

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF SOLOMON: SOLOMON'S OTHER ACTIVITIES

SESSION #15: 1 Kings 9:10-28 & 2 Chronicles 8:1-18

TEXT:

1 Kings 9:10-28

v.10 At the end of twenty years, during which Solomon built these two buildings—the temple of the Lord and the royal palace—

v.11 King Solomon gave twenty towns in Galilee to Hiram king of Tyre, because Hiram had supplied him with all the cedar and pine and gold he wanted.

v.12 But when Hiram went from Tyre to see the towns that Solomon had given him, he was not pleased with them.

v.13 "What kind of towns are these you have given me, my brother?" he asked. And he called them the Land of Cabul, a name they have to this day.

v.14 Now Hiram had sent to the king 120 talents of gold.

v.15 Here is the account of the forced labor King Solomon conscripted to build the Lord's temple, his own palace, the supporting terraces, the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer.

v.16 (Pharaoh king of Egypt had attacked and captured Gezer. He had set it on fire. He killed its Canaanite inhabitants and then gave it as a wedding gift to his daughter, Solomon's wife.

v.17 And Solomon rebuilt Gezer.) He built up Lower Beth Horon,

v.18 Baalath, and Tadmor in the desert, within his land,

v.19 as well as all his store cities and the towns for his chariots and for his horses—whatever he desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon and throughout all the territory he ruled.

v.20 All the people left from the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites (these peoples were not Israelites),

v.21 that is, their descendants remaining in the land, whom the Israelites could not exterminate—these Solomon conscripted for his slave labor force, as it is to this day.

v.22 But Solomon did not make slaves of any of the Israelites; they were his fighting men, his government officials, his officers, his captains, and the commanders of his chariots and charioteers.

v.23 They were also the chief officials in charge of Solomon's projects—550 officials supervising the men who did the work.

v.24 After Pharaoh's daughter had come up from the City of David to the palace Solomon had built for her, he constructed the supporting terraces.

v.25 Three times a year Solomon sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings on the altar he had built for the Lord, burning incense before the Lord along with them, and so fulfilled the temple obligations.

v.26 King Solomon also built ships at Ezion Geber, which is near Elath in Edom, on the shore of the Red Sea.

v.27 And Hiram sent his men—sailors who knew the sea—to serve in the fleet with Solomon's men.

v.28 They sailed to Ophir and brought back 420 talents of gold, which they delivered to King Solomon.

2 Chronicles 8:1-18

v. 1 At the end of twenty years, during which Solomon built the temple of the Lord and his own palace,

v. 2 Solomon rebuilt the villages that Hiram had given him, and settled Israelites in them.

v. 3 Solomon then went to Hamath Zobah and captured it.

v. 4 He also built up Tadmor in the desert and all the store cities he had built in Hamath.

v. 5 He rebuilt Upper Beth Horon and Lower Beth Horon as fortified cities, with walls and with gates and bars,

v. 6 as well as Baalath and all his store cities, and all the cities for his chariots and for his horses—whatever he desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon and throughout all the territory he ruled.

v. 7 All the people left from the Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites (these peoples were not Israelites),

v. 8 that is, their descendants remaining in the land, whom the Israelites had not destroyed—these Solomon conscripted for his slave labor force, as it is to this day.

v. 9 But Solomon did not make slaves of the Israelites for his work; they were his fighting men, commanders of his captains, and commanders of his chariots and charioteers.

v.10 They were also King Solomon's chief officials—two hundred and fifty officials supervising the men.

v.11 Solomon brought Pharaoh's daughter up from the City of David to the palace he had built for her, for he said, "My wife must not live in the palace of David king of Israel, because the places the ark of the Lord has entered are holy."

v.12 On the altar of the Lord that he had built in front of the portico, Solomon sacrificed burnt offerings to the Lord,

v.13 according to the daily requirement for offerings commanded by Moses for Sabbaths, New Moons and the three annual feasts—the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles.

v.14 In keeping with the ordinance of his father David, he appointed the divisions of the priests for their duties, and the Levites to lead the praise and to assist the priests according to each day's requirement. He also appointed the gatekeepers by divisions for the various gates, because this was what David the man of God had ordered.

v.15 They did not deviate from the king's commands to the priests or to the Levites in any matter, including that of the treasuries.

v.16 All Solomon's work was carried out, from the day the foundation of the temple of the Lord was laid until its completion. So the temple of the Lord was finished.

v.17 Then Solomon went to Ezion Geber and Elath on the coast of Edom.

v.18 And Hiram sent him ships commanded by his own officers, men who knew the sea. These, with Solomon's men, sailed to Ophir and brought back four hundred and fifty talents of gold, which they delivered to King Solomon.

INTRODUCTION:

TOMORROW BY SKINNY ROWLAND

Your future waits on tomorrow, not in today nor yesterday,
so use all your past and present, to mold each coming day,
learn from past mistakes, as you bring new plans into play,
you can plan ahead tomorrow, for what you'll be someday.

Today you shape that mold, with which your future's cast,
Your future waits each day ahead, and only memories last,
so take each day for what it is, don't push it ahead too fast,
for each new day is what links, your future with your past.

So live today for what it is, forget what it might have been,
and if you've stumbled once or twice, get up and try again,
do not be a quitter, if life's dealt a hard blow to your chin,
just get up and grit your teeth, and fight once more to win.

You are what you've made of you, none other is the same,
no one else can take the credit, and can't be held to blame,
so if there is some reason now, you feel regret and shame,
look ahead to tomorrow, and change what you've become.

**THAT FELLER, PAPA, AN ME
BY KENNETH WYATT**

"That Feller knowed his stuff!"
Said Papa talkin' there to me
An' answering back I said, "Yeah,"
'Cause with Papa it's easy to agree.

"That Feller really was a King!"
Said Papa layin' the Bible down.
An' I sorta' caught a glimpse of
Jesus in a crown.

"That Feller was born for man,"
Said Papa kinda' deep in thought.
An' I 'membered the wise men
An' the Baby that they sought.

"That Feller, He helped the poor,"
Said Papa fulla' gratitude.
An' I jes' nodded, "Yes," 'cause
Words might mess the mood.

"That Feller healed the lame!"
Said Papa with a flare
An' I thought of Freddy's
Limpy leg and said a little prayer.

"That Feller loved the children,"
Said Papa lookin' right at me.
An' I knew that Papa did too . . .
Shoot, that was plain to see.

"That Feller was a happy Man,"
Said Papa startin' in to smile.
An' I jes' grinned a grin to
Show 'im that I had style.

"That Feller, He had troubles too."
Said Papa quickly addin' more.
An' I had to squinch my eyes to
Keep back a tear or four.

"That Feller was the Son of God!"
 Said Papa in a positive way.
 An' I felt love a wellin' up. . .
 The kind you can't find words to say.

"That Feller is my kinda' Man,"
 Was Papa's reflective view.
 An' I found right then . . . that
 Papa's views were my views too.

(Credibility by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner)

"I know who I was, who I am, and where I want to be," says Dan Kaplan, president of Hertz Equipment Rental Corporation. "So in other words, I know the level of commitment that I am prepared to make and why I am prepared to make that level of commitment personally. I know what it takes to achieve success for me. That success for me comes from paying a big price, putting a lot of work and a lot of sacrifice behind it."
 p. 58

Roddick, like Walton, has an extraordinary strong will to succeed and an intense desire to be different. She writes:

The principal forces which motivate a leader are an incredibly high need for personal achievement and a different vision of the world. . . . You don't really have to be charismatic, you just have to believe in what you are doing so strongly that it becomes a reality.

