

IMPACT OF WISDOM

If you could ask God for anything this morning, what would it be? For some, it may be more money, a better job, a bigger house, or a better running car. For others, it may be a better measure of health for yourself, or a loved one. You may desire a spouse, or better behaving kids or just some energy to get through the week. Whatever the case may be, we all have requests. Unfortunately, if we are not careful, we will perceive God to be a genie granting us three wishes and if we don't get what we want, we either get upset with Him and we will blame Him for OUR lack of understanding of prayer. Anyone outside of me guilty of this? We love God, we trust God, we worship God, we do all things, but the moment our prayer requests aren't answered, He's an unloving God. How is your prayer life this morning? Are you waiting for that prayer to be answered? Are you upset because you got an answer you didn't want, or maybe your hands are lifted because He answered your prayer requests the way you expected this week?

Welcome to **Week 2 of KINGS AND KINGDOMS** as we work through our 4th section of our Through The Bible Series. We have been following God's Redemptive Plan as He has revealed it through His chosen people Israel and we have now entered the period in Israel's history where they will be ruled by a series of Kings. Due to division and territorial disputes within the nation, they will be divided into two kingdoms. **By the time we are through with this section we are going to see why it is that God was hesitant to set a king over His people in the first place.** In fact, it was God's desire all along for Israel to look at *Him* as their king. And by the time we finish our next section, Israel will be longing for a Savior to deliver them from their oppression, all of which will be the consequences of their own actions; the result of a people who turned away from God and trusted in their own wisdom. Today, we will turn our attention to a king that God sovereignly placed on the throne known as King Solomon. In this interaction between King Solomon and God, I want to show you that a wise man is a praying man because he is dependent upon the Lord for everything. To do that, I'm going to give you Three Heart Postures of what a wise man looks like as illustrated by King Solomon. My prayer is that you will be excited to spend time in prayer when you leave here today. If you have your portion of God's Word, turn with me to **1 Kings 3** and I am going to pray for us to jump in. PRAY.

To set the context of where we are today in scripture, scholars believe that King Solomon was around 20 years old at the time, he is the son of the great King David, and as his son, he is the next in line to hold the mantle of leadership for Israel. Make no mistake, there are big shoes to fill; Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel and his father David all at one point led this great nation under the sovereignty of God. This is no surprise when we consider that King Solomon is a part of God's redemptive plan for Jesus to eventually sit on the throne as the King of Kings. In 2 Samuel, Nathan gives David some insight into what God has in store and how his son will be a part of that plan: **2 Samuel 7:16, "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever."** Jeremiah would later confirm this in **Jeremiah 23:5-6, "The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be**

saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Savior. So let's jump in...

1 Kings chapter 1 tells us that King David is very old and death is near, and in verse 29 David gives his kingship to his son Solomon, "The king then took an oath: "As surely as the Lord lives, who has delivered me out of every trouble, **30** I will surely carry out this very day what I swore to you by the Lord, the God of Israel: Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne in my place." As death gets closer for David, we see a charge given to Solomon by David that really kicks off today's message . 1 Kings 2:1-2, When the time drew near for David to die, he gave a charge to Solomon, his son. **2** "I am about to go the way of all the earth," he said. "So be strong, act like a man, **3** and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in obedience to him, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and regulations, as written in the Law of Moses. Do this so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go **4** and that the Lord may keep his promise to me: 'If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a successor on the throne of Israel.'

As we enter into chapter 3, David has passed away and King Solomon's throne has now been established and he is about to have a conversation like no other with God Himself which leads us to our first heart posture of prayer:

Heart Posture #1: You Have To Seek God Through Worship

1 Kings 3:1 Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt and married his daughter. He brought her to the City of David until he finished building his palace and the temple of the Lord, and the wall around Jerusalem. **2** The people, however, were still sacrificing at the **high places**, because a temple had not yet been built for the Name of the Lord. **3** Solomon showed his love for the Lord by walking according to the instructions given him by his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places. **4** The king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, for that was the most important high place, and Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. First off, I want you to notice some interesting details about these first 4 verses. We see King Solomon get married which wasn't unusual for royalty to marry royalty but I want to take a minute on the next 2 verses. After the wedding they go to worship at the "**high places.**" High places were known for pagan worship, and usually included an altar and a sacred object such as a stone pillar or a wooden pole in various shapes identified with the object of worship. Even though Gibeon was considered a "high place" it held the tabernacle, "the tent of meetings," and this was the same tabernacle that the children of Israel under Moses leadership had built in the wilderness. Since the temple had not been constructed yet, this was the place God had chosen to worship with His children. **Solomon was seeking after God and went where He knew God would meet him!** Remember what David charged Solomon with in ch 2? **So be strong, act like a man, and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in obedience to him, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and**

regulations, as written in the Law of Moses. Solomon knew he could not be the king he was called to be and fulfill what his father charged him with if it didn't first start with God! The same with us! What's even more interesting is that 2 Chronicles 1 tells us that he didn't just go with his wife, but with all the leaders in Israel (thousands of men.) A king seeking after God is one thing, a king bringing his leadership squad to seek after God is a whole different ball game. Solomon wasn't selfish with his worship; not only did he bring others in the midst, he offered a thousand burnt offerings on the altar.

