

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: I Kings 3:5 “At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, ‘Ask! What shall I give you’”

Quote: “This is the beginning of a new day. God has given me this day to use as I will. I can waste it— or use it for good, but what I do today is important, because I am exchanging a day of my life for it! When tomorrow comes, this day will be gone forever, leaving in its place something that I have traded for it. I want it to be gain, and not loss; good, and not evil, success, and not failure; in order that I shall not regret the price that I have paid for it.” Heartsill Wilson, motivational speaker 1950s

Ambition is an eager and sometimes unhealthy desire after popularity, power, riches, or whatever would cause you to “stand out” from others. Solomon humbled himself before the Lord and admitted that he was not able to rule God’s people. His reply to God’s question, “What shall I give You?” was “Give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?” Because Solomon’s ambition was to rule wisely, God honored his request. He said to Solomon, “I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you. And I have also given you *what you have not asked*: both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days”¹

Unfortunately, Solomon lost sight of his unselfish ambition. He said, “Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart rejoiced in all my labor; And this was my reward from all my labor. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done and on the labor in which I had toiled; and indeed *all was vanity and grasping for the wind*. There was no profit under the sun.”² Solomon “had it all” and yet, in the end, possessions and pleasure left him “empty.”³ He acknowledged that “wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness. The wise man’s eyes are in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. Yet I myself perceived That the same event happens to them all.”⁴ That event common to all is

death. “The wise man sees that death is coming and lives accordingly, while the fool walks in darkness and is caught unprepared.”⁵ Solomon’s response to the common event shared by the wise and the fool was, “Therefore I hated life because the work that was done under the sun was distressing to me, for all is vanity and grasping for the wind. Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me.” In the context of the whole book of Ecclesiastes, and Solomon’s praise for diligence in the book of Proverbs, commentators are quick to point out that he was not suicidal. He simply concluded that ambition with the end goal of great accomplishment in worldly pursuits will leave one realizing that all things in this life are quickly passing.

Solomon got off course from his commendable request for wisdom when he disobeyed God’s guidelines for kings. The king was not to multiply horses to himself in the pursuit of *power*. Solomon had 40,000 stalls for chariot horses from Egypt. The king was

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not to multiply to himself wives, for they would turn his heart from God in the blind pursuit of *pleasure* and *political influence*. Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines who indeed influenced him to build altars to “gods” on which children were sacrificed in fire. The king was not to greatly multiply to himself gold and silver in the pursuit of *prosperity*. Solomon’s silver was as plentiful as stones. The king was also to write for himself a copy of the law and read it daily. It certainly appears from his grave disobedience that Solomon failed in this as well. At the end of Ecclesiastes, he wisely summed up what our ambition should be. “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: **Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all**. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.” What if God asked you, “What shall I give you?” How would you reply? Would your answer be in line with Solomon’s conclusion about life being about reverent obedience? Your answer says a lot about your ambition!

¹ I Kings 3:9, 12-13 ² Eccles.2:10-11 ³ See I Kings 4-10 for a description of Solomon’s incredible riches ⁴ Eccles.2:13-14 ⁵ W. Wiersbe