A fundamental shortcoming in much of business today is that the leadership lacks vision and passion—the two most important ingredients to inspire and motivate.

p. 223

As the scene of our study opens today in the life of King Solomon, he has about sixteen years left of life here on earth. How is Solomon going to invest his time? What are his priorities? What are his goals and objectives?

It will be obvious from this study that he has gotten himself caught up in building, bigness and grandeur. Money and materialism have hooked our hero.

Solomon is fast becoming the Donald Trump of his generation.

Somebody asked a wealthy man how much money is enough and he said, "Just a little bit more."

(Something to Smile About by Zig Ziglar)

To people who want to be rich and famous, I'd say... "Get rich first and see if that doesn't cover it." (Bill Murray)

p. 12

A man was praying, "Lord, is it true that to You a minute is like a thousand years and a penny is like a thousand dollars?" The Lord answered, "Yes." Then the man asked, "Then can I have a penny?" the Lord replied, "In a minute."

p. 60

(Simple Truths by Kent Nerburn)

If you build up possessions just as the logical outcome of pursuing your desires, you will lose your wings to fly.

p. 44

The temptation to want to acquire more and more is very subtle and very real.

1 Timothy 6:9, 10

But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.

(Prayer—The Great Adventure by David Jeremiah)

Ever heard the story about the minister who parked his car in a no-parking zone in a large city? He was short on time and couldn't find an open space with a meter, so he put a note under his windshield wiper that said, "I have circled the block ten times. If I don't park here, I'll miss my appointment. 'Forgive us our trespasses.'"

When he returned he found a citation from a police officer along with this note: "I've circled this block for ten years. If I don't give you a ticket, I'll lose my job. 'Lead us not into temptation.'"
p. 153

Solomon is facing another problem, too, he is a little over half way through his life's journey.

This is a time, according to Bob Buford, that a person should begin to think about switching over from the pursuit of success to the pursuit of significance.

(Game Plan: Winning Strategies for the Second Half of Your Life by Bob Buford)

As Russell Baker put it on the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Pulitzer Prize, “There is a hunger in us for more than the money standard—for assurance that our lives have not been merely successful, but valuable—that we have accomplished something grander than just another well-heeled, loudly publicized journey from the diaper to the shroud. In short, that our lives have been consequential.”
p. 88

Listen to the Apostle Paul as he counsels his young understudy, Timothy, in:

1 Timothy 6:6-8

But godliness actually is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.

Philippians 4:11-13

Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Psalms 37:4

Delight yourself in the Lord
and he will give you the desires of your heart.

(From *The Challenge* by Robert D. Foster, November 15, 1996)

Basic course #101 in the enjoyment of life. Paul goes on to share: "I'm just as happy with little as with much, with much as with little. I've found the recipe for being happy whether full or hungry, hands full or hands empty." How did this first century prisoner in a Roman jail pull that off? If Paul was living today, here is how he would challenge us:

Contentment is not an economic quality but a spiritual attainment.

Contentment is not a state of account but a state of heart.

Contentment is found in making the most of the least.

Contentment does not depend on what you have or where you are but who you are.

Contentment . . . In a cemetery in England stands a grave marker: "She died for want of things." Alongside the marker of that frustrated wife stands her husband's stone: "I died trying to give them to her."

Contentment . . . "Since we cannot get what we like, let's like what we can get." Spanish Proverb

Contentment is realizing that God has already given me everything I need for my present happiness.

Contentment is understanding that if I am not satisfied with what I have, I will never be satisfied with what I want.

Contentment is knowing that the more I release early possessions, the more I can grasp eternal treasures.

"Contentment is the power of getting out of any situation all there is in it." G. K. Chesterton.

"It is a great blessing to possess what one wishes," said an ancient philosopher, but he added, "It is greater still NOT to desire what one does not possess."

(The Roots of Inner Peace: Finding Fresh Courage and Strength in the Face of Fear and Worry by Don Hawkins)

What Paul describes in Philippians is a secret of vastly greater significance—and a far more trustworthy one. It's the secret of inner peace; and it's ours when we learn to replace distracting anxiety with focused prayer, to concentrate our minds and thoughts on things consistent with God's character, and to trust Him for strength and provision for every need.

I hope you've been initiated into this secret.

p. 92

(Prayer—The Great Adventure by David Jeremiah)

EXAMINING THE DISCIPLINE OF OUR LIVES

Basically, what are our needs? Something to put on, something to put in, something to put over. God says He'll take care of that for us if we trust Him. And He wants us to ask Him for these things every day.

p. 124

Let us dig into the text now and witness the on-going saga of our hero, King Solomon (1 Kings 9:10-28).

v.10 At the end of twenty years, during which Solomon built these two buildings—the temple of the Lord and the royal palace—

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

[We are] Near the mid-point of Solomon's reign (after **20** of his 40 **years**), after he had finished building **the temple** (7 years, 6:38) and his **palace** complex (13 years, 7:1). . .
p. 505

It is good for us to remember that neither one of these projects began in his first year, but rather the fourth year of his reign as king.

1 Kings 6:1

In the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the temple of the Lord.

What I am saying is that when you put all these figures together we are actually at year twenty-four of his forty-year-reign at this point.

Solomon has really gotten the "building bug." He could well have formed his own large construction company at this point.

These two big projects have really given him a lot of personal satisfaction.

(1001 Humorous Illustrations for Public Speaking by Michael Hodgin)

All Is Well

Charlie Brown tells Lucy about his birdhouse project: "Well, I'm a lousy carpenter. I can't nail straight. I can't saw straight, and I always split the wood. I'm nervous, I lack confidence, I'm stupid, I have poor taste and absolutely no sense of design." And then in the last frame he concludes, "So, all things considered, it's coming along okay." ("Peanuts")
pp. 319-20

v.11 King Solomon gave twenty towns in Galilee to Hiram king of Tyre, because Hiram had supplied him with all the cedar and pine and gold he wanted.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Solomon gave 20 villages in Galilee to his old friend King Hiram . . . of Tyre.
p. 505

King Hiram, as you will remember, when Solomon was involved in the building project, made provision for much of the timber that was used in these building projects in exchange for wheat, barley, wine, and olive oil.

Patrick & Lowth say:

They were near or adjoining to the country of Galilee (as the particle *beth* frequently signifies), but were no part of the land of Canaan, when it was divided among the Israelites: for that could not be alienated, being God's heritage. They were therefore cities out of the territories of Israel, as appears from Josh. ix. 27, but had been conquered partly by Pharaoh, who gave them to Solomon, as part of his daughter's portion; and partly by Solomon himself, who had power to dispose of them; especially since at that time they were not inhabited by the Israelites . . .
p. 326

v.12 But when Hiram went from Tyre to see the towns that Solomon had given him, he was not pleased with them.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

. . . **he was** disappointed; they were . . . located near unproductive land.
p. 505

What do you give to a man who has everything? Perhaps Hiram is having the experience of many who buy real estate from brochures and then when they go see what they have purchased, they are aware that have been done in by the deal.

There are TWO POSSIBILITIES as to why these villages did not satisfy King Hiram:

1. Perhaps they were villages in rocky and arid regions that had no potential for productivity. That would be like giving someone twenty towns between El Paso and Abilene.
2. Perhaps these villages did have great potential for farming, but Hiram was more into logging and navigation. This would be verified in Hiram's interest in the wheat, barley, olive oil, and the wine that have been imported from Solomon to his kingdom.

v.13 "What kind of towns are these you have given me, my brother?" he asked. And he called them the Land of Cabul, a name they have to this day.

