

LEADERS GUIDE

THE
RISE & FALL
OF SOLOMON



THE RISE & FALL OF SOLOMON

1 KINGS 1-11

He was a king who rose to dizzying heights. A growing kingdom, world-renowned wisdom, breathtaking building projects, and mind-boggling wealth. Solomon had it all. And under his rule, God's people, the nation of Israel, enjoyed a golden age.

But it didn't last.

Solomon was a king who also fell disastrously. By the end, his worship was compromised, his reputation tarnished, his kingdom divided, and his achievements obliterated.

Solomon's life is a stark warning to you and I about the dangers of compromise and the corrupting influence of wealth and power.

But it's also so much more.

Solomon points us to our great need for a greater King, one who will never compromise nor fail. The rise and fall of Solomon points us to the reign and rule of God's true and ultimate king, Jesus Christ, the King we desperately need, the one who will never fall or fail.



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is not meant to replace the Sunday sermon but is designed to help you apply the Biblical teaching given on a Sunday in your Growth Groups. We don't want our Growth Groups to feel like another 'mini-sermon', but rather to be places where we learn to obey what God says in Christian community. You can find our latest sermons here <https://oasischurch.com.au/audio/>

CHURCH SERVICES

Keep this guide with your Bible and bring it with you to church. There is space for you to take down notes during the sermon as well.

GROWTH GROUP

Use this guide during Growth Group each week. There are Growth Group questions for each sermon in the series, and space to write down prayer points that come from the discussion that week or prayer requests from the members of your group.

PERSONAL DEVOTIONS

Although this guide is primarily designed for Growth Groups, it can also be used in personal devotions. After you have heard the sermon preached on the Sunday, go through this guide and use it to apply what you have learnt. It may be more natural to go through these questions with your family. There are also leader's guides available that give additional information to aid leaders in arriving at Biblical answers. Leaders use these to help them lead the group but you may find one beneficial in your personal devotions. If you would like a copy of a leader's guide please email ben@oasischurch.com.au

GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSION

Your group needs to be a safe place for all people to share and to enter the discussion. This means, all members of the group need to follow a few guidelines:

WE LEAD WITH GRACE

We respond to one another in light of what Christ has done for us, understanding that we are all in need of His grace, compassion, and mercy.

WE TREAT EACH OTHER WITH RESPECT

We can wrestle with ideas and disagree with one another without judgement, personal attack, or dismissal. We don't laugh at others when they've shared and no putdowns of any kind. These are the actions that make others withdraw and feel uneasy about sharing.

WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER, NOT 'FIX' ONE ANOTHER

Jesus does the 'fixing'. Give encouragement, speak truth, and point to Jesus. Don't try to solve or fix each other.

WE COMMIT TO CONFIDENTIALITY

What is said in the group should stay in the group unless permission is given to share it elsewhere. This is not to create a dysfunctional group that keeps unhealthy secrets. Instead, it is to create a culture of safety where everyone feels safe to share thoughts and feelings and knows that others will not find out.

WE DO NOT CROSSTALK

Crosstalk is a conversation during discussion time that leaves others out and can be hurtful. Each person should be free to express his or her feelings without interruptions.

Your group needs to agree with one another that you are committed to providing a safe place to be encouraged and challenged by the word of God and to let Him do a healing, sanctifying work in your lives.

If you have any concerns, you should speak to your group leader or get in contact with our Community Pastor, Ben Fien (ben@oasischurch.com.au).

BIBLE READING PLAN

1 KINGS 1-16

WEEK ONE

Sunday 9 October
1 Kings 1:1-10

Monday 10 October
1 Kings 1:11-27

Tuesday 11 October
1 Kings 1:28-53

Wednesday 12 October
1 Kings 2:1-12

Thursday 13 October
1 Kings 2:13-46

Friday 14 October
2 Samuel 16:5-14

WEEK THREE

Sunday 23 October
1 Kings 5:1-18

Monday 24 October
1 Kings 6:1-14

Tuesday 25 October
1 Kings 6:15-38

Wednesday 26 October
1 Kings 7:1-12

Thursday 27 October
1 Kings 7:13-51

Friday 28 October
2 Chronicles 5:2-10

WEEK FIVE

Sunday 6 November
2 Chronicles 9:1-12

Monday 7 November
1 Kings 10:1-29

Tuesday 8 November
1 Kings 11:1-25

Wednesday 9 November
1 Kings 11:26-43

Thursday 10 November
1 Kings 12:1-33

Friday 11 November
1 Kings 13:1-34

WEEK TWO

Sunday 16 October
1 Kings 3:1-15

Monday 17 October
1 Kings 3:16-28

Tuesday 18 October
Proverbs 1:1-7

Wednesday 19 October
1 Kings 4:1-20

Thursday 20 October
1 Kings 4:21-34

Friday 21 October
1 Chronicles 22:6-19

WEEK FOUR

Sunday 30 October
1 Kings 8:1-11

Monday 31 October
1 Kings 8:12-21

Tuesday 1 November
1 Kings 8:22-53

Wednesday 2 November
1 Kings 8:54-66

Thursday 3 November
2 Chronicles 7:11-22

Friday 4 November
1 Kings 9:1-28

WEEK SIX

Sunday 13 November
1 Kings 14:1-20

Monday 14 November
1 Kings 14:21-31

Tuesday 15 November
1 Kings 15:1-8

Wednesday 16 November
1 Kings 15:9-34

Thursday 17 November
1 Kings 16:1-10

Friday 18 November
1 Kings 16:11-34

SERMONS

SERMON ONE

A RIGHT ROYAL SAGA

1 Kings 1

SERMON TWO

THE NEW KING ON THE BLOCK

1 Kings 2

SERMON THREE

THE WISEST MAN IN THE WORLD

1 Kings 3-4

SERMON FOUR

HOW TO BUILD A HOUSE FOR GOD

1 Kings 5-7

SERMON FIVE

ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD

1 Kings 8

SERMON SIX

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

1 Kings 9-10

SERMON SEVEN

A DIVIDED HEART

1 Kings 11

AN INTRODUCTION TO 1-2 KINGS

The books of 1-2 Kings testify to God's faithful presence among the nation of Israel, but also shows just how far a nation can fall when God is ignored. 1 Kings begins at the end of David's reign, as his sons Adonijah and Solomon compete for the throne. Solomon is selected, and he builds a temple for the Lord. But after Solomon, the once-prosperous nation splits into two kingdoms. Most of the kings on both sides fail to follow the Lord and allow idolatry to flourish. Meanwhile, prophets, most notably Elijah, boldly call unfaithful kings to account.

BACKGROUND

The books of 1-2 Kings originally formed a single work, which was probably divided because its length required two scrolls. The division between 1-2 Kings is not based on a natural break in the text; it splits the story of Elijah between the two books.

The whole work of 1-2 Kings deals with the period from 971 BC (the transition from David to Solomon) to 586 BC (the Babylonian exile). 1 Kings covers about 120 years of that span, starting just before Solomon's accession and ending shortly after Ahab's reign over the northern kingdom (853 BC). 2 Kings tells the remainder of the story until the Babylonian exile (586 BC). Throughout this period, nearly all the kings of Israel and Judah place their own agendas above God's, leading the people into idolatry (e.g., 17:7-23; 21:10-15). Their actions catch up with them, and God uses foreign powers to bring judgment upon them. Assyria conquers the northern kingdom of Israel and deports its citizens (ch. 17). The southern kingdom of Judah is conquered by the Babylonians and its people, too, are exiled (chs. 24-25).

OUTLINE

1. Solomon comes to the throne (1 Kings 1:1-2:46)
2. Solomon's reign (1 Kings 3:1-11:43)
3. Israel is divided after Solomon's death (1 Kings 12:1-22:53)
4. From the end of Elijah's ministry to the fall of Israel (2 Kings 1:1-17:41)
5. From Hezekiah's reign to the fall of Judah (2 Kings 18:1-25:30)

THEMES

In 1 Kings, priests lead God's people astray when they should have been interceding on their behalf; and kings, who are expected to be godly examples, are selfish and idolatrous. After Solomon's death, almost all rulers of the northern kingdom do evil by continuing the idolatrous shrines established by the first northern king, Jeroboam. (The one exception is Jehu, who receives a mixed evaluation; see 2 Kgs 10:28–31.) Most leaders of the southern kingdom also receive negative or mixed evaluations, but two—Hezekiah and Josiah—are regarded positively.

