

Redefining What We Want In Light of What We Need

Getting Ready for Ecclesiastes: Part 2, Sept. 21, 2008

From Last Week: When Solomon received that blank check opportunity it wasn't from a Genie, it was from God himself. Do you remember what he asked for? Not what he wanted, but what he needed: WISDOM.

Later he built a beautiful Temple. Listen to his dedication prayer:

"Oh Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below—you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way. You have kept your promise to your servant David my father; with your mouth you have promised and with your hand you have fulfilled it—as it is today.... But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built...." (1 Kings 8:23-27)

Sadly, though, Solomon then began a steady spiritual decline:

"King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter—Moabitesses, Ammonitesses, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites. They were from nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, 'You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your heart after their gods.' Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been. He followed Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord; he did not follow the Lord completely, as David his father had done.

On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods." (1 Kings 11:1-8)

What happened to Solomon? Why did he lose touch with the God he had embraced and how can we avoid a similar corrosion of faith ourselves?

THE ISSUE: As long as Solomon was in touch with his need he acted toward God with humility and appreciation for all God was doing for him. But when he began asserting and pursuing his wants above his needs his life took a very negative, self-focused turn. All of a sudden it was up to Solomon to take care of Solomon and that just isn't how it works!

The difference between living by your needs versus living by your wants: Needs are essential, core issues. They are bottom-line. When we are in touch with who we are we are at the NEED LEVEL and relate to God at HIS LEVEL, the NEED MEETING LEVEL. ("God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.") But when we are living at the WANT LEVEL we relate to God at a much more superficial, demanding level: OUR LEVEL, the DO WHAT I WANT YOU TO DO LEVEL.

Instead of being the joy of our salvation, our refuge and our strength, God becomes the errand boy of our whims and desires. This is a Santa Claus view of God: We tell Santa what we want and Santa gives it to us. The problem is that what we want, because of the distortion that sin has brought, is often not in our best self-interest and not what we need.

When we relate to God on a WANT LEVEL we relate to him on our terms, not his. He becomes the creation of our imagination and expectations. But do you really want a 3 lb. god working for you? (Av. weight of our brains.)

Instead, don't we want a Universe-Sized GOD working on our behalf?!

"Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you who works on behalf of those who wait upon him." (Is. 64:4)... "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31)

ONE WAY GOD WORKS ON OUR BEHALF—by helping us to engage in and win the FIGHT FOR JOY. This is a fight we can't afford to lose.