

Wisdom and Justice

- Doing justice is a challenging process, and the Bible doesn't give us a step-by-step handbook for how to do justice.
- One of the people in the Bible best set up to administrate justice to his nation was Solomon.
- Solomon was raised by a father who led Israel as king in justice and righteousness, the nation he was leading had a law divinely written by God Himself.
- Given that strong foundation, you would think that Solomon would feel confident to step into leadership. Yet, he still struggled to know how to govern God's chosen people in justice.
- Soon after Solomon became king, God appeared to Solomon in a dream, and asked him, "What do you want? Ask, and I will give it to you!" (1 Kings 3:5) Solomon answers:
"Now, O Lord my God, you have made me king instead of my father, David, **but I am like a little child who doesn't know his way around.** And here I am in the midst of your own chosen people, a nation so great and numerous they cannot be counted! Give me an understanding heart so that I can govern [*shaphat*] your people well and know the difference between right and wrong. **For who by himself is able to govern [*shaphat*] this great people of yours?" (1 Kings 3:7-9 NLT, emphasis mine)**
- Solomon-with all his mentoring and good laws- didn't know what to do!
- Knowing how already equipped he was, it makes this line all the more powerful: "I am like a little child who doesn't know his way around."
- True justice is always challenging to do, even if you have the best training and God-written laws.
- Solomon's request for wisdom was great according to God:
The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for wisdom. So God replied, "**Because you have asked for wisdom in governing my people with justice [*mishpat*]** and have not asked for a long life or wealth or the death of your enemies— I will give you what you asked for! I will give you a wise and understanding heart such as no one else has had or ever will have! (1 Kings 3:10-14 NLT, emphasis mine)
- God was pleased that Solomon asked for wisdom because **it meant that Solomon would have the wisdom to govern his people with *mishpat*.**
- Solomon could have asked for better laws or more help in governing, but instead asked for wisdom knowing that it was what was needed to administer *mishpat*.

Demystifying Biblical Justice

- Soon after, Solomon has to judge a complicated case involving two women both claiming that a baby belonged to them. Solomon used wisdom to come up with a solution to bring justice to the situation (1 Kings 3:16-27).
- The nation's response to Solomon's brilliant judgment in that case is that, "they saw that the **wisdom of God was in him to administer justice [mishpat].**" (1 Kings 3:28 NASB).
- Doing justice is hard- even for a man who had laws written by God and great mentoring- was impossible without wisdom.
- If you feel like you lack wisdom, just ask God for it: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him." (James 1:5 ESV)
- Wisdom is essential to do *mishpat*.