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BUT HE DID NOT KEEP WHAT
THE LORD COMMANDED.

1 KINGS 11:9-10

PROMISE

A F F I R M E D

DATE

March 28 & 29

WEEK

5 of 5

KEY VERSE

1 Kings 11:9-10

SETTING THE STAGE

For 33 years David aggressively guided God's united people to greatness, forging a powerful empire. As David grew older, his sons disputed over the succession. But God had revealed to David that He had chosen Solomon to succeed him (*see 1 Chronicles 22:9–10*).

David had shared this revelation with Bathsheba, Solomon's mother (*1 Kings 1:13, 17*). He had even announced it to the nation (*1 Chronicles 22:5; 29:1*). Still, Solomon was not the oldest of David's living sons. There were older brothers who understandably disputed his right to the throne.

Finally, one of David's older surviving sons, Adonijah, took steps to gain the succession. Nathan the prophet and Bathsheba insisted that David act. David did. He made Solomon coregent. When Adonijah heard, his supporters deserted him and the young man rushed to the altar of sacrifice to claim sanctuary. His life was spared, and Solomon was secure on the throne.

The story of Solomon is, in many ways, a wonderful success story. He is the wisest man who ever lived. His wealth and power were known to all who lived in Israel and most of those who lived beyond its borders. Solomon was a prolific writer, composing 1,005 songs and 3,000 proverbs. In spite of all this, Solomon's life ended as a disaster. His many foreign wives succeeded in turning his heart from the Lord, which cost Solomon's son much of his kingdom and divided Israel for centuries to come. The lessons we learn from Solomon are largely negative lessons-how not to make the same mistakes Solomon did.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. Solomon Focused on the Wrong Things.
2. Solomon Tuned God Out.
3. Solomon Trusted Himself Instead of God.
4. Solomon Refused to Listen to People Around Him.

THINGS TO KNOW

- Solomon was a prolific writer, composing 1,005 songs and 3,000 proverbs.

PROMISE

A F F I R M E D

Introduction

1 Kings 11 clearly catalogs the sinful shortcomings of Solomon, but it also highlights the faithful promises of God. God gave Solomon unusual wisdom, incredible wealth, and great opportunities, but in his older years, he turned from the Lord, made foolish decisions, and did not end well. “A man’s own folly ruins his life” (*Proverbs 19:3*). Solomon wrote those words and probably believed them, but he did not heed them.

It is not difficult to trace the steps in Solomon’s downward path. Let’s take a look:

1. SOLOMON FOCUSED ON THE WRONG THINGS

1 KINGS 11:1-8 (ESV) *Now King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, ²from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the people of Israel, “You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.” Solomon clung to these in love. ³He had 700 wives, who were princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart. ⁴For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. ⁵For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. ⁶So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and did not wholly follow the LORD, as David his father had done. ⁷Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem. ⁸And so he did for all his foreign wives, who made offerings and sacrificed to their gods.*

The danger of marrying pagan unbelievers is spelled out in v. 2, which is a quotation from Deuteronomy 7:4: “they will turn away your heart after their gods.” That is exactly what happened to Solomon (v. 3, 4, 9). The Ammonites and Moabites were descendants of Abraham’s nephew, Lot (*Genesis 19:30*). The Ammonites worshiped the hideous god Molech and sacrificed their infants on his altars (*Leviticus 18:21; 20:1–5; and see Jeremiah 7:29–34; Ezekiel 16:20–22*). Chemosh was the chief god of the Moabites, and Ashtoreth (Astarte) was the goddess of the people of Tyre and Sidon. As the goddess of fertility, her worship included “legalized prostitution” involving both male and female temple prostitutes, and that worship was unspeakably filthy. (See *Deuteronomy 23:1–8; 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46*.) The Babylonians also worshiped this goddess and called her Ishtar.

Solomon’s compromise was not a sudden thing, for he gradually descended into his idolatry (*Psalms 1:1*). First, he permitted his wives to worship their own gods; then he tolerated their idolatry and even built shrines for them. Eventually, Solomon began to participate in pagan practices with his wives. His sensual love for his many wives was more compelling than his spiritual love for the Lord, the God of Israel.

