence among them. An enormous gold building was certainly the kind of thing that would rank Solomon up there with his dad. And for a while, Israel flourished.

But as his reign continued, Solomon became more interested in worldly success than the promise he had made to obey God. He began to worship other gods, he married lots—yes, LOTS—of women, and he partied tons. Soon, though, he realized his worldly success might not have been worth it. Neither his wisdom nor his super-awesome temple could make up for his unfaithfulness to God. After Solomon’s reign ended, Israel was divided into two kingdoms, and the glory days were over. In the end, Solomon’s ambition for fame overcame his love for God—and that had consequences.

Youth Mindset: Solomon’s desire for greatness—and parental pressure—may connect with students. They are being pushed to live up to family expectations—becoming star athletes, getting straight A’s, or living up to siblings’ reputations. Sometimes those expectations can overshadow God their lives.

Teacher Homework: Read some key passages about the life of Solomon: 1 Kings 1, 3, 6, 11 / Song of Solomon.

Opening Activity

Tape sheets of paper around the room with phrases such as “My parents expect...” “My teachers expect...” “My youth leader/pastors expect...” “My friends expect...” “I expect...” etc., written on them. Give each student a marker and a few minutes to write the expectations they face from people they know.

Watch the Video

Show the video: “Solomon: The Ambitious Son.”

- What do you think it was like to grow up as King David’s son? What expectations did Solomon face?
- What are some expectations you face? Which expectations are fair and which are unfair? What do you do to live up those expectations?

Build a Temple

Students should consider the value of a house of worship and how God can be experienced there. Show students a picture of Solomon’s temple. Break into small groups and inform each group that they must make a model of this house of worship using toothpicks and marshmallows. The Temple was Solomon’s biggest achievement and was the first temple in Jerusalem. It stood for 410 years before being destroyed. Why do you suppose Solomon made this temple so extravagant? What was hardest about building your marshmallow temple? How do you relate to your own church as a house of worship? How is it important to your relationship with God? In which space in the church do you find it easiest to connect with God?

In the Bible

Solomon is as well known for writings attributed to him as he is for the temple—and they lasted longer! Form three groups, and have each read one of the following: Ecclesiastes 1:1-11, Proverb 2, and Song of Solomon 1:1-8. Ask them to rewrite or summarize the verses in their own words, or through a rap or song if they are really brave.

Take-Home Question

Solomon had many expectations placed upon him. Talk with a parent about the expectations they had when growing up. What are the top three biggest expectations your parents have for you? Summarize this conversation in your online response.