

What Makes Christians Different 4) They Seek Spiritual Wealth

1 Kings 3:5-12 • July 26, 2026 • Series: What Makes Christians Different



Talk about being born with privilege and power. Solomon was the son of King David and favored by David to be king. The vast lands David had conquered were placed under Solomon's control. They stretched nearly all the way from Egypt to Syria and straight across the Jordan valley to the sea. On top of this, David had spent many years stockpiling supplies to build a temple. All the fruits of David's forty years as king were placed into the hands of Solomon, now only a teenager. His coronation celebration included a thousand offerings sent up in smoke on the altar at Gibeon. The crowds no doubt felt a sense of hope and excitement at the prospect of a new king. What great potential and achievements lay ahead for Solomon?

Solomon had brothers who once fiercely sought after and envied his position. Recall David's son Absalom. He tried to take the throne only a few years earlier. Absalom thought he was a better fit for the throne than his father. But David wept at his death. Absalom only ended up as a better fit for the end of a spear in a failed coup attempt. And then there was, Adonijah. He was so confident that he would make the best king after David that he moved to proclaim himself the new king without his father's consent, without the consecration of the priests, and without the confirmation of the prophet Nathan.

But Solomon wasn't like those brothers. He wasn't chasing after the crown or claiming to have great potential and right to the throne. After the offerings and all the pomp were completed, Solomon went to bed that night. He was probably uneasy about the future. Sure, being king was exciting and an honor. But he saw it as a big responsibility. He knew the kingship was an insurmountable task.

I'm sure at some point you've probably found yourself on the verge of a new responsibility and about to enter into a new role. What about new parents? It's exciting to be a new dad. But who couldn't say the responsibilities are profound? You never said you weren't excited to be a mom. But do you remember the sudden hysteria that would hit as it dawned on you what it meant? And it's not like you sought to be put in charge of the project at work. But it is a task you've been entrusted to oversee. And you didn't ask to be Sunday School teacher. But someone said, "Would you be willing to teach the children this year?" You probably didn't have the immediate nervous response you feel the five minutes before each class when you see the children looking to you for spiritual wisdom. And when your married son or daughter comes to you for advice, do you worry you might not steer them the best direction? What about when you are serving on a church board and you've been tasked to manage your congregation's resources faithfully. Are you up to it?

Or maybe your task is limited. Maybe you're in charge of a small committee or a wedding program. You quickly find that it doesn't take a lot of responsibility to feel pressure and inadequacy. Whether your role is big or small, you can probably relate to Solomon. He was called to govern God's chosen nation right at a crucial time of political beginnings, temple construction, and religious wavering. What could one man do?

That night God appeared to Solomon in a vision in his dream. "Ask me for whatever I can do for you." Solomon knew who he was dealing with here. This was not the genie from Aladdin promising to fulfill a goofy request. This was El-Shaddai, God Almighty, the Lord of the armies of heaven, the Creator. And he wanted Solomon to ask for anything so that he could give it to him.

What would you have asked for? And be honest. What is your first impulse? Solomon might have very much desired to have wealth for himself. If he was ever going to be a great king, he had to be a rich king, right? We know the draw of wealth. Solomon also had many enemies around him. David had conquered territories, but those territories were not fully secure. Imagine if he had just asked God, "Let me win every battle and always conquer whoever opposes me." Then he would never have to worry! It would all fall into his lap, and his people would love him as he brought lasting peace and his enemies cowered in fear before him. We don't have as many enemies as Solomon, but don't we want to ask for security and personal protection? "All I want God, is for my family to live safely with no one to harm us. All I want is a top-notch fail-safe security system and a personal bodyguard and an honest police force and the world's best military." Finally, Solomon had no guarantee of health. How many times haven't you cried out to God for better health? "Ask me for whatever I can do for you." What would you ask for yourself?