Gaebelein says:

The transaction with Hiram is interesting. Besides furnishing Solomon with timber he also gave him gold; this amounted to 120 talents of gold (3½ million dollars). Solomon gave to Hiram twenty cities in Galilee. When he came to look at them, he was displeased with them and called them Cabul, which probably means "as nothing." These cities may have been given to King Hiram for the gold Solomon had received from him. The cities were later restored to Solomon by Hiram, most likely after Solomon had paid back the gold Hiram had furnished.

p. 268

Patrick & Lowth say:

These are not words of contempt; for it is not likely that Solomon, who had been highly obliged to Hiram (and was in his own temper very generous), would give him that which was of little value. But his meaning is, these cities were not such as would serve his purpose; which made him return them to Solomon again (2 Chron. viii. 2), who, no doubt, made him some other recompense, which gave him better satisfaction. Abarbinel thinks, that Solomon having agreed to give Hiram so many measures of wheat and oil, as are mentioned, v. 11, with which he had supplied him every year; now that this work was ended, gave him this country, out of which he might raise this provision for his household himself. Which Hiram did not like, because his people were addicted to merchandise, not to agriculture; but did not upon this account break off friendship with Solomon, as appears by the following history.

p. 326

McNeely says:

Again the king of Tyre, Hiram, appears in the account. He had furnished building materials as well as skilled laborers for Solomon. In this passage it appears that Hiram was paid by being given twenty cities in Galilee. It should be noted, however, that these cities were not payment for services rendered. Solomon paid Hiram for materials and men with wheat and oil (cf. 5:11). In fact, he sold the cities to Hiram for 120 talents of gold. Solomon wanted gold. The cities were probably small villages, and to Hiram were not particularly desirable. Solomon and Hiram may have struck a bargain, and the result of the bargain was the payment to Solomon.
p. 53

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown point out:

Hiram having refused these cities, probably on account of their inland situation making them unsuitable to his maritime and commercial people, Solomon satisfied his ally in some other way; and taking these cities into his own hands, he first repaired their shattered walls, then filled them with a colony of Hebrews (II Chron. 8:2).
p. 256

Lange says:

Probably Hiram had at first agreed to the proposition; but upon a closer inspection he was not pleased with these towns, though he had to abide by his agreement. This is the only explanation of the fact that no answer from Solomon to the question in ver. 13 is recorded. As we may conclude, from the account of their joint enterprise in ver. 26 *sq.*, that the friendly relations of the two kings continued, it is probable that Solomon satisfied him in some other way.
p. 111

Matthew Henry says:

The country was truly valuable, and so were the cities in it, but not agreeable to Hiram's genius. The Tyrians were merchants, trading men, that lived in fine houses and became rich by navigation, but knew not how to value a country that was fit for corn and pasture.
p. 375

Keil and Delitzsch observe:

The twenty cities in *Galil*, which Solomon gave to Hiram, certainly belonged therefore to the cities of the Canaanites mentioned in 2 Sam. xxiv. 7; that is to say, they were cities occupied chiefly by a heathen population, and in all probability they were in a very bad condition. Consequently they did not please Hiram, and he gave to the district the contemptuous name of the land of *Cabul*.
p. 141

Keil and Delitzsch say further:

The "land of Cabul" would therefore mean the pawned land; and in the mouths of the people this would be twisted into "good for nothing."
p. 142

DeVries

. . . "like nothing," is a pun strongly suggested by Hiram's derogatory query of v 13a.
p. 132

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

"Cabul" means good for nothing.
p. 506 (paraphrased)

v.14 Now Hiram had sent to the king 120 talents of gold.

According to The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

This would equal about 9,000 pounds of gold.
p. 505 (paraphrased)

McNeely says:

The price of 120 talents is meaningless to most present-day people. There were two different measurements for a talent. The Babylonian talent was the equivalent of 130 pounds. The Jewish talent, which came later, weighed about 66 pounds. In contemporary terms, Hiram paid Solomon either \$35 million (Babylonian scale) or \$19 million (Jewish scale) for the twenty cities. Payment was in the king of metals—gold.
p. 53

Keil & Delitzsch say:

This is no doubt to be regarded as a loan, which Solomon obtained from Hiram to enable him to complete his buildings.
p. 142

David and the children of Israel certainly opened their hearts with great benevolence and generosity in providing what was necessary for these buildings. I would imagine that Solomon, in his great love for luxury, probably had several cost overruns on these projects that he has gotten himself involved in.

v.15 Here is the account of the forced labor King Solomon conscripted to build the Lord's temple, his own palace, the supporting terraces, the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer.

The writer OUTLINES SEVEN PROJECTS in this verse. Two of which we are already familiar with:

1. "THE LORD'S TEMPLE" and
2. "HIS OWN PALACE."

The writer then mentions:

3. "THE SUPPORTING TERRACES,"
4. "THE WALL OF JERUSALEM,"
5. "HAZOR,"
6. "MEGIDDO," and
7. "GEZER."

I have worked my life through this entire passage and have come up with SIXTEEN BUILDING PROJECTS that are mentioned in these verses. It might be good for us to back off for a minute and take a look at these projects so we can see the magnitude of Solomon's construction program.

The SIXTEEN BUILDING PROJECTS I have come up with are:

1. "the temple of the Lord,"
2. "the royal palace,"
3. "THE SUPPORTING TERRACES,"
4. "THE WALL OF JERUSALEM,"
5. "HAZOR,"
6. "MEGIDDO,"
7. "GEZER,"
8. "LOWER BETH HORON,"
9. "BAALATH,"
10. "TADMOR IN THE DESERT,"
11. "ALL HIS STORE CITIES," — "HAMATH"
12. "THE TOWNS FOR HIS CHARIOTS,"
13. "THE TOWNS FOR HIS HORSES,"
14. ship building "AT EZION GEBER,"
15. villages "IN LEBANON," and
16. "UPPER BETH HORON."

McNeely explains:

The extension of fortifications for Jerusalem was necessitated by the completed Temple and palace which were to the north of the old City of David. The three fortress cities, Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer were each strategically important. Hazor protected the northern routes into Galilee. Megiddo protected the fertile valley of Jezreel, and Gezer guarded the southern routes into the heartland of Solomon's kingdom.
p. 54

DeVries says:

Solomonic defense-works in Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer, particularly the characteristic triple gateway, are known from archeological excavations. Each of these was an ancient Canaanite town from the Bronze Age, and had always been important in defense strategy. Hazor lay in the far north, near the Sea of Galilee. Megiddo guarded the Carmel pass from the valley of Jezreel. Gezer lay between the Shephelah and the coastal plain due west from Jerusalem. Thus each city was located on Israel's borders; so also Beth-Horon the Lower at the edge of the Benjaminite hill-country, guarding the strategic road to Jerusalem, Baalat southeast of Beersheba, and Tamar in the extreme southern Negeb.
p. 132

The Bible Knowledge Commentary helps us in giving us some definition to "THE SUPPORTING TERRACES":

. . . (probably large level areas between hills made by filling [the] land), and **the wall of Jerusalem** which he extended farther to the north, more than doubling the size of the city. His wall surrounded the temple and probably the palace which were built to the north of the old City of David . . . **Hazor, Meggido, and Gezer** were fortress cities. Hazor, north of the Sea of Kinnereth, guarded the northern part of the kingdom. Meggido protected the Valley of Jezreel that stretched from west to east in the central sector of Israel. And Gezer served as a site of defense in western Judah where it discouraged potential southern and western aggressors from attacking Israel.
p. 506

v.16 (Pharaoh king of Egypt had attacked and captured Gezer. He had set it on fire. He killed its Canaanite inhabitants and then gave it as a wedding gift to his daughter, Solomon's wife.

v.17 And Solomon rebuilt Gezer.) He built up Lower Beth Horon,

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Lower Beth Horon (as well as Upper Beth Horon) and Gezer were important defense towns for protection against attacks from Israel's southwest.
p. 506

As you read about these projects and this work, you can see where Solomon's heart was and it is his number one priority.