1 Kings profoundly illustrates just how faith in national identity or leadership can lead to failure. Meanwhile, a faithful relationship with God is reflected in the life of Elijah, who predicts droughts, resurrects the son of a widow, and calls down fire upon the prophets of the god Baal (chs. 17–18). Elijah and a few others bravely show strength in the midst of religious persecution (e.g., 18:1–16). We see that these courageous few have the most powerful ally of all, God, who provides whatever they need (17:2–6) and speaks truth in a still small voice (19:9–18).

1 Kings leads us to reflect on what kind of people we will turn out to be. We can choose to stand nearly alone like Elijah, proclaiming righteousness in an unjust time, or we can choose to follow after failed leaders—or worse, become like them. The choice to follow God—or not—is ours to make.

2 Kings cuts through the complications of politics and warfare to bring clarity via God's perspective. There is evil, there is good, and there are those like Elisha who discern between the two. Yet, 2 Kings also shows us how gloomy life without God really is.

As we witness the demise of the nation God originally chose, we are prompted to decide what kind of people we will be. We must choose between false beliefs—in nations, gods, and ideologies—and belief in the truth of God's ways.

The above introduction is from the Faithlife Study Bible (Lexham Press, 2016)



Scan the QR Code to
watch an overview of

1-2 KINGS
by The Bible Project





1 KINGS 1

A RIGHT ROYAL SAGA



READING PLAN

WEEK ONE

Sunday 9 October
1 Kings 1:1–10

Monday 10 October
1 Kings 1:11–27

Tuesday 11 October
1 Kings 1:28–53

Wednesday 12 October
1 Kings 2:1–12

Thursday 13 October
1 Kings 2:13–46

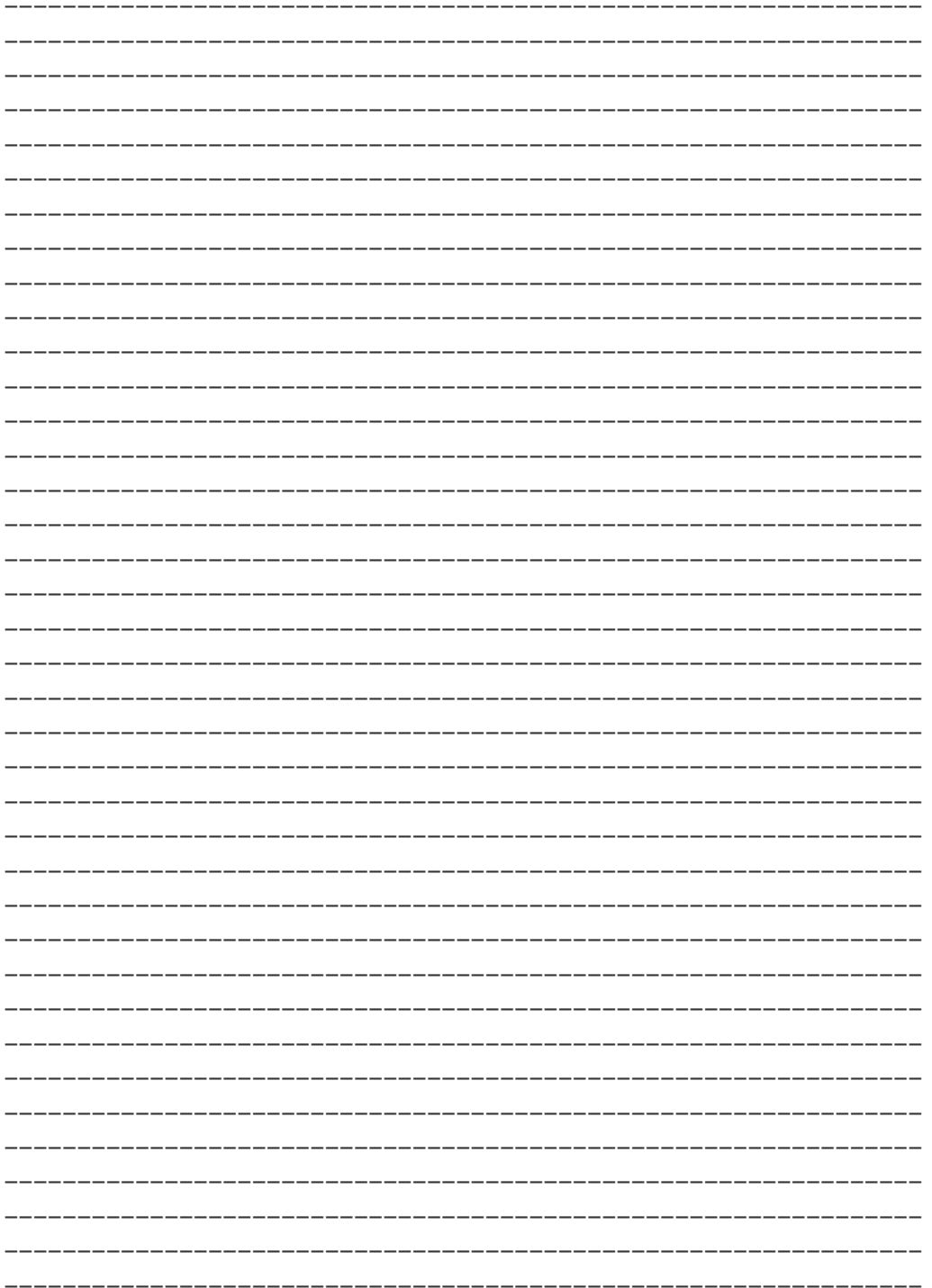
Friday 14 October
2 Samuel 16:5–14

CONTEXT

The book of 1 Kings, which picks up the story of 1 & 2 Samuel, begins at a time of significant change for the nation of Israel. King David, Israel's greatest king, is old and dying. What will happen next? Who will take his place as king? This is the focus of chapter 1. In fact, the noun king (and its related verb) appears seventy times in this chapter alone—the most of any chapter in the Bible. Adonijah, David's oldest surviving son, puts himself forward for the role. But God had already promised that Solomon, David's son to Bathsheba and Adonijah's half-brother, would be king. This chapter has all the makings of a right royal saga.

SERMON NOTES

A series of horizontal dashed lines for writing notes.



STUDY OBJECTIVE

This chapter shows us that even when life seems unstable and the future seems uncertain, God is always in control and his will always prevails. It is our hope that by the end of this study, we will all have an unshakeable confidence in the sovereign power and gracious promises of God.

SHARE TOGETHER

BUILDING AUTHENTIC AND LOVING RELATIONSHIPS

Spend some time checking in with each other. Try to share one real/personal thing with one another. Here are some questions that could help:

- Has anything been bothering you lately?
- What has God been teaching you lately?
- How have you been conscious of God this week?

PRAY TOGETHER

RELATING TO GOD TOGETHER

Before you begin your discussion, spend time in prayer together. While catching up you may have identified some prayer points you should include. Be sure to pray that God makes you more like Jesus through this discussion.

PURSUE GOD

GROWING IN KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND CHRIST-LIKENESS

- 1 Describe a time you went through a significant transition or time of change. What was it like? How did it make you feel?

Read 1 Kings 1:1-10

- 2 What is the opening story about David meant to demonstrate (v.1-4)

3 Adonijah, David's fourth born and oldest surviving son, puts himself forward to be king (v.5). What are we told about Adonijah (v.6)? Evaluate his actions. Do you think he was right to assume he would be king after David (consider v.10, v.13 and 1 Chronicles 22:9-10)?

4 How is the example of Adonijah a warning to us? If you're honest, can you see some of Adonijah's example in your own heart and life?

Adonijah shows us the danger of pride and the need for humility (e.g., 1 Peter 5:5-6; Philippians 2:3-4; Proverbs 6:16-17; Ps 75:6-7; Luke 14:11). He shows our need to submit to God's will and God's Word instead of pursuing our own self-interest or listening to those who only tell us what we want to hear. Even though Adonijah's name means "Yahweh is my Lord," he doesn't live like it. (Tony Merida)

Read 1 Kings 1:11-27

5 How does Nathan react (v.11-14)? Why does he react this way? Consider 2 Samuel 12:24-25 and 1 Chronicles 22:9-10.

Nathan knows Solomon is the rightful heir to the throne, loved by God, so he must do what he can to make sure Solomon becomes king.

6 What does the active response of Nathan (and also Bathsheba, v.15-21) teach us about our role in the fulfilment of God's promises?

We shouldn't sit back and do nothing. We need to get involved, take risks, and take action to work for the fulfilment of God's plan and purposes. But equally, they don't seem to think it all depends on them. They know God is in charge.

