



BIBLE

STUDENT BOOK

▶ **11th Grade | Unit 8**

BIBLE 1108

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

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The Pursuit of Happiness

Introduction

In the Declaration of Independence, the founding fathers of America explained their reasons for wanting to break with England and establish their own nation. As part of their argument, they stated, "We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." The men who signed the document argued that one of the rights God gave to people was the "pursuit of happiness."

So, what does the "pursuit of happiness" look like or mean? For some it means being allowed to do whatever they want wherever they want as long as they are happy. Rules of moral behavior are thrown away as they chase after pleasures that can be found through social indulgence and excess. However, parties end and food and alcohol run out. These people equate happiness with physical pleasure.

Others think they can find happiness through acquiring material possessions. They believe that accumulating cars, jewelry, and property will bring joy to their lives, but wherever they look they see another car to buy or someone who has even more possessions than they do. Eventually they find no satisfaction or joy from the accumulation of possessions.

Some people attempt to find happiness and meaning through hard work. They keep themselves busy with their jobs and careers. Still others try to find satisfaction in lives spent trying to influence others and rise to power. In the end, people who search for happiness through pleasure, possessions, hard work, and power end up empty. They are like dogs chasing their tails which are never caught. In the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon described these pursuits as the "chasing after the wind."

The book of Ecclesiastes traces Solomon's attempt to find meaning, purpose, and happiness. He strove to build a kingdom that would stand as a testament to his wealth and power. He experienced all the pleasures that money and power had to offer. He educated himself about the world with the great wisdom God had given him. In the end, he found it all to be meaningless. Solomon wrote, "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit" (Ecclesiastes 1:14). After exploring and evaluating everything the world had to offer, Solomon found it void and joyless.

In this LIFEPAK, you will study the life and legacy of Solomon. You will begin by studying how Solomon, King David's son, came to be ruler over Israel. You will learn how Solomon asked God for the gift of wisdom so that he could better rule Israel. You will also trace Solomon's fall into sin and rejection of God. Finally, you will read the book of Ecclesiastes in which Solomon outlined his search for meaning in a meaningless world.



Fortunately, Ecclesiastes does not end with Solomon’s hopeless observations. Solomon recognized that apart from God, life does not hold any meaning or joy. People can pursue all kinds of happiness, but if it brings them away from God, it amounts to nothing. God told Solomon that if he obeyed God’s commands and followed him, he would be blessed. At the early part of his reign, Solomon did exactly this. It was only when he stopped following God that his life became devoid of meaning.

Christians’ lives should be especially joy-filled. They know that the promises God made to David, Solomon, and others were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Only through obedience to him can Christians find true happiness. The apostle Peter phrased it this way: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls” (1 Peter 1:3–9).

THE LIFE OF SOLOMON	
AUTHOR: SOLOMON	
THEME: THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS	
KEY VERSE: ECCLESIASTES 12:13	
SUCCESSION	1 Kings 1–2; 1 Chronicles 29:23–30
PROSPERITY	1 Kings 3–11; 2 Chronicles 1–9
REFLECTIONS	Ecclesiastes; Proverbs 3

Objectives

Read these objectives. The objectives tell you what you will be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIFEPAAC®. When you have finished this LIFEPAAC, you should be able to:

1. List the events that took place to make sure Solomon was king after David.
2. Describe how Solomon secured his kingdom.
3. Appreciate that Solomon asked God for wisdom, and if he followed God he would be given wealth and honor.
4. Describe Solomon's work in building God's temple in Jerusalem.
5. Relate how Israel was a strong, united kingdom under Solomon.
6. Acknowledge how Solomon turned from God during his reign.
7. Realize that life's meaning is found in fearing God and keeping his commands.
8. Recognize that the pursuit of happiness begins and ends with Christ.

Survey the LIFEPAAC. Ask yourself some questions about this study and write your questions here.

