

Devotion 14:

Our Father Knows Right And Wrong

I Kings 1—22

I Kings shows us a variety of attributes of our Father:

1. He delivers His children out of every trouble. 1:29
2. He is pleased when we ask for help serving others. 3:10
3. He gives us more than we ask for sometimes. 3:13
4. He appeared in dreams occasionally. 3:5
5. He gives wisdom, insight, and understanding. 4:29; 5:12; 10:24
6. He hears prayers. 9:3
7. He established a royal throne forever in David's house. 9:5
8. He gets angry when a heart turns away from Him. 11:9
9. He raised up adversaries for Solomon. 11:14, 23
10. He split Israel into two kingdoms. 12:22-24
11. He has jealous anger with idolatry. 14:22; 15:30; 16:7, 13, 26, 33;
12. For one righteous man's sake, He will do good to others. 15:4

But, yet again, a book in the Old Testament has numerous repetitions surrounding a particular trait of God. On 11 occasions someone in I Kings "*does evil in the eyes of the Lord.*" (14:9, 22; 15:26, 34; 16:7, 19, 25, 31; 21:20, 25; 22:52) In 4 instances someone "*did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.*" (14:8; 15:5, 11; 22:43) This tells me that man did not necessarily see what a king did as *evil* or as *right*, but our Father did. He knows what is best.

It usually takes several decades before the average son or daughter realizes that their earthly father knew more than they gave him credit in their younger years. Mark Twain once quipped, "When I was 14, I couldn't believe how dumb my old man was. But when I turned 21, I was astounded at how much he had learned in seven years." Older readers will chuckle at the above, but we laugh because there is some truth in the joke.

Why is that? I think it goes all the way back to Genesis 3:4-7a and the familiar story of the Fall:

"'You will not surely die,' the serpent said to the woman. 'For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened...."

Have you ever thought about that? The great sin is our thinking we know what good and evil is. We think we know what is good and will relieve our pain, so we reach for the

alcohol or the pills or have sex. The Fall turned all of us into judges rather than the lovers of God and others that God intended at creation. The Fall led us to depend upon ourselves rather than upon God to determine good and evil. And that causes much heartache and trouble. Listen to Isaiah 5:20-21:

“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight.”

Webster’s Dictionary defines woe = “deep suffering from misfortune, affliction, or grief.” What caused great woe in Israel or Judah according to I Kings? Whenever a king *did evil in the eyes of the Lord*. I am sure the kings believed what they were doing was good. They were wrong.

And how about your life? Can you think back to times when you believed something—words, actions, thoughts—was “good” only to discover later that it was in fact “evil in the eyes of the Lord?” How about the other way around? You believed something was “evil” but it turned out to be “right in the eyes of the Lord?”

What about your Christian walk today? Do you believe and live as though it is indeed better to give than to receive? That in order to live, you must die? To turn the other cheek and to love your enemies?

The ultimate test is the cross. To our finite logic, for God to descend to earth as a man and get beaten and crucified is not the way to usher in an eternal kingdom. To believe that to be saved, I can do nothing but trust that Jesus Christ has done it all for me at times doesn’t seem “right.” And yet, to believe that I can do something, anything, to be sufficient to enter our holy and perfect Father’s presence for one second, let alone, for eternity, is evil.

Perhaps our earthly existence as children maturing into adulthood is a perfect parable for our being children of God being sanctified into mature sons and daughters of our heavenly Father. Slowly and gradually we discover with Him as we do with our earthly dads, He really does know right and wrong.