(The Roots of Inner Peace: Finding Fresh Courage and Strength in the Face of Fear and Worry by Don Hawkins)

There are many distractions, however, that can keep us from making Jesus the sole Master of life. A survey by *Industry Week* indicated that 73 percent of business leaders and managers worried about their own health and fitness; 49 percent were concerned about a lack of time for family or leisure pursuits; 43 percent were concerned about their children's problems, and an equal number about job-related stress. Finishing fifth at 39 percent was concern over the stability and security of personal investments. Concerns about estate planning, relationships with children, aging, income level, and marriages rounded out the top ten.
p. 73

v.18 Baalath, and Tadmor in the desert, within his land,

The Bible Knowledge Commentary helps us here by pointing out that:

Baalath stood near Gezer. **Tadmor** (later named Palmyra) was located on a caravan route between Damascus and the Euphrates River to Israel's northeast.
p. 506

v.19 as well as all his store cities and the towns for his chariots and for his horses—whatever he desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon and throughout all the territory he ruled.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Solomon's **store cities**, scattered throughout Israel, were fortified towns in which surplus food was stockpiled. . . . **towns** . . . [for] **his chariots and horses** were ready to defend Israel against any invader.
p. 506

In these verses you have the LISTING of THIRTEEN PROJECTS:

1. "the Lord's temple,"
2. "his own palace,"
3. "the supporting terraces,"
4. "the wall of Jerusalem,"
5. "Hazor,"
6. "Megiddo,"
7. "Gezer,"
8. "Lower Beth Horon,"
9. "Baalath,"
10. "Tadmor in the desert,"
11. "ALL HIS STORE CITIES,"
12. "THE TOWNS FOR HIS CHARIOTS," and
13. "[THE TOWNS] FOR HIS HORSES."

This is all SUMMARIZED by a phrase:

"WHATEVER HE DESIRED TO BUILD."

Solomon had the resources so he just moved ahead in doing whatever he wanted to do:

"IN JERUSALEM, IN LEBANON AND THROUGHOUT ALL THE TERRITORY THAT HE RULED."

(The Seeking Heart: Volume 4: The Library of Spiritual Classics by Fenelon)

The important question is not "Do I enjoy being a Christian?" but rather, "Do I want what God wants?" Confess your faults. Do not be too attached to things of this world. Trust God. Love Him more than yourself. Love His glory more than your life. If you do not want these things, ask to want them. God will come to you with His love, and put His peace in your heart.
p. 182

v.20 All the people left from the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites (these peoples were not Israelites),

v.21 that is, their descendants remaining in the land, whom the Israelites could not exterminate—these Solomon conscripted for his slave labor force, as it is to this day.

"ALL OF [these] PEOPLE" who should have been driven out by the tribes of Israel when they occupied the territory in Joshua's time are now being used by Solomon as a labor resource for all of these projects that have been outlined in these verses.

v.22 But Solomon did not make slaves of any of the Israelites; they were his fighting men, his government officials, his officers, his captains, and the commanders of his chariots and charioteers.

v.23 They were also the chief officials in charge of Solomon's projects—550 officials supervising the men who did the work.

In these two verses you have SEVEN LEVELS OF INVOLVEMENT on the part of the Israelites themselves in the administration:

1. "HIS FIGHTING MEN,"
2. "HIS GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS,"
3. HIS OFFICERS,"
4. "HIS CAPTAINS,"
5. "THE COMMANDERS OF HIS CHARIOTS,"
6. "CHARIOTEERS," and
7. "THE CHIEF OFFICIALS IN CHARGE OF SOLOMON'S PROJECTS."

Solomon has done a great job in organizing his administration. I am sure it thrilled him at times as he recognized the magnitude of his responsibilities.

(The Aladdin Factor by Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen)

When Christian Herter was governor of Massachusetts, he was running hard for a second term in office. One day, after a busy morning chasing votes (and no lunch) he arrived at a church barbecue. It was late afternoon and Herter was famished.

As Herter moved down the serving line, he held out his plate to the woman serving chicken. She put a piece on his plate and turned to the next person in line.

"Excuse me," Governor Herter said, "do you mind if I have another piece of chicken?"

"Sorry," the woman told him. "I'm supposed to give one piece of chicken to each person."

"But I'm starved," the governor said.

"Sorry," the woman said again. "One to a customer."

Governor Herter was a modest and unassuming man, but he decided that this time he would throw a little weight around.

"Do you know what I am?" he said. "I am the governor of this state."

"Do you know who *I* am?" the woman said, "I'm the lady in charge of the chicken. Move along, mister."¹⁷

¹⁷From *The Best of Bits and Pieces*. (Fairfield, New Jersey: Economics Press, 1994.) pp. 161-2

McNeely helps us get an overview in these final verses:

Not offering a strict chronology, the writer mentions four additional items that reinforce the theme of this section, consolidation of the empire. First, Solomon's work force was supervised by 550 Israelites. The king's wisdom is once more apparent; he recognized that the Israelites would show more concern over the quality of work than the dispossessed Canaanites.

Second, the writer noted that the Millo was built after the pharaoh's daughter came to her palace in Jerusalem. The significance of the reference is related again to the work to which the slave force had been commissioned.

Third, Solomon's devotion to God was cited. Three times in the same year Solomon offered sacrifices. These three times were probably the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles.

And last, Solomon's merchant fleet was mentioned. Little detail was given. The port city was near the present Israeli port Elath. The Phoenician sailors Hiram furnished to Solomon were the finest seamen of their time. The fleet brought King Solomon 420 talents of gold—an awesome amount. pp. 54-55

v.24 After Pharaoh's daughter had come up from the City of David to the palace Solomon had built for her, he constructed the supporting terraces.

Obviously this involved landscaping and the moving of a great amount of dirt to fill in these areas to create what Solomon wanted to create around these new buildings. Solomon mentions in:

Ecclesiastes 2:4-6

I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees.

v.25 Three times a year Solomon sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings on the altar he had built for the Lord, burning incense before the Lord along with them, and so fulfilled the temple obligations.

Patrick & Lowth say:

The meaning is not, that he offered sacrifices no oftener; but that he never failed to keep the three solemn festivals which God commanded to be observed by every body, when he offered sacrifices suitable to those great mercies which were then commemorated; and to the great blessings God had bestowed upon his family.

p. 328

The QUESTION I have in my mind at this point and perhaps it is not legitimate:

Just how important a priority were these "OBLIGATIONS" to Solomon? And what about relationship?

Solomon seems to be so caught up in the here and now and all of these projects that he has forgotten the personal relationship that he should have with God. His father was characterized as a man after God's own heart.

