

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF SOLOMON: SOLOMON'S SPLENDOR

SESSION #17: 1 Kings 10:14-29

TEXT:

1 Kings 10:14-29

v.14 The weight of the gold that Solomon received yearly was 666 talents, v.15 not including the revenues from merchants and traders and from all the Arabian kings and the governors of the land.

v.16 King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; six hundred bekas of gold went into each shield.

v.17 He also made three hundred small shields of hammered gold, with three minas of gold in each shield. The king put them in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon.

v.18 Then the king made a great throne inlaid with ivory and overlaid with fine gold.

v.19 The throne had six steps, and its back had a rounded top. On both sides of the seat were armrests, with a lion standing beside each of them.

v.20 Twelve lions stood on the six steps, one at either end of each step. Nothing like it had ever been made for any other kingdom.

v.21 All King Solomon's goblets were gold, and all the household articles in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. Nothing was made of silver, because silver was considered of little value in Solomon's days.

v.22 The king had a fleet of trading ships at sea along with the ships of Hiram. Once every three years it returned, carrying gold, silver and ivory, and apes and baboons.

v.23 King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth.

v.24 The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart.

v.25 Year after year, everyone who came brought a gift—articles of silver and gold, robes, weapons and spices, and horses and mules.

v.26 Solomon accumulated chariots and horses; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses, which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem.

v.27 The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycamore-fig trees in the foothills.

v.28 Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and from Kue—the royal merchants purchased them from Kue.

v.29 They imported a chariot from Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty. They also exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and of the Arameans.

INTRODUCTION:A COWBOYS PRAYER

by

Badger Clark

Oh Lord, I've never lived where churches grow
 I love creation better as it stood
 That day you finished it so long ago
 And looked upon your work and called it good
 I know that others find you in the light
 That's sifted down through tinted window panes
 And yet I seem to feel you near tonight
 In this dim quiet starlight on the plains
 I thank you, Lord, that I am placed so well
 That you have made my freedom so complete
 That I'm no slave of whistles, clock or bell
 Nor weak eyed prisoner of wall and street
 Just let me live my life as I've begun
 And give me work that's open to the sky
 Make me a pardner of wind and sun
 And I won't ask for life that's soft or high
 Let me be easy on the man that's down
 Let me be fair and generous with all
 I'm careless sometimes, Lord, when I'm in town
 But never let 'em say I'm mean or small
 Make me as big and open as the plains
 As honest as the horse between my knees
 Clean as the wind that blows behind the rains
 Free as the hawk that circles the breeze
 Forgive me, Lord, if I sometimes forget
 You know the reasons that are hid
 You understand the things that gall and fret
 You know me better than my Mother did
 Just keep an eye on all that's done or said
 And right me sometimes when I turn aside
 And guide me on the long, dim trail ahead
 That stretches upward, toward the Great Divide

(Chuck Pritchard—C BAR T—Cowboys Prayer <http://www.dtx.net/~cbart/prayer.html>)

Cowboy Prayer

Our gracious and heavenly Father,
We pause in the midst of this festive occasion,
mindful and thoughtful of the guidance that you have given us.

As cowboys, Lord, we don't ask for any special favors,
we ask only that you let us compete in this arena, as in life's arena.
We don't ask to never break a barrier, or to draw a round of steer that's hard
to throw,
or a chute fighting horse, or a bull that is impossible to ride.
We only ask that you help us to compete as honest as the horses we ride
and in a manner as clean and pure as the wind that blows across this great
land of ours.

So when we do make that last ride that is inevitable for us all to make,
to that place up there, where the grass is green and lush and stirrup high,
and the water runs cool, clear, and deep -

You'll tell us as we ride — that our entry fees have been paid.

These things we ask — Amen.

© Clem McSpadden

(<http://www.sanctum.come/rodeo/prayer.htm>)

(The Finishing Touch: Becoming God's Masterpiece: A Daily Devotional by Charles R. Swindoll)

Here are a few examples. Hold on tight . . . there's a lot to be learned that you may have missed in your years in school.

For example, did you know that Ancient Egypt was inhabited by mummies who wrote in hydraulics? They lived in the Sarah Dessert and traveled by Camelot. Certain areas of that dessert were cultivated by irritation.

Then we learn that in the first book of the Bible, Guinnessis, Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. One of their children, Cain, asked, "Am I my brother's son?"

After that, Pharaoh forced the Hebrew slaves to make bread without straw, and Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the ten commandments. He died before he ever reached Canada.

Later we learn that David was a Hebrew king skilled at playing the liar. He fought with the Finkelsteins. Solomon, one of his sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines.

p. 423

(The Unofficial Liberal Joke Book for the Politically Incorrect by Bob Phillips)

Two men took a shortcut through a graveyard and noticed a gravestone that read, "HERE LIES A LIBERAL AND A GOOD MAN."

"Imagine that!" said the one to the other.

"I had no idea you could bury two men in one grave!"

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

If you turned the Lord's Prayer over to a bureaucrat to rewrite, the single phrase, "Give us this day our daily bread," would probably come out something like this: We respectfully petition, request and entreat that due and adequate provision be made, this day and the date hereinafter subscribed, for the satisfying of these petitioner's nutritional requirements and for the organizing of such methods of allocation and distribution as may be deemed necessary and proper to assure the reception by and for said petitioners of such quantities of baked cereal products as shall, in the judgment of the aforesaid petitioners, constitute a sufficient supply thereof.

—Fred J. Emery

pp. 111-12

(A Passionate Commitment: Recapturing Your Sense of Purpose by Crawford W. Loritts)

Bill Klem was a major league baseball umpire who was widely respected. He was a massive man weighing in excess of three hundred pounds. Whenever he was behind the plate calling the game, he maintained control. In fact, few had the courage to challenge his calls.

However, in one game things did get a bit out of hand. It was a classic situation: the bottom half of the ninth inning, and the score is tied. Two outs and a runner on third base. The pitcher hangs a curve ball over the plate. The batter hits a shallow single just over the third baseman's head. The left-fielder races toward the ball, picks it up with his bare hand, and makes a perfect one-bounce throw to home plate. Problem: The ball and the third base runner arrive at home at the same time. There is a collision, and a cloud of dust explodes at home plate. In the confusion, both teams forget who's calling the game and they race out of the dugout and off the field screaming repeatedly, "He's safe!" "He's out!"

In the midst of the confusion, Bill Klem throws off his umpire's mask, holds up his two massive arms, and shouts, "He ain't nothin' until I call it!"

p. 102

In this SEVENTEENTH EPISODE of the LIFE OF KING SOLOMON we are going to get a picture of what he has accomplished in his career as the King of Israel.

