

BACKWARDS & FORWARDS

Reference: **1 Kings 3:5-13**

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This is the time of year that many Americans take some time for “LOOKING BACKWARD” and “LOOKING FORWARD.” (REFLECTIONS & RESOLUTIONS)

- > Reflection is important if we are to learn from the past and avoid repeating its mistakes.
- > Resolutions (or making plans for the future based on what is behind) are important to allow us to move forward confidently and differently.

Reflection requires some time and thought, but resolutions require discipline and determination. A Bible word for resolution is “covenant”. It is used some 272 times to describe a decision or commitment. The Hebrew word for covenant has the idea of a compact made by passing between the pieces of a sacrifice. The idea is that a covenant or commitment will always involve a sacrifice.

1 Kings 3:3-14

- I. REASON FOR REFLECTION - Reflect means to distinguish, recognize, or understand. We should to reflect in order to understand...
- A. What we did right.
 - B. What we did wrong. (**1 John 1:6-10**)
 - 1. Sinfully - Sin involves intentionally and willfully violating God’s will. (**Galatians 6:7-8; Proverbs 28:13**)
 - 2. Stupidly – (foolishly) All sin is stupid, but not all stupidity is sin!
 - a) Many of our foolish choices hinder us from experiencing the freedom God desires.
 - b) Spirituality does not protect us from stupidity.
 - C. Honest reflection will better equip us to make wise plans moving forward!
- II. REASON FOR DECISIONS MOVING FORWARD
- A. Decisions moving forward provide solutions. If they don’t “fix” anything, then they are a waste of time and effort.
 - B. Decisions moving forward allow us to begin again more:
 - 1) Intentionally
 - 2) Intelligently
 - 3) Intensely

III. A ROYAL DECISION MOVING FORWARD: **1 Kings 3:3-14**

- A. Solomon was the new king facing new challenges.
 - 1) The old King (David) was dead and gone, leaving Solomon to enjoy the good and endure the bad that he had left. This is probably why Solomon went to Gibeon to offer such a huge sacrifice. He was looking for God’s help and blessing.
 - 2) The old year is gone, and we are left with both the good and bad that it brought us.
- B. God offered him a blank check for the future. (**vs. 5**)
 - 1) It was a test of sorts. God wanted to see if Solomon would avail himself of the resources God had waiting for him.
 - 2) Remember it was Solomon who later wrote **Pr. 3:5-6**
- C. Solomon recognized that he was unequal to the challenges before him. (**vs. 7**)
 - 1) He felt himself a child, although he was 30 years old!
 - 2) Are we foolish enough to believe we have the future in our pocket? We will all face challenges beyond our ability, experience and skill.
- D. Solomon chose the greatest gift possible and so passed the trust test. (**vs. 9**) Solomon asked for an understanding heart.
 - Understanding: (To hear intelligently, with obedience.)
 - Heart: (Soul: feelings, will, and intellect)He asked God to give him the ability to perceive and obey Him with all of his soul.
- E. God’s response was to give Solomon more than he asked.
 - 1) David (a man after God’s heart) had written **Psalms 37:4-5**
 - 2) God granted him a wise and understanding heart.

APPLICATION:

- 1) Are we (YOU) much different from Solomon? Have we (YOU) “inherited” problems and pressures from the past?
- 2) Are we (YOU) willing to trust and love the Lord? (**1 Kings 3:5; Proverbs 3:5-6**)
- 3) Is the desire of our heart an “understanding (wise) heart”? **Proverbs 4:7** (Beginning = primary, first in order) Wisdom is the God given skill to face life’s choices and challenges.

SUGGESTED DECISIONS FOR YOU MOVING FORWARD:

Read a Chapter of Proverbs each day this year!
It is a record of what God taught Solomon
about the skills to handle life’s problems!