

In 1st Kings 3 Solomon's father, King David had recently died, and Solomon was now on the throne as the King of Israel.

Vs. ⁵ At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I shall give you." What an incredible offer by the Lord of hosts.

We've all played the game, if you were given 3 wishes what would you wish for?

Rule #1: can't wish for more wishes...

How about if you had only one wish? My first thought would be 'what do I want?' and I am pretty sure I would waste it.

If I'm really honest I'd ask for my hair back! (PIC) Glory days. (PIC OFF)

Solomon doesn't ask for a full head of hair—he asks for wisdom and becomes the wisest person to ever live—second only to Jesus who is wisdom personified.

But how was it that he automatically ask for the right thing? God is not a genie. I believe God would not have given Solomon whatever he asked for.

But Solomon's request was godly and pleasing to the Lord, because he asked according to God's will for his life.

I believe it's because of four principles from Solomon's example that will serve us well as we go before the throne of grace. So, we can pray and ask according to God's will and not our own.

1. He lovingly walked in obedience to God (3-4)

³ *Solomon loved the Lord, (by) walking in the statutes of David his father, only he sacrificed and made offerings at the high places. ⁴ And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place. Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.*

He took to heart and lived out the last words his father David spoke to him (1 Kings 2) *Be strong, and show yourself a man, ³ and keep the charge of the Lord your God, "IOW--do what has been commanded by the Lord. Keep all of his commandments"*
So, Solomon did. At least in the beginning of his reign he did, and God blessed him for it.

Solomon did what God required BUT he did it out of love. *Solomon loved the Lord by walking in obedience.*

IOW--his life was more than just lip service to God. Like many give.

I love God, but I am gonna live how I want to. Indicating no real fear of the Lord.

I love God, but I have no idea what his Word says. Indicating no desire to know God.

I love God, but Jesus is an afterthought and not Lord of my life. Indicating no submission to King Jesus

Many people (or you) may not say that explicitly—but that is what's being conveyed when one professes a love that isn't supported by reality. (Marriage)

To love the Lord your God is a heart, soul and mind service to the Lord.

And at least initially, this was true of Solomon.

He loved God so he obeyed God—he obeyed God because he loved God.

➤ And Solomon's obedience created the context for him to ask rightly of God.

We can't divorce the two.

A life of disobedience inhibits the intimacy and fellowship necessary to align one's will with God's will. Not to mention the confidence. Or the knowledge of what to ask for. *John 15—IF you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.*

A life lived in disobedience to God is a life that lacks the desire to ask rightly of God. *James 4:3 You ask and do not receive because you ask wrongly to spend it on your passions.*

A life of obedience, on the other hand is a life that is in step with the Lord. It's a life that exists to glorify God.

This is what Solomon was doing when God visited him and it set the stage for him to respond well to the Lord.

2. He humbly trusted in God's steadfast love (6-8)

⁶ *And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because (as) he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. ⁷ And now, O Lord my God, you have made you servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸ And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude.*

Solomon answered according to God's steadfast love. According to God's loving kindness expressed in his promise to David. The covenant promise that someone from his offspring would rule and reign over God's people, forever.

Solomon himself being a fulfilment of that promise, at least in the near-term aspect.

Of course, Solomon being a foreshadowing of the One True King.

The Eternal King who right now reigns in the hearts of believers, sits as Lord overall, and one day will reign perfectly on this earth. Jesus perfectly fulfilling the covenant promise God made with King David.

Solomon understood how great and steadfast God's love. His life to this point had consisted of an up close and personal education of the loving and faithful kindness of the Lord.

And now he's receiving it himself.

And his response is one of *humility*. He has a right view of himself in light of who God is—that's humility.

In his humility, Solomon acknowledged that the only reason he is where he is —is because of God. He knows he shouldn't be the newly appointed king—he has no right to it. And he knows that outside of God's loving-kindness to his father and now himself—he is not in the position he is right now.

Solomon answers, "God this is your doing. This all because of you." You 5x's.

- It's God's *grace* to Solomon that provides what is necessary for him to walk in obedience to God.
- It's God's *promise* that gives Solomon the foundation to trust that God will do what he says he will do. Answer and provide for him.

- It's even God's *love of Solomon* that gives Solomon the ability to love the Lord. 2 Samuel 12:24 after Solomon was born it says that the Lord loved him.

Isn't that the gospel we preach and believe in? 1 John 4:19 "we love because he first loved us"

We only experience the good in our life because of God. That should humble us. Humility is the only right posture before God.