Read 1 Kings 1:28–53

7 What does David do (v.28–31)? What stands out to you about David's response?

David will keep his promise—he declares that Solomon will be the king after him. David remembers God's promise (especially 2 Samuel 7:1–16) and God's faithfulness to him throughout his life.

8 Adonijah grasps at the throne. Solomon is placed on the throne. Adonijah puts himself forward. Solomon is put forward as a result of God's promise and God's grace. How does this give us a picture of the way we enter God's kingdom? What is your response to this truth?

9 Adonijah takes hold of the horns of the altar (v.50), a visual way of admitting he's done wrong and asking for mercy. When Solomon is told about this (v.51), how does he respond (v.52–53)? What does this tell us about Solomon?

LIVE IT OUT

APPLYING WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

10 How can this chapter encourage us when the future seems uncertain?

11 What should be our attitude when it seems like our lives are out of control and God's promises are not being fulfilled in our lives?



1 KINGS 2

THE NEW KING ON THE BLOCK



READING PLAN

WEEK TWO

Sunday 16 October
1 Kings 3:1–15

Monday 17 October
1 Kings 3:16–28

Tuesday 18 October
Proverbs 1:1–7

Wednesday 19 October
1 Kings 4:1–20

Thursday 20 October
1 Kings 4:21–34

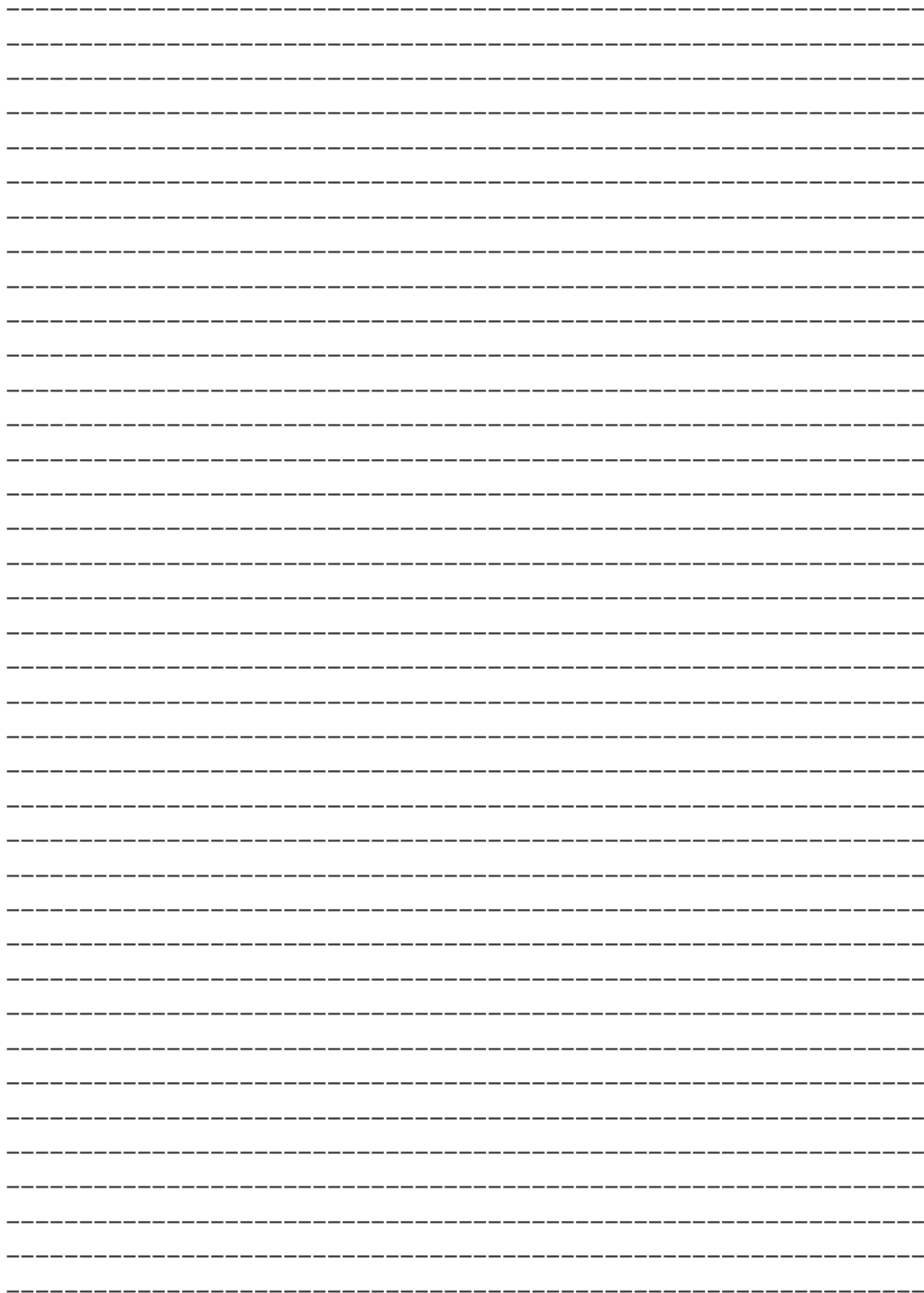
Friday 21 October
1 Chronicles 22:6–19

CONTEXT

David is dying and Solomon has just taken over the throne, but there are some remaining who do not want him to be king. What will be David's final instructions to his son? And how will Solomon deal with the threats to his reign? Will Solomon's reign be firmly established?

SERMON NOTES

A series of horizontal dashed lines for writing notes.



STUDY OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this study is to get us to wrestle with both (a) the providence of God as he establishes the king he wants on the throne and (b) the responsibility of human beings for the actions they take. Through this study people will grow in their ability to evaluate narratives by how much they conform to God's Law. It is important to remember that narrative is descriptive not prescriptive. Thus, it requires Biblical discernment to understand what lessons we should draw from the story.

SHARE TOGETHER

BUILDING AUTHENTIC AND LOVING RELATIONSHIPS

Spend some time checking in with each other. Try to share one real/personal thing with one another. Here are some questions that could help:

- Is there anything that's been bothering you that we could pray for?
- Is there a prayer that has been answered recently?
- How conscious have you been of God this week?

PRAY TOGETHER

RELATING TO GOD TOGETHER

Before you begin your discussion, spend time in prayer together. While catching up you may have identified some prayer points you should include. Be sure to pray that God makes you more like Jesus through this discussion.

How did you go with the Live it Out challenge from the last study? Did you learn anything new?

PURSUE GOD

GROWING IN KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND CHRIST-LIKENESS

- 1 Have you ever been with someone close to their death? Did they give you any final words of instruction? Share the significance of this with the group if you are comfortable.

Read 1 Kings 2:1-11

2 These verses demonstrate David's trust in and love for God, but also his great concern for the continuation of his Kingdom through Solomon. Do you think David's instructions are pleasing to God? Why or why not?

Hopefully people will try and back up their answers with Scripture. Verses 5-6 are in keeping with the commands of Scripture, read Exodus 21:12-14 together to show this. David's desire to show generosity to Barzillai is nothing but honourable (2:7). This is similar to David's generous actions toward Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9). However, his instructions for Shimei are more questionable. Shimei was a dishonourable man and mistreated David (2 Samuel 16:5-14). However, David promised to spare him (2 Samuel 19:16-23). His instructions here contradict that promise and seem to be an example of David erring. Though his instructions concerning Shimei may be wise in human political terms, they seem out of step with God's will.

3 David reminds us that even the greatest kings were a mixture of sinner and saint. How does David's story emphasise God's mercy rather than the moral brilliance of David?

God could have forsaken David in his failures. Ultimately, God's kindness and promises to David (see 2 Samuel 7) were not based on David's moral performance, but on God's unwavering grace.

4 Is there anyone or anything you tend to put your trust in for your security, hope or joy in life? How is Jesus a better King to trust in?

5 Is there anything else in verses 1-11 that interests you or confuses you that you want to discuss?

Read 1 Kings 2:12-46.

6 Notice the word 'established' in 1 Kings 2:12. This Hebrew word is repeated three more times in this chapter (sometimes as 'secure' in NIV) in verses 24, 45 and 46. How does this key word help you understand the purpose of this chapter?

Whether Solomon's actions are right or wrong, this chapter is about securing/establishing the reign of Solomon. This is a helpful idea to keep in mind as you progress through the narrative.