That's where we go wrong, isn't it? "Ask for yourself." Solomon's did not ask for himself. He asked with the Lord's purposes in mind and his role in serving the Lord with his life. Imagine if that shaped all our prayers! And he started where we so often fail in our prayers: with praise and thanksgiving. "Lord, you have been so gracious to my father David and have shown him great mercy, and you made me king just in that same

kindness.” Solomon has concerns. But he saw all the good things God had done. That was why he offered thousands of animals as a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God. His first response: “God, you are so good to me.” Unlike Absalom and Adonijah who thought they deserved the throne, he knew he didn’t deserve God’s gifts. Next, he did what we all need to do in prayer: pour out all concerns to the Lord. “Lord, this gift of being king. It’s great. But I don’t feel like I’m up to it. You’ve put me in charge of all your people! I’m just like a little kid who has no idea what to do.” Solomon was a teenager, at most twenty. He’s not a helpless young child. He already has a one-year-old son. But in humility he knows that when it comes to ruling the kingdom he is as good as a little child in experience and ability. You can’t come to God in prayer for so many things if you don’t in pride recognize that you need to come to God for them. Solomon in humility saw he needed the Lord.

What does he ask? “Give me a listening-heart to judge and govern the people and to know right from wrong.” He isn’t asking for worldly intelligence or even worldly wisdom. The wisdom he asks for is to not just know right and wrong, but to know it according to God’s will. He wants to know the Lord and what the Lord considers good and just. He wants his kingdom in line with God’s kingdom. He doesn’t want to further his own self; he wants to further God’s kingdom. His request is essentially, “Lord, help me to know your will so that I can serve you. Let me be the king these people need.”

This pleased the Lord. He said Solomon would have the greatest of all wisdom. He would also be the richest of his time. And Solomon was also given the conditional promise of a long life if he continued to serve God. He had it all! Solomon clothed in splendor would experience the truth promised by Christ, “Seek first the Lord’s kingdom and righteousness and all the rest will be added to you as well.” But for all his wisdom, Solomon still failed to live up to that last condition. He did not continue to seek the Lord’s kingdom. The unfortunate truth is that he turned aside from the Lord to worship other false gods. In his great wealth and honor, he took on many wives. He also began to honor their gods. Solomon’s brothers had defied king David. Solomon defied the King of the Universe. It seems by God’s grace Solomon repented of this folly before his death. But as a sinner he was not able to bring lasting goodness, justice, and peace.

No one can. Even if we were gifted with all that Solomon had, we too fail to secure perfect wisdom, justice, and peace. We might ask for wisdom to serve others, but inevitably and most foolishly keep reverting to serving self. Solomon had to ask for more than wisdom. He had to ask for forgiveness for all his foolishness. So do we. For all the times we’ve thought we were the greatest and wise in our own eyes we deserve to be humbled, dethroned, and treated as enemies of the King of the universe who we forgot or tried to usurp. Jesus once said, “Someone greater than Solomon is here.” Wisdom from on high took on human flesh. Jesus, the Son of David had one request: “Let me be the king these people need.” To bring perfect justice and truth he was crowned, but first by his enemies. He did not ask for wealth but gave it up. He did not ask for long life but gave it up. He did not ask for the death of his enemies but willingly offered his own for theirs. And rather than offering a thousand sacrifices of thanks for his crowning, he sacrificed himself once for all.

But he sought first the kingdom of God, and everything was added to him as well. He rose to life and lives forever to bring us his eternal kingdom of peace. Through baptism you have been made a royal member of his house. You don’t even have to ask for it. You inherit it all as a child of God!

Ah, but what about the time you failed to be a Christian father and teach the Bible to your children as well as you ought? Ask, repent, and the greatest gift is yours. It is forgiven by Christ your perfect, merciful king. What about the time you as a Christian mother failed to direct your children in the Word of the Lord as you were entrusted to do? Washed clean with all other sins. What about the time you just didn’t prepare enough for the Sunday School lesson, the board meeting, the job you had at work as a Christian man or woman. You did fail. And you did receive full forgiveness in Christ. Now you have found, like Solomon, the greatest treasure. Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness. All the rest will be added.

Are you jealous that Solomon got to ask for whatever he wanted? Jesus says to you, “Ask for whatever you want in my name and it will be given to you. The reason you do not have is that you do not ask.” James reminds us, “If anyone lacks wisdom, he should ask God who gives without finding fault.” And our Lord also reminds us “Will not your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him?” What is it that you will pray for? Don’t worry. But do ask. “Let me be the one these people need.”

Are you a parent, grandparent, entrusted with a task or taking on a new role in life? There’s something that makes you different. It is what you seek. Pray, “Lord, make me different from this world, let me seek spiritual wealth to serve others as I serve you.”