We are going to see his:

FINAL STATEMENT,

BOTTOM LINE, and

NET INCOME.

These are things that Solomon has lived for.

You can not help but be REMINDED of the fact that all of this national greatness is very similar to what we have witnessed in the United States of America.

There comes a time when:

GREAT PROSPERITY coupled with

PLEASURE brings the

PLUNGE.

(The Things that Matter Most by Cal Thomas)

On election night 1992, Vice President-elect Al Gore exuded in his victory speech, "We are the children of the modern age."

The torch had been passed to a new generation, but this statement was symbolic of the power failure that has caused the light to go out on the social and moral questions that are critical to any nation.

Who are these "children," and have they grown up or do they remain childlike and idealistically immature inside their adult bodies? What have they given us?

They and the value system they forced on America have given us condoms in the schools, not self-control and virtue; "recreational" drugs, not a "high" that comes from honor, duty, and character; no-fault divorce, not commitment and a determination to work things out no matter how one feels; prenuptial agreements and a nuclear strike on the family; AIDS and low-quality television that increasingly focuses on the region between the waist and the thigh, rarely visiting the things of the mind and spirit.

So many liberals have dismissed all but the most impersonal religion and the power of spiritual ideas from the center of public life.
p. 112

Matthew Henry reminds us:

Now let us remember, 1. That this was he who, when he was *setting out in the world*, did not ask for the wealth and honour of it, but asked for *a wise and understanding heart*. 2. That this was he who, having tasted all these enjoyments, wrote a whole book to show the vanity of all worldly things and the folly of setting our hearts upon them, and to recommend to us the practice of serious godliness, which, through the grace of God, is within our reach, when the thousandth part of Solomon's greatness is a thousand times more than we can ever be so vain as to promise ourselves in this world.

p. 376

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown say:

Solomon undoubtedly carried the Hebrew kingdom to its highest pitch of worldly glory.
p. 317

Lockyer says:

If Psalm 72 was from Solomon's pen then it reflects the wisdom, work and wickedness uniting to make him a renowned king, whose reign coupled with his father's constitutes the golden period of the Jewish state. Solomon's might and greatness of dominion permanently impressed the oriental mind. He not only strengthened his kingdom at home but made alliances with surrounding nations and engaged in extensive commerce in all kinds of goods. R. K. Harrison reminds us:

Solomon took advantage of the decline in Egyptian and Assyrian power to expand the economic interests of his vast realm. . . . From his commercial activity he derived a great deal of revenue, partly by exacting tolls and partly by engaging in trade with other nations. . . . Failing to increase the agricultural productivity of the country to any great extent, the balance of trade was heavily offset by his ambitious building and economic projects.

p. 112

He says further:

In a chapter on Solomon in his book on *Bible Characters*, H. V. Morton says that if he were "writing a book about Solomon, I would paint him not as we commonly imagine him, a kind, wise and pious ruler, but as a greedy and relentless autocrat who by his insatiable love for splendor sucked his people dry, overtaxed them, carried them at one bound from the simple, tribal civilization of his father, David, to the misery of a highly organized commercial state, with its ghastly extremes of wealth and poverty."

p. 113

Baxter says:

"Solomon was promised wisdom, wealth, and power, and he received them. He was promised 'length of days' *if* he persevered in his walk with God (I Kings iii. 14). This latter gift he forfeited, and died at fifty-nine."
p. 184

Lange says:

1. *In the section before us* the delineation of Solomon's glory reaches its climax. No other king's reign is treated at such length in our books as that of Solomon, which alone occupies 11 chapters.
p. 123

Selman titles the parallel passage in Chronicles as:

ii. Solomon's wisdom, fame and fortune (9:13-28)
p. 355

He says further:

This is a more general summary of Solomon's wisdom, wealth, and fame, in which his wisdom at least is directly attributed to God (v. 23). His *gold* (vv. 13-21) and his supremacy among *all the kings of the earth* (vv. 22-28) receive special mention. His varied wealth also included *silver* (vv. 14, 20, 21, 24, 27), *ivory* (vv. 17, 21), *apes* and 'monkeys' (v. 21, GNB, REB, NEB; the latter may be *baboons*, NIV or 'peacocks', NRSV, RSV following vss), *spices* (v. 24; cf. vv. 1, 9), 'myrrh' (v. 24, RSV; possibly 'perfumes', REB, NEB, or *weapons*, NIV, GNB, JB), *mules* (v. 24), *horses* and *chariots* (vv. 24, 25, 28), and *cedar* (v. 27).
p. 356

Gaebelein says:

And what riches and glory the King possessed! Everything was of gold. His throne was of solid ivory overlaid with gold. Twelve wonderful lions stood on the one side and on the other. All the drinking vessels were of gold. Silver depreciated in his days; it was worth next to nothing, . . .
p. 270

I think it would be good at the outset of this particular study for us to take a few moments to reflect on the TEMPTATION OF WEALTH.

1 Timothy 6:6-10

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. 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.

Luke 12:16-20

And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a certain rich man was very productive. And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' And he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry."' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?'

Mark 10:17-31

And as He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him and was asking Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do in order that I might inherit life eternal?" And Jesus said to him, "Why are you saying I am good? No one is good except God alone. You are knowing the commandments, 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'" And he said to Him, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up." 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." And they were even more astounded saying to one another, "Then who is able to be saved?" Having looked at them, Jesus is saying, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God." Peter began to be saying to Him, "Behold, we left everything and followed You." Jesus said, "Truly I am saying to you, there I no one who abandon house, or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the sake of gospel, but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions, and in the coming age, life eternal. But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first."

Luke 16:19-25

Now there was a certain rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, gaily living in splendor every day. And a certain poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame." But Abraham said, "Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.

1 John 2:15-17

Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If any one loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.

In my office I have a beautiful picture of a large rainbow trout rising to the surface of the water and laying on the surface is the fly that contains the hook that is going to put an end to this beautiful specimen.

Karl Menninger put it this way:

"When a trout rising to a fly gets hooked on a line and finds himself unable to swim about freely, he begins with a fight which results in struggles and splashes and sometimes an escape. Often, of course, the situation is too tough for him.
(source unknown)

Perhaps it would be good for us to join George Beverly Shea in singing:

"I'd Rather Have Jesus"

I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold; I'd rather be His than have riches untold; I'd rather have Jesus than houses or land; I'd rather be led by His nail-pierced hand:

I'd rather have Jesus than men's applause; I'd rather be faithful to His dear cause; I'd rather have Jesus than world-wide fame; I'd rather be true to His holy name:

He's fairer than lilies of rarest bloom; He's sweeter than honey from out the comb; He's all that my hungering spirit needs—I'd rather have Jesus and let Him lead:

Refrain: Than to be the king of a vast domain or be held in sin's dread sway! I'd rather have Jesus than anything this world affords today.