7 Jonathon's older half-brother, Adonijah, is the main concern of verses 12-25. How are we supposed to evaluate Adonijah's actions in these verses?

He could be scheming for the throne by looking to marry Abishag. Abishag personally attended to King David in his final days, and was therefore associated with the King of Israel (1:3 & 1:15). Even if he just wanted

Abishag for her beauty, he was still behaving foolishly (compare 1:52-53) and astonishingly still felt entitled to special privileges even after he had betrayed Solomon.

8 Adonijah gives us a case study of where self-willed strategies and entitlement can lead us. Are there ways in which you treat King Jesus like you are entitled to certain privileges? If so, what would be a better way to honour Jesus as King and show submission to him?

9 In one sense, Adonijah died because Solomon had the foresight to warn Adonijah earlier in 1 Kings 1:52-52 and then ordered his execution when he behaved foolishly. In another sense, however, Adonijah died because he undermined God's appointed king. God had put Solomon on the throne and no one could stop God's providential plan. What is God's providence. How does it help us understand 1 Kings?

God's providence refers to God's governance over all things, directing them toward his ends.

"The text teaches the importance of God's providence. At first that might seem more theoretical than practical, but failure to grasp this will mean either we will resort to moralising or to delivering historical lectures. Providence is essentially a doctrine which encourages perseverance; God is working out His purpose with indifferent human material and that is writ large in 1-2 Kings. The (audience) had to be reassured that, while God's just anger had led to (their exile), His covenant love endures forever. This remains as true today as at every stage of the history of God's people." – Bob Fyall

10 Have you thought about God's providence in your own life? How does this truth encourage or challenge you?

11 How does Solomon foreshadow Jesus as God's King? How does he fail to be God's King?

12 What lessons can we learn from the remainder of the chapter?

LIVE IT OUT

APPLYING WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

13 How can you express your gratitude for King Jesus this week? How can you live in greater obedience to his reign? Share an action step you can take with the group.



1 KINGS 3-4

THE WISEST MAN IN THE WORLD



READING PLAN

WEEK THREE

Sunday 23 October
1 Kings 5:1-18

Monday 24 October
1 Kings 6:1-14

Tuesday 25 October
1 Kings 6:15-38

Wednesday 26 October
1 Kings 7:1-12

Thursday 27 October
1 Kings 7:13-51

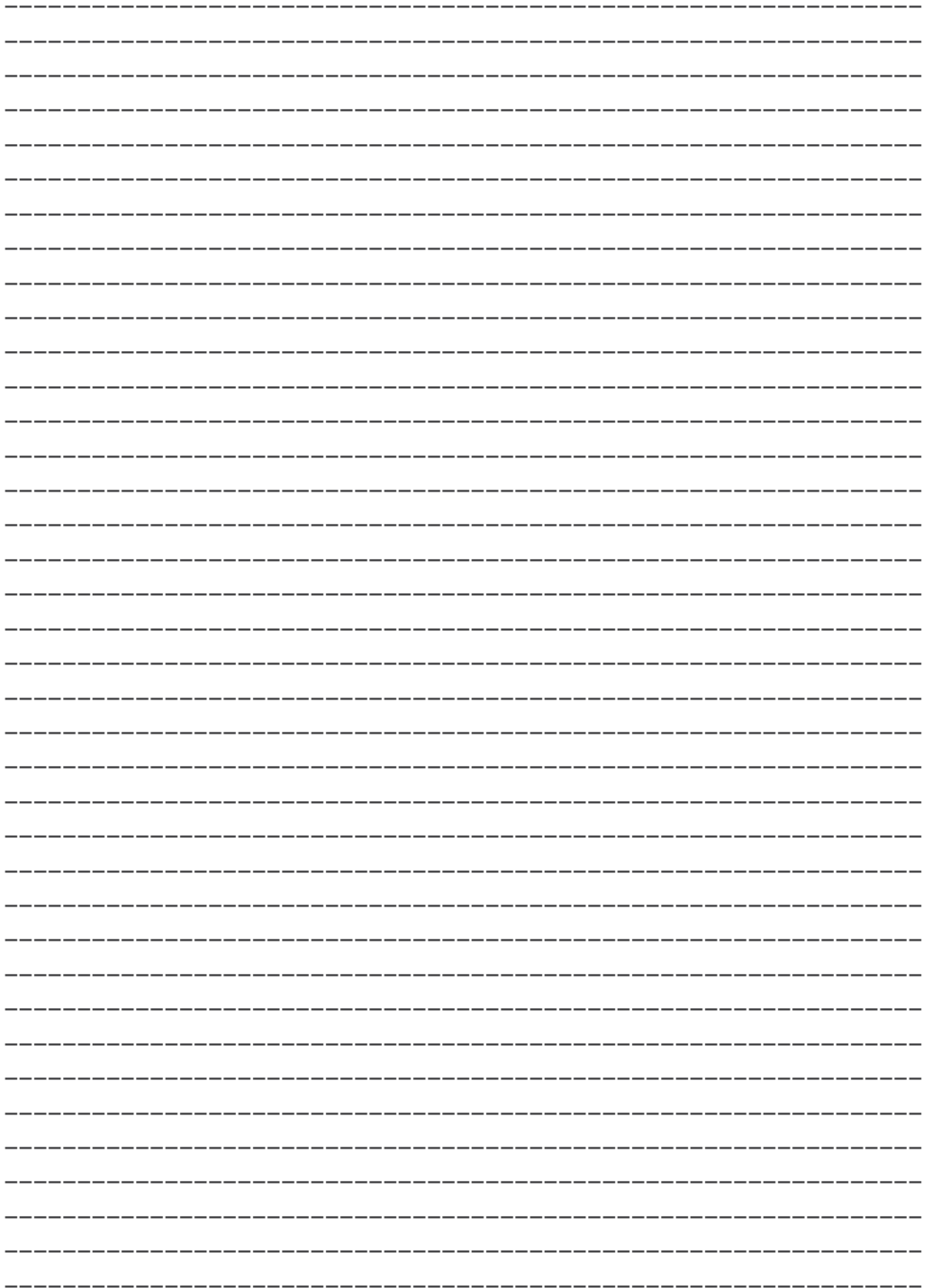
Friday 28 October
2 Chronicles 5:2-10

CONTEXT

With the kingdom of Israel now firmly established in Solomon's hands (2:46), we are given insight into his character and the nature of his reign. The focus in these chapters is on Solomon's request for wisdom, the exercise of his wisdom, and the greatness of his wisdom. Solomon becomes wiser than anyone else in the world and his reputation for wisdom spreads throughout the world. But even now there is already an ominous hint that even the wisest man in the world will fail to qualify as God's perfect and ultimate ruler. Solomon's alliance with Egypt via his marriage to Pharaoh's daughter is a shadow of the darkness that will descend in the future and lead to his fall from God's favour (11:1-6). Solomon is merely an imperfect glimpse of God's greater king, Jesus Christ, the one "...in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Colossians 2:3).

SERMON NOTES

A series of horizontal dashed lines for writing notes.



STUDY OBJECTIVE

These chapters show us what wisdom looks like, how we should seek it, and, ultimately, how true wisdom is found in Christ, God's true and ultimate King. It is our hope that by the end of this study, we will all have a desire to seek God's wisdom by seeking God's King through God's word.

SHARE TOGETHER

BUILDING AUTHENTIC AND LOVING RELATIONSHIPS

Spend some time checking in with each other. Try to share one real/personal thing with one another. Here are some questions that could help:

- Is there anything that's been bothering you that we could pray for?
- Is there a prayer that has been answered recently?
- How conscious have you been of God this week?

How did you go with the Live it Out challenge from the last study? Did you learn anything new?

PRAY TOGETHER

RELATING TO GOD TOGETHER

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PURSUE GOD

GROWING IN KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND CHRIST-LIKENESS

- 1 Who is someone that you would describe as 'wise'? Why? What makes them stand out to you?

Read 1 Kings 3:1–3

2 What are we told about Solomon in verses 1–3—both good and bad?

Solomon is evidently powerful enough to enter into an alliance with Egypt and to undertake ambitious building projects (v.1), but the mention of marriage to Pharaoh's daughter is foreboding. Marriage to foreigners who worshipped other gods was forbidden in Deuteronomy 7:1–4 because of the temptation it would present to worship these gods as well. Additionally, although Solomon loves God and is walking according to his instructions (v.3a), he has not yet taken a stand against the high places, which will be repeatedly denounced later in the story (e.g., 12:31–32; 13:2, 33; 14:22–23).

