

**The History Channel:
Messages of Israel's Historians
History IQ: Kingdom Life According to Solomon
I Kings 3:4-15**

Intro: Solomon is a complex personality just as all of us are. The first 10 chapters of 1 Kings are all about the blessings that God brings to Solomon and to the nation. It is a time of joy and prosperity because Solomon loves God and rules in God's wisdom.

At the beginning of his reign Solomon gets the wish that everyone wishes they could get. He gets to ask for anything. He is invited to ask from the God of the universe for anything that he desires. God said, "Ask for whatever."

I want you to put yourself in the place of Solomon this morning. I want you to imagine that you have this dream that God speaks to you and says, "Ask for whatever." What would you ask for? Some would ask for riches. Others would ask for long life. Some would ask that their enemies be vanquished.

Honestly, what would be your request? You can have anything. What do you want? Speak it, and it will come to pass. It will appear before you in a pile. It will be guaranteed to you by the Master of the Universe. What does your heart long for?

I think you have to be at a certain stage in your life, beyond infancy and childhood and even adolescence, before this particular request rises to the top of your mind and soul.

Solomon asked for *chokmah*. He longed for wisdom to govern the people of God as a young man taking over the kingdom from his great father, King David.

I. Acknowledge the Chesed (Kindness) Of God

A. Acknowledging Chesed is the first step in knowing God. It is the first movement of worship. It is the expression of a heart of gratitude for the gift of life, of God's love, and of his providential care for you and those you love. He is the covenant-making and the covenant-keeping God. He is faithful. He is true. He is holy. He is just. He is loving and kind. All of this we express in our praise for his Chesed.

B. Acknowledging Chesed is the first step in knowing your world. It is the recognition of the behavior of God toward your ancestors and family. It is seeing the world as it truly is. "This is my Father's world" is not simply a pleasing jingle. It is a life orientation, a way of perceiving all that is. And this is the only true perception of our world.

C. Acknowledging Chesed is the first step in knowing yourself. You know the true nature of your existence when you confess and embrace the loving kindness of God. You know your true worth in terms of this kindness. You know your purpose and your reason for being on the planet when you know the covenant love of God toward you.

Solomon is hearing from the God of the universe. He is speaking to him in this dream. Why would the God of all come and speak to a young king on a tiny planet in his universe? It is all about the chesed of God.

II. Recognize the Leb (Heart) as the Key: 1 Kings 3:9: *So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong.*

The son of David, the new king Solomon, speaks of the heart for a number of reasons.

A. **David was a man after God's own heart.** Solomon recognizes this in his acknowledgment of the *chesed* of God toward his father, David. He notes that his father was "righteous and upright in heart." This righteousness of which Solomon speaks was an imputed righteousness, a gift from God to David. He could not earn it nor did he deserve it. We all know how David wandered from God's way. But his heart sought after God continually.

Now David's son is asking for such a heart, a heart like God, a heart like the heart of his father. This request truly pleases God.

B. **The heart is the center of the human personality.** It describes the real you. The term "heart" is the most used word in the Bible to describe the inner you. *As he thinketh in his heart, so is he* (Proverbs 23:7). The real you and the true you is what goes on the recesses of your heart. The thought process involves more than the brain. The brain is the processor, but the heart is what feeds that machine its information. Your heart is the center of your personality. The word *leb* means to include everything about you that is truly you and is nonmaterial in nature.

C. Wisdom is a matter of the heart, not just the head. It is spiritual as well as intellectual.

Solomon is wise enough to know this truth. Therefore,

1. Our hearts must be protected: "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). Guard your heart carefully. The substance of your life is located in your heart.

2. Our hearts must be suspected: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked—who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

***We are inclined not to face this painful truth. Here we are like the grandchildren during their inoculations, we are crying out in pain from the pricks that are necessary to maintain our health and prevent terrible and even fatal disease.

3. Our hearts must be disciplined: Love the Lord your God with all your heart (Deut 6:5).

4. Our hearts must be humble: *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. Do not be wise in your own eyes (chakam); fear the Lord and depart from evil* (Proverbs 3:5-6). *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge* (Proverbs 1:7).

***Solomon's sin and idolatry are summarized in Chapter 11. We talk about bankruptcy in terms of Chapter 11. Well, this is Solomon's bankruptcy. Despite all that God gave him and did for him, Solomon ends up bankrupt spiritually and morally. The decline of nation begins before the end of his reign.

What happened? Solomon's heart was turned away from God, according to 1 Kings 11:9. It was a matter of his affections. He turned away from that love for God with which he began his reign, and he turned his heart toward idols that are not God.

III. Seek the Chokmah (Wisdom) First: *The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this* (1 Kings 3:10).

A. **Wisdom is our greatest need.** Solomon was a smart young man. I suspect that he was first in his class all his life. But when he became the king, he was overwhelmed by his own limitations.

You will come up against the wall of your own limitations. You will be at a loss. Your limitations will not be in regard to information. You can look up all the statistics, outlines, and plans on the internet. You have a mountain of information available to you on the information highway.

No, your limitations will be in regard to morality, right and wrong. Here is where you will discover that you are at a loss to know what to do next. You will be trying to rear your children appropriately, and

you will discover that you cannot discern the way. You will be trying to relate to your spouse in a healthy way, and you will long for instruction in this regard.

The longing for wisdom is part of the maturing process for every believer in God. Simple faith even a child can receive and implement. But at some stage in our spiritual development, our hearts turn toward knowing what is true and right and good.

***I was a pastor when I ran up against this terrible wall of my own limitations. I thought I was pretty smart, but I was involved in so many things that I could not understand. I could not discern what was best or right or true. I actually resigned my church to become a student at our seminary here for that very reason.

Fundamentally, wisdom is trusting God, just as King David wrote in Psalm 2:10-12: Be wise now therefore, all ye kings; be instructed, ye rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son lest he be angry and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

[B. Wisdom is our greatest gift.](#) Solomon knew this, and therefore he asked for wisdom. The gift is delivered to us as we combine faith and learning, trust and knowledge. You may reply, "No, Jesus is our greatest gift." Let me read for you a passage from the Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 1:20-24): Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. 22Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, 23but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Jesus as the incarnation of God in human flesh is the love of God, the power of God, and the wisdom of God all rolled up into one human being.

You have heard the question, "What would Jesus do?" I think it is the fundamental question of Christian morality and ethics. I do not think any question surpasses it in both its insight and its scope. It throws us back upon the works and words of Jesus. It calls for us to evaluate right and wrong based upon what we know of God's greatest revelation. And the question insists that we know Christ Jesus personally, and that we spend all our days walking with him and talking with him.

Conclusion: Do you know Christ? If not, you will never have the wisdom that overcomes the world, for that comes only through faith in the One who loves you and bought you with his blood.