

International Conversation Cafe

Bible Topic: Academic Success: the Recommendation of King Solomon: Researcher, Scientist, Poet, Philosopher, Politician, Economist

Most people enrolled in a university strive for academic success: good grades, understanding of the subject, favor with professors, and opportunities to advance. While we tend to emphasize hard work and discipline, there are several other elements involved in attaining these goals. Below, is the description of the third king of Israel (990 BC), Solomon, perhaps the wisest man to walk the face of the earth.

God made Solomon very wise. His understanding couldn't even be measured. It was like the the wisdom of all the people of the east. It was greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. Solomon was wiser than anyone else. He was wiser than Ethan, the Ezrahite. He was wiser than Heman, Kalkol and Darda. They were the sons of Mahol. Solomon became famous in all the nations around him. He spoke 3,000 proverbs. He wrote 1,005 songs. He spoke about plants. He knew everything about them, from the cedar trees in Lebanon to the hyssop plants that grow out of walls. He spoke about animals and birds. He also spoke about reptiles and fish. The kings of all the world's nations heard about how wise Solomon was. So they sent their people to listen to him. 1 Kings 4

List the fields of study Solomon was proficient in.

Solomon was also wise. Wisdom is defined as: the quality of having experience, knowledge, and good judgment. How is wisdom different than knowledge? Where did Solomon's wisdom come from?

Explain how wisdom is crucial to academic success.

Is there anything that limits our growth in wisdom? Explain

Besides receiving wisdom as a gift from God, Solomon wrote that knowledge is also a gift from God.

For the Lord gives wisdom;
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. Proverbs 2

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,
but fools despise wisdom and instruction. Proverbs 1

Usually we think of knowledge as a result of hard work. In what way do you think God gives knowledge? What do you think the fear of the Lord is and how is it related to knowledge?

Academic success also has something to do with hard work and discipline. Solomon also speaks of hard work and enjoying what you have.

Go and enjoy your food. Be joyful as you drink your wine. God has already approved what you do. **8** Always wear white clothes to show you are happy. Anoint your head with olive oil. **9** You love your wife. So enjoy life with her. Do it all the days of this meaningless life God has given you on earth. That's what he made you for. That's what you get for all your hard work on earth.

10 No matter what you do, work at it with all your might. Remember, you are going to the place of the dead. And there isn't any work or planning or knowledge or wisdom there.
Ecclesiastes 9

*What are some of Solomon's thoughts about work?
What is the reason Solomon recommends working hard?
Describe the attitude Solomon recommends toward things that you possess like food, wine, clothing, and family. How is it possible to enjoy what you have?
What hinders us from enjoying life?*

While we can control our work habits, there is a lot we cannot control. Solomon goes on to make this observation about life.



Georgian, Jruchi Gospels. Presents to King Solomon. 15th century. Beroma.livejournal.com

11 Here's something else I've seen on this earth.
Races aren't always won by those who run fast.
Battles aren't always won by those who are strong.
Wise people don't always have plenty of food.
Clever people aren't always wealthy.
Those who have learned a lot aren't always successful.
God controls the timing of every event.
He also controls how things turn out.

12 No one knows when trouble will come to them.
Fish are caught in nets.
Birds are taken in traps.
And people are trapped by hard times
that come when they don't expect them.

*Explain Solomon's thoughts in your own words.
Can you tell a story that verifies Solomon's perspective?
What do you think about Solomon's perspective on life as it relates to academic success?*