

ALTARS

Title: **ALTAR OF SOLOMON**

Date: February 25, 2024

Leader's Notes:

1. Start and end the life group on time.
2. Facilitate discussions with your group and **give all attendees opportunities to share their thoughts**. Encourage participation.

Life Group Discussion Proper

WORSHIP: (15 mins)

Option 1: In person - Home gatherings

Suggestions: Assign someone to lead worship or play two praise & worship songs from You Tube.

Option 2: In person gatherings at a public place (park, school, café) or Online home gathering (via Zoom).

Suggestions: Ask people to share testimonies of answered prayers or ask the question: Ask the group, "What are you thankful to God about this past week?"

Main Text: 1 Kings 3:3-14

Intro: Solomon was King David's successor. As a new king, he was a young and inexperienced leader. By leaps and bounds, the kingdom he inherited from his father was greater than the kingdom David took over from Saul. He had a large shoe to fill. One of the first things he did as king was offering 1000 burnt offerings to Yahweh. Afterwards, God spoke to him in a dream and asked him what he wants from God.

This encounter with God signifies God's approval of what he offered to God on His altar in Gibeon. The offering of 1000 animals appears to have been a voluntary action by Solomon, rather than a mandatory ritual dictated by religious law. Solomon's act may have been motivated by his desire to seek favor from God. Regardless of the specific reasons, it was an **exceptional display of devotion** rather than a requirement of the Mosaic Law. What he did, was **above and beyond what was expected of a worshipper**. What made it possible for Solomon to do so? What Solomon gave was far and beyond what was required of the Law.

WELCOME:(15 mins): IWC - Introduce yourself. Welcome guests/first-time visitors. Cheerfully call someone to do the same.

Ice-breaker Questions: Ask for participations

Q: If the richest Billionaires (e.g. Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg, etc.) in the world will give you a blank check, what amount will you place on the check?

Q: If one of them will give you CAN \$10-20 Million, how do you plan to spend that money?

WORD (30–45 mins)

1. He knew where he came from – recipient of the grace and mercy of God

God's mercy and grace on his life are more than wealth and riches. He owes his life and good fortunes to God. His father King David committed adultery with his mother Bathsheba who at that time was married to Uriah, one of David's mighty men. Bathsheba became pregnant so David attempted to conceal his sin, he tried to manipulate the situation. He recalled Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, from the battlefield, hoping that Uriah would sleep with his wife, and the child's paternity would be attributed to him. However, Uriah, out of loyalty to his comrades still fighting in battle, refused to go home and instead slept outside the palace with David's servants.

Returning to Solomon, in addition to being David's second son with Bathsheba, based on the line of succession to the throne, he was not the eldest among David's sons, as there were several older than him. Thus, God's selection of him over his elder brothers signified God's mercy and grace upon his life. The meaning of Solomon's name is "**peace**" as given by David at his birth, showing God's mercy and grace on the boy because God decided to treat Solomon with kindness and favour even before he did anything good or bad. Hence, Solomon's other name is "**Jedidiah**," means "**beloved by the Lord**."

We too are recipients of God's grace and mercy! Nothing comes close to the love, goodness and faithfulness of our God over us displayed in Christ's sacrifice on the cross for us. Jesus, instructs His disciples to deny themselves, carry their cross, and follow Him. He calls for us to offer everything at His feet: our hearts, minds, bodies, talents, time, and treasures—all surrendered in worship unto Him. The death of Christ paved the way for us to attain peace with God and experience His peace within us. There exists no alternative path to attain such peace. Read **Romans 5:1-2 NLT**.

Continuation:

Discussion Questions:

Q: *Would you be able to share a testimony of God’s goodness over your life the past few weeks?*

Q: *In what other areas of your life has God demonstrated His great love over your life, family, etc.*

2. He knew that he stands to gain more than what he offered – Read I Kings 3:5, 9-14 NLT

As a result of the significant burnt offerings Solomon presented to God, he gained favor in His sight, and God granted him an open-ended offer. God instructed Solomon to request whatever he desired, and it would be granted to him. When he chose wisdom to govern God's people effectively, Solomon received not only what he asked for but also riches and fame. This illustrates the principle that ***we cannot surpass God's generosity.***

Application:

Sacrificing everything at the cross of Christ to gain Christ is not a loss but enjoying the greatest gain one possibly can have. Having Christ is the greatest gain in life! Paul is the ideal witness to the indescribable joy and ecstasy he experienced when he made this decision. When he decided to surrender his self righteousness for the righteousness of Christ, he gained Christ, and nothing compares to the infinite value of knowing Christ. **Read**

Philippians 3:5-8 NLT

Whenever we give to God our time (*through volunteering, etc.*), talents (*serving in the church*) and treasures (faithfully giving our tithes and offering to God), those are still beyond comparison to what we have gained through Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

Discussion Questions:

Q: *Is there anything still holding us back in living a life in full surrender to our Lord Jesus Christ?*

Q: *What do you think can be our gain and our loss once we have laid everything on the altar of Christ?*

Read Philippians 1:21 NIV

Paul was even willing to know Christ and live for Him even when it involves persecution and sufferings. And dying for Christ as a blessing because that will usher him into the presence of Jesus in heaven.

Q: *What are you holding on to that prevents you from knowing Jesus and enjoying Him fully?*

Conclusion:

Many Christians aren't fully devoted to Christ because they haven't given everything to Him willingly. Some are still trapped by wanting material things and wealth, while others struggle with pride, holding onto their own goodness instead of accepting God's forgiveness through Jesus' sacrifice. This leads to some Christians boasting about their achievements and relying on their own efforts instead of relying on God's grace, which dishonors Christ's work in their lives. It's a mistake to follow Jesus only partially; real joy comes from worshiping Him completely. When Solomon devoted his life and wealth to God, God showed up. Paul was willing to let go of everything else to have Christ, he found immense and infinite joy in knowing Jesus as his Lord and Master. Now is the time to give our worship to God fully and willfully surrender to His Lordship so we can start enjoying the joy of His presence and the bounty of His blessings.

Challenge: (Give people an opportunity to make Jesus Lord & Savior)

*"If you have not yet made Jesus, Lord and Savior of your life. I would like to give you an opportunity today to do so. **Would you pray this prayer with me...**" Lord Jesus, thank You that You died on the cross and paid the full price for my sins. You took the punishment on my behalf so that I can be forgiven and have eternal life. Today, I surrender my life and I want to make you the Lord and Saviour of my life. From this day forward, be my Lord, my Master and My God. Thank You Lord Jesus for giving me eternal life. In Your name I pray, Amen.*

LG leader, please say this: *"Congratulations! If you prayed with me, you became born again. You are starting a new journey in Christ as a child of God. I want to encourage you to begin reading the Bible so you can know more about the decision you made today. If you have more questions, please feel free to talk to me after the Life group. God bless you!"*

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST TAKE-AWAY FROM THE LESSON?

Tell your group to partner with someone and ask this question to their partner.

Q: What impacted you the most from this lesson?

WORK: The Challenge & Closing prayer (15 mins.)

1. Memorize a verse from your devotions this week and be prepared to share it on our next gathering.
2. Please take time in your smaller groups to pray for one another. If there are specific needs, take time to lift them up to God in prayer as well. Ask each other, ***"what can I pray for you?"***

Leader's Notes:

1. Please remind your group of your next gathering and ask them to invite a friend.
2. Please encourage the group to remember to pray for one another during the week.