

Reading: Read 1 Kings chapter 3

Key Thought: **Wisdom and kindness in righteous judgment.** Proverbs 21 verse 21 (ESV):
Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will find life, righteousness and honour.

Context: Solomon was young when he became king. We don't know his actual age, but information would suggest that he was in his late teens. He was certainly old enough to marry the daughter of an Egyptian Pharaoh. This was a good move politically, but perhaps not wise spiritually. We also see reference to Solomon using the 'High Places' (verses 2 -4). The High Places were local sacred cult altars, often built upon a rock. They posed a threat to the pure worship of God, representing conflicting loyalty to God. The Israelites had been forbidden to use such places for worship (Deuteronomy 12 verses 2-4). So, we see that Solomon was not quite in the right place spiritually. But he was about to have an encounter with God!

The first part of this chapter shows us how Solomon acted rashly. But the second part reveals that he had a heart for God and a desire to rule the kingdom with wisdom. Solomon's spiritual thinking was in a muddle.

Praise God he sees through the muddle and speaks to the heart!

Content:

This chapter is about God seeing past our outward appearance, past our youth or old age, past our foolishness – and seeing the true intentions and desires of our heart. As a young King, Solomon didn't begin too well ... until he had an encounter with God (verses 5-16). In the dream/vision God promises to give Solomon whatever he asks for. And because Solomon asks for wisdom to govern righteously, he pleased God. So that God promised him wisdom – and added that he would bless him with riches too. (Read next week's study to see the extent of his wealth!) This amazing encounter ended with Solomon worshipping the Lord (verse 15).

In the second half of the chapter, we see how Solomon applies this wisdom. It was not man's wisdom, but Godly wisdom – God's wisdom working through Solomon:

- Solomon didn't reject or pre-judge the women. As prostitutes (especially just having given birth too) they were deemed unclean by The Law (Leviticus 12 verses 1-8) and should not have deigned to enter his presence. But Solomon showed grace and was willing to hear what was on their hearts before he judged them.
- Just as God had looked on Solomon's heart, Solomon now looked to the intentions of the heart in both women. He decreed that the woman who was willing to sacrifice her child to give him life was the true mother. We could argue over whether or not she was the biological mother, but she was the one who had a mother's heart and would care for the child.

Challenges:

We all have to make judgments and decisions every day of our lives. And some of the decisions we make can impact the rest of our lives and those with whom we interact, either for good or bad.

- **Do we ask for God's wisdom to make the right choices and decisions?**
- **Do we ever judge people by their look or way of life, and form opinions based on those factors?**
- **Do we make assumptions before we have heard what they have to say?**
- **What would God see when he looks into our heart?**

It may be that we are the victim of a wrong accusation, like one of the women in the story. How does it make us feel? Are we still able to act with grace? It's easy to act foolishly when we are riled and upset.

- **Do we wish harm on another?**
- **Or do we ask for God's grace to deal with the situation wisely?**

Communicate:

Feel free to let us know if you have any questions or comments about this study. Perhaps you have a testimony or word of encouragement that might help others. Or maybe you would like prayer as you begin a new thing for God in your life. We will gladly get back to you.