➤ Because God only gives grace to the humble.

James 4:6 Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

God not only won't respond to the proud --he literally resists them, frustrates their efforts—stiff arms and prevents their plans from happening.

But with the humble he does great things with, in and through.

You don't need to be a king and have a dream to be convinced that God desires to give you grace. Right now, and just the right amount.

He is a good Father, because he is a kind Father. Loving his children with a steadfast love. Wanting to give good and precious gifts. Gifts for his glory and our good. Gifts that fuel our worship of him. Gifts that we acknowledge have everything to do with his gracious and sovereign hand.

Solomon trusted in God's loving kindness

But he also...

3. *He honestly assessed his limitations and what he needed. (7b; 9)*

7 although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. (I have no idea what I am doing)⁹ *Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?"*

Solomon is not actually a child—it's a way of him saying that he is really inexperienced. (best calculations was he was in his 20's)

But Solomon is feeling the weight and reality of his role. And he knows that he is not sufficient for the position. He is not sufficient for the people and things before him. *8b...a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude.* What honesty and clarity of assessment.

We tend to think we are more capable than we really are. At least in doing things for an eternal impact. That's not what we need to be before the Lord.

We have to fight against the attitude of "I got this" I'm pretty smart(education, pedigree, IQ) Instead, we need to drop the façade and be honest about our limitations and ask God for what is needed.

He already knows exactly what you need, but he desires for you to express your need to him. But it starts by being honest before your God.

A believer's goal is not to supply some or most of what is needed and then ask God for the rest. The point of a believer's life is total dependency on Christ. 100%.

Because you are lacking... I am lacking...as a parent, spouse, friend, an employee, pastor, in everything.

In light of who God is and as a believer...what a glorious place to be. Lacking, but as the *branch* we are connected to the *Vine* who supplies everything!!!

It was obvious for Solomon what he needed—godly wisdom.

And let's admit—that we all need godly wisdom. I think it's consistently a missing characteristic within our churches today.

Just to be clear--don't confuse your earthly intellect with godly wisdom. The smarter you are the more likely you are to miss out on God's wisdom.

Solomon asks for: **an understanding mind/ a receptive heart to judge God's people and to discern between good and evil.**

- A *receptive heart*- The ability to bring his thoughts and mind under the authority of God's perspective—instinctively.
- *Discernment*: being able to determine between right and wrong when it's not black and white.

ONSCREEN *Charles Spurgeon* "Discernment is not knowing the difference between right and wrong. It is knowing the difference between right and almost right."

Just to be clear: Areas do you don't need discernment for are areas that the Bible is very clear on; *premarital sex; adultery; loving your neighbor AND your enemy; drunkenness; gossip; lying; idolatry...just to name a few.*

Where you may need discernment: *where to go to school, who to date, who to marry, how about in discipleship?(how to love, know, speak, rebuke, encourage, etc.)*

Like Solomon we are lacking, and we must acknowledge our need before the Lord so he can be our perfect provider.

Lastly...

4. *He fully believed in faith what God had said (10-15)*

It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. (it pleased the Lord for Solomon to ask according his will) ¹¹ *And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹² behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. ¹³ I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. ¹⁴ And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days."*

And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream. Then he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

God answered Solomon and then gave so much more –graciously overwhelming Solomon.

Isn't that just like God? We go to him many times asking for the bare minimum and he graciously provides above and beyond. He gives in ways we didn't even think we needed.

God may not appear and speak to you in a dream. But God *is* inviting you to ask of him. By the mere fact that you are in Christ, you have access to Wisdom himself (Jesus) God is saying to you —"ask what I shall give you".

He is inviting you, right now from his Word:

Ask whatever you will in my name, this I will do, that my Father may be glorified. John 14:13

By prayer...let your requests be made known to me. Philippians 4:6

And do so without stopping 1 Thess. 5:17 pray without ceasing

➤ But don't minimize the importance of your response.

Solomon believed without doubting that God would give to him what he said he would.

Without hard evidence, he worshipped God in faith.(15) He believed without doubting that God would give what he said he would give.

So, should we. We must ask in faith and then believe in faith.

ONSCREEN James 1:5-8

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

God gives to everyone/every believer (not just a select few, not just Solomon), he gives generously (he'll pour it out) and he gives lovingly.

In light of that truth, let's approach God in obedience, humility, honesty, and faith.

Pray