



DECEMBER 2010 TEACHING PLANS

GET A REACTION

BY MATT TULLOS

If you're a physics major — or even if you just managed to stay awake in your Science 101 class — you're probably aware of the third leg of Newton's Laws of Motion: For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. It doesn't take a physicist to translate that law into the core of our spirituality as Christians. Every choice we make either builds upon the legacy of our relationship with God or inhibits that legacy.

In 1 and 2 Kings, we read story after story — historical accounts — of God's covenant blessings on Israel that were conditional upon their obedience to His commands. We see kings become fools and fools become kings, violence, divine declarations, wild prophets, and wicked temptresses. It all seems so outlandish, doesn't it? But compared to the stories in everything from USA Today to TMZ.com's celebrity gossip, it's obvious that these matters aren't really outdated.

Ultimately, God has a plan and purpose for human history, and He will see it through to completion. Along the way it's up to each of us to ask ourselves some important questions: Does my character count? Do my decisions really matter? Where's my future headed? How we individually answer those questions determines our role in His storybook.

WHAT'S INSIDE ...

The goal of the *Collegiate* online features is to bring you a structured teaching plan with additional helps and relevant questions to equip you to lead a strong discussion-based lesson. Here's a breakdown of what's inside: "Getting Started" helps introduce the topic and get your students engaged in the lesson. "Need-to-Knows" provide the lesson overview and key verses of each lesson. "Explore the Bible" leads your students through the Scripture passages of the lesson, helping them understand the text, its historical and cultural context, and what it means to them today. "Apply to Life" gives you ideas for furthering the application of the Scripture, so students can take active steps to process what they're learning and how it impacts their lives. Be sure you also use the commentary provided (threadsmedia.com/collegiate) to help with your preparation and personal study of the lessons.

As always, we're here for you. Please send us your questions, thoughts, and suggestions. Let us know what we could do better and how these teaching plans could be even more relevant to your students and ministry.

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THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON ON PAGES 28-29 OF *COLLEGIATE'S* WINTER ISSUE
- THE SONG "BE GLORIFIED" BY ALM:UK FROM THE ALBUM *NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES*

NEED-TO-KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson is about Solomon's request of God at Gibeon for an obedient and discerning heart. The emphasis is on God's giving His people wisdom by which they can live right and help others. The lesson encourages college students to continually seek godly wisdom.

FOCAL PASSAGES

1 KINGS 3:3-15



CHARACTER WELCOMED

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "Be Glorified" by ALM:UK playing in the background as students arrive.

Welcome to today (which isn't much better than yesterday or even a thousand years ago). Sure, we have more stuff these days — technology, plastic, and music. But are we really any better off than when the toilets were behind the house and mail came in paper envelopes?

The basic foundations remain the same. We all want to hear the truth. We want people to say what they mean, even the last 10 percent that people usually don't say. We'd like our relationships to be organic and untouched by manipulation, greed, and selfish ambition. In truth, it's called character, and all of us should welcome it!

- **Why do you think someone would live a double life?**
- **What's your greatest frustration with the culture that surrounds us?**

College students are looking for something real. But how do you find it when everything looks so fake? The one and only source for the whole truth about character is the Bible. The passages we read in this unit are a collection of stories that reveal the deepest mysteries of character. They don't leave much to the imagination, so you know we're going to have fun with this!

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 28 in *Collegiate's* winter 2010/11 issue for a thought-provoking quote, film suggestion, and a Scripture passage that relates to the lesson topic.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Have someone read the introduction to the session on page 28 of *Collegiate's* winter 2010/11 issue.

Ask the students to share funny and embarrassing stories from their childhood that relate to the idea of character.

1) CHARACTER IS WORSHIP

READ 1 KINGS 3:3-5.

³ Solomon loved the LORD by walking in the statutes of his father David, but he also sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. ⁴ The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there because it was the most famous high place. He offered 1,000 burnt offerings on that altar. ⁵ At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night. God said, "Ask. What should I give you?"