(From Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions by Kenneth W. Osbeck, p. 190)

JESUS CHRIST and PLEASING HIM should be our SINGLE FOCUS.

2 Timothy 4:10

for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; . . .

John 3:30

He must increase, but I must decrease.

v.14 The weight of the gold that Solomon received yearly was 666 talents,

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The revenue of **gold** recorded as being **received** annually (almost 25 tons, or 50,000 pounds) did not include what must have been vast quantities required from trading with **all the Arabian kings** and taxes brought in by **the governors** of Israel. God had told his kings not to multiply gold (Deut. 17:17), but Solomon disobeyed.

p. 507

Deuteronomy 17:17

He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.

Lange says:

The 666 talents were the regular yearly income; but we must not necessarily suppose, with Thenius, that they were "the income of taxes laid on the Israelites themselves;" for there is no mention anywhere made of a yearly income tax.

p. 121

Lange says further:

The glory of Solomon. Wherein it lay (Power, dominion, pomp, splendor, glory, and honor, everything that men wish or desire in this world—all these we see before us in the life of this one man. But the glory of man is as the grass of the field, which fades and withers; truly, the lilies of the field exceed it in glory, . . .

p. 124

Dillard says:

Solomon's control of the trade routes generated enormous revenues. The 666 talents was beyond the revenue generated by trade imposts and taxation from the governors of the various districts (1 Kgs 4:7-28); the amount presumably represented a sum produced by Solomon's own mercantile ventures and tribute paid him.
p. 73

Patrick & Lowth say:

The history of the queen of Sheba being ended he returns to give an account of Solomon's riches and magnificence; which he had begun to set forth before. And first he relates what a vast quantity of gold was brought into his country every year; not only from Ophir, but from other countries, unto which perhaps the queen of Sheba opened him a passage.
p. 331

J. Vernon McGee says:

I cannot comprehend it when it says there were six hundred threescore and six talents of gold that came to him every year—he simply cornered the gold market. The kingdom had reached its zenith. Actually, David brought it to this position, but now Solomon is the one who is able to move in and enjoy the peace, the plenty, and the prosperity.
p. 269

Lange, commenting on the Chronicles passage, says:

On Solomon's great wealth, as it is repeatedly described, especially ch. i. 14 ff. and ix. 13 ff., Bengel (on ch. ix. 27) makes the striking remark: "It is strange how soon so much can be accumulated and again vanish away! Men could not endure it if it were always so; they would wander from God, and be distracted by the creatures; as Solomon himself did not long act well. He had the benefit of David as his father; he had gone through tribulation, whereas Solomon entered at once on possession! That is a weighty difference."
p. 190

McNeely says:

Comment was made earlier concerning Solomon's accumulation of gold. Here the writer records that his receipt of gold in one year was equivalent to over \$67 million. In reading the account, one must be impressed with the fact that gold was abundant throughout the royal buildings as well as in the Temple.
p. 56

Montgomery & Gehman title these verses:

Solomon's income. . . . After the interlude of the Queen of Sheba's visit the register of Solomon's wealth and glory is resumed.
p. 219

FIVE WAYS TO ELIMINATE ENVY

By comparing myself with others, I wasn't only unwise—I also was miserable.

We always lose out when we begin comparing ourselves with others. Some ways to attack an envious attitude:

(1) Get your focus off yourself. Instead of comparing, concentrate on how you can meet their needs.

(2) Recognize covetousness for what it is—sin. Then confess it and forsake it.

(3) Realize that desiring what your neighbor has demonstrates ungratefulness to God for what He has given you.

(4) Remember that material things are merely temporal. Fix your eyes on the eternal values.

(5) Like the writer of Proverbs who asked for neither poverty nor riches, pray for God to give you just what you need. Be thankful for what He gives and share some with others. Trust that the portion He chooses for you will always be enough.

"Five ways to eliminate envy" by Annie Chapman. Today's Christian Woman, Sep/Oct 1991. Page 69.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

(1001 Humorous Illustrations for Public Speaking by Michael Hodgin)

A Miser's Money

A miser isn't any fun to live with, but he makes a wonderful ancestor.
p. 192

v.15 not including the revenues from merchants and traders and from all the Arabian kings and the governors of the land.

DeVries says:

This represents the gold obtained by trading with gold-exporting regions. The annotator goes on to specify two other ways of getting gold: (1) through the taxation of caravans and (2) through profits from state monopolies or franchises, viz., such as were held by local merchants, Arab vassals, and provincial governors.
p. 139

Lockyer says:

Solomon, the ardent capitalist, had fine qualities of the mind and a certain amount of spirituality, but these broken down under or were undermined by greed, success, luxury and idolatry.

'Tis but the moral of all human tales,

'Tis but the same rehearsal of the past:

Wealth, vice, corruption — barbarism at last.

p. 113

v.16 King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; six hundred bekas of gold went into each shield.

Montgomery & Gehman say:

Two patterns of shield are denoted: the first (*sinnah*) the long shield proper, covering the length of the body, and the small round shield . . .
p. 220

v.17 He also made three hundred small shields of hammered gold, with three minas of gold in each shield. The king put them in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The Palace of the Forest of Lebanon . . . must have served as an armory among other things. Each **large . . . shield** was made of **600 bekas** (7 ½ pounds) **of gold** and each **small . . . shield** had **three minas** (3 ¾ pounds) **of gold**. . . . Evidently these 500 shields were intended for parade use rather than for battle as **gold** is a soft metal.
p. 507

DeVries says:

Solomon's golden shields were essentially decorative, and as such were hung in the House of the Lebanon Forest (7:2-5), and where Shishak later plundered them during Rehoboam's reign (14:26). The "large shield," was the rectangular buckler carried by heavy infantry, while the "small shield," was the target, light and round and carried by light infantry or officers.
p. 139

Keil & Delitzsch say:

Consequently the gold plate upon one target was not quite 9 lbs., and that upon a shield not quite 4 ½ lbs. These shields were intended for the body-guard to carry on state occasions . . .

p. 163

v.18 Then the king made a great throne inlaid with ivory and overlaid with fine gold.

v.19 The throne had six steps, and its back had a rounded top. On both sides of the seat were armrests, with a lion standing beside each of them.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Solomon's **throne . . . overlaid with gold** reflected the king's glory. The **12 lions**, one on each end of **the six steps** to the throne, may have been intended to represent the 12 tribes of Israel.

p. 507

v.20 Twelve lions stood on the six steps, one at either end of each step.
Nothing like it had ever been made for any other kingdom.

