

I KINGS 3:5-15, 24-28 At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, 'Ask what I should give you.' **6**And Solomon said, 'You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart towards you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. **7**And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. **8**And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. **9**Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?'

10 It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. **11**God said to him, 'Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, **12**I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you. **13**I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honour all your life; no other king shall compare with you. **14**If you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your life.'

15 Then Solomon awoke; it had been a dream. He came to Jerusalem, where he stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. He offered up burnt-offerings and offerings of well-being, and provided a feast for all his servants.

[Soon, two prostitutes appear before the king, each claiming to be the mother of the same child, the other child having died in the night. They argue with one another before the king.] **24**So the king said, 'Bring me a sword', and they brought a sword before the king. **25**The king said, 'Divide the living boy in two; then give half to one, and half to the other.' **26**But the woman whose son was alive said to the king—because compassion for her son burned within her—'Please, my lord, give her the living boy; certainly do not kill him!' The other said, 'It shall be neither mine nor yours; divide it.' **27**Then the king responded: 'Give the first woman the living boy; do not kill him. She is his mother.' **28**All Israel heard of the judgment that the king had rendered; and they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him, to execute justice.

JAMES 1:5-8 If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you. **6**But ask in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind; **7, 8**for the doubter, being double-minded and unstable in every way, must not expect to receive anything from the Lord.



Identify principles of seeking wisdom.

GOD'S WISDOM IS

● [redacted] not master: means, not ends; care, not hammer: Solomon, as King, prayed for wisdom so that he'd be a better servant king for the great people of God.

● [redacted] God's promise to Solomon is reiterated in James as a promise to all: If we lack wisdom, we can pray with faith that God is eager for us to have the resources for the ministry he's called us to.

● Addresses [redacted] not just what's fair or even "right", not just behavior.

● [redacted] not [redacted] God could have told Solomon "the first woman is the mother" but he wanted it to be clear to all in the room.

Instead of giving advice or telling people what they do, ask questions in a way that will help people hear from God about what is right. Use good questions to help them come to their own clarity.

HOW TO MOVE THROUGH A DECISION: OAR

OBJECTIVES: Goals, priorities, motives, whys, ends

- What are the reasons you are doing this?
- What are your motives behind this action?
- What goals do you have right now?
- What results are you looking for?
- What is the end toward which we are working?
- These things need to be stated, they are often implicit.

ACTIONS: Choices, options, means, people, resources

- What can you do to accomplish these objectives?
- How else could you do this?
- How does that action fulfill my objectives?
- What are the reasons this action is the best?
- If actions are attractive that don't meet the objectives, there must be other objectives that aren't being mentioned. Return to the discussion of objectives.

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Most decisions are considered as actions. For example: Should I go to this event? What classes should I take? How many hours should I work this semester? What kind of a job do I want this summer? Spend more time on the objectives and the action discussion will be more fun and will go more smoothly. If actions are attractive that don't meet the objectives, other objectives need to be uncovered. Return to talk about them before going on to actions.

The leader's contribution: to consider the objectives, help people to own Biblical objectives and priorities, and to help them make their own decisions which help them accomplish their own objectives in the best way.

Practice Exercise In Twos: Person 1 consider a real decision you are facing. Person 2 asks questions of Person 1, using OAR and good questions. Avoid advice and leading questions. Rotate roles and repeat the process. After the exercise, debrief.

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Identify principles of seeking wisdom.

- Solomon was wise to ask for wisdom.
- Solomon felt in over his head with his new leadership responsibility and he asked God for the resources to care for the people entrusted to his leadership.
- Solomon was a good shepherd for the flock of God. (And he remembers that it is God's flock.)

INTERVARSITY
LEADING
EDGE

- Solomon thinks of himself as small and the people as great, rather than vice versa.
- The James passage makes the offer God made to Solomon a universal offer—he offers us all wisdom, if we but ask him for it without doubting his goodness or faithfulness to his promises.
- James: We don't need to pray, "Lord, if it be your will, grant me wisdom." God is always delighted to give us wisdom, especially for the ministry he's called us to.



To Solomon, God is his daddy's God. Today, God adopts him and becomes his God, by offering him anything he wants. (Psalm 2, coronation Psalm.)

God would have answered Solomon's requests for his own needs, but instead, he seeks first the K of G, and these things are added to him (Matt 6:33)

Solomon is willing to celebrate the promise God made before it was evidently granted. He didn't doubt.

Solomon had to be willing to be misunderstood, and thought a tyrant or crazy, for this little drama to work. It was hugely risky—to threaten with the sword but not plan to carry it out was sure sign of being a weak king—deadly to one newly on the throne.

He performs this drama in order to get to the heart, to uncover motives and hidden thoughts, so everyone could know who was truly the mother.

In this way everyone sees the wisdom of God. God is vindicated.

GOD'S WISDOM IS

● **Servant**, not master: means, not ends; care, not hammer: Solomon, as King, prayed for wisdom so that he'd be a better servant king for the great people of God. *I am not simply trying to figure out what the situation requires and then display my "godly" wisdom by telling the other person what to do. Rather, I am trying to serve the other by helping him or her receive God's wisdom in the best way.*

● **Available to all who ask.** God's promise to Solomon is reiterated in James as a promise to all: If we lack wisdom, we can pray with faith that God is eager for us to have the resources for the ministry he's called us to.

● Addresses **motives, the heart:** not just what's fair or even "right", not just behavior. *It is not enough to spell out correct behavior, but it is essential to get to the heart, where convictions are formed and where behavior becomes not compliant but internalized.*

● **Displayed**, not **dispensed.** God could have told Solomon "the first woman is the mother" but he wanted it to be clear to all in the room. *He didn't want Solomon to merely dispense God's wisdom, but to display it for all to see as having been delivered by God. We can be very tempted to want to dispense God's wisdom (through godly advice) rather than displaying it through a longer process of discussion and discovery.*

Instead of giving advice or telling people what they do, ask questions in a way that will help people hear from God about what is right. Use good questions to help them come to their own clarity.

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