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# FOLKS Like Us

SOLOMON

“When Changing Your Mind Is A Good Thing.”

Timeless truths from our ancient past,  
for a journey with God in the modern era.

**Fran Sciacca**

## “Folks Like Us” — an introduction

Over the years I’ve written and published a number of Bible studies that collectively have sold well over a half-million copies. They were forged, most of them, in the furnaces of pain, doubt, and loneliness. Maybe that’s why they were well-used, they touched people where they hurt most.

Recently, my publisher decided that they no longer wanted to handle the books that contained these 60 or so individual studies. So, I’ve decided to make them available to any who might benefit from them. At no cost.

I have always believed that because God thought it best to become human in the Incarnation, that perhaps “incarnational truth” was His preferred method of revealing Himself and His purposes to us. I suppose that’s where the basic genre of these studies originated. I wanted to provide believers with Bible studies rooted in our ancestral past. The lives of men and women, who it turns out, are “folks just like us” in so many ways.

So, please take your time and work slowly through as many of these studies as you care to do... there’s a lot of them! And may God use the combination of the struggles and insights of your *ancient* brothers and sisters, combined with those of mine, your modern brother, to help you in your spiritual journey. That is the goal of this project.

Warmly in The Lamb,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fran Sciacca". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fran Sciacca  
Birmingham, AL

# SOLOMON

*“When Changing Your Mind Is A Good Thing.”*

**A** **BIDING PRINCIPLE** – The command center of human nature is the mind. In order for God to make us more and more like Jesus, He must have access to our minds and freedom to use His Word to change the way we think.

*“He who will not command his thoughts will soon lose command of his actions.” — Woodrow Wilson*

**S**olomon, the son of King David by Bathsheba, is an enigma of Scripture. After the death of his father, he ascended to the throne. God appeared to him in a dream and gave him the chance to choose whatever he wished. Exercising more than a modicum of wisdom, Solomon sought more—more wisdom, that is. God was so pleased with Solomon's desire to rule with justice and discernment that He rewarded him not only with wisdom, but with an abundance of material wealth and status. God Himself declared that Solomon would have "no equal among kings." His reign as the third king of the Jews began with promise, pomp, and power. However, it halted forty years later with infanticide, infidelity, and infamy. Solomon the Wholehearted had become Solomon the Cold-hearted. What is it that regulates the "temperature gauge" of a redeemed heart when it comes to God? What factors work to cool it down, and how does God keep it ablaze?

**KEY SCRIPTURE:** 1 Kings 3:1-14; 9:1-7; 11:1-13

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## STUDY QUESTIONS...

1. One of Solomon's first opportunities to use his new gift of divine wisdom is recorded in 1 Kings 3:16-28. Read this moving story and carefully answer the following questions.

Do you see this as a story of justice or compassion? Defend your answer.

What do you think Solomon would have done if the real mother had remained silent? Explain your answer.

2. Read the story in 1 Kings 11:1-8 about women and children near the *end* of Solomon's reign. Chemosh and Molech were "fire gods" of the Canaanites. The shrines Solomon built consisted of hollow brass statues in which fires were stoked until the outstretched arms of the god became red hot. The Jews then sacrificed their infant children by placing them onto the idols. From the

text, how do you explain the transformation of Solomon from his early days as king to what he had become?

3. What is the conditional promise God repeated to Solomon in 1 Kings 3:13-15 and 9:4-7?

To better understand Solomon's behavioral decline, we need to go back nearly seven centuries before him, where God prophetically spoke through His servant Moses. Read Leviticus 18:21 and Deuteronomy 17:14-17. Make a list of the things God specifically laid out for the future kings of Israel *not to do*.

Now read 1 Kings 10:14-21,26-29, and 11:1-3. How did Solomon fare regarding these prohibitions?

4. Read Deuteronomy 17:14-15 and 18-20. Describe God's instructions for the future king of the Jews. What *was* he told to do? Be specific and thorough.

What conclusion can be made about Solomon's commitment to God's instructions and His prohibitions?

What do you think he *failed* to do?

5. The following passages reveal where God's work of spiritual transformation in the lives of His children faces opposition. What does each passage portray as the place where the battle begins?

Deuteronomy 6:5 –

Deuteronomy 13:1-3

1 Kings 11:1-4 –

Read Proverbs 4:23. In your own words, rewrite the verse. (Keep in mind that Solomon wrote these words!)

Solomon began his reign as king committed to do what was right and pleasing to God. From the Scriptures you have studied, how would you explain what led to Solomon's downfall?

### LOOKING BACK...

**W**isdom has been defined as the ability to see life from God's point of view, and to live in harmony with it. Solomon's life is a veritable sermon exposing how *not* to live. After stunning the watching world with his insight and courage, he slowly lost his reputation and renown as the wisest king on earth. He changed from a man of tenderness and compassion to one of cold tyranny. Solomon's heart grew hard because he wandered from the light of God's Word. Even though he instructed his own son to "guard his heart," he failed to do so himself! Solomon stands forever as a sobering example of what each of us can become if we desert our post and fail to guard our hearts. This begins when we abandon our attention to God and His Word.

### APPLICATION QUESTIONS

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6. In the Old Testament, the heart and mind are nearly synonymous. Scripturally speaking, the heart is the most vital ingredient to living and growing as a believer. Read the following passages and explain what they teach about the heart and mind. (Note: The word translated "imagination," "motive," and "intent" in these verses is the same. It is a beautiful Hebrew word that implies a "careful working over" of something—like pottery or art, in some cases.)

Genesis 8:21 (NASB if possible) –

1 Chronicles 28:9 –

Jeremiah 17:9 –

Why do you think God places such a premium on guarding the heart and mind?

7. In Romans 12:1-2, God tells us about His will and intent for our minds, as we are being transformed. What is God’s “end game” for our minds, and what do you think this would look like? (Note: The Greek word translated "transformed" is the root of our English word, “metamorphosis”—the process in which a caterpillar becomes a butterfly.)

What is the inevitable result if we are negligent? (You may want to read over your responses to question 6.)

8. What do the following verses in Psalm 119 teach us about the relationship between God's Word and our daily lives?

Verses 9-11 –

Verse 18 –

Verse 24 –

Verse 29 –

Verse 32 –

Verses 36-37 –

Verse 72 –

9. Read the following passages. Record what each teaches about what should be going on in your mind as you are becoming more like Jesus?

Romans 8:6 –

1 Corinthians 2:16 –

Philippians 2:5-7 –

Philippians 4:8-9 –

Hebrews 4:12 –

Hebrews 12:2-3 –

10. Do you think that this "renewal" of your mind is something God can accomplish without regular exposure to the Scriptures? Why, or why not?
11. Thinking about the example of Solomon's life, what would you say is more harmful to your spiritual life: neglect of daily scriptural input, or negative input? Explain your answer.
12. Audit your current commitment to the "renewing of your mind" regarding input. In other words, based on what is going into your mind on a daily basis, are you being conformed, or transformed? Explain by using examples.



13. What is one specific source of input in your life that you realize contributes to your mind being "conformed to this world"? (This could be a TV show, online activity, or conversations with specific individuals, etc.)

What can you do to change that situation?

What is one thing you can *add* to your daily life so that you are being "transformed"? Consider memorizing a passage of Scripture from this study, or beginning a disciplined devotional life.

Write down your "plan" and find a friend who will hold you accountable regarding both of your intentions.

### **SCRIPTURE MEMORY** (optional)

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- The process of a transformed mind – Romans 12:2
- The "auditor" of my thoughts – Hebrews 4:12