It is one thing to fulfill religious obligations and it is another thing to develop an ever deeper relationship with God.

It reminds me of Eugene H. Peterson's description of the rich young ruler when the Lord was dealing with him about how important his money was.

(Inspiring Quotations compiled by Albert M. Wells, Jr.)

He'd gotten the message early that religion's good for health and business: keep the rules, avoid loose girls, righteousness has happy rewards, Moses is a good investment.

It hadn't taken long to show a profit, living proof that piety pays: his heart was sound, the family farm blessed, two kids in Little League, a wife who knew her place.

Confident of his claim on the heavenly bonanza, he put it all on display for Jesus.

The dismissing phrase, "you lack one thing," was disappointing, considering the source.

He'd have to find a better rabbi, one who understood and appreciated the finer things of life.

—Eugene H. Peterson

p.129

Mark 10:21-25

And Jesus having looked at him loved him and said to him, "One thing you are lacking: go and sell whatever you are having and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven, and come, follow Me." But at these words his face became gloomy, and he went away grieving, for he was one having much property. And Jesus, having looked around is saying to His disciples, "How hard it will be for those who are having wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" And the disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus answered again and is saying to them, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

(Inspiring Quotations compiled by Albert M. Wells, Jr.)

Even fanaticism is to be preferred to indifference. I had sooner risk the dangers of a tornado of religious excitement than to see the air grow stagnant with a dead formality.

—Charles H. Spurgeon

p. 10

(The Christian in Complete Armour by William Gurnall)

Does your heart still receive the same generous portions of spiritual nourishment when you go to commune with God? This communion should strengthen both your faith and your obedience. Or do you listen and pray, but no longer find strength to keep a promise or power to win over temptation? How you dishonor the Lord when you come down from the mount of communion and break the tables of His law as soon as you are off the place! To find no renewed faith and no renewed strength in your communion with Him is a sure sign of spiritual decline.

How easy it is to let the responsibilities of job and family leave us in a less spiritual frame of mind than we once possessed. If we let them, the cares of this world will follow us into our prayer closets and cleave to our spirits, giving a stale, earthly odor to our prayers and meditations.
(May 10)

(The Seeking Heart: Volume 4: The Library of Spiritual Classics by Fenelon)

I also warn you not to let your business distract you from your spiritual life. If you allow yourself to be constantly distracted, your heart will grow hard.
p. 18

(God's Little Devotional Book on Prayer by Honor Books, Inc.)

A house party once was held in an English manor. As was customary, the after-dinner entertainment featured recitations and songs from the guests. A famous actor was present, and when it came his turn to perform, he recited the Twenty-third Psalm. His rendition of the familiar psalm was magnificent and received with much applause.

Later in the evening, the hostess noticed her little old great-aunt dozing the corner of the room. She was almost completely deaf and had missed most of the evening's entertainment. Still, the other guests urged her to recite something. Since most people of that era knew many poems by memory, the hostess felt sure she would recite a poem. To everyone's surprise, she stood up, her voice quivering, and recited the Twenty-third Psalm! When she finished there were tears in most eyes, including those of the famous actor. One of the guests later approached the actor and said, "You recited that psalm absolutely superbly. It was incomparable. So why were we so moved by that funny, little old lady?"

He replied, "I know the psalm. She knows the Shepherd."

Prayer is our foremost way of getting better acquainted with Him.
p. 55

I sense that Solomon, instead of drawing closer and growing stronger, is drifting away and growing weaker in his spiritual commitment.

v.26 King Solomon also built ships at Ezion Geber, which is near Elath in Edom, on the shore of the Red Sea.

Lange observes:

A wise government seeks not only to preserve existing prosperity, but also to discover new sources thereof.—Many there are who travel over land and sea to seek gold, and to become rich, and forget that the Lord hath said: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich (Rev. iii. 18). Expeditions into far countries must serve not only to obtain gold and treasure, but also to carry thither the treasure which neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal (Matth. vi. 19 *sq.*)—Commerce may become a rich blessing for a nation, but a greedy thirst for gold often leads to extreme luxury and neglect of God, as is many times exemplified in the history of Israel.
p. 115

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Archeologists have discovered the remains of **Ezion Geber** at the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba. This site, on the east arm of **the Red Sea**, gave Israel access to the east and south by water.
p. 507

v.27 And Hiram sent his men—sailors who knew the sea—to serve in the fleet with Solomon's men.

Once again, Hiram is involved with Solomon. Obviously the gift of the no-good cities had not affected their friendship and diplomatic relationship.

v.28 They sailed to Ophir and brought back 420 talents of gold, which they delivered to King Solomon.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Ophir was probably in southwestern Arabia . . . **gold** . . . helped finance and decorate Solomon's vast building projects.
p. 507

"420 TALENTS" would be 16 tons or 32,000 pounds "OF GOLD."

Patrick & Lowth observe the fact that the mention of "420 TALENTS" here conflicts with the Chronicles passage of "four hundred and fifty talents":

Fetches from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents,] It is said in 2 Chron. viii. 18, that they brought four hundred and fifty: but we may well suppose that thirty talents might be spent in the charges of the voyage to and fro; so that only four hundred and twenty came to Solomon's coffers. Or rather, as Abarbanel thinks, Solomon gave the servants of Hiram, who managed the ships, thirty talents for a gratuity.
p. 329

Lockyer points out:

Solomon was the first man to see the commercial possibility of Arabia and to realize the fabulous riches that lay waiting for any man who would organize the trade of the early world. Thus he built the first great trading fleet which ventured to the mysterious confines of Ophir — some say India.

p. 113

Keil & Delitzsch say:

The destination of the fleet was *Ophir*, whence the ships brought 420 or (according to the Chronicles) 450 talents of gold. The difference between 420 and 450 may be accounted for from the substitution of the numeral letter (50) for (20). The sum mentioned amounted to eleven or twelve million dollars . . .

p. 149

J. Vernon McGee says:

Solomon just about cornered the gold market in that day. He also had quite a navy. Ezion-geber was situated on the eastern arm of the Red Sea. This was Solomon's seaport. It was situated near Israeli Eilat. It is thought that his navy extended its navigation as far away as Ophir in southwestern Arabia.

p. 267

Let us turn our attention to the Chronicles' account and pick up a few things that we were not able to get from the King's record.

2 Chronicles 8:1-18

v. 1 At the end of twenty years, during which Solomon built the temple of the Lord and his own palace,

We have already noted that we are at the TWENTY-FOURTH YEAR in Solomon's reign and there are sixteen years remaining. During twenty of those years he spent seven of them building the temple of the Lord and thirteen building his own palace.

Joseph Stowell makes an interesting observation that will set the stage for these remaining verses of our study:

(Perilous Pursuits by Joseph M. Stowell)

If we are obsessed with exalting our own significance, we are unable to exalt His significance. The two are mutually exclusive endeavors. You can't have it both ways. Paul said in the next verse, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." If our formula is "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." If our formula is "For me to live is personal gain and to die is Christ," then we forfeit the essential element of what it means to glorify Christ and His Kingdom.

p. 26

v. 2 Solomon rebuilt the villages that Hiram had given him, and settled Israelites in them.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

. . . these towns, 20 in all, had originally been given by Solomon to Hiram but Hiram was displeased with them. The chronicler was possibly referring to the return of these rejected towns to Solomon who then restored them.
p. 626

v. 3 Solomon then went to Hamath Zobah and captured it.