1. SOLOMON'S SUCCESSION

Solomon is recognized as the wisest king to ever rule Israel. Some believe he was the wisest king to rule any kingdom at any time. Others contend that he was the wisest king ever. Sometimes we forget that Solomon was once a young monarch unsure of himself and his kingdom. Solomon did not begin his reign filled with wisdom and understanding. Instead, he had a tenuous hold on Israel's throne.

As David entered his later years, speculation began about who would inherit the throne of Israel. Adonijah, David's oldest surviving son, thought he had the right to his father's throne. Like his older brother Absalom, Adonijah began to take on the appearance of Israel's next king. Some of David's key government and religious officials felt Adonijah's claim to the throne was legitimate. They worked to have Adonijah declared king.

However, Solomon was chosen by God to reign over Israel after his father David. God had promised David that his line would rule over God's people forever. We know that Christ was the fulfillment of this promise. While Adonijah was part of David's line, he was not the one whom God had determined would rule Israel. David needed to act quickly to make sure that his son Solomon would succeed him. Solomon began his reign before his father's death and reigned alongside his father for about six months.

Before his death, David spoke to Solomon about the challenges he would face as ruler over Israel. He spoke at first in generalities about what a king over God's people would need. Later, he advised Solomon regarding specific individuals who had been a blessing or detriment to his rule. Solomon's transition into becoming sole ruler over Israel was still not secure at the time of his father's death. As long as Adonijah and his supporters were alive, they were a threat to Solomon's throne. At first, these men were allowed to live with the agreement that they would not threaten the kingdom and would support Solomon as king. Once David died, they used deception to try to seize the throne again.

Internal threats were not the only ones Solomon faced as he began his rule. Other kingdoms knew that Israel had a young monarch. Israel would be vulnerable to attacks as the kingdom transitioned from one ruler to another. Solomon recognized the many complexities of ruling over the kingdom of Israel. He would not be able to reign alone; he would need God's help.

In this section, you will study the events of Solomon's early reign. You will observe how Solomon came to take Israel's throne. You will investigate the ways that King David prepared his son for ruling over Israel. Finally, you will explore how Solomon secured his kingdom from both internal and external threats.

Section Objectives

Review these objectives. When you have completed this section, you should be able to:

1. Describe Adonijah's plan to seize King David's throne.
 - 1.1 Compare and contrast Adonijah and Absalom.
 - 1.2 Know the key advisors for Adonijah and Solomon.
 - 1.3 Recognize God's plan for Israel.
2. List the events that took place to make sure Solomon was king after David.
 - 2.1 Know Solomon's parentage.
 - 2.2 Identify the role of Israel's prophets.
 - 2.3 Understand that Solomon forgave Adonijah.

3. Recall that King David advised his son King Solomon.
 - 3.1 Remember that David advised his son on both internal and external kingdom threats.
 - 3.2 Know that Solomon and his kingdom would prosper if he followed God.
 - 3.3 Realize that God fulfilled his promise of a member of David's family ruling on the throne forever through Jesus Christ.
 - 3.4 Understand that mature Christians need to encourage young Christians in following Christ.
4. Describe how Solomon secured his kingdom.
 - 4.1 Relate Adonijah's second attempt to seize Israel's throne.
 - 4.2 Summarize how Solomon secured his kingdom from internal threats.

Vocabulary

Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.

anoint

concubine

remnant

succession

unconditional

Note: All vocabulary words in this LIFEPAK appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used. If you are not sure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given.



Read 1 Kings 1-2; 1 Chronicles 29:23-30

A FALSE START

Like his father David, Solomon was an unlikely choice to be Israel's king. First of all, David was still living when Solomon became king. Second, Solomon was not David's oldest son. However, God made it clear that Solomon was to take his father's place as Israel's king.