We're presented with a picture of a very young king who has a passion for God. Solomon loved God and sought to do the right thing. This is an early visual of God's plan for humanity — before Jesus, before the church, and before a complete revelation of grace. At the beginning of Solomon's story, we see God seeking him out in a culture of worship.

- What kind of worship do you think God really enjoys?
- What kind of love do you think God despises?
- Have you ever been to a church or a worship event where you sensed that God just wasn't there?

2) CHARACTER IS SURRENDER

READ 1 KINGS 3:6-8.

⁶ And Solomon replied, "You have shown great and faithful love to Your servant, my father David, because he walked before You in faithfulness, righteousness, and integrity. You have continued this great and faithful love for him by giving him a son to sit on his throne, as it is today. ⁷ "LORD my God, You have now made Your servant king in my father David's place. Yet

I am just a youth with no experience in leadership. ⁸ Your servant is among Your people You have chosen, a people too numerous to be numbered or counted.

Have someone read "Character Is Surrender" on page 28 of *Collegiate*.

Note that Solomon expresses being in a place where he is desperate for and dependent on God.

- Ask students to compare God's attributes with Solomon's attributes.
- Which attributes are you relying on this week?

3) CHARACTER IS RECEIVING

READ 1 KINGS 3:9-14.

⁹ So give Your servant an obedient heart to judge Your people and to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" ¹⁰ Now it pleased the Lord that Solomon had requested this. ¹¹ So God said to him, "Because you have requested this and did not ask for long life or riches for yourself, or the death of your enemies, but you asked discernment for yourself to understand justice, ¹² I will therefore do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has never been anyone like you before and never will be again. ¹³ In addition, I will give you what you did not ask for: both riches and honor, so that no man in any kingdom will be your equal during your entire life. ¹⁴ If you walk in My ways and keep My statutes and commandments just as your father David did, I will give you a long life."

Have someone read "Character Is Receiving" on page 28 of *Collegiate*.

- What do we discover about the heart of God when He answered Solomon?
- What pleases God?
- What does God value more than anything else?

4) CHARACTER IS CELEBRATION

READ 1 KINGS 3:15.

¹⁵ Then Solomon woke up and realized it had been a dream. He went to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the Lord's covenant, and offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then he held a feast for all his servants.

Have someone read "Character Is Celebration" on page 29 of *Collegiate*.

- Do you think God still speaks to people? How?
- Have you sensed God wanting to say something to you? When?
- What was Solomon's reaction to the dream?

The whole point of the gospel is that a word from God is "good news" and worth celebrating. We can rest assured that God's plan is ultimately good news. The only thing we have to do is embrace it.

THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON ON PAGES 30-31 OF *COLLEGIATE'S* WINTER 2010/11 ISSUE
- THE SONG "CAN ANYBODY HEAR ME" BY MEREDITH ANDREWS FROM THE ALBUM *AS LONG AS IT TAKES*

NEED-TO-KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson focuses on the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple. The emphasis is on God's hearing and responding to our earnest, humble prayers. The lesson encourages college students to make earnest, humble praying a daily discipline.

FOCAL PASSAGES

1 KINGS 8:22-43



DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE YOU'RE TALKING TO GOD?

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "Can Anybody Hear Me" by Meredith Andrews playing in the background as students arrive.

As Christ-followers, we can be certain of one thing with automatic eternal impact: prayer. Prayer is our direct link to the Source of power. It's not meant to change or manipulate God, but to transform us.

- What is difficult about prayer?
- Why do so many people get weary of prayer?
- What does prayerlessness say about us?

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 30 in *Collegiate's* winter 2010/11 issue for a thought-provoking quote, an eye-opening statistic, a suggested further study, and a challenging word study related to the lesson.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Have someone read the introduction to the session on page 30 of *Collegiate's* winter 2010/11 issue.