DeVries says:

. . . but Solomon's lions may have been no more than the traditional symbol of the tribe of Judah (Gen 49:9).
p. 140

v.21 All King Solomon's goblets were gold, and all the household articles in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. Nothing was made of silver, because silver was considered of little value in Solomon's days.

McNeely says:

The wry comment of verse 21 concerning silver as not being considered valuable in Solomon's kingdom must cause a modern reader to raise his eyebrows.
p. 56

(Collected Verse of Edgar A. Guest by Edgar A. Guest)

THE EPICURE

I've sipped a rich man's sparkling wine,
 His silverware I've handled.
 I've placed these battered legs of mine
 'Neath tables gayly candled.
 I dine on rare and costly fare
 Whene'er good fortune lets me,
 But there's no meal that can compare
 With those the missus gets me.

I've had your steaks three inches thick
 With all your Sam Ward trimming,
 I've had the breast of milk-fed chick
 In luscious gravy swimming.
 To dine in swell café or club
 But irritates and frets me;
 Give me the plain and wholesome grub—
 The grub the missus gets me.

Two kiddies smiling at the board,
 The cook right at the table,
 The four of us, a hungry horde,
 To beat that none is able.
 A big meat pie, with flaky crust!
 'Tis then that joy besets me;
 Oh, I could eat until I "bust,"
 Those meals the missus gets me.

p. 45

v.22 The king had a fleet of trading ships at sea along with the ships of Hiram. Once every three years it returned, carrying gold, silver and ivory, and apes and baboons.

Now we see that Solomon has made a move toward INTERNATIONALISM, sailing to distant ports.

This is a real TEMPTATION to increase one's volume and access to material things that they are unable to acquire in any other way.

The PROBLEM with this is that you not only get the:

MATERIAL but you also get the

SPIRITUAL IMPACT upon the country because of these trading alliances.

This has been very true in the United States of America with all of the influx of Eastern Religion.

McNeely says:

And not only gold was imported, but silver and ivory, and exotic pets such as apes and peacocks.
pp. 56-57

J. Vernon McGee says:

All of these are luxury items: apes for entertainment (these were Solomon's zoo); peacocks for beauty; and gold, silver, and ivory for magnificent decorations. There is a frivolous and tragic note here which is symptomatic of the condition of Solomon's kingdom. He is called to give a witness to the world—the world is coming to his door—and what does he do? He spends his time and energy with apes and peacocks simply to satisfy a whim.
p. 269

Many of the contemporary Hebrew scholars have translated the word "PEACOCKS" by "BABOONS" believing that this is more accurate to the text.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The **apes and baboons** may have been pets in vogue at the time.
p. 508

I shall always remember that while we were searching for property in Colorado the Tom Cat Ranch came to our attention. This incredible 400 acre piece was outfitted with all of the latest equipment. It was brand new and had never been lived in. It was truly a man's castle with its own hot tub, weight room, video center, pool table, vaulted ceilings, plush furniture, electronic surveillance, lake stocked with golden trout, and to top it all off, it had some very high fenced pens for all of the exotic animals that they had acquired through the years.

The sad thing about the place is that it had never been lived in because the couple that were going to live there were killed on their way back from California to Colorado to take up residence at the Tom Cat Ranch.

One thing it did for me was it made me realize what gets left behind when death takes place. The answer is "Everything!"

THE DEVIL'S BAIT

An interesting method is used by tribes in North Africa to catch monkeys. The hunter hollows out a gourd and makes a hole in its side just large enough for a monkey to insert his open hand. Then he fills the gourd with nuts and ties it to a tree. Attracted by the smell of its appealing contents, the monkey reaches inside and grasps the nuts. The hole in the gourd is too small, however, for the animal to withdraw his fist as long as it remains clenched tightly around the cherished delicacies. Refusing to release his prize, the monkey falls easy prey to his captor. If he would only relax his grasp on the desired treasure, he could escape being caught. But because he is unwilling to do this, he is captured by the hunter. Actually, he has trapped himself.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

LETTING GOD HAVE HIS WAY

A young man was wrestling with a decision. He wondered whether he should serve the Lord or make a fortune by using his talents in worldly places. "I ought to let God have His way, but I can't seem to yield to His will," he said. To help him, his Christian mother cut some letters out of construction paper and pinned the motto on his wall. It read: LET GOD. He looked at it again and again, but the deep inner struggle of his heart continued. Finally, he decided to take a walk to clear his mind. Upon leaving the room, he slammed the door, saying, "My own desires are just too strong." When he returned, he found that the letter "D" had fallen from the motto to the floor. He was startled to read: LET GO. Under deep conviction he cried, "I will, I will, Lord Jesus!" Renouncing his selfish desires, and putting his trust and confidence in the Lord, he asked the Holy Spirit to energize, direct, and use him in the service of Christ.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

(In the Face of God: The Dangers & Delights of Spiritual Intimacy by Michael Horton)

Entertainment Weekly is not exactly the official mouthpiece of evangelical Christianity. Yet, like many secular periodicals it has a sense of the contemporary world's fascination with "spirituality." In its October 7, 1994 issue, Jeff Gordinier wrote,

In a year when TV airwaves are aflutter with winged spirits, the bestseller lists are clogged with divine manuscripts and visions of the afterlife, and gangsta-rappers are elbowed aside on the pop charts for the hushed prayers of Benedictine monks, you don't have to look hard to find that pop culture is going gaga for spirituality. [However,] seekers of the day are apt to peel away the tough theological stuff and pluck out the most dulcet elements of faith, coming up with a soothing sampler of Judeo-Christian imagery, Eastern mediation, self-help lingo, a vaguely conservative craving for 'virtue,' and a loopy New Age pursuit of 'peace.' This happy free-for-all, appealing to Baptists and stargazers alike, comes off more like Forest Gump's ubiquitous 'boxa chocolates' than like any real system of belief. You never know what you're going to get.

pp. 3-4

There are THREE VERSES in Psalm 119 to help us understand David's attitude toward riches and how different it is from Solomon's:

Psalm 119:14

I find joy in the way shown by your written instructions
more than I find joy in all kinds of riches.

Psalm 119:37

Turn my eyes away from worthless things;
give me a new life in your ways.

