

Solomon's Wisdom

1 Kings 3:4-28 & Matthew 6:9-10

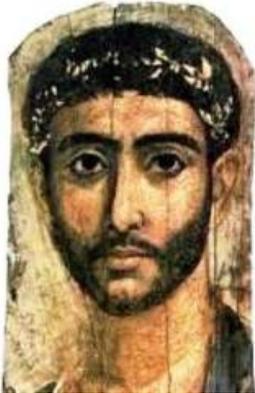
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Sara Larson

Lay Minister

First Lutheran Church

Marshall, MN



“Why isn’t God answering my prayer?”

Solomon is the son of David. David was a good king overall and as a result God blessed him and his decedents. When David died Solomon became the new king. Solomon’s mother was Bathsheba. Even though David took a wife that did not belong to him, he later repented and found God’s favor again.

Solomon was a young man likely in his 20’s when he was given this title. He was rich and had many opportunities. Yet he knew he needed something more to be a good ruler. He climbed up the mountain to Gibeon. This is where the *Holy Tabernacle* was being held. In those days people thought the closer you physically were to heaven the more likely God was to hear you and grant your request.

Solomon had grown up knowing and loving God. His father David had modeled an affection and deep respect for the Lord. Solomon believed that God could grant any wish he made and in fact because of his solemn and earnest prayer, God tells him just that. “Go ahead ask for whatever you wish and it shall be granted.”



Can you imagine being 20 years old and told you could have whatever you wanted? What would you wish for? A shiny new car, good health, diamonds and gold, a new pony or more wishes?

Solomon asks for wisdom and he does so in the form of a prayer. He acknowledges that God was good to his father who loved him and that if it were not for God; Solomon himself would not be there. Solomon acknowledges that he is just a pup, wet behind the ears, not really trained in how to lead a country. Solomon has a heart felt conversation with God, pouring out his fear over managing such a large and great nation. He then asks for something that pleases God. He asks for something that will help him, but not lengthen his life or increase his wealth or give him more property and possessions. Solomon's request is not selfish. It was for the betterment of God's people.



What is wisdom? Google defines it as a sound action or decision with regard to the application of the experience, knowledge and good judgement. Being wise usually is something that comes with age and experience. You can be very smart and have plenty of knowledge but wisdom trumps this, because it gives you the ability to know what to do with the facts and the intelligence you or others have. Wisdom is in essence **skillful living**. It is knowing when enough is enough and that you don't have to try to compete with the Jones. It is being able to recognize the skills of those around you and assist them in using their talents in a manner that creates a better environment for the whole.

Solomon came to God, because he knew the Lord could provide. He engaged in a relationship with the Lord because he knew the Lord had been blessing him and his family all along. He knew his status as a king was not earned on his own.

How do you pray? When do you pray? Where do you pray? We often come to God when we are desperate, when we need a quick fix or when we have given up. God wants us to be in a relationship with him all along. He wants us to acknowledge that our gifts and talents and blessing are not something we have earned on our own. God is most glorified when we have satisfaction in him.

I received an email from the friend of a mother with an 8 year old boy. It detailed a conversation that the child had with his mother. The child had asked his mother why God was not answering his prayer.



The child had just started in a new school and was asking God to help him get a friend. The child was very sad, lonely and disheartened with God because even though he had asked he still had no friends. This child was likely genuine in his prayer. Being 8 years old and praying to God, he likely believed that God could help him. But just because we ask does not mean it will be granted. At least in the way we anticipate. God always hears us and he does respond, but not always in ways we can see or understand.

When I worked in the court system I completed training so that I could do Custody Evaluations for parents who were disputing with one another over who should get custody of the kids and how much time they got to see the other parent. The training I took was called *Solomon's Surrogates* after King Solomon, the wisest king in history. The court required me to use the "Best Interest Standard" MN Statue 518.17 in making these decisions. The facts of the case had to be complied to tip the scales in favor of one or the other. One factor could not outweigh the rest and the recommendation was to be based on what was BEST for the child. Having performed this job for 20 years, I saw many different types of parenting and I made many different types of custodial recommendations. I had to use more than just the facts of the case to arrive at a *wise* decision. I used my years of experience and knowledge of child development, training in domestic violence, diversity, healthy attachment and plain old common sense.

Solomon suggested the child fought over between the two prostitutes highlighted in today's story be split in half. Solomon was banking his wisdom on his knowledge that the true mother would never want



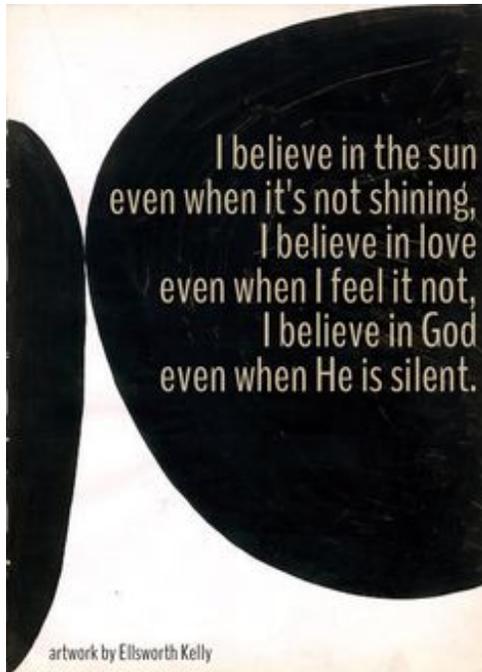
her child harmed. *Reminds me of an episode of Colombo.*

Solomon pretends like he is going to do one thing, so that the whole truth is revealed in the actions of the guilty party. It is the old, she said, she said story that every parent has to deal with. What happens when you don't share? Everyone loses or the truth comes out.

Now I don't want you thinking Solomon always made the right decisions. Just because God granted him great wisdom and the book of Proverbs that he is attributed to have written exemplifies this, does not mean he did not succumb to temptation. In fact, Solomon made some really bone headed decisions. He

was a good and fair King, but he loved women and it was recorded he had between 700 and 1000 wives. Anyone with common sense would know that just isn't gonna work. He failed to follow God's law of only having one wife and his wives corrupted his belief system because of all the different Gods they worshiped.

The gospel lesson (Matthew 4:9-10) is an excerpt from what we now know as The Lord's Prayer. It was the prayer Jesus prayed at the *Sermon on the Mount* and the prayer he taught the disciples to pray at *The Last Supper*. It is how God wants us to pray. This is "our" all giving Father, whom holds all our wishes and dreams. We trust **you Lord**, that you know what is best and **what we need** in each moment.



When we pursue our own selfish desires, bad things happen. If we don't share, everyone loses. Wisdom comes from the heart. It is not always in the numbers or facts. If your heart is open and ready to receive, blessings come. Even though **WE** make BONE-HEADED mistakes, we are justified and forgiven by God's grace through our FAITH. That is the crux of Martin Luther's reformation, which we celebrate at this time each year.

So what about that innocent little 8 year old? Don't you think God is answering his prayers in giving him a loving and caring mother, who has a good friend, who can seek the advice of a lay pastor who cares? What about the school counselors that can help him learn how to be a good friend and oh yeah there is that thing called the Holy Spirit that is always with him, walking with him, sitting with him at the lunch table and swinging next to him at recess. Prayer is an action of faith. He is certainly learning that.

AMEN FRIENDS AMEN