

**The Blessings of God:
What Solomon *Didn't* Ask
By
Vic Coleman**

Introduction

One of the things Christians need and desire is to be blessed by God. The blessings from God are those things which promote our happiness and welfare. But all too often we fall in a trap of wholeheartedly seeking the “blessings” and end up receiving something far short of what we hoped for. This can lead to disillusionment and a loss of faith.

This lesson focuses on the “proper” way to seek blessings from God in a manner that honors Him the most. Our Father is not against blessing us – as a matter of fact, blessing us is an expression of His love. But like a child, we sometimes have to readjust our focus and priority.

Scriptures Used In This Lesson

1 Kings 3:4 – 15

Matthew 6:22 – 33

Philippians 4:6

Matthew 6

What Solomon *Didn't* Ask For

After the death of David, Solomon, one of his son, became king of Israel. In 1 Kings 3, Solomon went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices to the Lord. Gibeon was located about 16 miles northwest of Jerusalem and is at the same location as the modern day Palestinian village of al-Jib. At Gibeon, Solomon had an encounter with the Lord that changed his life forever. The section we'll focus on is found in 1 Kings 3:4 – 15. This passage provides us with three important concepts in receiving blessings from God. (This account can also be found in 2 Chronicles 1:1 – 13).

Read 1 Kings 3:4 – 5. The Lord appeared to Solomon and gave him a very amazing offer in verse 5...an offer that makes me wonder if we could honestly respond in the same way as Solomon. Paraphrasing, the Lord told Solomon, “Tell me what you want and I will give it to you.” Can you imagine being told by the Creator of the universe, “I'll give you whatever you want, just tell me.”? Now you may wonder why God would present Solomon with such an offer, but for us the more important part of this exchange is Solomon's response.

How would you respond if God made you the same offer? Why?

Read 1 Kings 3:6 – 9. If we study his response, I think we can gain some insight on how we should approach the Lord concerning blessings we are seeking.

First of all what is the topic of verse 6? Is it the desires of Solomon to be rich? Is it a discussion of Solomon's enemies? Is it his need and/or desire for a queen? No. Solomon's first responds by acknowledging the *kindness of God*. The focus of his response is not on himself, but on God.

This response shows the following:

- A reverence for God
- A certain level of maturity in Solomon's relationship with God

Solomon knew where his blessings came from. He also had a sense of the respect for God. Instead of focusing on himself and the "blessing", he placed "first things first" and acknowledged God.

In our "immaturity" as Christians, we are like children in many ways. Children are inherently selfish. By definition, being selfish means:

- seeking or concentrating on one's own advantage, pleasure, or well-being *without* regard for others
(*Emphasis mine*)

Children have to be taught how to share and think of others, and *not* to think of themselves all the time. Some catch on quicker than others, but they all have to be taught by their parents not to be selfish. When children receive a gift, they only think of the gift and the excitement it brings. As they mature and become adults, they develop an appreciation for the *people* who show them kindness. After a while, the *gift* of benevolence is not as important as the *giver*. Solomon showed a level of maturity in that he remembered the kindness of the Giver and addressed Him first.

How "mature" are you in your prayers to God? Do you usually start out by running down a list of your needs and desires or do you take time to acknowledge Him and what He's done for you first? Why do you do what you do?

Key Point: We should begin our prayers by focusing on God, His character and the good things He has done. We should honor and acknowledge Him first.

Verse 7 begins by Solomon's acknowledgement of who made him king...God. This shows a second important aspect of his response...humility. By definition, to be humble means:

- not proud or haughty : not arrogant or assertive
- reflecting, expressing, or offered in a spirit of deference or submission

Solomon knew where his blessings came from. He knew his position as king was made possible by God, especially since he had an older brother who tried to steal the kingdom away from his father (David) and himself. The most powerful man in the kingdom, with thousands of soldiers at his disposal, and the ability to have anything he wanted by just making a request, referred to himself as "a little child" before his Creator. He expressed a "spirit of deference" or respect towards God.

