

In the story from the Old Testament, we have King Solomon who encounters God and is asked this question: "Son, tell me what I should give you."

We know what Solomon's answer was: he asked for wisdom; he asked for an understanding mind so that he could be a better king; and he could discern between good and evil.

Of course, it is one of the most famous stories in the Bible; we have heard it many times.

My first question was this: Ok, then, would Solomon have made the same request if he had not been the king?

After all, he was the king; that means he had everything; he had all the power; he had all the riches he could claim as his own.

But, what if he was like us who have to worry about where our next meals come from? Would he have made the same request?

I wish I could be given that kind of once-in-a-life-time moment so that I could present to God a list of things I need for myself, you, church, and people out there who are trying hard to make their ends meet.

I do not have to tell you all the details; three-meals-a-day is not just the concern of those in Africa but everywhere. So we want things; we want to make sure we get what we need; we want a little security in our life; and what do you do when things are not looking good?

We need to look to God for help. It is my absolute belief that God knows our needs and when we pray, God hears our prayers

So when I heard that King Solomon asked for wisdom, well, I thought, maybe that was the only thing he was lacking; everything else—he already had. That was what I had in mind.

Then, I asked myself: what is wisdom?

And I did some research on this.

First of all, the New International Version says, what Solomon asked was an "understanding mind" to discern between good and evil.

Wisdom is having an understanding mind to see what is good and what is evil.

Then, who decides what is good and evil based on what?

Sometimes evils come to us in the appearance of good. How do you tell?

Now, people talk about health care reform; and even though everyone seems to say what they think is right, the whole country is in chaos; people seem to be more confused as they talk about it.

In this case, who decides who is right and who is wrong based on what?

The Bible says: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Psalm 111:10)

St. Paul says in today's Ephesians text: "Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of God is..."

Then, what is wisdom? It has to do with fearing God, worshiping God, and walking with God. More importantly, it has to do with putting life in order and doing things to please God, not my personal desires, not my worldly desires.

It is about doing the will of God. And if you read the whole Bible, The same thing is mentioned over and over: and there is one verse from Micah 6:8 which summarizes it well.

"What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."

"Walk humbly with God."

Solomon chose wisdom over other things; even if he had it all, he could have asked for more. But he, at least in this stage of his life, wanted to be right.

He thought of his people first. No, I should say--he thought of God first, not his own desires, not his own comforts, not his own riches, but the will of God. He wanted to Walk with God.

Biblical scholar Tremper Longman says: wisdom is about relationship, and "Solomon clearly enjoyed an intimate relationship with God." After all, God talked with Solomon in his dreams.

In our technological world, we value knowledge over wisdom. We say knowledge is power; knowledge makes people smart; and we want those highly educated people to make our world more convenient place. That is for sure.

When I went to Africa, I realized how inconvenient it is not to have all those technologies. One day I wanted to make a phone call to my home and it was not easy. Going online was not easy. Wherever I went, I talked about Internet Café; people laughed at me... But I wanted to know what was going on with my house and moving arrangement: that was all...

You wouldn't believe how hard it was for me to call here. They didn't even know how to dial... After many tries, we eventually made it through and the man said, "Was it your home phone?" When I said "Yes," he seemed to be very surprised that I had a phone at home.

That tells you what kind of life we are talking about over there.

But here is the thing. Those African friends are not stupid people. They are just behind in knowledge and technologies;

But they have a lot of wisdom.

They are very spiritual; they walk with God; they know how to take

care of each other; they are just wonderful people of God.

Despite the fact that their life situation is hard and tough, God gave the wisdom not only to survive there but also live a life that pleases God.

I think one of the best gifts we get from God is the wisdom of knowing God. It is the ultimate gift we can ever have.

Last Thursday. My wife and I went to LA to attend a funeral service for my wife's aunt. They said everything was paid for by the deceased. My aunt had made a good preparation for her own funeral. I thought she was a very wise woman.

Real wisdom is that we know God; we walk with God; we serve God; we live according to His will; we use our time wisely; we use things wisely for God and His work as much as we can; and that is the way we prepare our way to God.

We don't know when our lives will end here; but that does not matter, as long as we do those things, we can call ourselves the smartest people; we can call ourselves the people of wisdom. The Bible says: "The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." (Ps.14:1)

God gave Solomon wisdom. The wisdom was to walk humbly with God. Unfortunately, Solomon's wisdom was great in many ways except when it came to women or his loyalty to God.

Solomon later "loved foreign women more than he loved the Lord, and he worshiped their idols.... Solomon's failure reminds us that a human being is neither the origin nor the prime example of wisdom."

Our real model is Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "Seek your kingdom first; then everything else will be added onto you." Mt.6:33.

Life is full of challenges; life is full of temptations; life is always choice of one thing over another. Let's walk humbly with God; let's be people of wisdom. Amen.