In other words, Solomon knew God was important and that he needed to be shared with those around him. Not only that, He honored God with his burnt offerings. Btw, a burnt offering is a voluntary act of worship that expresses devotion or commitment to God that requires a bull, bird or ram to be fully sacrificed. There should be no difference between us and Solomon. We should have hearts that are seeking God "continually." Scripture is filled with verses about seeking after God, and the promise that God gives in **Jeremiah 29:13** should provide everyone of us with hope today, "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." Btw, that promise is still true today: **Matthew 7:7-8** "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened." **Are you not thankful that we serve a God who is not hiding in the bushes, but a Father who is waiting for you to seek Him?** And His response is, YOU WILL find me! God isn't a hide n seek God! He's a "here I am" God, but it takes your whole heart of pursuit; not just when it's convenient for you. When our hearts are in a posture of seeking God, there is no greater level of intimacy. How? **James 4:8**, "Come near to God and he will come near to you." The more we seek the face of God the more He reveals Himself to us. You cannot expect to find God when your heart is really not looking for Him. So the first heart posture we see from Solomon is to seek God and the second one is this...

Heart Posture #2: You Have To Have Humility Before God

Humility is the complete opposite of pride **and as the phrase goes, "Humility is not thinking less of ourselves, but thinking of ourselves less."** We still know our worth, know our value, but we continually put others above ourselves. If we really seek God and find Him, and He begins to reveal Himself to us; it should allow us to fully see ourselves in light of who He is, which is where we derive our value from. As we continue to read, that is exactly what happens to Solomon.

5 At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." **6** Solomon answered, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day. **7** "Now, Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. **8** Your

servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number.

So God comes in a dream and says to Solomon what you and I have always longed for... **“Ask for whatever you want me to give you.”** What is interesting is that this isn’t a question but more of a statement. God knew Solomon's heart. God knew his circumstances and what he was up against. That’s what happens when you seek God, you give God the opportunity to tend to your needs. Notice how Solomon saw himself as he responded in prayer. First he remembered God's faithfulness to his father David, and what God did for him up to this point and then he recognized that he was there only by divine appointment. God placed him there, and it was an act of God’s grace. God’s grace is only received with a humble heart! **It's hard to receive from God when you think you don't need what He has to offer!** That's why **James 4:6** says, **“.....God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”** Btw, when your heart is not postured with humility and not receiving grace, it's hard to give grace! You can only give out of what you've first received! Solomon recognized he was in the presence of God and humility was the posture of his heart, what is yours this morning? Even as followers of Jesus Christ, if we are not careful we will live a life of pride thinking we get this all under control. We might not pray to God in those exact words, but our actions will tell a different story. Unfortunately, you can walk in here, grab some coffee, give some hugs, sing some songs, hear this message and walk out of here prideful as ever. Why? Because the favor of grace goes to the humble person, the one dependent on God; not the prideful heart that’s just checking off boxes. **As easy as it is to deceive ourselves, we cannot fake humility before The Lord.** Which leads us to our third heart posture and that's

Heart Posture #3: You Have To Have The Right Motives

To become wise through prayer, we have to have the right motives behind our prayer life. If you have been a part of church for any time, you’ve probably heard it said this way, “pray according to God’s will.” That comes to us from **1 John 5:14-15**, **14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.** Essentially that means our prayer life should be focused on what God wants, and what He wants is revealed through His scriptures. Obviously, Solomon didn’t have that promise in 1 John the way we do, but here is how he responded **9 So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?”** The NLT version says a “understanding heart.” Solomon wanted more than just head knowledge, he wanted a true understanding of how to govern God’s people. His motives were pure. **The Hebrew word “understanding” translated is literally “hearing.” Solomon wanted a hearing heart, one that would listen!** His motives were not one of a selfish heart. Solomon asked for God’s wisdom in order to lead God’s people well. He made a request for himself, but his intention was to use the wisdom to lead the people of Israel with justice and fairness. In other words, his motivation for wanting wisdom was others-centered. That’s why his prayer pleased

the Lord. **10 The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this.** When your motives behind your prayers align with God's will, this is the outcome: God is pleased! Church, the true things that matter in life are those things that actually improve or bless the lives of others. How much better would this world be if everyone lived a life that sought after gifts and blessings that would improve others lives?

Solomon asked God for the very thing that he needed to be the king God desired: wisdom. Not power, not wealth nor charisma would be enough to lead the people God had called out for Himself. Solomon needed God to do what God had called him to do *and so do we.*

I want you to see God's response after being pleased with Solomon's request. You see there are benefits that comes with this type of prayer life and for Solomon it looked like this, **11 So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, 12 I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be.** Past, present, and future, God made Solomon the wisest man in the world – God spoke it and so it was! **13 Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. 14 And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life."** God did exactly what he asked and went beyond expectation because Solomon seeked Him through worship, humbled himself in His presence and had the right motive behind his requests. Our prayer life can have this same type of impact today. **Ephesians 3:20-21, Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.** Your cup may not overflow with wealth and honor, but it just might look like an abundance of love, joy, peace, forbearance [patience], kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, and don't be surprised if it does.

15 Then Solomon awoke—and he realized it had been a dream. He returned to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the Lord's covenant and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then he gave a feast for all his court. Solomon wakes up and goes back to the place where it all started and worshiped again! Seeking the presence of God, recognizing true wisdom came from Him!

Guess what? It hasn't changed! You wanna live a life that is truly dependent upon The Lord, it starts with Jesus! You see, Solomon ended up being the wisest king of Israel, and his kingship points us to the perfect king and that is Jesus! The one who would reign in wisdom and never falter in His trust in God. The One True King who rules and reigns in infinite wisdom. In fact, Paul said that it is Christ **"in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."** **Colossians. 2:3**

Solomon wasn't perfect and was also thick with bad choices and emotional and mental trauma, we'll hit more on that next week, but he still possessed wisdom. Wisdom that pointed to a coming Messiah and one that would not struggle with the things of this world.

Invitation:

- Are you currently seeking God? Maybe you need to for the first time, or you need that fresh fire stirred up in your heart?
- Is there something that you're being prideful about and you need to repent of this morning?
- As believers, what are your motives behind your prayer life? Is it according to God's will or your own? **James 4:3, When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.**
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