

Solomon – The Beginning and the End

Part 1 – The Wisdom of a King

How many would like for God to ask you: tell me what you want and I'll give it to you? I'm sure that we all would like that. But what would you ask for? Would it be: "money, health, happiness, love, peace, revenge, fame, a restored marriage, a house, etc.?"

I don't know what would you ask but this actually happened to Solomon (2 Chronicles 1:7) when God appeared during the night and asked him **"What do you want? Ask, and I will give it to you!"**. Based on verses like this one, some believe that all you have to do is ask God and He will give it but, as we'll see, that's not what God promises. He promises to give us what we need and that's different than what we want.

God blessed Solomon because his life was pleasing to Him. Can we say that God is pleased with how you live? If that is not true, then why do we expect God to be with us as he was with Solomon? Will He say: "I don't like how you live your life but either way ask, and I will give it to you!" I don't think so because we don't do it to our own children?

Why God was pleased with Solomon's life? 2 Chronicles 1:2-3 reveal that: **Solomon called together all the leaders of Israel, the generals and captains of the army, the judges, and all the political and clan leaders. Then he led the entire assembly to the place of worship in Gibeon, for God's Tabernacle was located there...5 But the bronze altar made by Bezalel son of Uri and grandson of Hur was there at Gibeon in front of the Tabernacle of the Lord. So Solomon and the people gathered in front of it to consult the Lord.6 There in front of the Tabernacle, Solomon went up to the bronze altar in the Lord's presence and sacrificed 1,000 burnt offerings on it.** In these verses we find the reasons why Solomon pleased God. He not only called everyone to come and worship God but he also gave to the Lord and sought God's direction for his life and for his people.

This is why God was willing to give him whatever he wanted. He knew that Solomon would ask for the right things. If we don't worship, seek, give or ask for God's direction why do we expect Him to do the same for us?

Proverbs 16:7 says that: **When people's lives please the Lord, even their enemies are at peace with them. Nothing is impossible when God is pleased with the way we live.** God will be more inclined to ear our requests if we follow Solomon's example.

God's Word says that we do not receive because we don't ask but also that when we ask our reasons for asking are wrong. If that's true, how should we ask in a manner that pleases God?

Before asking **1. be grateful for what you already have.** 2 Chronicles 1:8 **Solomon said to God, "You have acted toward my father David with great loving-kindness. And You have made me king in his place.** Before asking Solomon celebrated what God had already done for his father and for him. He remembers that God had been faithful and shown love.

We ought to do the same thing, before asking we should show appreciation for the things we already have. We live in an ungrateful culture as we tend to complain more than to express gratitude. As a parent how do you feel when your children just complain without showing appreciation for what you do for them? I imagine that saddens your heart as it does to God also. We need to become more grateful for what we already have. Before asking God, be grateful, and secondly:

2. Take time to ask. James 4:2b says that: **you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it.** James reminds us here of the great power of prayer. I wonder how many things we don't receive from God simply because we do not take time to ask!

But if God knows already what we want, why would he ask Solomon **What do you want?** Why do we have to ask? Because when we ask we have to come to Him and he loves when we do that. Actually, if it was not for our needs many would never go to God.

God loves when we spend time with Him, when we seek His presence in the same way we love when our kids make time to be with us. I'm convinced that if we sought Him more, we would have fewer needs. We must understand that God loves and we make time for Him.

In third place, to ask in a way that pleases God you have to: **3. Examine your heart.** Before you ask it is important to be sure that your desires are right before God. James 4:3-4 **even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong. You want only what will give you pleasure. You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God.** James says here that our prayers are not answered for two reasons:

a. The first is because our heart motivation is selfish.

b. The second reason is because we are spiritual adulterers. What is an adulterer? Is a person who has a relationship with someone who is not the spouse. The believer is "married to Christ (Rom. 7:4) and ought to be faithful to Him but we replace God with other things. We may say that we love God, but we love others things more than Him. And James says that our unfaithfulness to God prevents the Lord from answering our prayers.

So if you expect God to answer your requests be sure that your motives are not selfish and you're not unfaithful to Him by embracing things that God hates.

Let see what did Solomon ask of God? V.9-10 **You have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth! Give me the wisdom and knowledge to lead them properly, for who could possibly govern this great people of yours?** Although he could have asked anything he asks for wisdom to guide the people and to make good decisions. No wonder that God was pleased with him. His heart was in the right place.

We show maturity when instead of thinking about ourselves we think of others. The immature Christian always wants to receive while the mature Christian is pleased to give. If you want to ask in a manner that pleases God be grateful for what you already have, take time to ask, examine your heart and finally:

4. Expect God to answer. James 1:6 says: **when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.** When we ask we must not only have the right motivation but we shouldn't doubt, we must expect God to answer.

This is what God said to Solomon V.11-12 **"Because your greatest desire is to help your people, and you did not ask for wealth, riches, fame, or even the death of your enemies or a long life, but rather you asked for wisdom and knowledge to properly govern my people I will certainly give you the wisdom and knowledge you requested. But I will also give you wealth, riches, and fame such**

as no other king has had before you or will ever have in the future!” God not only grant him what he requested, but He gave him much more. God not only heard what Solomon asked for but also heard what he did not ask for.

God was glad that he didn't ask what the majority of people ask: wealth, riches, fame, revenge or a long life. And because his motivation was right, the Lord added many more blessings.

Solomon shows that he knew that there are more important things in life than his personal needs therefore God gave him more than he asked for. Solomon did what Jesus taught in Matthew 6:31-33: **Don't worry and ask yourselves, “Will we have anything to eat? Will we have anything to drink? Will we have any clothes to wear?” Only people who don't know God are always worrying about such things. Your Father in heaven knows that you need all of these. But more than anything else, put (1) God's work first and (2) do what he wants. Then the other things will be yours as well.** Almost all of us know these verses but frequently we forget this teaching. I consider myself blessed and that's because I always sought first God's kingdom and everything else has been added to my life.

As you pray to God consider these things:

- a. Be grateful for what you already have.
- b. Take time to ask. Do not rush out of the presence of God. Rejoice in his presence.
- c. Examine your heart. Make sure that your petitions aren't selfish. Get rid of any spiritual infidelity in your life, don't embrace things that God hates.
- d. Expect God to answer in His time. Sometimes God answers our prayers in a process that can last a lifetime. Sometimes He answers when we already forgot our petition. Other times He doesn't answer because He loves us and He knows that what we ask for would bring harm to our lives.
- e. Honor God when He answers your prayers. Do not say “God knows that I'm thankful”. Testify of His goodness to the world and that will encourage people to seek the Lord and bring shame to the enemy.
- f. After receiving God's blessings don't forget Him as Solomon did. We'll look at this next week.

We all want things from God, but what do you think He wants from you?

1. He wants your life. That's more than coming to church, to give offerings or sing praises; it is to give yourself, your time and your talents to be used in the work of God in the way that is most useful.

2. He wants your heart, your loyalty. Nothing, neither family nor work, nor your own lives should be in first place because Jesus said: **Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.** Matthew 10:37

3. He wants your trust, your faith. We need to believe and be confident that even in tough times, when we don't see the result we want, God is with us and working for our good.