This location is NOT MENTIONED in the King's passage.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

. . . **Solomon** began his conquest of foreign states, commencing with the Aramean city of **Hamath Zobah**, almost 300 miles north of Jerusalem.
p. 626

J. Vernon McGee mentions:

This is the only war that is recorded during the reign of Solomon, and it doesn't seem to be very significant at all.
p. 423

v. 4 He also built up Tadmor in the desert and all the store cities he had built in Hamath.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Tadmor . . . [was] a **desert** oasis trading center on the main highway from Mesopotamia, about 150 miles northeast of Damascus.
p. 626

Selman in his commentary agrees with that in saying:

Tadmor (Ass. Tadmār), is about 125 miles north-east of Damascus, and later become the important caravan city of Palmyra. Solomonic influence in Tadmor is consistent with that in Hamath, since as key places on major trade routes both would be appropriate to Solomon's known interests (*cf.* ch. 9).
p. 346

Dillard points out:

By pairing Hamath and Tadmor the Chronicler shows Solomon's sovereignty over all major arteries for trade with Mesopotamia: the main overland route (Hamath) and the desert shortcut (Tadmor) are in his control. Domination of these cities on the trade routes to the north was fundamental to Solomon's commercial endeavors and wealth.
p. 64

v. 5 He rebuilt Upper Beth Horon and Lower Beth Horon as fortified cities,
with walls and with gates and bars,

We have had mention of "LOWER BETH HORON" in the King's passage but not the "UPPER BETH HORON."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Beth Horon was about 10 miles northwest of Jerusalem on the border between Judah and the Northern tribes . . .
p. 626

v. 6 as well as Baalath and all his store cities, and all the cities for his chariots and for his horses—whatever he desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon and throughout all the territory he ruled.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Baalath was in the territory of Dan (Josh. 19:44). The other unnamed cities probably include Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer (cf. 1 Kings 9:15).
p. 626

Once again we run into that little phrase:

"WHATEVER HE DESIRED TO BUILD."

That reminded me of:

Ecclesiastes 2:10

I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor.

Phillip Keller makes this observation late in his life:

(Strength of Soul: The Sacred Use of Time by W. Phillip Keller)

Looking back in retrospect I now see clearly that my own fast pace of life; my haste in the heat of getting things done; my drive to “go, go, go” or “do, do, do” had combined to turn me into a hard person. Hard on myself, hard on others, hard for God my Father to handle.
pp. 20-21

(The Seeking Heart: Volume 4: The Library of Spiritual Classics by Fenelon)

Listen to God, live in His presence, and avoid things that draw you away from Him. Find Him within you, and pour out your heart to Him. Love Him above everything. Submit your plans to His will. Find out what He wants for you and then do it quickly. Small things become great when they are done as God wills.
p. 74

v. 7 All the people left from the Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites (these peoples were not Israelites),

v. 8 that is, their descendants remaining in the land, whom the Israelites had not destroyed—these Solomon conscripted for his slave labor force, as it is to this day.

We have already considered those matters in the previous passage.

v. 9 But Solomon did not make slaves of the Israelites for his work; they were his fighting men, commanders of his captains, and commanders of his chariots and charioteers.

This takes us back to:

1 Kings 9:22

But Solomon did not makes slaves of any of the Israelites; they were his fighting men, his government officials, his officers, his captains, and the commanders of his chariots and charioteers.

v.10 They were also King Solomon's chief officials—two hundred and fifty officials supervising the men.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary explains the difference between the 550 officials in the King's passage and the 250 officials here:

The **250** supervisors were only Israelites whereas the 550 officials in 1 Kings 9:23 probably included Canaanite foremen as well. In addition to the 250 Solomon had 3,600 other foremen (2 Chron. 2:18), a total of 3,850 (which equals 3,300, 1 Kings 5:61, plus 550, 1 Kings 9:23). [equals the same].
p. 626

v.11 Solomon brought Pharaoh's daughter up from the City of David to the palace he had built for her, for he said, "My wife must not live in the palace of David king of Israel, because the places the ark of the Lord has entered are holy."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

A final political achievement by **Solomon** was his relocation of his wife, the **daughter** of the Pharaoh of Egypt, **from** David's old **palace** on Mount Zion . . . **to** her new **palace** on the temple mount . . . The reason given is that she, an Egyptian, would profane David's palace which at one time had had such close connection with **the ark** of the covenant.
pp. 626-7

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown say:

On his marriage with the Egyptian princess at the beginning of his reign, he assigned her a temporary abode in the city of David, i.e., Jerusalem, until a suitable palace for his wife had been erected. While that palace was in progress, he himself lodged in the palace of David, but he did not allow her to occupy it, because he felt that she being a heathen proselyte, and having brought from her own country an establishment of heathen maidservants, there would have been an impropriety in her being domiciled in a mansion which was or had been hallowed by the reception of the ark. It seems she was received on her arrival into his mother's abode. . .

p. 316

Wiersbe says:

David was known for his battles, Solomon for his buildings. It was a time of peace, so the opportunities and resources for building were available.

It is disappointing that Solomon married a foreign woman who could not be identified with the Lord's throne. God wants each home to be a tabernacle (Isa. 4:5-6); He wants His children to enjoy His presence (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1). Apparently in this decision, Solomon was concerned more about politics than about piety.

Solomon was faithful in his public worship despite these inconsistencies in his life, and he continued to increase the wealth of the nation. But the people were not growing in the things of the Lord. Alexander Whyte wrote that "the secret worm . . . was gnawing all the time in the royal staff upon which Solomon leaned."

The most important part of your life is the part that only God sees. Are you concerned about character—or reputation?

p. 240

v.12 On the altar of the Lord that he had built in front of the portico,
Solomon sacrificed burnt offerings to the Lord,

The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out that there are **THREE THINGS** that the Chronicler wants to have emphasized as far as Solomon's religious life is concerned:

1. He fulfills the Mosaic sacrificial requirements,
 2. He maintains the priestly and Levitical **divisions**, and
 3. He began and completed **the temple**, his highest religious achievement.
- p. 627 (paraphrased)

Parker says:

Solomon was great in burnt offerings. Do not men sometimes make up in burnt offerings what they lack in moral consistency? Is not an ostentatious religion sometimes the best proof of internal decay. It ought not to be so. The hand and the heart should be one, the outward and the inward should correspond, the action should be the incarnation of the thought.

pp. 231-2

Parker says finally:

It is often easier to offer a burnt offering than to do some deed of moral heroism. It may be pleasanter to go to the altar in order to perform a religious ceremony, than to go up to an offended brother and fall down before him in token of broken-heartedness on account of wanton offence against his honour or his feeling. Here again we must come back upon the discipline of self-examination, and let every man stand or fall by the result of that penetrating scrutiny.

p. 232

v.13 according to the daily requirement for offerings commanded by Moses for Sabbaths, New Moons and the three annual feasts—the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles.

Here is an OUTLINE of Solomon's religious observances which are a little more extensive than the one mentioned in:

1 Kings 9:25

Three times a year Solomon sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings on the altar he had built for the Lord, burning incense before the Lord along with them, and so fulfilled the temple obligations.

v.14 In keeping with the ordinance of his father David, he appointed the divisions of the priests for their duties, and the Levites to lead the praise and to assist the priests according to each day's requirement. He also appointed the gatekeepers by divisions for the various gates, because this was what David the man of God had ordered.