Ask students to think about a time in their lives when their prayers were clearly answered. After a few moments of reflection, ask them to share those moments with the group.

1) BECAUSE WE REMEMBER

READ 1 KINGS 8:22-24.

²² Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the entire congregation of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven. ²³ He said: LORD God of Israel, there is no God like You in heaven above or on earth below, keeping the gracious covenant with Your servants who walk before You with their whole heart. ²⁴ You have kept what You promised to Your servant, my father David. You spoke directly to him and You fulfilled Your promise by Your power as it is today.

Have someone read “Because We Remember” on page 30 of *Collegiate*.

We understand the nature of God through the crucible of life and the story He’s told through His followers. Solomon looked at the life of his father David.

- Do you know someone who has dedicated his or her life to prayer?
- Have you ever wondered whether God was really listening and involved in your life? If so, how did you process those feelings?
- What biblical promises do you know?

2) BECAUSE HE LISTENS

READ 1 KINGS 8:27-28.

²⁷ But will God indeed live on earth? Even heaven, the highest heaven, cannot contain You, much less this temple I have built. ²⁸ Listen to Your servant’s prayer and his petition, LORD my God, so that You may hear the cry and the prayer that Your servant prays before You today.

Have someone read “Because He Listens” on page 30 of *Collegiate*.

Solomon marveled at the fact that God was much bigger than the place he built for Him.

- Do you think churches and believers ever put God in a box and refuse to consider that He’s even bigger and more powerful than they would ever understand?
- How can you let God be God in your relationships?
- Are you willing to allow God to do His will, in His way, and in His own time? How hard is that?

3) BECAUSE HE RESPONDS

READ 1 KINGS 8:38-39.

³⁸ Whatever prayer or petition anyone from Your people Israel might have—each man knowing his own afflictions and spreading out his hands toward this temple—³⁹ may You hear in heaven, Your dwelling place, and may You forgive, act, and repay the man, according to all his ways, since You know his heart, for You alone know every human heart,

Have someone read “Because He Responds” on pages 30-31 of *Collegiate*.

- Is God carrying you through some sort of recovery from one of the following?
 - Pain
 - Abuse
 - Addiction
 - Heartbreak
 - Depression
 - Doubt
 - Despair
- Is it more difficult to ask God or a friend for forgiveness?

4) BECAUSE HE’S AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE

READ 1 KINGS 8:43.

⁴³ May You hear in heaven, Your dwelling place, and do according to all the foreigner asks You for. Then all the people on earth will know Your name, to fear You as Your people Israel do and know that this temple I have built is called by Your name.

Have someone read “Because He’s Available to Everyone” on page 31 of *Collegiate*.

- What areas of the world need strong intervention from God?
- Do you think God wants you to pray for people you’ve never even met?
- Do you think God wants you to go to places you’ve never been?
- Can you think of a time when you traveled out of your comfort zone to help people you didn’t know?

THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON ON PAGES 32-33 OF COLLEGIATE'S WINTER 2010/11 ISSUE
- THE SONG "WINTER SNOW" BY CHRIS TOMLIN, FEATURING AUDREY ASSAD, FROM THE ALBUM *GLORY IN THE HIGHEST*
- PENS AND NOTECARDS FOR THE NAME DRAWING OPTION IN THE "APPLY TO LIFE" SECTION

NEED-TO-KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson is about the birth of Jesus and the coming of the wise men. The emphasis is on God's sending Jesus to be the Messiah-King as He promised. The lesson encourages college students to worship Jesus as the King of kings.

FOCAL PASSAGES

MATTHEW 1:20-2:11



BIBLE STUDY

MATTHEW 1:18-2:23 // WEEK OF DEC. 19

THE TRUE BETHLEHEM STORY

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "Winter Snow" by Chris Tomlin, featuring Audrey Assad, playing in the background as students arrive.