3 How did Solomon show his love for God (v.3a)? Should this be true for us as well? To what extent does this describe your life? Consider John 14:15, 21–23 and 1 John 5:3.

4 Are there any “except that” areas in your life (v.3b)? If you're willing, share them with the group.

Read 1 Kings 3:4–15

5 How would you respond to God's offer in verse 5? Be honest. What did Solomon ask for, and why (v.6–9)?

He asks for a discerning heart to distinguish between right and wrong (v.9a), so that he can govern the people. This is defined later simply as wisdom (3:28; 4:29–34).

6 How does God respond to Solomon's request (v.10–14)? What does this reveal about God's priorities? How does it illustrate the truth of Jesus' words in Matthew 6:33? Have you ever experienced this reality in your life?

God is pleased with Solomon's request, because he asked for help to serve others rather than wealth and honour for himself. As a result, God gives wisdom to Solomon abundantly (4:29–34), as well as wealth and honour.

7 **Read Proverbs 1:1–7** What is wisdom? What makes someone wise? What is meant by “fear of the Lord”? What does it not mean?

According to these verses, wisdom is variously understood as insight, understanding, doing what is right, guidance, knowledge, discretion, etc. The key statement is verse 7, which tells us how true wisdom is acquired:

"the fear of the Lord". This fear is not terror but awe. It is a rightful sense of reverence of God which leads to right living before God. To show your group an example of what this looks like, you may wish to read Exodus 20:18–20.

Read 1 Kings 3:16–28

8 What would you do if you were confronted with the scenario described in verses 16–22? What are some of the difficulties?

There were no other witnesses, there will be significant consequences whatever decision is made, and both women have a plausible story.

9 How is Solomon's wisdom revealed in the way he handles it (v.23–28)?

'He gets to the heart of the matter—one person's word against another (v.23). He sets up an effective and fair test to draw out the real mother (v.24–26). He rules decisively (v.27).' (James Hughes)

10 Compare Matthew 7:28–29 and 1 Kings 3:28. What are the similarities between Solomon and Jesus?

'The wise words of both Jesus and Solomon prompt awe or amazement in those who hear, and a recognition that they have a special kind of authority. Solomon's is recognised as God-given, and Jesus' hearers realise that His authority is unlike anyone else's.' (James Hughes)

11 **Read Colossians 2:2–3** How is the wisdom of Christ different to, and beyond, the wisdom of Solomon?

'Solomon asked God for wisdom and was given it by God (v.9, 12). And he was still capable of acting unwisely (as v.1 hints and as we'll see more clearly in chapter 11). Christ Jesus, though, IS wisdom. All of God's wisdom is found in Him, not because He asked God for it, but because He is God. And He never acted unwisely.' (James Hughes)

LIVE IT OUT

APPLYING WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

12 What are the implications of Colossians 2:3 for anyone who wants to be truly wise? What might this look like practically for you?



1 KINGS 5-7

HOW TO BUILD A HOUSE FOR GOD



READING PLAN

WEEK FOUR

Sunday 30 October
1 Kings 8:1-11

Monday 31 October
1 Kings 8:12-21

Tuesday 1 November
1 Kings 8:22-53

Wednesday 2 November
1 Kings 8:54-66

Thursday 3 November
2 Chronicles 7:11-22

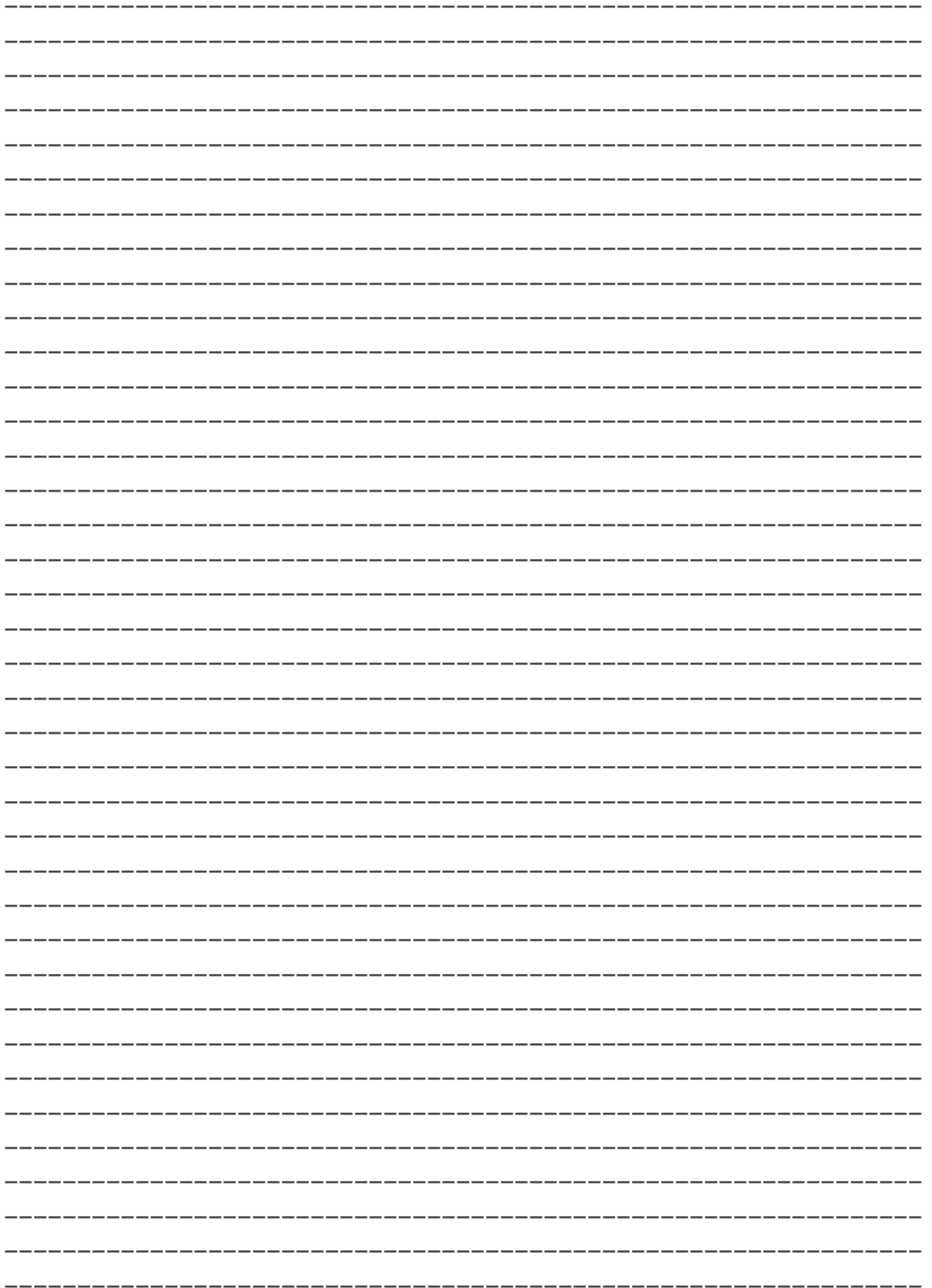
Friday 4 November
1 Kings 9:1-28

CONTEXT

In these chapters Solomon's wisdom is put on further display through his relations with Tyre and his careful oversight of the building of the temple and the palace. In this he fulfills the promise of 2 Samuel 7:13 and gives us a glimpse of the blessings of living under a wise ruler. However, amidst all this, cracks are beginning to show in Solomon's allegiance to the Lord.

SERMON NOTES

A series of horizontal dashed lines for writing notes.



STUDY OBJECTIVE

There are many things we can notice in this study. These chapters reveal Solomon's wisdom and recognise his commitment to the LORD. They recognise the way God is honoured through the intricate care given to the building of the temple as well as the rare value of the materials used. The temple itself has many references to Creation and the Garden of Eden and is meant to point us forward to the ideal of dwelling with God in the New Creation. However, cracks are also showing in King Solomon who takes twice as long to build his own palace and whose Egyptian wife is forebodingly mentioned.

SHARE TOGETHER

BUILDING AUTHENTIC AND LOVING RELATIONSHIPS

Spend some time checking in with each other. Try to share one real/personal thing with one another. Here are some questions that could help:

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- What has God been teaching you lately?
- How have you been conscious of God this week?

How did you go with the Live it Out challenge from the last study? Did you learn anything new?

PRAY TOGETHER

RELATING TO GOD TOGETHER

Before you begin your discussion, spend time in prayer together. While catching up you may have identified some prayer points you should include. Be sure to pray that God makes you more like Jesus through this discussion.