As the oldest surviving son, Adonijah was the heir apparent to Israel's throne. As David's death neared, Adonijah was in his mid-thirties, unlike Solomon who was in his teens. Adonijah shared many characteristics with his older brother Absalom, who unsuccessfully tried to take David's throne. Like Absalom, Adonijah was handsome (1 Kings 1:6). You may remember that King Saul was also described as handsome and having the appearance of a king (1 Samuel 9:1-2). In contrast, David lacked the appearance of a king and was the youngest son of Jesse (1 Samuel 16:7; 11-12), yet David was the person God chose to be king of his people and from whose line Christ would come. Even though Solomon was a younger son, God had chosen Solomon to rule after his father David.



While you might think that Adonijah learned from the mistakes of his brother Absalom, he did not. Adonijah followed Absalom's example in presenting himself to the people as their next king. Adonijah gathered chariots, horses, and men to run ahead of him, giving the appearance of his power. Key advisors of David encouraged Adonijah's claims to the throne much like other advisors of David had done for Absalom. Joab, a military leader, and Abiathar, a priest, supported Adonijah. Adonijah went so far as to invite royal officials and all of his brothers, except Solomon, to a feast and sacrifice where Adonijah was declared king (1 Kings 1:25), but God had other plans for Israel.

A CORRECT CONCLUSION

Solomon was the son of David and Bathsheba. Bathsheba was the wife of Uriah the Hittite when David slept with her and she became pregnant. In an attempt to hide his sin, David ordered Uriah killed on the battlefield. Soon after, Nathan, God's prophet, confronted David with his sin. Even though David repented and was forgiven, the child born to Bathsheba did not survive. While David's sin with Bathsheba was a dark period in his life, God used it to advance his plans for the people of Israel (2 Samuel 11–12).

While Adonijah was trying to seize the throne, David, Bathsheba, and Nathan came together to make sure that Solomon would be Israel's next king. When Nathan became aware of Adonijah's actions, he arranged for a meeting with Bathsheba. Nathan advised Bathsheba on how she should approach David and confront him regarding Adonijah's actions. She was to remind David of the promise he had made to put Solomon on the throne. She was also to remind David that she and Solomon would be killed if Adonijah succeeded in taking the kingdom. Most kings of the time period killed their nearest rivals and anyone associated with them. Once Bathsheba presented David the evidence of Adonijah's actions, Nathan would enter the king's chamber and confirm Bathsheba's story.

David was sickened when he heard what Adonijah had done; he took immediate action. He reiterated

his promise to Bathsheba that Solomon would be the next king of Israel (1 Kings 1:29–30). He directed Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet to **anoint** Solomon the king of Israel and announce his rule. While Zadok's role in Solomon's anointment was expected, Nathan's was not. Generally, the priest anointed the next king according to the typical order of **succession**. For example, if David's older son Adonijah was to have been king, a priest would have anointed him. If the typical order of succession was not being followed, a prophet would anoint the next king. Prophets were God's messengers, and their words and actions often interrupted the assumed order of things. David, the youngest son, was anointed by the prophet Samuel. Similarly, Solomon was anointed by the prophet Nathan, as well as the priest Zadok. The people of Israel would have no question as to who was to be their next king.

Of course, the problem of Adonijah's claim to the throne remained. Adonijah recognized that in all likelihood he would be killed for attempting to take his father's throne. As a result, Adonijah fled to the tabernacle where he held on to the horns of the altar (1 Kings 1:50). The altar, used for sacrifices for the sins of the people, had four horn-like projections at each corner. By grabbing onto the horns, Adonijah sought God's protection from his brother. King Solomon agreed to let Adonijah live so long as he remained a faithful subject.

Complete these statements.

- 1.1 Solomon's mother was _____ and his father was _____.
- 1.2 Adonijah followed the example of his brother _____ in looking like the future king of Israel.
- 1.3 Solomon's brother _____ tried to seize their father's throne.
- 1.4 The prophet _____ warned Bathsheba that Adonijah was having himself declared king.
- 1.5 The priest _____ wanted Adonijah to be Israel's next king.
- 1.6 Solomon was anointed king by _____ the prophet and _____ the priest.
- 1.7 Adonijah grabbed the _____ of the altar in an attempt to save his life.



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