Psalm 119:111

Your written instructions are mine forever,
they are the joy of my heart.

v.23 King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

God's promise to make **Solomon** the richest and wisest king of his time was fulfilled.
p. 508

McNeely says:

The two marks of this man, riches and wisdom, continued to draw a retinue of world travelers to Jerusalem. And as they came, the coffers of Solomon's wealth filled, overflowed into new coffers, and the cycle continued.
p. 57

Lange says:

—*Power and dominion.* (a) The responsibility involved therein ("to whom much is given, of him shall much be required, and to whom men," &c., Luke xii. 48; singular endowments bring with them singular requirements—authority is power given for the use and benefit of inferiors—wealth is bestowed upon the rich that they may relieve necessity according to their means). (b) The perils connected with it (pride and haughtiness, forgetfulness of God, and unbelief), Ps. lxii. 11; lii. 9; 1 Tim. vi. 9; Matt. xvi. 26. Therefore envy not the rich and powerful, for they are exposed to many temptations. But godliness with contentment, . . . [is great gain].
p. 124

(The Power of Personal Integrity: Becoming a Person of Character in a Drifting World by Charles Dyer)

One of my favorite "Far Side" comics shows the outside steps leading up to Midvale School for the Gifted. At the top of the steps stands one of these gifted students, books cradled in his right hand, with his left hand vainly pushing against the outside door to open it. Just above the student is a sign on the door that says (in very *large* letters) PULL.
p. 41

(1001 Humorous Illustrations for Public Speaking by Michael Hodgin)

Famous Humble Doctor

Of course, one of the greatest sources of modern illustration is the delightful comic strip *Peanuts* by Charles Schultz. One of my favorites shows Linus and Charlie Brown sitting and talking about their plans when they grow up.

Linus says, "When I get big I'm going to be a humble little country doctor. I'll live in the city, see, and every morning I'll get up, climb into my sports car and zoom into the country! Then I'll start healing people. I'll heal everybody for miles around!" And he concludes this speech with "I'll be a world-famous humble little country doctor."
p. 185

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

Overheard in Las Vegas: I came here in a \$25,000 Cadillac. Now I'm going home in a \$75,000 bus.

People who can afford to gamble don't need money, and those who need money can't afford to gamble.
p. 77

(A Dangerous Grace by Charles Colson with Nancy R. Pearcey)

REAL MEN NURTURE THEIR FAMILIES

Just a week after leading the Washington Redskins to a Super Bowl victory, head coach Joe Gibbs announced he was giving up football to spend more time with his family. "I'm fifty-two [years old]," the coach explained, "and there's a window of opportunity with my family" that's not going to stay open forever.

Gibbs says he wants to see his wife all year round, not just in the off-season. He wants time to spend with his sons, watch them play football.

"I want to sit in the stands and just be a dad," Gibbs told reporters.

Now, I love rooting for the Redskins, but this Father's day I'm rooting for Coach Gibbs. He's doing something tougher than taking on the Dallas Cowboys: He's standing against a distorted value system—a system that says, in the words of one Christian counselor, that "it's OK for men to be married to their jobs and fail at home."

For decades, fathers have handed over the major responsibility for child rearing to their wives, as though their only role was to bring home the bacon. But today the evidence is pouring in that fathers are crucial in their children's emotional and intellectual development.

Unfortunately, a lot of that evidence is negative: Dark reports from the inner cities about the crime and social pathology caused by what psychologists term "father absence."

But the most prevalent form of father absence isn't in the inner cities, says one book on the subject. It's in families where fathers simply do not engage in their children's lives—fathers who work sixty-hour weeks and come home to slump in front of the television or behind a newspaper. Fathers are all too prone to what psychologist Robert Coles labels "the teddy bear syndrome": They buy their children boys and Nintendos to compensate for spending so little time together.

Joe Gibbs is one father who's not satisfied with trying to buy father-substitutes. He's cutting back on a brilliantly successful career to give his family what they really want: time with him. My friend Joe Gibbs has set a wonderful example—something far more important than any Super Bowl championship.

pp. 146-7

(Over the Top by Zig Ziglar)

Maribeu said that "none but men of strong passions are capable of rising to greatness." Tennyson said, "The happiness of a man in his life does not consist in the absence but in the mastering of his passions." Franklin said that "he is a governor that governs his passions and he is a servant that serves them."

p. ix

(Standing Together: Impacting Your Generation by Howard Hendricks)

Chad Walsh, in his intriguing book *Early Christians of the Twenty-First Century*, placed a burr in my mental saddle with these words:

Millions of Christians live in a sentimental haze of vague piety, with soft organ music trembling in the lovely light from stained-glass windows. Their religion is a pleasant thing of emotional quivers, divorced from the will, divorced from the intellect, and demanding little except lip service to a few harmless platitudes. I suspect that Satan has called off his attempt to convert people to agnosticism. After all, if a man travels far enough away from Christianity, he is liable to see it in perspective and decide that it is true. It is much safer, from Satan's point of view, to vaccinate a man with a mild case of Christianity so as to protect him from the real disease.

p. 19

EXAMINE NOW!

As has been said, 'Life is like a coin. You are free to spend it any way you wish . . . but you can only spend it once!'

God challenged His people through the prophet Haggai (Hag. 1:5) not to live unexamined lives, but self-evaluation does not come easily. The hectic pace of our lives makes it difficult. Some of us are just too comfortable with the way things are. Others shy away from it, knowing that it will be painful to see how little they have accomplished. Five questions can help you examine yourself and see what changes are needed:

(1) Is your life consistent with your beliefs? Your lifestyle should match your theology. If you say that the local church is important, your attendance record ought to reflect that conviction. If you believe giving to God's work is a high priority, your checkbook should show it.

(2) What do you find more enjoyable in life? A favorite television show, a particular sport, your job, or your children can certainly bring you pleasure, but we should find pleasure in spiritual things as well. Prayer, Bible study, and ministering to others ought to give us a sense of joy. If my greatest enjoyment [in] life derives from the same things as my non-Christian neighbor's does, something is wrong.

(3) Do you offer God your best or just the leftovers? In the Old Testament it was called giving God your firstfruits. In our day many Christians are committed to excellence in their business or profession but content with mediocrity in their spiritual life.

(4) What do you want people to remember you for? Tragically, when family and friends gather to mourn the death of a loved one, sometimes they can remember nothing of any real importance from the individual's life. It is, perhaps, excusable for teenagers or even young adults to live materialistic, self-centered lives, but more mature men and women ought to have examined themselves and know what is worth living for.