The beautiful thing about this verse is that it indicates that Solomon is being very careful in carrying out all of the requests that were made by David his father before his death.

The FINAL PHRASE in the verse gives the REASON:

"BECAUSE THIS WAS WHAT DAVID THE MAN OF GOD HAD ORDERED."

v.15 They did not deviate from the king's commands to the priests or to the Levites in any matter, including that of the treasuries.

Solomon was a real stickler for detail and he was very careful not to "DEVIATE" at all from what David his father had commanded him to do with regard to the "PRIESTS OR TO THE LEVITES" and also the "TREASURIES" where all of these gifts and monies were ear-marked for specific projects.

The SADNESS of the verse is that Solomon does "DEVIATE" in his religious obedience. His personal life is filled with compromise, disobedience, and botched up priorities. Here in His public life, he is so careful to be straight as an arrow in everything he does.

v.16 All Solomon's work was carried out, from the day the foundation of the temple of the Lord was laid until its completion. So the temple of the Lord was finished.

v.17 Then Solomon went to Ezion Geber and Elath on the coast of Edom.

This takes us BACK to:

1 Kings 9:26

King Solomon also built ships at Ezion Geber, which is near Elath in Edom, on the shore of the Red Sea.

Dillard says:

The unique position of Israel as the sole land bridge between Europe-Asia and Africa is itself sufficient explanation for the vast wealth accruing to Solomon from his virtual monopoly over all commerce through the region. Not only did he have mastery of the routes to the north (8:4), he also controlled the overland access south and undertook maritime trade in the commodities of Africa and beyond (9:21; 1 Kgs 10:22). The Phoenician expertise in craft technologies and monumental architecture that Solomon had hired once before extended beyond these areas to shipbuilding and seamanship as well; Phoenician renown for seamanship was celebrated by the prophets (Isa 23:1, 14; Ezek 27). Solomon undertook a joint venture to mutual benefit with Hiram to exploit the maritime trade to the south . . .
p. 66

Patrick & Lowth say:

After he had finished all those great works of the house of the Lord, and his own house, and built many cities, as before recited, he designed to improve navigation, which the Jews did not much understand.
p. 550

(Reflecting the Character of Christ: His Kindness, His Confidence, His Grace
by Dr. Les Carter)

Self-restraint is made possible by wide-open honesty. As you clearly reveal your problems to people you trust, you will find a growing sense of accountability. Sharing your real self creates bonding with others, which is an important ingredient in personal growth. Take the example of the apostle Paul, who openly confessed his own struggles in this area, saying, "The good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice" (Rom. 7:19).

p. 46

It seems as though Solomon will never stop. He moves from one project to another, to another, to another. Could it be that he is avoiding some of these more personal matters? That is, dealing with the specific things that are offense to the Lord in his personal walk? Is he carrying out any responsibilities with regard to his family?

(The Tribute by Dennis Rainey with David Boehi)

After one couple returned home from a FamilyLife Marriage Conference, the husband immediately walked into the family room and unplugged the TV. With the cord dangling and wide-eyed kids in tow, he lugged the set to the garage.

In the empty place where the television had once stood, he hung a picture of the family. Their five-year-old son sat down on the floor, staring at the portrait. Then he looked up at his dad and asked, "Does this mean we're going to become a family?"

p. 275

(Forever, Erma: Best-Loved Writing From America's Favorite Humorist by
Erma Bombeck)

Daughter Returns to College—January 28, 1972

Our daughter has just returned to her college campus following three weeks of R and R at the Bombeck Hilton. She may be rested and rehabilitated, but we are beyond recovery.

As my husband and I walked through the gutted, bare rooms of our home, our footsteps echoed hollowly on the bare floors. Finally, my husband spoke. "It's incredible, isn't it? It took us twenty-two long married years to amass eight rooms of furniture, forty-three appliances, linens for five beds and an acceptable wardrobe and now . . . it's all gone."

I nodded. "And to think she condensed it all in two large suitcases and a zippered gym bag."

"I just don't believe it," he said, closing the doors on the bare linen closet. "The sheets, the towels, our electric blanket. All gone. Why don't you make us a cup of coffee?"

"Can you drink it out of an ashtray?"

"Forget it," he said. "I'm going to sit down and—"

"I wouldn't," I cautioned. "She took that small occasional chair you used to sit in."

"And the TV?" he gasped.

"The first to be packed, along with the transistor radio, the hair dryer, the makeup mirror, the iron, the electric skillet, your shaver and your parka jacket."

"And I suppose the phonograph is—"

I nodded. "College bound. Along with the typewriter, electric fan, space heater, bulletin board, label maker, bowling ball, popcorn popper and full set of encyclopedias."

"How will she lug all that stuff back to school?"

"I think she dismembered the bicycle and put it under her seat."

"What are we going to do?" he asked, looking at the barren rooms.

"If we looked better we might get on *The Newlywed Game* and try to win a washer and dryer."

"I think we've got enough Green Stamps for—"

"Forget the Green Stamps," I said softly. "She took them."

"We could take a trip and—"

"If we still have luggage," I corrected.

"This is ridiculous," he snarled. "Why can't she go to college right here at home?"

"She wants to get away from materialism," I said.

pp. 146-7

v.18 And Hiram sent him ships commanded by his own officers, men who knew the sea. These, with Solomon's men, sailed to Ophir and brought back four hundred and fifty talents of gold, which they delivered to King Solomon.

Patrick & Lowth say:

Besides those ships which Solomon had built, Hiram sent more, who brought able seamen with them to manage the whole fleet.
p. 550

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Much of Solomon's prosperity was due to his maritime industry, an enterprise he was able to undertake with Phoenician help. Operating out of **Ezion Geber and Elath**, seaports on the eastern arm of the Red Sea (known today as the Gulf of Aqaba or Gulf of Eilat), his and Hiram's sailors **sailed to** distant points such as the land of **Ophir . . . 450 talents of gold** (ca. 17 tons, or 34,000 pounds) . . . [The] (First Kings [passage in] 9:28 has 420 talents, ca. 16 tons [or 32,000 pounds]. . . . the two figures may be due to a copyist confusing the two similar-looking Heb. letters for 450 and 420.)
p. 627

This says they only made one trip.

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: How good it would be if we would make a commitment to contentment with all that the Father is doing in and through our lives.

LESSON #2: Solomon and Hiram demonstrate the great value of team work in accomplishing greater objectives.

LESSON #3: Solomon and Hiram did not let differences affect their long term friendship.

LESSON #4: May it be our deepest desire that no one would say "Cabul," good for nothing, when they are describing us.

LESSON #5: Whatever Solomon desired to build, he built.

LESSON #6: Has your religious observance become more of a ritual than the deepening of a relationship?

LESSON #7: What priority does money and material things have in the total picture of your life?

LESSON #8: Are there any areas of your life that you are compromising on in your relationship to the Lord that need to be dealt with?

LESSON #9: Are you avoiding issues in your spiritual life by consuming yourself with projects in the here and now?

LESSON #10: Solomon has been snared by the desire for material things and the good life.

I thought it would be good for us to TURN BACK to the book of Ecclesiastes and read a few passages and verses that will come to life as a result of this particular study.

Ecclesiastes 2:4-11

I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired men and women singers, and a harem as well—the delights of the heart of man. I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me. I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor. Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.

Ecclesiastes 2:17-21

So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the work into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless. So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun. For a man may do his work with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then he must leave all he owns to someone who has not worked for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune.