PURSUE GOD

GROWING IN KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND CHRIST-LIKENESS

- 1 When it comes to any kind of work you do, do you tend to value quality or efficiency? Why?

Read 1 Kings 5

- 2 How does this chapter demonstrate Solomon's wisdom?
- 3 What does this chapter show us about Solomon's priorities as king?

He wants to fulfil the Lord's will to build a temple (5:3-5).

He cares about the quality of the work because it is for the Lord (5:6).

He cares about his relations with Tyre and shows friendship and faithfulness to Hiram (5:6-12).

- 4 What does this chapter teach us about good government?

Read on 1 Kings 6

- 5 Why do you think the building description is interrupted with the message in verses 11-13?

This is a way of highlighting the importance of these instructions from the Lord

- 6 Verses 11-13 shows us the great value that God places on obedience and faithfulness to his Word. In your effort to 'do things for God' do you ever forget about what God really wants from you (i.e. an attentive and obedient heart)? Why do you think that is?

This question is not meant to imply that Solomon was not attentive to God at this point. It's just a question for us to apply the passage to our own walk with God.

- 7 Why do you think there was so much gold used in the temple (6:19-22) along with images of cherubim, flowers and palm trees (6:29)?

This is meant to remind us of Eden (e.g. Genesis 2:11-12 and 3:24). The temple is the meeting place between God and humanity. It is ultimately a symbol that points forward to the reunion of God's presence with the Creation in the New Heaven and New Earth (Revelation 21-22). At this stage, because of sin, God's presence could only be accessed in a very limited sense by God's people.

8 Why don't we need a physical temple today as Christians? Consider John 2:19–21 and 1 Corinthians 3:16–17

Jesus said he is the true temple (i.e. the meeting place between God and humanity, in whom the presence of God dwelt) in John 2:19–21. God's plan to dwell on earth again has progressed forward since Solomon's temple through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. We encounter God through Jesus, and receive the presence of the Holy Spirit through him, so that as God's people we have become a spiritual 'temple' on earth (1 Corinthians 3:16–17). God's presence dwells among us!

Read on 1 Kings 7

9 Why do you think 7:1 points out the greater length of time it took Solomon to build his own 'house'?

There are hints here that there are cracks in Solomon's commitment to the Lord. This is reinforced by the mention of Pharaoh's daughter again in 7:8, because marriage to foreigners (those who remained committed to paganism) was forbidden for God's people.

10 In 7:15–22 there is much space devoted to two pillars. What is the significance of these pillars and how do their names (7:21) help us in understanding this? (Note: The footnotes in your Bible should tell you the meaning of the names)

"In practical terms the pillars were to be ever-present reminders to each successive king of the fact that he was ruling by God's appointment and by his grace, and that his strength lay in God." – Richard Patterson and Hermann Austel

11 What are Solomon's priorities in this chapter?

12 Reflect on your own priorities. Where does God feature in them?

LIVE IT OUT

APPLYING WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

13 How can you prioritise God and his Word this week? Share with the group.



1 KINGS 8

ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD



READING PLAN

WEEK FIVE

Sunday 6 November
2 Chronicles 9:1-12

Monday 7 November
1 Kings 10:1-29

Tuesday 8 November
1 Kings 11:1-25

Wednesday 9 November
1 Kings 11:26-43

Thursday 10 November
1 Kings 12:1-33

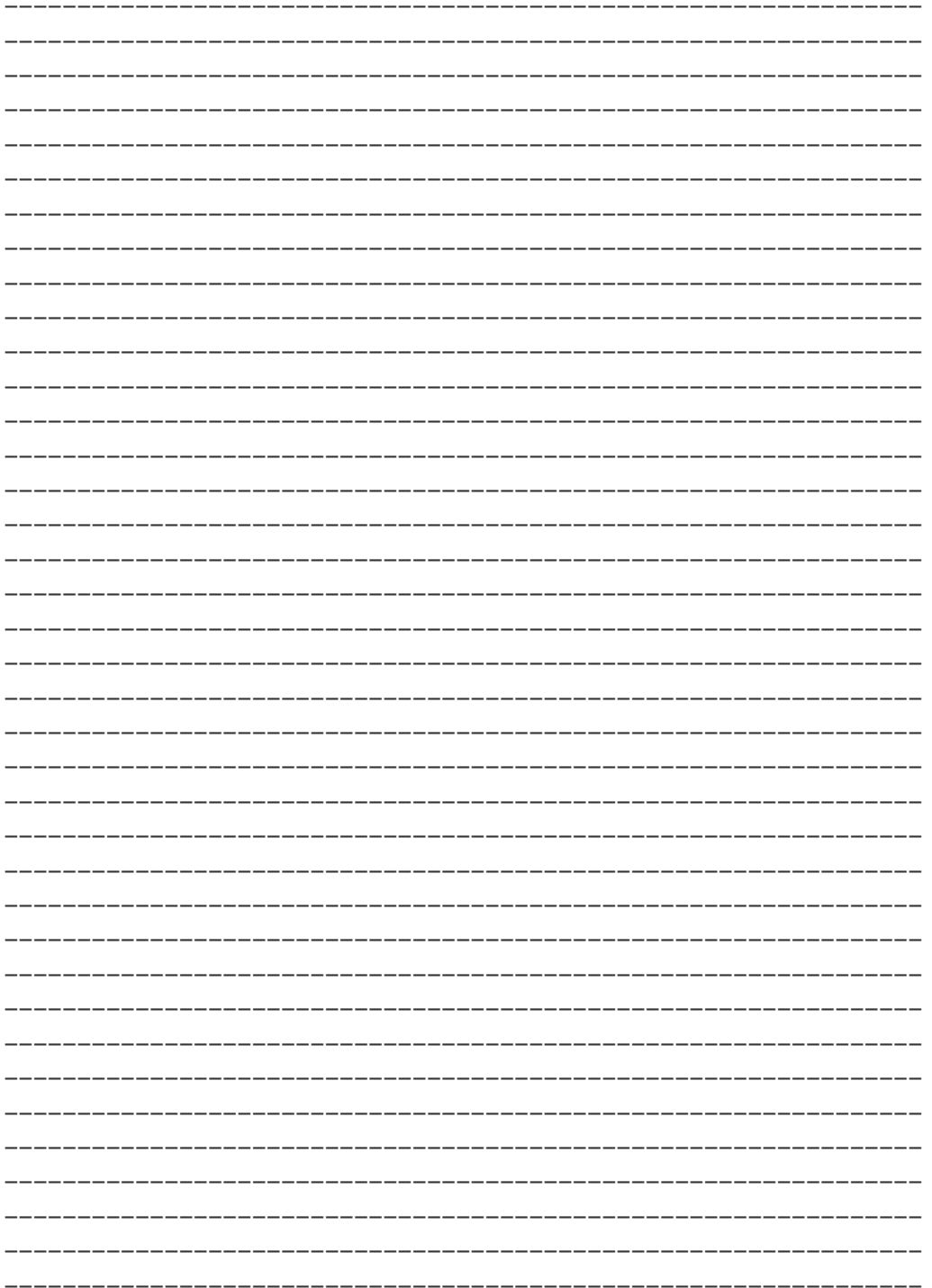
Friday 11 November
1 Kings 13:1-34

CONTEXT

This is perhaps the highest point in Solomon's reign. Here he dedicates the temple to God, blesses the people and seeks God in prayer. God's presence fills the temple in an incredible sign of God being with the people of Israel.

SERMON NOTES

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STUDY OBJECTIVE

We want our groups to see the importance of the ark, God's commitment to his covenant with David, and the great praise and gratitude that characterises this whole chapter. This study will cause us to reflect on how we value God's Word, how we understand God's covenant love and how much praise and gratitude accentuates our own worship of God.

SHARE TOGETHER

BUILDING AUTHENTIC AND LOVING RELATIONSHIPS

Spend some time checking in with each other. Try to share one real/personal thing with one another. Here are some questions that could help:

- Has anything been bothering you lately?
- What has God been teaching you lately?
- How have you been conscious of God this week?

PRAY TOGETHER

RELATING TO GOD TOGETHER

Before you begin your discussion, spend time in prayer together. While catching up you may have identified some prayer points you should include. Be sure to pray that God makes you more like Jesus through this discussion.

PURSUE GOD

GROWING IN KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND CHRIST-LIKENESS

Read 1 Kings 8:1-9

- 1 Why do you think so much space is devoted to the ark of the Lord's covenant?