(5) If you knew you had only one year left to live, how would your life be different? When it comes to serving God, procrastination is so easy. We should be investing ourselves in things that will last for eternity.

Ultimately our lives will be examined by Jesus Christ. Right now, however, we have the opportunity to not only engage in self-evaluation but also to make changes.

"Examine now!" by Nelson Annan. Interest, Oct 1991. Pages 12-13.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Yes, Solomon has arrived at the top! He has won the Super Bowl, the World Series, and the NBA Title. He is King #1! He has got a bigger bottom line and he is gifted with wisdom more than all the other kings of the earth.

v.24 The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart.

James 1:5

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Patrick & Lowth say:

That is, the great men of the neighbouring countries came, as the queen of Sheba did, to be acquainted with his wisdom; which they heard was a divine gift.
p. 333

Originality is the art of concealing your source.

Franklin P. Jones

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

The cowboy says it well:

(Savvy Sayin's: Lean & Meaty One-Liners by Ken Alstad)

For some men, it was too late to get wise the day they was born.
p. 58

Marry a woman with brains enough for two and you'll come out even.
p. 58

(God's Little Devotional Book for Couples by Honor Books)

Shortly after his wife died of cancer, a man found a note written by his wife — apparently a list of qualities she wanted her husband to know she appreciated. She wrote:

Loved. Cared. Worried.
Helped me when I was sick.
Forgave me for a lot of things.
Stood by me.
Always complimentary.
Provided everything I ever needed.
Warmth. Humor. Kindness.
Thoughtfulness.
Always there when I need you.
Good friend.

Although the woman probably intended her list to be part of her husband's thank-you letter for their nearly four decades of marriage, she also gave to the world a good prescription for marriage!
p. 245

(Turn Toward the Wind by Dale Hanson Bourke)

Last year Charles Colson received the million dollar Templeton prize for Progress in Religion. Colson was obviously moved but also saw the great irony in the award. As he told a small gathering of friends and Prison Fellowship board members: "Twenty years ago I was a hotshot lawyer who had all kinds of ideas about how to be successful. In my wildest dreams, I never would have believed that someone would award me such a prestigious and generous prize for being a failure and an ex-convict who spends his time with other prisoners."

p. 71

(As Iron Sharpens Iron by Howard & William Hendricks)

I feel so extremely confident about this because I've seen it happen time and again. In 1993 I spoke on the subject of mentoring at the Boulder, Colorado, gathering of the Promise Keepers. More than 50,000 men had filled the University of Colorado football stadium. I stated a truth that has not changed: "Every man here should seek to have three individuals in his life. You need a Paul. You need a Barnabas. And you need a Timothy."

As I explained, these are three kinds of mentoring relationships that a man desperately needs to pursue: a Paul, an older man who can build into his life; a Barnabas, a peer, a soul brother to whom he can be accountable; and a Timothy, a younger man into whose life he is building. At the end of the time, I asked every man present to bow his head and pray that God would lead him to a Paul, a Barnabas, and a Timothy.

p. 78

(The Christian in Complete Armour by William Gurnall)

The more public your place, and the more eminent your service for God, the greater the probability that Satan is at that very moment hatching some deadly scheme against you. If even the cadet corps need to be armed against Satan's bullets of temptation, how much more the commanders and officers, who stand in the front line of battle!

(January 31)

(A Man to Match the Mountain: Overcoming the Obstacles of Life by David Roper)

I recall praying with my wife, Carolyn, one night after returning from a weekend trip and thanking God for "taking care of things while I was gone," at which point Carolyn chuckled and wryly asked, "Who do you think takes care of things while you're here?" *Touché!*
p. 112

v.25 Year after year, everyone who came brought a gift—articles of silver and gold, robes, weapons and spices, and horses and mules.

As these people came from miles around to have an audience with Solomon, to "hear the wisdom that God had put in his heart . . . EVERYONE WHO CAME BROUGHT A GIFT."

The gifts were one of SEVEN DIFFERENT KINDS:

1. "ARTICLES OF SILVER,"
2. "GOLD,"
3. "ROBES,"
4. "WEAPONS,"
5. "SPICES,"
6. "HORSES," and
7. "MULES."

The most bored people in life are not the underprivileged but the over-privileged.

Fulton Sheen

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

You can really see Solomon slipping, can't you! Not only is he gaining greater and greater wealth, but he is also gaining greater and greater popularity. He is being sought out by so many who want to come and "hear the wisdom God had put in his heart." This, too, has to affect his feelings about his own importance and value to others.

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

Our permissive society has affected me: I watch things on television today I would not have tolerated in my life twenty years ago. Am I being slowly brainwashed by Satan's forces, by the very culture about which the Lord says, "Come out from among them and be ye separate and touch not the unclean thing?"

—Billy Graham

p. 197

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

You cannot give place to the world, to your passions or your laziness. Words are not enough to claim the kingdom of God. It takes strength and courage and violence. You must violently resist the tides of the world. Violently give up all that holds you back from God. Violently turn your will over to God to do His will alone.

p. 27

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

Charles Wesley is said to have been inspired to write the text for this hymn while reading Matthew Henry's commentary on the book of Leviticus. In his thoughts on Leviticus 8:35, Henry wrote, "We shall everyone of us have a charge to keep, an eternal God to glorify, an immortal soul to provide for, one generation to serve." This hymn text first appeared in *Wesley's Short Hymns on Select Passages of Holy Scriptures*, published in 1762. It was printed under the title "Keep the Charge of the Lord, That Ye Die Not."

This hymn text reflects the strength and zeal of the early Methodists. John Wesley once remarked upon hearing of his followers' persecution: "Our people die well." On another occasion a physician said to Charles Wesley, "Most people die for fear of dying; but I never met with such people as yours. They are none of them afraid of death, but calm and patient and resigned to the last."

Being a Christian who worthily represents the Lord has never been and will never be a life of ease. It requires our very best, the total commitment of our lives.

A charge to keep I have—a God to glorify, who gave His Son my soul to save and fit it for the sky.

To serve the present age, my calling to fulfill—O may it all my pow'rs engage to do my Master's will!

Arm me with jealous care, as in Thy sight to life; and O Thy servant, Lord, prepare a strict account to give!