This is an important reminder for us: sin starts small and then grows. What are the seemingly small sins in our lives that have the potential to grow out of control? If it could happen to the wisest man in the Bible, it can surely happen to you and me.



Warren Wiersbe explains, “His love for spiritual values was replaced by a love for physical pleasures and material wealth, and gradually his heart turned from the Lord. First, he was friendly with the world (*James 4:4*), then spotted by the world (*James 1:27*), and then he came to love the world (*1 John 2:15–17*) and be conformed to the world (*Romans 12:2*). Unfortunately, the result of this decline can lead to being condemned with the world and losing everything (*1 Corinthians 11:32*). That’s what happened to Lot (*Genesis 13:10–13; 14:11–12; 19:1ff*), and it can happen to believers today.”¹

2. SOLOMON TUNED GOD OUT

1 KINGS 11:9-13 (ESV) *And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice 10 and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he did not keep what the LORD commanded. 11 Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, “Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant. 12 Yet for the sake of David your father I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. 13 However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen.”*

God was angry with Solomon. Twice before, God had appeared to him and warned him of the dangers of disobedience (*1 Kings 11:9-10*). God told Solomon that his persistent disobedience would cost him most of his kingdom. For the sake of David, God would put off judgment on Solomon’s house until after his death. One tribe would be left for Solomon’s son to reign, but ten tribes would follow someone else (*1 Kings 11:11-13*).

Were it not for God’s covenant with David and His love for Jerusalem, the city where His temple stood, He would have taken the entire kingdom away from Solomon’s descendants. God promised David a dynasty that would not end, and therefore He kept one of David’s descendants on the throne in Jerusalem until the city was taken by the Babylonians and destroyed. Of course, the ultimate fulfillment of that covenant promise is in Jesus Christ (*Luke 1:32–33, 69; Acts 2:29–36; Psalm 89:34–37*). God’s name was upon the temple (*1 Kings 8:43*), so He preserved Jerusalem, and God’s covenant was with David, so He preserved David’s dynasty. Such is the grace of God, affirming His promise.

In the midst of great sin, it is easy to become blinded to reality. When we stop listening to God, we will lose the sense of conviction that comes from following Christ. It is like when we burn our hand on a stove - it hurts! But if you continued to do it, eventually a callous would form and you would lose feeling. This is a great picture of what becoming dull to sin looks like. It hurts at first, but if you don’t learn from it and stop, we will eventually become callous to it.

When we stop listening to God, we will start resisting God.

When we stop listening to God, we will start resisting God. This is exactly what happened to Solomon as recorded in *1 Kings 11:14-25*. Because of this, God raised up adversaries to oppose Solomon.

3. SOLOMON TRUSTED HIMSELF INSTEAD OF HIS GOD

1 KINGS 11:14-25 (ESV) *And the LORD raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite. He was of the royal house in Edom. 15 For when David was in Edom, and Joab the commander of the army went up to bury the slain, he struck down every male in Edom 16 (for Joab and all Israel remained*

¹ Warren Wiersbe, *Be Responsible*, “Be” Commentary Series, Colorado Springs, CO: Victor, 2002, p. 79–80.

there six months, until he had cut off every male in Edom).¹⁷ But Hadad fled to Egypt, together with certain Edomites of his father's servants, Hadad still being a little child.¹⁸ They set out from Midian and came to Paran and took men with them from Paran and came to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who gave him a house and assigned him an allowance of food and gave him land.¹⁹ And Hadad found great favor in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him in marriage the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen.²⁰ And the sister of Tahpenes bore him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house. And Genubath was in Pharaoh's house among the sons of Pharaoh.²¹ But when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers and that Joab the commander of the army was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, "Let me depart, that I may go to my own country."²² But Pharaoh said to him, "What have you lacked with me that you are now seeking to go to your own country?" And he said to him, "Only let me depart."²³ God also raised up as an adversary to him, Rezon the son of Eliada, who had fled from his master Hadadezer king of Zobah.²⁴ And he gathered men about him and became leader of a marauding band, after the killing by David. And they went to Damascus and lived there and made him king in Damascus.²⁵ He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon, doing harm as Hadad did. And he loathed Israel and reigned over Syria.