The covenant God made with Israel at Sinai is at the very heart of their relationship with God. Thus, it is fitting for this ark to be placed right in the very 'hot spot' of God's presence in the temple - 'The Most Holy Place'.

2 What do the contents of the ark teach us about God?

Inside the ark were the tablets of law that Moses placed in it (1 Kings 8:9). It reminds us of the importance of obedience to God's law.

3 How has our covenant relationship with God changed through Jesus? Use Romans 3:21-26 to help you answer this.

While God values obedience, we could never be obedient enough. Romans 3 shows us that everyone falls short, no one is 'justified' or gains 'right-standing' before God through obedience to the law, but rather by grace. Jesus fulfilled Israel's role where they failed, and he took the judgement God's people deserved, that is why right-standing before God is available through faith in Jesus. We now have a greater access to God through Jesus the true 'mercy seat', the true meeting place between heaven and earth. His obedient life and death have secured these privileges for God's new covenant people.

Read on 1 Kings 8:10-21

4 Take a moment to look at the passage. What does Solomon focus on in his address to the people and why?

Read on 1 Kings 8:22-61

5 What are some of the themes in Solomon's prayer?

6 What does this teach you personally about prayer?

Read on 1 Kings 8:62–66

- 7 Notice the lavish praise and the great joy in this passage. How much do these things characterise your own worship of God? Why or why not?
- 8 Why is David rather than Solomon mentioned in verse 66?

This temple is the fulfilment of God's promises to David. David is the one God covenanted with.

- 9 Are there any other questions you have of the passage that you would like to explore?

LIVE IT OUT

APPLYING WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

- 10 What spoke to you from this chapter? What do you want to apply? Share with the group how you'd like to respond.



1 KINGS 9-10

THE BEGINNING OF THE END



READING PLAN

WEEK SIX

Sunday 13 November
1 Kings 14:1-20

Monday 14 November
1 Kings 14:21-31

Tuesday 15 November
1 Kings 15:1-8

Wednesday 16 November
1 Kings 15:9-34

Thursday 17 November
1 Kings 16:1-10

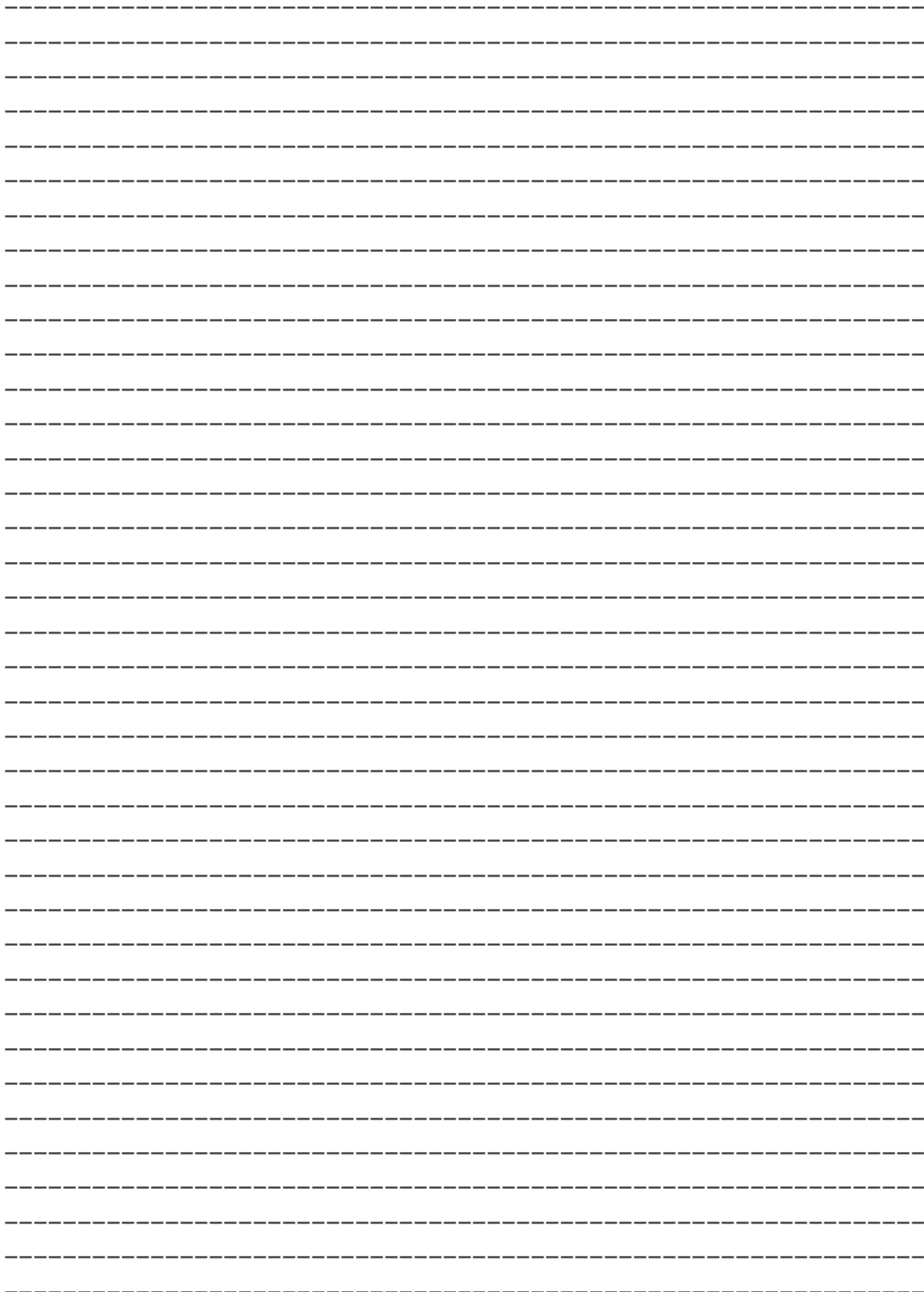
Friday 18 November
1 Kings 16:11-34

CONTEXT

The temple has now been completed and dedicated to God by Solomon. God now appears to Solomon, to warn him that the existence of the temple alone will not guarantee God's blessing, but rather God's people must remain faithful to Him to retain his blessing. This is followed by a long description of the incredible wealth which Solomon acquires. But this wealth starts to become the focus rather than the God who has given it. We also start to see hints of imperfection in Solomon's behaviour, as he utilises forced labour, gives part of the Promised Land to a Gentile king, and builds a palace for one of his wives, the daughter of Pharaoh (3:1).

SERMON NOTES

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STUDY OBJECTIVE

We must see the great wealth of Solomon in light of the promise and warning given by God in 9:1–9. He has been blessed with wealth and wisdom, but he has the responsibility to use these resources to serve God. We want our groups to see that we too have the same responsibility; to use our gifts and resources to serve God. We also want to appreciate the reality that in Jesus we have a king with far greater wealth and power than Solomon, and who will never fail in his responsibility to rule perfectly.

SHARE TOGETHER

BUILDING AUTHENTIC AND LOVING RELATIONSHIPS

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- Has anything been bothering you lately?
- What has God been teaching you lately?
- How have you been conscious of God this week?

How did you go with the Live it Out challenge from the last study? Did you learn anything new?

PRAY TOGETHER

RELATING TO GOD TOGETHER

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PURSUE GOD

GROWING IN KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND CHRIST-LIKENESS

- 1 If you were a journalist or travel blogger writing about Solomon's kingdom, how would you describe it? What adjectives would you use?

Read 1 Kings 9:1-9

- 2 How does God encourage Solomon? What promises does God make?
- 3 What warnings does God give? What consequences does he outline?
- 4 From your knowledge of the Bible, which of these two paths end up becoming reality? See 2 Kings 25 if you need a hand.

Solomon himself will soon fall into sin, and his kingdom will collapse after his death. The people continue their cycle of rebellion against God, eventually resulting in the destruction of the temple and the exile.

- 5 What do we see Solomon doing in the rest of chapter 10? What does this tell us about his reign? Do you see any warning signs about his character?

The picture is of a wealthy kingdom, growing in power and prestige. Yet there are some warning bells starting to ring. Solomon has given land to a Gentile ruler which was part of the Promised Land. We are also reminded of his concerning marriage to the daughter of Pharaoh.

Read 1 Kings 10:1-13

- 6 Why does the Queen of Sheba come to Israel? What does she find?

The queen comes following the rumours of Solomon's wealth but especially of his wisdom, and she finds the rumours true as she observes the kingdom and speaks to Solomon.

