

1. **To do a job you need the proper equipment.** No arguments there. But even if you have the best equipment money can buy, there is no guarantee that the job you're doing will be a success. There is something else needed – any ideas?

Let me give you an example: If I had a surgeon's kit with all the very best scalpels', needles and anaesthetic money could buy, would you let me try and put you under anaesthetic? Would you let me try a surgical procedure on you? Of course not! The finest scalpel might as well be a chainsaw without a wise surgeon.

Or a less confronting possibility that won't give you nightmares of me holding a chainsaw; imagine the best stove, Mixmaster and quality ingredients all laid out on the bench ready to make a spectacular culinary delight.

Just having it all laid out on the bench won't guarantee someone like me a delicious cake or dessert - without a knowledgeable chef cooking it! Even if there are directions on the table, whatever I'm cooking will probably still work out as a kitchen disaster or a flop.

The point is, to do a job you need the proper equipment, but you also need wisdom in order to use the equipment and get the job done.

2. **You heard this earlier in the LORD'S dealings with Solomon in 1st Kings.** Solomon had the title of King. He had the credentials as the son of King David.

Perhaps he even had a King's sceptre – I'm not sure, but he's lacking something. And so God literally appears and manifests himself to Solomon in a dream – and tells Solomon to ask for whatever he wants!

- **As you sit here today, what is it that you would you ask God with a blank cheque offer like that?**
- **Would you ask the same thing for other people you're praying for, or would you pray differently for others than you do for yourself?**

Solomon didn't ask God for gold or silver or a share portfolio. He didn't ask to God for long life free from illness or any kind of sickness or suffering. He didn't ask God to strike down the people he didn't like – he wasn't out for vengeance. He could've asked for these things but he didn't. **Why?**

⁶ *Solomon answered the Lord, "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.*

Solomon was a man who could look back at the Lord's record of faithfulness. And it gave him confidence that all his basic needs would continue to be met as he lived in God's promises. So Solomon prays asking God for much more than the daily necessities he knows God will give him anyway. **He prays expectantly:**

⁷ *"Now, O 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. 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?**"*

Solomon has the title, 'King' and he has the credentials – he has the equipment, now he asks God for a **wise and discerning heart** that he might listen to people, understand where they're coming from and then make right decisions for their blessing.

And so the bible says, ¹⁰ *The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for 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...*

3. **What about your life? Could you benefit from a wise and discerning heart in the situations you encounter at home, at work or even here at church?**

Also recognize today that there are different types of wisdom - wisdom from above and wisdom from below that are available to you.

James names wisdom from below this way, ¹⁴ *But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts...* ¹⁵ *This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.*

Wisdom from below is a frightening spiral. It starts out as earthly wisdom, which is unspiritual; which then spirals into demonic behavior. That kind of wisdom is always asking **"what's in this for me?"**

It willingly tramples on others to get what it wants. It willingly chooses to ignore the providence and sovereignty of God because it thinks it knows better than everyone else.

Wisdom from below tries to look clever – but it's really stupid and worthless in the big picture.

Everyone gets caught up in this kind of false wisdom from below – but the call today is to turn away from it and look to something infinitely superior - **wisdom that comes from above!**

¹⁷ *But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.* ¹

This is the kind of wisdom that flows from the cross.

- When Jesus went on the cross for you;
- when your sins were nailed to the cross with Him;
- and when he died that you would walk in his forgiveness...

It was the greatest act of wisdom you and I could ever imagine!

It means that through your faith in Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, you have access to this wisdom from your Father in heaven! Sure, the cross may be foolish to the world's ears, but it is pure wisdom...pure Gospel for your ears.

Listen to what Paul says...

¹⁸ *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God... we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,* ²⁴ *but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.* ²⁵ *For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength...* ³⁰ *It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.* ²

Godly wisdom from above not only guides your feet on a daily basis, but it keeps leading you back to the source of your salvation and the righteousness, holiness and redemption that you have only in the name and power of Jesus. That's the foundation God has laid for you.

Wisdom begins at the cross where God goes to work in your life, forgiving sin, cleansing you and consecrating you for service as a Royal Priest in His household – its practical wisdom for every day.

Then instead of stopping there (like many Christians think it does), it actually continues to flow into your life as you live in relationship with God, seeking and receiving His wisdom from above for your daily life...

How? The same way Solomon received it! Just ask! God keeps it simple for us saying:

⁵ *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.*

¹ *The Holy Bible: New International Version.* 1996 (electronic ed.) (Jas 3:17). Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI

² *The Holy Bible: New International Version.* 1996 (electronic ed.) (1 Co 1:23–31). Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI

4. Now this means you'll need to acknowledge that you have needs you can't meet yourself.

You'll need to accept that a wise and discerning heart is a gift from God. That's what Solomon did when he laid it all out and was honest with God,

But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number.

In other words, this task you've given me is huge! If I'm going to be successful, if I'm going to cope with all the demands of my calling in life, I'm going to need help! We could say the same thing for ourselves...

You are the Lord's servant where he has placed you in life. You are a kingdom and a royal priesthood saved by the blood of Jesus on the cross. The Lord has placed you where he wants you to serve Him and His people here in FNQ.

- But have you ever felt inadequate and in need of wisdom in your calling? I have!
- Have mum's and dad's ever been in need of God's heavenly wisdom as they raise their kids in the Christian faith?
- Have young guys and girls ever been in need of Heavenly wisdom as they make big life decisions as they grow and mature?
- Do people who are called to serve in various roles in the church ever feel in need of a wise and discerning heart to fulfil their tasks?
- What about all the Christians here in the workforce – would you like wisdom as you live out your calling in ways that honour God and show integrity?
- Would you like access to the fountain of heavenly wisdom so that you might know what to say when you're asked about your faith or asked for wise counsel?
- What about if you think beyond your own needs. When people come to you from church, or they tell you about their life and hardships at work, how will you respond? With wisdom from above? Or will you slip into handing out wisdom from below because that's what you know best?

5. Jesus says, ⁷ *If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.*

Ask God for a wise and discerning heart as you live in your calling today. Remember as you ask him, that God uses special means to fill your life with his treasure and Spiritual gifts. He has already given you His greatest act of wisdom - Jesus Christ on the cross. So how much more will he give you practical wisdom for your life in this world!? Where will that happen? Well He does it through...

- worship services, like he is now;
- He'll do it through family devotions like the FAITH5 and simple things like reading scripture.
- He'll grant you a discerning heart as you learn from him and engage in all kinds of bible centred spiritual disciplines - on your own and when you gather with other people.

Question is: Are you willing to take hold of the gifts God is offering you today?

Let's pray asking God to give us wisdom for our calling in life.

Lord God Almighty, please give us your wisdom from above that we would not only be equipped for our calling through Jesus' death and resurrection for us on the cross, but that we would also have the wisdom to respond to the challenges we face every day in ways that honor and glorify your holy name and encourage and build up others. Please keep calling us into a living relationship with you and help us as we live in the various callings you have given us in your world. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.