Help me to watch and pray, and on Thyself rely; and let me ne'er my trust betray, but press to realms on high.

p. 309

v.26 Solomon accumulated chariots and horses; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses, which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 9:25

Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horses, which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Chariots were the most effective and dreaded military machines of that day. Their mobility and versatility gave Israel a great military advantage and discouraged enemies from invading the wealthy nation. Solomon's **chariot cities**, some have suggested, were Gezer, Hazor, and Megiddo.
p. 508

Patrick & Lowth say:

In a time of profound peace he thought it a piece of wisdom to be ready for war, as a means to preserve the peace. Though the surest way to enjoy the happiness wherein he lived, had been to observe strictly the commands of God.
p. 333

McNeely says:

In Solomon's day, chariots were the most feared of all forces that could be assembled on a battlefield. The speed with which they moved, as well as the advanced weaponry used from their platforms, made them the armored divisions of the ancient world. The tank battles of the recent Yom Kippur War were modern-day counterparts to the ancient use of chariots.

Until Solomon's time, Israel's military force had consisted of infantry. Solomon modernized his army by introducing the use of chariots and placing chariot forces strategically throughout the land.

p. 57

J. Vernon McGee says:

Solomon, as he gathered horses and horsemen, expanded in a department in which God had forbidden him to expand. Solomon's stables would make these modern race tracks look like a tenant farmer's barn in Georgia.

p. 269

McGee says further:

This reveals the defect in this man's character. The king had been forbidden by the Mosaic Law to multiply horses and wives. Solomon multiplied both. One of the most impressive things at Megiddo is the ruins of the stables that Solomon had there. And there are ruins of his stables in several other areas. He really multiplied horses!

p. 425

Wiersbe says:

Chariots and horses (vv. 26-29) were another indication of decay (Deut. 17:17). And don't forget what Jesus said about all of Solomon's glory (Matt. 6:29).

p. 202

Deuteronomy 17:14-17

When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, "Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us," be sure to appoint over you the king the Lord your God chooses. He must be from among your own brothers. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not a brother Israelite. The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the Lord has told you, "You are not to go back that way again." He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.

It is obvious from this passage that there are quite a number of STATEMENTS in the Mosaic Law that Solomon is violating at this time:

1. He is multiplying his SILVER AND GOLD,
2. he will multiply his WIVES,
3. he has gotten HORSES, and
4. many of these were IMPORTED FROM EGYPT.

Matthew 6:28, 29

"And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these.

It was D. L. Moody who said:

(They Walked with God by James S. Bell, Jr.)

Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." Mark you, He did not say—"no man shall serve . . . Ye shall not serve . . .," but "No man can serve . . . Ye cannot serve . . ." That means more than a command; it means that you cannot mix the worship of the true God with the worship of another god any more than you can mix oil and water. It cannot be done.

D. L. Moody

(01/21)

(The Christian in Complete Armour by William Gurnall)

In our march to heaven, fighting with the cursed spirits and lusts that stand in our way, we too must go by God's rules, which are spelled out for us in His Word.

(January 21)

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

Woe to anyone who tries to widen the narrow way!
p. 138

(Detours, Tow Trucks, and Angels in Disguise: Finding Humor and Hope in Unexpected Places by Carol Kent)

*"I just don't understand it, Mom,
My feet just won't do what my mind says it wants to."*

p. 52

(A Man to Match the Mountain: Overcoming the Obstacles of Life by David Roper)

Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom laments, "T's wicked I is; mighty wicked; anyhow I can't help it!"
p. 61

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

Choices are the hinges of destiny.

—Edwin Markham

p. 25

(Time To Get Serious: Daily Devotions to Keep You Close to God by Tony Evans)

When the Bible uses the word *flesh* in this context, it means the body contaminated by sin. Your body is not evil in and of itself, but it is like a house that is infested with roaches. We have been infested with spiritual roaches that, given the right amount of darkness, will come out of hiding.
p. 260

(Walking With Saints: Through the Best and Worst Times of Our Lives by Calvin Miller)

This is all a bit reminiscent of C. S. Lewis's ghost in *The Great Divorce*. He approaches heaven with a lizard on his lapel. The ghost is informed at the gate that heaven holds no lizards and that while he is quite welcome to come in, the lizard may not. The lizard begins to plead and beg that there be no separation. The poor ghost is hungry to honor his toy, but he is also most desirous of heaven. In a moment of decision he rips the shrieking lizard from his lapel and throws it to the ground. Even as it begs for life, he stomps it to death. No sooner is it dead than it begins to change into a great steed, on which the decisive new saint rides gloriously into heaven.
p. 13

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

If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us, and bury all our glory in profound obscurity.

—Daniel Webster

pp. 139-40

v.27 The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycamore-fig trees in the foothills.

v.28 Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and from Kue—the royal merchants purchased them from Kue.

Patrick & Lowth say:

Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt,] Here he again openly transgressed the law of God (as Grotius observes), presuming he had no need of those cautions, which were given against this by Moses in the book of Deuteronomy (xvii. 16).

p. 333

Patrick & Lowth say further:

It is evident that in David's time they had no horses: for Absalom, when he had lost the battle wherein he perished, rode upon a mule to make his escape; and David ordered his own mule to carry Solomon to be anointed. And indeed the country did not produce them; but Solomon, being able to make great expenses, had them brought out of Egypt, and maintained this number of chariots; which resembled those of the Grecians; that is, they were small, with two wheels a piece, carrying a man or two, standing or leaning forward.

p. 551

(A Man to Match the Mountain: Overcoming the Obstacles of Life by David Roper)

The Philistines decided to strike a final blow, and so they gathered all their forces—along with David and his mercenaries—with the intent of assaulting Israel across the plain of Esdraelon. David was obliged to follow his king into battle, though he did so with a sinking heart. He knew it meant he must go into battle against his countrymen, against Saul his king and Jonathan his beloved friend.

It may be that at this point David's heart began to turn to God, asking him to extricate him from the mess he had contrived for himself. If so the Lord heard him.

F. B. Meyer has written, "If by your mistakes and sins you have reduced yourself into a false position like this, do not despair; hope still in God. Confess and put away your sins, and humble yourself before Him and he will arise to deliver you. You may have destroyed yourself, but in Him will be your help."

p. 236

v.29 They imported a chariot from Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty. They also exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and of the Arameans.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

. . . he presumably made a profit on them.

Though Solomon's wealth enabled him to purchase large quantities of **horses** and **chariots**, this practice was specifically prohibited in the Mosaic Law (Deut. 17:16). The reason for this prohibition was that the Lord wanted His people to depend on Him for their protection. The presence of strong physical defenses in Israel turned the hearts of Solomon and the people away from the Lord with a false sense of security. As is often the case, an abundance of material benefits leads people to think they have no needs when in reality their need for God never diminishes.
p. 508

I am reminded once again of the CHURCH AT LAODICEA along this very line:

Revelation 3:14-22

"And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. 'Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eyesalve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. 'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent. 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me. 'He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'"

McNeely observes:

Solomon's kingdom represented the epitome of prosperity, but the high life did not realistically characterize Solomon's realm. Working as a cancer were deteriorating influences that would soon split the kingdom into two rival factions.

p. 57

J. Vernon McGee says:

Solomon really built up tremendous wealth in the kingdom. At that time he actually cornered the market on gold, silver, and precious stones.