Ecclesiastes 6:1, 2

I have seen another evil under the sun, and it weighs heavily on men: God gives a man wealth, possessions and honor, so that he lacks nothing his heart desires, but God does not enable him to enjoy them, and a stranger enjoys them instead. This is meaningless, a grievous evil.

Ecclesiastes 7:29

This only have I found: God made mankind upright, but men have gone in search of many schemes."

Ecclesiastes 10:1

As dead flies give perfume a bad smell, so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.

Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14

Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole [duty] of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.

(No More Excuses: Be the Man God Made You to Be by Tony Evans)

If you think about it, there are a lot of people who live like that. They get the good education and the good job, they provide for their children so their children can provide for their own children, then they grow old, retire, die—and leave it all behind. As the song says, "If that's all there is, then let's keep dancing."

p. 72

(Guard Your Heart by Dr. Gary Rosberg)

It was early 1990 when this panic occurred. It was a scare with international implications, but it wasn't war, famine, or earthquake.

On February 9, Ron V. Davis, president of Perrier Group of America Inc. in Greenwich, Connecticut, ordered Perrier, that chic fizzy water, removed from distribution in North America. It seems that a lab in North Carolina had picked something up in one of those trademark green bottles: traces of benzene, a toxic chemical known as a carcinogen. The product that flowed from the purest, most perfect wellspring of all, the artesian wells, had been tainted.

A few days later, on February 14, most romanticists turned their hearts toward their Valentines. But in Paris, the city of love, many hearts were beating at record rates for a different reason. At a press conference the folks at Source Perrier announced a worldwide recall of 160 million bottles of their famous product.

The unprecedented global recall cost the French company about \$30 million up front. This didn't include the fear that if they couldn't bounce back after the scare, it would threaten the industry of "bottled pure water." You have to admit, when you pay a couple bucks for a bottle of water, your expectations are a little high. I mean—excuse the suggestion—you could get it out of the tap. Then to learn that it not only isn't pure, but it's also potentially contaminated and cancer causing. That's a tad unsettling.

The North Carolina lab identified benzene in the Perrier at 15 parts per billion—way beyond the USFDA limit of 5 parts per billion. How could it happen? Eventually, company officials explained that workers had failed to change filters that usually took out the benzene that is naturally present in carbon dioxide, the gas used to make Perrier bubbly.

The product of the wellsprings, the heart of the purest water in the world, had been contaminated during the bottling process—and now, what would be the ripple effect. No Perrier, no parties? What would people drink with their oysters?

I have to admit I didn't lose much sleep over this crisis. I never liked the stuff. But I guess the big news here is that careless workers in an unguarded moment allowed this impeccable beverage to become tainted. And that carelessness touched lives all over the world.

In Proverbs 4:23, Solomon is telling us that (above all else!) we must guard that deep inner source of life from contamination. If we do not, everything that flows out of our lives from now on will be colored and tainted by the toxins we've allowed to seep into the very source of who we are. It will effect everything we touch: our marriage, our kids, our job, our friends, and our potential ministry for the Lord.

pp. 52-53

(The Royal Way of the Cross: Letters and Spiritual Counsels of Francois de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon, edited by Hal M. Helms)

You have withered your heart by so eagerly pressing your own wishes regardless of God's will. This is the cause of all you are suffering. You have spent a great deal of time in making plans which were mere cobwebs, and a breath of wind has blown them away. You withdrew gradually from God, and He has withdrawn from you. You must return to Him, and give yourself up unreservedly to Him: there is no other way by which you can regain peace.
p. 57

(Inspiring Quotations compiled by Albert M. Wells, Jr.)

O sanctifying flame, I pray
Go through my heart, descend
today:
Burn out the sin, make no delay.
Come down, come in, make room
to stay.

O purifying fire, I wait;
Remove the dross, the sin I hate:
My gold refine, thy likeness make
In me, I plead for Jesus' sake.

O holy fire in cloven flame
Descend on me in Jesus' name:
Burn in my heart, let naught
remain
But love Divine, eternal flame.

—W.C. Roberts

p. 174

(Inspiring Quotations compiled by Albert M. Wells, Jr.)

Before General Eisenhower died, Billy Graham was invited to visit the former President. He was told he could only stay thirty minutes. But when the time was up, the general asked him to stay longer. "Billy," he said, "I want you to tell me once again how I can be sure my sins are forgiven and that I'm going to heaven, because nothing else matters now." Billy took out his New Testament and read several verses. He pointed out that we go to heaven totally . . . on the merits of what Christ did on the cross. After prayer General Eisenhower said, "Thank you. I'm ready." It is the Word of God, and not man's opinion, that people want when they are stepping into eternity.

—**Thomas F. Zimmerman**

pp. 16-17

(God's Little Devotional Book on Prayer by Honor Books, Inc.)

If trouble drives you to prayer, prayer will drive the trouble away.



The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.
Psalm 9:9 NIV

Shortly after Charles Colson received word that he was to be returned to Maxwell prison, he got a call from Al Quie, one of the most respected public figures in Washington. Quie said, "Chuck, I've been thinking about what else we can do to help you. . . . There's an old statute someone told me about. I'm going to ask the President if I can serve the rest of your term for you."

Colson was stunned. "I mean it, Chuck," Quie said. "I haven't come to this decision lightly." Overwhelmed, Colson refused his offer. Later that day, he received a note from Al Quie, who wrote, "If I could I would gladly give my life so you could use the wonderful gifts of God, that He has entrusted you with, to the glory of God. . . ."

That night Colson completely surrendered his life: "Lord, if this is what it is all about . . . I praise You for giving me Your love through these men, for being God, for just letting me walk with Jesus."

Forty-eight hours later an order was issued to release Colson from prison. A Christian marshal said to him as he departed, "I kind of knew He would set you free today." Colson replied, "Thank you, but He did it two nights ago."²⁹

²⁹*Born Again*, Charles Colson (NY: Bantam Books, 1977), pp. 390-392.
pp. 74-75

(Holiness by J. C. Ryle)

Let us all learn and strive to do so more and more. Let us live on Christ. Let us live in Christ. Let us live with Christ. Let us live to Christ. So doing, we shall prove that we fully realize that Christ is all. So doing, we shall feel great peace, and attain more of that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord (Heb. 12:14).

p. 316

(Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions by Kenneth W. Osbeck)

The apostle Paul's fervent concern for his life, that after he had preached to others he himself might be disqualified by God through careless living, seems to apply to the writer of this hymn text. George Heath was an English independent minister, who in 1770 became pastor of a Presbyterian church at Honiton, Devonshire. Later, proving himself unworthy of this office, he was deprived of his parish "for cause." Eventually, it seems, he became a Unitarian minister. It is difficult to understand how a person could write such a stirring challenge on the subject of spiritual steadfastness and then change so drastically in later years. Yet the Scriptures are clear that the Christian life is a lifetime of perseverance, and whoever puts his hand to the plow and looks back is unfit for service in God's kingdom (Luke 9:62). We must have the enabling power of the Holy Spirit each day if we intend to be on guard.

My soul, be on thy guard—ten thousand foes arise. The hosts of sin are pressing hard to draw thee from the skies.

O watch and fight and pray; the battle ne'er give o'er; renew it boldly ev'ry day, and help divine implore.

Ne'er think the vict'ry won, nor lay thine armor down; the work of faith will not be done till thou obtain thy crown.

Fight on, my soul, till death shall bring thee to thy God; He'll take thee, at thy parting breath, to His divine abode.

p. 312