

Redefining What We Want In Light of What We Need

Getting Ready for Ecclesiastes: Part 1, Sept. 14, 2008

THE OFFER: "That night God appeared to Solomon and said to him, 'Ask for whatever you want me to give you.'" (1 Kings 3:5)

1st BLANK CHECK: Write anything on it you want.

When God gave Solomon a blank check HERE'S HOW HE RESPONDED: "You have shown great kindness to my father David.... 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. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. 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?" (1 Kings 3:6-9)

What is cool about how Solomon responded to God, is that he didn't ask for what he wanted, he asked for what he needed...

On the blank check God gave him, Solomon wrote one word: WISDOM.

GOD'S RESPONSE Similar to: Matt. 6:33—s "Seek first...": "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; I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both riches and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. And if you walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life." 1 Kings 3:11-14

If you live at the WANT LEVEL you will find yourself pursuing all kinds of self-defeating endeavors and counterproductive behaviors. (Ecclesiastes calls this "chasing after the wind.") The root of such

striving for things that are ultimately unfulfilling is the fundamental confusion of what is in our best self-interest....

...What we think we want is to be happy.

What we need is to find and rely on the Source of happiness.

I say "what we think we want" rather than "what we want" because if we could really see the destructive consequences of our wants we would change them—we would live according to our needs. When we live according to our needs we are living according to our best self-interest.

Spiritual growth is not about denying our wants, it's about redefining those wants in light of what we really need. That's why scripture study, prayer, fellowship with other believers, and taking risks in our Christian walk are so important—it helps us in that redefining process.

Living on our NEED LEVEL: Jesus is not Santa Claus. Santa gives us what we want, while Jesus gives us what we need because, unlike Santa who has never been known for his spiritual insightfulness, Jesus realizes that our wants are often counterproductive to our best interest.

Being in touch with our deepest needs is very well the greatest gift that God could give us. Why? Because to understand our neediness is to embrace humility and humility is the essential building block from which God can build a man, a woman, a young person after his own heart.

ROGER MARTIN & THE CAVE: Do you have a moment in time, a period, an experience you can go back to that reminds you of how powerless and helpless you are. I'll bet you do too, likely several. Did you find God there?

Our lives as Christians are meant to be lived in the ER...

Thankfully Jesus is the Great Physician and he's on duty at all times!

2nd BLANK CHECK—What do you need? SONG OF NEED: *Breathe*