**Choices
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Forgiveness
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Anytime we get into this kind of sinful action in life- where we are openly sinning and not fully trusting God - there will be consequences. Those consequences were brutal for Solomon.

God did bring about certain consequences during Solomon's lifetime. He raised up adversaries who opposed Solomon: Hadad the Edomite (v. 14-22); Rezon son of Eliada (v. 23-25); and Jeroboam son of Nebat, who would eventually rule over ten of the tribes of Israel (v. 26-40). Jeroboam was assured that God would give Jeroboam a lasting dynasty if he only obeyed His rules and commandments. This divided kingdom would not be forever.

We must remember that choices always have consequences. Equally as important is that forgiveness does not erase consequences. Say you steal my car from the church parking lot. You take it for a spin and have a good time. In the meantime, I have called the police and made a report of a stolen vehicle. Eventually, you return with my car. Now, because I understand forgiveness, I am going to forgive you, but you are still going to jail for auto theft. Forgiveness does not erase the consequences.

This is so clear with Solomon, but even more so in our lives and in the lives of people we know and love.

4. SOLOMON REFUSED TO LISTEN TO PEOPLE AROUND HIM

1 KINGS 11:26-43 (ESV) *Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite of Zeredah, a servant of Solomon, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow, also lifted up his hand against the king.²⁷ And this was the reason why he lifted up his hand against the king. Solomon built the Millo, and closed up the breach of the city of David his father.²⁸ The man Jeroboam was very able, and when Solomon saw that the young man was industrious he gave him charge over all the forced labor of the house of Joseph.²⁹ And at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him on the road. Now Ahijah had dressed himself in a new garment, and the two of them were alone in the open country.³⁰ Then Ahijah laid hold of the new garment that was on him, and tore it into twelve pieces.³¹ And he said to Jeroboam, "Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Behold, I am about to tear the kingdom from the hand of Solomon and will give you ten tribes³² (but he shall have one tribe, for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city that I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel),³³ because they have forsaken me and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milcom the god of the Ammonites, and they have not walked in my ways, doing what is right in my sight and keeping my statutes and my*

rules, as David his father did.³⁴ Nevertheless, I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, but I will make him ruler all the days of his life, for the sake of David my servant whom I chose, who kept my commandments and my statutes.³⁵ But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand and will give it to you, ten tribes.³⁶ Yet to his son I will give one tribe, that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I have chosen to put my name.³⁷ And I will take you, and you shall reign over all that your soul desires, and you shall be king over Israel.³⁸ And if you will listen to all that I command you, and will walk in my ways, and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, I will be with you and will build you a sure house, as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you.³⁹ And I will afflict the offspring of David because of this, but not forever.' ”⁴⁰ Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. But Jeroboam arose and fled into Egypt, to Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.⁴¹ Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the Book of the Acts of Solomon?⁴² And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years.⁴³ And Solomon slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David his father. And Rehoboam his son reigned in his place.

These verses capture a long warning from God to Jeroboam (one of Solomon's key leaders) by way of Ahijah.

Ahijah dramatized his message by tearing Jeroboam's new garment into twelve parts and giving him ten of them. This was God's way of saying that Jeroboam would become king of the ten northern tribes of Israel. Ahijah explained why two tribes were still reserved for the house of David and also why Solomon's son was being given only those two tribes. Solomon had sinned greatly by introducing idolatry into the land, a sin that would eventually destroy the nation and lead them into captivity.

It was for David's sake that God protected Judah and Jerusalem. Solomon had not kept the terms of the covenant God made with his father (2 Samuel 7), but God would be faithful to His Word (2 Samuel 7:11–13). The lamp would burn for David until the end of the Jewish monarchy with the fall of Zedekiah (2 Kings 25; see 1 Kings 11:36; 15:4; 2 Kings 8:19; 21:7; Psalm 132:17).

