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Just imagine what it would be like to have three wishes granted to you, or even one wish. I wonder what those of us here might wish for. What if someone walked up to you and said, “I’ll grant you one wish. What’ll it be?” What would you choose? ...

It just so happens I read about a guy who encountered the opportunity for three wishes.

While out walking one night he happened to find an old rusty oil lamp lying in the street. He took the lamp home and began polishing it, when suddenly a genie popped out of the lamp.

“You have summoned me from ancient times, and now I will grant you three wishes. What’ll it be?”

The guy thought for a long time, and then he said, “I wish for lots of money.” Poof. Piles of money suddenly surrounded the guy.

The genie said, “Now what what’ll it be for your second wish?”

The man thought for a while and said, “I wish for a fast, red sports car,” and poof, a slick red car appeared outside in his driveway.

The genie then said, “OK, what about your third wish? What’ll it be?”

The guy replied, “I’m not quite sure. Can I wait a bit longer and summon you when I’m ready for my third wish?”

The genie replied, “This is quite unusual, but the wishes are up to you. Call me when you’re ready. All you have to do is say ‘I wish’ and I will grant your final wish.”

The guy put the lamp in the backseat of his new car and took off down the road. Finally, all his patience had finally resulted in something good happening in his life. He turned up the radio, singing along with all the tunes. He was so happy that things had finally changed in his life that he even sang along with the radio commercials, including that favorite one lots of kids like to sing, “I wish I were an Oscar Meyer Weiner.” Poof. His last wish was granted<sup>1</sup>

It’s a good thing that King Solomon didn’t know this song when he was given the opportunity to ask for anything from God. Solomon’s life didn’t begin in the best of situations, for he was the second son of David and Bathsheba. His parents had been caught in a political sexual scandal that led to the birth of their first son, who died soon after being born. Solomon was the second son, and I imagine he sometimes wished that he didn’t have to live in the light of his parents’ mistakes, that he didn’t

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have to carry around the stigma of what had happened before he was born.

One day King Solomon went to the mountainous area of Gibeon, which had belonged to other people before Solomon's father David captured it. David had avoided worshiping there since it was not a safe place,<sup>2</sup> but for some reason Solomon decided to hike up the mountain for worship. Solomon was known for worshiping idols in high places, so this week's story from the book of 1 Kings begins on a sour note as he hikes up a mountain to an unsafe place to worship idols.

In this place Solomon had a dream where he heard God say, "Ask what I should give you." In the Hebrew the word *ask* is in the imperative voice, meaning it wasn't a polite request, such as "If you want to ask me, go ahead." It was a demand, "**Ask** me, now!"

Solomon at first seems to avoid the demand by trying to get on God's good side. "You've shown great love to my father and to me and made me king, though I think I'm too young for such a job.

You've chosen a great people for me to govern, but I'm not sure I'm very good at it." Finally, Solomon gets around to asking God for something as God had requested. Maybe Solomon was feeling a bit guilty about his choice to worship idols, so he asked, "Maybe you could give me some wisdom to govern your people, to know the difference between good and evil."

Ding, ding, ding. Correct answer! "You could have asked for riches or a long life or for a victory over your enemies," God replied, "but instead you asked to discern what is right. Follow my teachings and walk in my ways, and you will be known as the wisest of all kings."

And before you know it, Solomon's wisdom was tested as two women came to him claiming to be the mother of the same baby. They both lived in the same house; one woman gave birth to a baby, and then three days later the second woman gave birth. One woman's son died in the night, so she got up and switched the babies in the middle of the night. But the real mom recognized the difference and

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appealed to the king to return her son. Both women claimed the living baby was her son. How would he decide? No DNA tests. No fingerprints or baby footprint records. No cute baby photos taken on the day of their birth. Nothing but the mothers' words, and both women claimed they were telling the truth.

I imagine Solomon praying, "Ok, God, I asked you for wisdom. How's it going to help me solve this problem? If only they could share the baby equally, then... That's it! Share the baby equally!"

"I have a solution," he told the women. "Bring me a sword. We'll cut the baby in two and you can each have half a baby."

One woman replied, "Oh my, please don't cut him in half. Give the living baby to her."

The other woman said, "Go ahead, cut him in two."

Although we may cringe at the suggestion of cutting the baby in half, wondering if Solomon would have actually carried out this act, the strategy led him to discern who was the real mother. He

declared, "Give the baby to the first mother, for she wanted him to live at all cost."

Have you ever faced a difficult decision, wishing for God's wisdom to guide you? Women living in a fishing village on the Atlantic coast, just outside the capital of Ghana, needed such wisdom. Fishing is the only means of providing food and income in this small village, but since men are the only ones allowed to fish, if the man in the household becomes ill or dies, the family has no means of survival.

The village faced a decision. What'll it be? Allow women and children to die of starvation—or find another way.

That's when our Disciples Global Ministries stepped in and offered financial assistance for the women to start their own business. The women can buy fresh fish from the fishermen, then they dry the fish

on huge racks on the ground. Then a wood burning oven is used to smoke the fish. The women tend the fire on the ground under the

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oven, while the fish are smoked in racks on top. Then the preserved fish are packaged and sold.<sup>3</sup> Through an interpreter, the women were asked, “What is it that makes you want to get up in the morning?”

A woman replied, “I want to get out of bed, because I now have my own business...I can now support myself and my children.”

Sometimes we need God’s wisdom to get through difficult times, and at other times we might hear wisdom from those around us—even the youngest among us.

One website has gathered together wise thoughts written by children:

- After a child read a story about Abraham Lincoln, a question asked, “Imagine that you lived at the same time as Abraham Lincoln. What would you say to him or ask him? A

student wrote: “I’d tell him not to go to a play ever.”

- For another assignment, a student wrote, “Love who you are. Nevr give up. Be calm in your self. Stand up for your self. You are a super hero. Beleav in your self. Be brave.”
- Emma K, age 6, wrote for another assignment: “Love is when you’re missing some of your teeth but you’re not afraid to smile because you know your friends will still love you even though some of you is missing.”<sup>4</sup>

When you have a day when you feel as though part of you is missing, you may wonder “What’ll it be? How do I get through this day?” On these days, may you trust that God’s wisdom fills you and surrounds you, offering new possibilities each day.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.ranker.com/list/funny-wisdom-from-kids/nathandavidson](http://www.ranker.com/list/funny-wisdom-from-kids/nathandavidson)

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from *1002 Humorous Illustrations*, #599, Michael Hodgins.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Chronicles 21:28-30

<sup>3</sup> Penny Ross-Corona, [www.mid-america-disciples.org/mission-work/2018/9/10/christian-discipleship-in-ghana](http://www.mid-america-disciples.org/mission-work/2018/9/10/christian-discipleship-in-ghana)