7 The 'report in my own country' which the Queen heard brought her to listen to Solomon's wisdom. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:6-10. What does this passage show about the kind of 'report' that should be made about a local church?

This passage shows lives that are Christ-like (v.6), joy in suffering (v.6), faith in God (v.8), a change in priorities and lifestyle caused by a wholehearted focus on Jesus (v.9), and an expectant longing for the return of Jesus (v.10).

8 What 'report' do you think our local community would make about our church? Do you think this report would encourage non-believers to come and see for themselves?

9 **Read Deuteronomy 17:16-17** What is concerning about 1 Kings 10:26-29?

Kings of Israel were not to accumulate large numbers of horses (a status symbol of military strength), and were not to obtain them from Egypt, the land which had oppressed them.

10 Looking back on chapters 9-10, do you think that Solomon has used his wealth, wisdom, and influence responsibly?

While there are some warning signs, Solomon seems to be ruling well so far.

LIVE IT OUT

APPLYING WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

11 If you were put in the place of Solomon, do you think you would have been a more faithful ruler? Why or why not? What does this tell us about our need for a perfect king?

12 What gifts, wealth or influence has God given to you? Are you using these things responsibly to serve God and others? If not, what practical steps can you take to grow in this area?



1 KINGS 11

A DIVIDED HEART

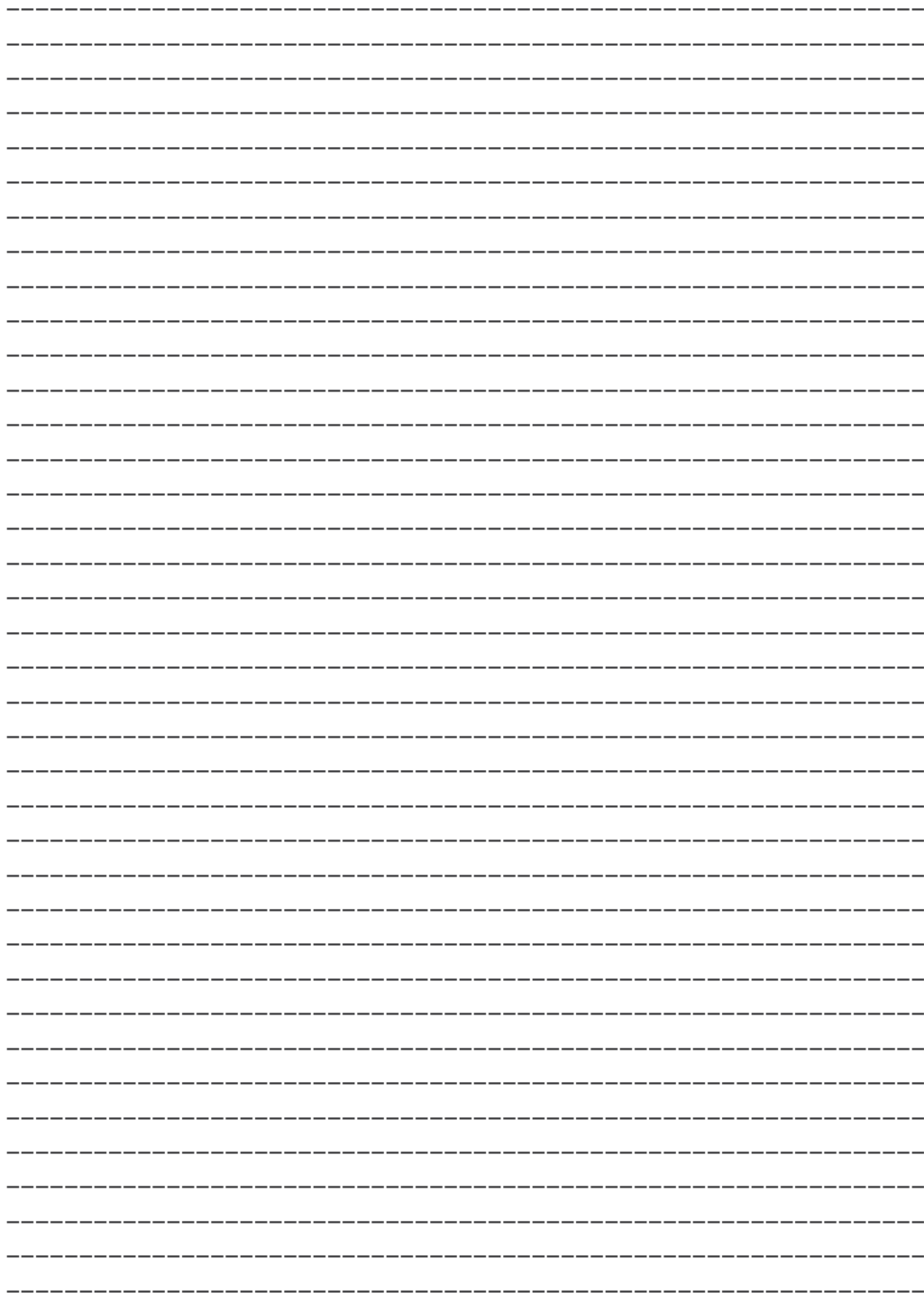


CONTEXT

The warning signs which were hinted at in previous chapters now lead to Solomon's fall from God's favour as he is led by his own folly and his foreign wives into rejection of God as the one true God. He marries many women who follow other gods, and is led by them into compromise by building them places to worship their gods and thus condoning their idolatry. God's warning given at the start of chapter 9 now becomes reality, and Solomon's kingdom is doomed to collapse after his death and enemies close in on every side.

SERMON NOTES

A series of horizontal dashed lines for writing notes.



STUDY OBJECTIVE

As we look at Solomon's unfaithfulness to God in his later years, the aim is to highlight that Jesus is the only king who is qualified to rule over God's people. The example of Solomon can also serve as a warning to us, challenging us to search our hearts for ways that we might be compromising in ways that could become disastrous.

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PURSUE GOD

GROWING IN KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND CHRIST-LIKENESS

- 1 Have you ever experienced or observed a situation where a small compromise got bigger and became a significant problem? What could have prevented it?

2 How would you define 'idolatry'? What are some examples of this in our culture today?

There are several ways to define idolatry, but broadly it is to put anything that is not God in the place of God. To give our worship, our attention, and devotion to something other than God.

Read 1 Kings 11:1-13

3 What did Solomon do wrong in verses 1-3? Why had God commanded the Israelites not to do this? (v.2)

4 What does Solomon's compromise lead him to do in verses 4-8? Why does God react so strongly in verse 11?

5 How does God's command not to marry those from other nations apply, through Jesus, to us today? Consider Galatians 3:28 and 2 Corinthians 6:14-16. Why is this a wise and beneficial principle?

Through Jesus, God's people are no longer identified by their culture (Jewish), but by faith in Jesus. The command to not marry someone who isn't part of God's people remains, and it remains for the same reason. A divided heart leads to divided worship.

Read 1 Kings 11:14-25

6 God had allowed Solomon decades of peace, both within his own nation and diplomatically as well (1 Kings 5:4). How is this blessing withdrawn in verses 14-25?

Read 1 Kings 11:26-43

7 What promises does God make in verses 11-13? How are these kept in verses 26-40?

God promised that (a) Solomon would lose his kingdom to someone who worked for him, (b) A small part of the kingdom would remain ruled by his line, and (c) This would happen after Solomon's death (so he would die with the knowledge that he had no legacy).

8 Should we expect that modern nations who follow God faithfully will in turn be blessed in the same way as Solomon?

No. Because God had made specific promises to David, and then to Solomon. While following Jesus will lead to practical benefits for any nation as people become less sinful and more like Christ, we have no reason to expect the same worldly wealth as a result of our faithfulness. In fact, the Bible often warns us that following Jesus will lead to a less comfortable experience in this life!

9 Given the spectacular fall of Solomon, what hope is there for a perfect king to come from David's line? See Matthew 1:6-17.

LIVE IT OUT

APPLYING WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

10 What has stood out to you the most about this series on Solomon? What is one 'take-home' which you have or will apply in your life?

11 Have you been tempted to make compromises in your life which seem small? You don't need to share these with the group, but take a moment to search your heart, then pray together. It can be helpful to share this with a close Christian friend, so they can keep you accountable.

Finish your time together in prayer. You could start this with some silent prayer, where each person brings to God their need for Jesus. Then someone could finish by thanking Jesus for being our perfect, true ruler.