Ask the students which king they enjoy more:

- Michael Jackson (King of Pop)
- Lebron James (King James)
- Burger King
- Sacramento Kings
- Elvis (Thank-you-very-much!)
- The Lion King

The word "king" is a foreign word these days in the political realm, but we continue to crown kings in sports and entertainment. At the very beginning of the story of Jesus, we encounter some mysterious characters. Some called them sages or magi, others called them wise men, and still others called them kings.

- When you hear the Christmas hymn, "We Three Kings," what pops into your head? A memory? A pageant? A worship service? A dysfunctional family get-together?

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 32 in Collegiate's winter 2010/11 issue for a thought-provoking quote, a suggested film, and a Scripture passage that relates to the lesson topic.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Have someone read the introduction to the session on page 32 of *Collegiate's* winter 2010/11 issue.

Refer to the G.K. Chesterton quote and ask the students if what they believe has been challenged this past year. If so, how?

1) THE GRAND DESIGN

READ MATTHEW 1:20-23.

²⁰ But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her is by the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to name Him Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.” ²² Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³ See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name Him Immanuel, which is translated “God is with us.”

Have someone read “The Grand Design” on page 32 of *Collegiate*.

As you think of the grand design (Jesus coming to earth), respond to these questions:

- Why is the birth of Jesus significant to the history of the world?
- How has He changed our world’s systems, such as time, law, and philosophy?
- Has the coming of Jesus changed your life?
- How do you think the coming of Jesus changed Joseph’s life?

2) THE SUPREME COMMANDER

READ MATTHEW 2:1-6.

¹ After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, wise men from the east arrived unexpectedly in Jerusalem ² saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.” ³ When King Herod heard this, he was deeply disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ So he assembled all the chief priests and scribes of the people and asked them where the Messiah would be born. ⁵ “In Bethlehem of Judea,” they told him, “because this is what was written by the prophet: ⁶ And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah: because out of you will come a leader who will shepherd My people Israel.”

Have someone read “The Supreme Commander” on page 32 of *Collegiate*.

King Herod had a different reaction to the news of the wise men’s arrival from the east: threatened. He was unwilling to consider that someone might be greater than he was.

- Have you ever known someone who was ruled by jealousy and vengeance?
- How does this reaction sully Herod’s name in history?
- Could his story have been changed if he’d had a different strategy concerning this baby?

3) EXTRAORDINARY ACTS

READ MATTHEW 2:7-11.

⁷ Then Herod secretly summoned the wise men and asked them the exact time the star appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. When you find Him, report back to me so that I too can go and worship Him.” ⁹ After hearing the king, they went on their way. And there it was—the star they had seen in the east! It led them until it came and stopped above the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed beyond measure. ¹¹ Entering the house, they saw the child with Mary His mother, and falling to their knees, they worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Have someone read “Extraordinary Acts” on pages 32-33 of *Collegiate*.

- In what ways can we live in continual celebration?
- What steals the joy of following Christ?
- What kinds of gifts please God the most during the Christmas season?
 - Rebuilding a relationship
 - Buying more gifts for people
 - Staying busy and attending every Christmas party you’re invited to
 - Finding ways to help the poor

THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON ON PAGES 34-35 OF *COLLEGIATE'S* WINTER 2010/11 ISSUE
- THE SONG "DOWN" BY JASON WALKER FROM THE ALBUM *JASON WALKER*
- SEVERAL INDEX CARDS FOR THE "GETTING STARTED" ACTIVITY

NEED-TO-KNOWS

LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson is about Solomon's slide into idolatry in his old age. The emphasis is on God's holding His people accountable for their sins regardless of position, age, or previous faithfulness. The lesson encourages college students to consistently guard against spiritual compromise.

FOCAL PASSAGES 1 KINGS 11:1-13



THE ANATOMY OF GRAY LINES

GETTING STARTED

Have the song "Down" by Jason Walker playing in the background as students arrive.

