

I was doing some research for another story when I came upon an Old Testament scripture. I am NOT an expert on old testament stories and usually just blow past those scriptures and head for my sweet spot in the gospel stories. But this scripture was short, so I thought I'd give it a looksie.

Glad I did.

It was about a guy named Solomon. His dad was King David and apparently God chose Solomon to take over the family business, even though he had an older brother whom most expected to be the next king.

Solomon challenges God's choice by reminding God that he has no experience in ruling people and doesn't think he'd do a very good job. God tells Solomon to ask him for anything and he would grant it.

Solomon said, "Give me an understanding heart to judge your people and to distinguish right from wrong."

God basically tells Solomon that's why he chose him - he could have asked for riches beyond anyone else, more power, a long healthy life and God would have given it to him .... but he asked for an understanding heart.

As I mentioned before, I am not an old testament guy and have no idea how this story develops. I understand that Solomon ruled God's people and was beloved as a very wise ruler. I also understand that God has chosen many people throughout the bible that had questionable experience for the job God chose them for and you would be well advised to accept the fact that God does not make bad choices, people. God works in mysterious ways is probably the greatest understatement in the bible, to be sure.

But that's not what I wanted to talk to you about today. I wanted us to look at what Solomon asked God for.

'Give me an understanding heart to judge your people...'

The more I thought about this request, the more I came to thinking that this may be the most important prayer any of us could lift up to God.

We all live in a tough world. I have written many times that the greatest gift God gave us is diversity. There is so much diversity in our world that it's hard for me to imagine anyone becoming complacent about our world. So many different environments. So many different eco systems. So many different animals who adapt and thrive in those many different environments. So many different weather patterns and seasons.

And I haven't even started talking about the diversity of our own human race.

So many people born in many varieties of environments, under so many different societies and languages. So many born in such a diversity of economic situations. So many people born with such extreme levels of opportunities.

We all have relationships in our life. And with those relationships there will always be conflicts and disagreements even with those we love the most.

That's when the prayer of Solomon becomes so important.

The first step of any conflict should be to pray, "God help me to have an understanding heart so I can better determine right from wrong."

When we pursue an understanding heart in any conflict we face, we may not always get our way or agree to disagree, but by starting with a prayer for an understanding heart, we stand a good chance of avoiding a conflict that escalates into painful battle where nobody wins.