Ahijah closed his message by warning Jeroboam that what happened to him was wholly of God's grace. He had better take his calling seriously and obey the Word of the Lord, or God would discipline him just as He had to discipline Solomon.

One cannot read the story of Solomon without asking the question, “How is it possible for a man who was so wise to become so foolish?” As we have spent the last 3 weeks studying David and Solomon, let me suggest that the key may be found in the contrasts between Solomon and his father, David.

- **David** is credited with 73 of the Psalms – almost half of them. Of **Solomon's** 1005 songs, only 1 (or at the most 2) of them are “published” in the Book of Psalms.
- **Solomon's** wisdom was, to one degree or another, wisdom that dealt with somewhat secular matters. These are important matters- construction, botany, biology, government, justice – but we do not see his wisdom focused on the revealed Word of God, the Law of Moses. One would think that his wisdom could have provided great insight into the Law. Psalm 119 makes it clear that there is a great wealth of truth to be found here, but **Solomon** does not seem to have spent as much time here as he did elsewhere.
- **David** sought to know and to worship God; **Solomon** sought to know much about God's creation and what God established.
- **David** was a “man after God's own heart;” **Solomon** was after his own fleshly desires.

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- **David** was a servant, who was rejected (to some degree) by his brothers. He learned to serve God faithfully, in menial ways. **Solomon** seemed to have been born into royalty and position.
- **David** suffered much in his life; **Solomon** suffered little, if at all.
- **David** fought many battles; **Solomon** was a man of peace. He did not attempt to rid the land of the remaining Canaanites.
- It was **David** who became the standard by which all subsequent kings in Israel were measured; it was not **Solomon**, even though his kingdom was greater than that of **David** by external standards.

There was one crucial difference between David and Solomon. David had a heart for God.

There was one crucial difference between David and Solomon. David, though not perfect, had a heart for God. He became the standard by which all subsequent kings were measured. Solomon had a more intellectual relationship with God. He was more detached, more philosophical about his relationship with God. It was an “upper story faith,” rather than an intimate, daily, passionate relationship with God. As we have watched biblical scholars rise and fall, the two major causes have been sexual immorality and intellectualism – an infatuation with one’s own intellectual powers.

The Bible has words of wisdom for all of us, words that the life of Solomon illustrates:

1 CORINTHIANS 8:1 (ESV) *With regard to food sacrificed to idols, we know that “we all have knowledge.” Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.*

I fear that many of us (including me) are more “Solomonic” in our relationship with God than “Davidic.” It is wonderful for us to pursue truth (biblical or natural), but it is no substitute for simple childlike faith in God. Let us give serious thought to those things which caused both David and Solomon to fall.

Let us learn from their experiences so that we need not learn from our own.

HOW HIS PLAN SHAPES OUR PURPOSE

Let us turn from mere men and their failures to the impeccable Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Consider the fact that Israel’s two greatest kings fell; they fell far short of the standard God had set for the Messiah. If God’s promises to David – promises of an eternal kingdom through the offspring of David – are to be fulfilled, it will not be by mere men, no matter how great they may be. Israel wanted a king, and they got one, and then another, and another...The only king who will ever fulfill God’s promises and our hopes is God Himself. God fulfilled His promises to David in the person of Jesus Christ.

There are times when we feel so defeated in our circumstances, or that we messed up so badly that there is no hope of a positive outcome. It is in the midst of these difficulties that we can rely on God’s promises. Throughout His Story, we have seen God be faithful in the midst of unfaithfulness. God has been gracious in the midst of rejection. God wants to love you in a way that is truly life-changing regardless of what you have done or not done, good or bad. Be confident in what God wants to accomplish in your life through Jesus Christ. As a Christ-follower, you are part of the family of God. God is not going to give up on you, nor turn his back on you. God is going to complete that which He started in your life.