As the students arrive, give each one an index card with the phrase "Next Thing You Know." Ask them to think of a story from their past that's memorable, exciting, or pivotal in their lives. Tell them that the last sentence must begin with the phrase: "Next thing you know ..."

Some of the big things in our lives started with something small. You might've met someone who introduced you to a new hobby or opinion. Next thing you know, you were rock climbing. Next thing you know, you were an extra on a movie set. Next thing you know, you found yourself in love with ...

- **What random happening or chance encounter made history in your private world?**

When we encounter things that question our moral compass or draw us into spiritual darkness and confusion, it's easy to slowly lose momentum, and the next thing you know, we're in a really bad place. This is a part of Solomon's story.

DIG DEEPER

Refer to "Dig Deeper" on page 34 in *Collegiate's* winter 2010/11 issue for a thought-provoking quote, an eye-opening statistic, a further reading recommendation, and some Scripture related to the lesson.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

The college campus is often a place where faith collides with cynicism and skepticism.

Have someone read the introduction to the session on page 34 of *Collegiate's* winter 2010/11 issue.

- **Has your faith been challenged by an authority figure this past year?**

1) THE FOUNDATION

READ 1 KINGS 11:1-3.

¹ King Solomon loved many foreign women in addition to Pharaoh's daughter: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women ² from the nations that the LORD had told the Israelites about, "Do not intermarry with them, and they must not intermarry with you, because they will turn you away from Me to their gods." Solomon was deeply attached to these women and loved them. ³ He had 700 wives who were princesses and 300 concubines, and they turned his heart away from the LORD.

Have someone read "The Foundation" on page 34 of *Collegiate*.

Just because you can do something, doesn't mean you should. And absolute power corrupts absolutely. These modern adages speak to the later life of Solomon. How could a man so wise do some things that were so foolish? We come to the conclusion that unlimited power and few boundaries are deadly to the character of the believer.

- **What hero or authority has disappointed you in the past?**
- **What do you fear about taking positions of authority?**
- **Why do you think relationships and politics don't mix?**
- **How can you protect yourself from a loss of integrity?**

2) THE DOMINO EFFECT

READ 1 KINGS 11:4-8.

⁴ When Solomon was old, his wives seduced him to follow other gods. He was not completely devoted to Yahweh his God, as his father David had been.

⁵ Solomon followed Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Milcom, the detestable idol of the Ammonites. ⁶ Solomon did what was evil in the LORD's sight, and unlike his father David, he did not completely follow Yahweh. ⁷ At that time, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, the detestable idol of Moab, and for Milcom, the detestable idol of the Ammonites, on the hill across from Jerusalem. ⁸ He did the same for all his foreign wives, who were burning incense and offering sacrifices to their gods.

Have someone read "The Domino Effect" on page 34 of *Collegiate*.

- **What little missteps can be a gateway to larger character mistakes?**
- **Do you think Solomon originally desired to have false gods in Israel?**
- **What would you have done or said if you were a close advisor to Solomon?**

3) THE AFTERSHOCK

READ 1 KINGS 11:9-13.

⁹ The LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from Yahweh, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. ¹⁰ He had commanded him about this, so that he would not follow other gods, but Solomon did not do what the LORD had commanded.

¹¹ Then the LORD said to Solomon, "Since you have done this and did not keep My covenant and My statutes, which I commanded you, I will tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant.

¹² However, I will not do it during your lifetime because of your father David; I will tear it out of your son's hand. ¹³ Yet, I will not tear the entire kingdom away from him. I will give one tribe to your son because of my servant David and because of Jerusalem that I chose."

Have someone read "The Aftershock" on pages 34-35 of *Collegiate*.

- **What could potentially steal your heart from God's plan?**
- **How do you know when you're in the danger zone?**
- **Has God ever disciplined you?**

If we become more and more focused on self, does this honor God? The answer is obvious. God's voice in our lives must increase, or we'll fall on our own sword of pride and foolishness.

