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## REQUESTING WISDOM

I can remember many years ago when I was a youngster in Sunday School Class at the Second Baptist Church in my hometown and the teacher asked the question, "If you could ask for anything in the world and have it, what would you request?" Some of the guys wanted a new bicycle or something similar. I knew that was not the "right" answer. I said that I wanted to go to Heaven when I died. After all, was that not what I prayed for each night before I really learned to pray? "Now I lay me down to sleep, . . ." If that was not the most important issue that was facing me as a little boy, then why was I taught to pray that prayer? At the time, my answer was pooh-pooed by my classmates as being the "textbook" reply; however, as I look back on that incident, I have trouble (some 40+ years later) coming up with a better answer. I can remember about 2 or 3 years after I had (at the age of 30) made a serious **adult** commitment to God in an encounter that I shall never forget, I was in an opening assembly session in Sunday School and the moderator asked the question, "What is the most important thing we can do with our lives?" Several people suggested things such as helping the poor, raising their children properly, and other worthwhile things. My response was to "bring glory to God." Again, that was pooh-pooed as being a textbook answer; however, I believe that within the framework of "bringing glory to God" that whatever we do takes on importance and has an appropriate priority of its own.

In a sense, we answer the above two questions each and every day of our lives and in each and every situation that we face. Another way to ask the questions is "**What** do you want out of life and **how** do you want to do it?" The actions we take in situations that we face answer those two questions in a way that we really *do* get exactly what we ask for. We may not realize that for which we are asking, since we may not really understand cause and consequence.

We read the account of Solomon in the Old Testament and we see that God gave Solomon the chance to ask for anything he wanted and we secretly wish for that same opportunity. We find ourselves in Solomon's situation one situation and one decision at a time and in doing so, we work out a lifestyle and destination as we establish our value system. The problem is that many people do not even consider God or what He wants in these decisions.

**I KINGS 2:1-4** The end of David's life had been marked by turbulence that was a consequence of his sin with Bathsheba. Several of David's sons were a disappointment to him with Absalom having killed one of his brothers and then lead a revolt against his father. Another son, Adonijah, was at the point of declaring himself to be king before David died since David had not named a successor to the throne. David had promised Bathsheba that he would pick her son Solomon and this move was endorsed by Nathan the prophet. This passage follows the decision of David to name Solomon as the next king.

David's charge to Solomon was to be strong and to be mature. Being a leader requires strength of character and character that is exemplary of our being made in the image of God. Many leaders today have trouble taking a stand on issues or avoiding selling their allegiance to the highest bidder. It takes integrity to do the right thing and not be influenced by pride or greed. David had a formula for Solomon to follow that would insure his success. That formula was fairly simple and it still works today for it is *to find out what God wants and then do it*. If people would do this, then they would be able to enjoy the blessings that God has promised to each Christian just as David's descendants could enjoy the blessings God promised to him. Those promised blessings were conditioned on "taking heed to their way, to walk before God in truth with all their heart and soul."

**I KINGS 3:5-9** Solomon had gone to Gibeon to sacrifice a thousand animals to God. Israel had no Temple to God at this time. Gibeon was one of the so-called "high places" where sacrifice was made to the heathen gods of Canaan. Apparently, Solomon saw no problem with taking his sacrifice to God to such a place. God remembered His promise to David and He initiated action to help Solomon be a good king. God appeared to Solomon in a dream and told him to ask for what he wanted from God.

To Solomon's credit, he realized that he needed help. He could see that the task before him

was greater than his capabilities and he acknowledged that. This is true humility. Solomon knew that he was relatively young and very inexperienced and that if he was to succeed, then he would need wisdom beyond his years and experience. He simply wanted the tools to do a good job in the assignment that he had been given to

do. The thing that Solomon needed was an understanding heart. Everyone of us could pray that same prayer. Most of us are intelligent enough for that with which we are involved in life. At the same time, most of us have opportunities to do better in setting priorities between people and things, between short term and long term, between the material and the spiritual. Such choices are correctly made as a result of having good wisdom.

**I KINGS 3:10-12** Can you imagine a parent's delight if a child is offered a choice of vegetable or dessert and the child chooses vegetable because he believe that it is better for him. God was more than delighted with Solomon's choice. There was nothing selfish in Solomon's choice and self is the main obstacle in our way when it comes to pleasing God. Godly love thinks of others rather than self, it makes the sacrifice to get the job done rather than pleasing self, it realizes that true wealth is not in material possessions, and it realizes that in interpersonal relationship that we don't have winners and losers, either everyone wins or nobody wins.

God had no problem granting Solomon's request and because of the rightness of the choice, God provided all the other things that Solomon might have asked for but didn't.

The Bible tells us that God does not change. The thing that delighted God about Solomon's choice will delight Him today if we make the same choices. We can be assured that God will always answer "YES" to such requests.

