

GROOMED TO SUCCEED

2 Samuel 7:8-17

At the beginning of this year we began focusing on the theme of “growing”, of growing in our understanding of God and His Bible so that we can faithfully represent Him in the world. God has, fortunately, given us many examples in the Bible of the growth He expects from us. This lesson introduces a series considering the story of king Solomon, an individual whose life reveals both the look of growth and the challenges that seek to prevent growth. This lesson will survey the story of Solomon’s ascension to the throne, showing how his growth as king came from the help he received that enabled him to become king.

Aided and Abetted

- Because of his faithfulness to God, God made a covenant with David that included a promise regarding one of David’s future sons; God announced that He would “establish the throne of his kingdom forever”¹ and “be to him a father” (2 Samuel 7:12-15).
- While that promise of a son – which echoes promises of a son to people like Abraham (cf. Genesis 15:1-5) and Hannah (1 Samuel 1:1-20) – did not identify the child, David later commented that God indicated to him that Solomon was the promised son (1 Chronicles 28:5-6).
- Adonijah’s attempt to take the throne for himself (1 Kings 1:1-10) reveals that, even though God selected Solomon to succeed David in ruling Israel, Solomon (like his father before him, 1 Samuel 16:1-13) was not the obvious choice for Israel’s next king:
 - He was not the oldest son and natural heir to the throne (Adonijah was David’s oldest living son).
 - He was the child of the scandalous marriage between David and Bathsheba (cf. 2 Samuel 11-12).
- Solomon’s unlikely appointment to Israel’s throne meant that he had a number of obstacles to overcome in order to succeed. Solomon did not, however, overcome those obstacles on his own; the story of his ascension to the throne reveals the helps he received that ensured and secured his rule. The account of his succession and his growth as king reveals an important insight – ***we do not succeed on our own.***
- Consider, for example, the numerous helps Solomon received that enabled him to become king and to succeed in his responsibilities:
 - God made promises to help Solomon, which led to blessings He later gave to him (2 Samuel 7:13-15; 1 Chronicles 29:25; 1 Kings 3:1-15).
 - Bathsheba and Nathan the prophet worked to ensure Solomon’s ascension to the throne (1 Kings 1:11-27).

¹ All quotes from the Bible come from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (ESV Permanent Text Edition, Crossway, 2016) unless otherwise noted.

- David made preparations for Solomon's rule that included:
 - Making extensive preparations for the building of the temple that would be one of Solomon's God-given tasks (*1 Chronicles 22:1-5, 14-16; 28:9-19*).
 - Organizing the priests to serve under Solomon's rule, to help oversee the building and staffing of the temple (*1 Chronicles 23-26; cf. 1 Chronicles 23:1-2; 27*).
 - Encouraging the people to support Solomon's reign and temple-building mission (*1 Chronicles 28:1-29:22*).
- The numerous helps Solomon received enabled him to ascend to the Israelite throne and ensured the growth of his rule and his kingdom.

Applications

- God expects us to take responsibility for our personal, individual growth (*cf. Galatians 6:5*).
- Taking responsibility, however, involves intentionally cultivating relationships with other Christians with whom we share responsibility (*cf. Galatians 6:2*).
- Our relationships with one another form a key part of the growth God expects from us.
Consider:
 - God designed us so that we only realize our potential through relationships (*Genesis 2:18-25*).
 - Individual and corporate growth unite together in the church; we need the church family to grow and the church family needs us to grow (*1 Corinthians 12:14-26; Ephesians 4:15-16*).
 - Peter offers us a good illustration – growing into the responsibilities God gives to us involves submitting to the accountability we have to one another (*cf. John 21:15-19; Galatians 2:11-14*).
 - Our coronavirus-influenced world has, however, introduced complications to God's relationship-shaped plan for our growth. We must consequently make extra effort to sustain and develop our relationships with one another so that we can realize the growth in our lives that God intends them to produce.

God does not expect us to do it on our own. He Himself gives to us helps that work to ensure our success like the church family who provides support and accountability. Be, therefore, encouraged – God wants us to succeed and has given us the helps we need to grow into His expectations.