When you pray, do you humble yourself before God? When you approach God, do you do it without being arrogant or proud? Do you show a "spirit of deference or submission" towards God? Why or why not?

As an exercise, take a sheet of paper and divide it into two columns. On the left side of the paper list five accomplishments in your life; things that you are proud of, that give you joy, that have been beneficial to you in some way. They could involve you directly or indirectly (such as your children graduating from high school or college or getting their first "real" job). Leave some space after each item on the list. On the right side of the paper, across from each accomplishment, describe how God made it possible. If you have problems seeing how God was involved, think about some of the following:

- *Who gave you the ability, talent or gift?*
- *Who gave you the opportunity?*
- *Who brought you through the trials and tribulations associated with the accomplishment?*
- *Who helped you encounter the right people at the right time?*
- *Who influenced others to show you favor?*
- *Who restored you after you "messed up"?*

Key Point: We must approach God in a spirit of humility. Why? Because He's worthy.

Read verses 8 and 9 again. They illustrate a third important concept in receiving blessings from God. Notice the phrases below from the NIV. The emphasis is mine.

v.8 “Your servant is here among the people *you have chosen....*”

v.9 “...a discerning heart to govern *your people...*”

v.9 “...govern this great *people of yours?*”

The pattern shown in these verses is that Solomon recognized the people as *God’s* people, and not *his* subjects. Solomon cared about the things that belonged to God – first. He wanted a “discerning heart” and wisdom to rule God’s people. It was almost as if Solomon said, “Lord, there are many things that I want, but I’m willing to put those aside and focus on what’s important to you.”

Key Point: Take care of God’s business, first. Care about the things He cares about, first. Make His priority your priority, first. In short, put God first.

Make a list of some things that you think might be a priority to God. Think of things that He cares about. If you get stuck, think about the various ministries of the Church. If not your church, may be another church or organization that’s making a positive impact on society. Think about the things Jesus did on a daily basis. Think about your family, friends or co-workers. Is someone going through a hard time? Does someone need encouragement? Try to list at least 10 items. After you finish, review our list. What is your involvement in the items on the list? If you are not involved in any of them, why not? Can you get started today?

What was God’s response to Solomon? Read 1 Kings 3:10 – 15. Verse 10 says that God was pleased with Solomon’s response. God not only gave Solomon what he asked for, but what he *didn’t* ask for – riches and honor (verse 13). Solomon’s riches and honor (the blessings of God) were renown throughout the known world.

Now how does this apply to us today? Read Matthew 6:25 – 33. The key verse is verse 33. Jesus tells us several things in this passage. Name some key points He makes before reading the list below.

At the very least you should have gotten these points below:

- God knows our needs.

- If God will take care of the animals and the grass of the field which are temporary, He will certainly take care of you.
- We should not worry.
- If we seek God and His righteousness first, all these things (things we need) will be given to us.

Solomon is the perfect example. Not all of us are called to be a king or queen, but we all have been called by God for service. He has given us gifts and talents which are to be used for His glory and fulfilling His purpose. We are to be examples of Christ expressing the love of God to others. So the question is, "What are you doing for the Lord? Are you engaged in some form of activity that expresses His love, or builds His kingdom?" If not, why?

Summary

From the lesson we should see that there were three key aspects in Solomon's response to an amazing and highly unusual offer from God:

1. We should begin our prayers by focusing on God, His character and the good things He has done. We should honor and acknowledge Him first.
2. We must approach God in a spirit of humility. He is worthy.
3. Take care of God's business, first. Care about the things He cares about, first. Make His priority your priority, first. In short, put God first.

There is nothing wrong with praying for blessings from God. As a matter of fact He tells us to do so, especially as it pertains to worry (see Philippians 4:6). But we should remember Who we are praying to and give Him the honor and respect He deserves. We will always do well and overcome if we put God first.

(Read the entire chapter of Matthew 6. Meditate on what Jesus says about worry, how precious you are to God and putting first things first.)