My friend, what are you busy doing today? Are you getting out the Word of God or are you in the business of gathering a bunch of apes? Do you pay more for entertainment than you do for the Word of God? How about the peacocks for beauty? More money is spent today on beauty preparations than is given to the Lord's work. What about gold, silver, and precious stones? Are you so busy making money that you have no time left for the Lord? Oh, my friend, we are called to witness to the world. God have mercy on us for going into the business of apes and peacocks. How frivolous!

pp. 269-70

(1001 Humorous Illustrations for Public Speaking by Michael Hodgin)

Get Even

A man died and left his great wealth to his secretary. Naturally, his wife was furious. She went to have the inscription on his tombstone changed, but was too late. To change it now she would need to buy a new stone. She thought for a moment. She certainly didn't want to spend any more of her money, so she said, "Right after 'Rest In Peace' I want you to chisel in these additional words: 'Till We Meet Again.'"

p. 307

(The Power of Personal Integrity: Becoming a Person of Character in a Drifting World by Charles Dyer)

When some small problem threatens to undo an otherwise good thing, we describe it as “a fly in the ointment.” That phrase originally came from the pen of the wisest of Israel’s kings—Solomon. He had a knack for turning a phrase, and the whole proverb goes, “Dead flies will cause even a bottle of perfume to stink! Yes, an ounce of foolishness can outweigh a pound of wisdom and honor” (Ecclesiastes 10:1). The phrase teaches us much about wisdom and folly—and about Solomon.

p. 43

Pleasure itself is not wrong, but it can turn one’s eyes away from the Lord. Solomon became more intent on gratifying himself than on pleasing God. The first tiny crack appeared in the foundation of his life, and it grew in proportion to the size of Solomon’s harem.

p. 53

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

Often what you offer God is not what He wants. He usually wants that which you dread giving Him. It is Isaac, the well-beloved, that He wants you to give up. What He is after is what comes between you and Him. He will not rest, and neither will you, I might add, until you have given Him everything. If you want to prosper and enjoy God's blessing, don't hold anything back from Him. What comfort, freedom, and strength there is when nothing stands between you and God.

p. 78

CONCLUSION:

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

LESSON #1: "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life" (Proverbs 4:23 NIV).

LESSON #2: Jesus Christ and our desire to please Him should be our single focus.

LESSON #3: God is in the business of blessing the obedient heart.

LESSON #4: Find your joy in His Word rather than in your bottom line.

LESSON #5: Satan uses the snare of accumulating wealth to destroy the things that are most precious to us.

LESSON #6: Those things that are most precious to us are our family, our marriage, our physical health, and our spiritual well-being.

LESSON #7: One of the temptations of wealth is to make a statement by becoming overly extravagant.

LESSON #8: Solomon is totally focused on material things and is caught up in the bigness of his projects.

LESSON #9: The fall of great men usually starts with rationalizing small things.

LESSON #10: "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon" (Matthew 6:24 NASB).

LESSON #11: "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 " (1 Timothy 6:10 NASB).

LESSON #12: "Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word " (Psalm 119:37).

(The Complete Book of Zingers by Croft M. Pentz)

Definition of a Christian: "Under New Management."

In the Christian life, any time you let up, you can expect a letdown.
p. 26

Bob Buford has written a book called Half Time: Changing Your Game Plan from Success to Significance. I wish that Solomon would have taken time to recognize how vulnerable he was at this point and would have done something similar.

(Halftime: Changing Your Game Plan from Success to Significance by Bob Buford)

One of the consequences of my transition into the second half is that I no longer organize my life in terms of goals. Instead, I now make commitments. These commitments also help me stay focused on my mission, and I share them here not because they are especially profound, but because they might encourage you to develop a list of commitments for your own life mission:

1. The primary loyalty of my life is Jesus Christ. I am committed to fully put into play my gifts in service to him.
2. I am committed to a vital marriage until "death do us part."
3. I have committed the majority of my time and money to beginning and developing a series of overlapping ventures which release the latent energy in American Christianity.
4. I am committed to be an effective steward of the resources entrusted to my care.
5. I am committed to be a good friend to ten people.
6. I am committed to have a renaissance in the second half of my life.
7. I am committed to practice "altruistic egoism." (Altruistic egoism means gaining personal satisfaction by helping others. It recognizes self-interest as central to my human design, and it counts as greatest gain the goodwill of one's neighbors.)

pp. 122-3

(Churchill on Courage: Wisdom for Perseverance by Frederick Talbott)

It is always in the last lap that races are either gained or lost. The effort must be forthcoming. This is not moment to slacken.

Winston Churchill
London, November 9, 1944

(quote 125)

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

Prayer is a sin-killer, a power-bringer, a victory-giver, a holiness-promoter, a dispute-adjuster, an obstacle-remover, and a Christ-revealer.

—Paul Radke

Before we can pray, "Lord, Thy Kingdom come," we must be willing to pray, "My kingdom go."

—Alan Redpath

p. 160

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

Arthur J. Allan Petersen tells about a flight he took on a 747 out of Brazil. He was awakened from sleep by a strong voice announcing, "We have a very serious emergency." Three engines had quit because of fuel contamination and the fourth was expected to go at any second. The plan began to drop and turn in the night, preparing for an emergency landing.

At first the situation seemed unreal to Petersen, but when the steward barked, "Prepare for impact," he found himself — and everyone around him praying. As he buried his head in his lap and pulled up his knees, he said, "Oh, God, thank You. Thank You for the incredible privilege of knowing You. Life has been wonderful." As the plan approached the ground, his last cry was, "Oh, God, my wife! My children!"

Petersen survived. As he wandered about the airport in a daze, aching all over, he found he couldn't speak, but his mind was racing. *What were my last words? What was the bottom line?* As he remembered, he had his answer: relationship. Reunited with his wife and sons, he found that all he could say to them over and over was, "I appreciate you, I appreciate you!"

Listen to what you are saying. Have you told that person who matters most to you how you *really* feel?

p. 153

(Detours, Tow Trucks, and Angels in Disguise: Finding Humor and Hope in Unexpected Places by Carol Kent)

I had been in California for five days of training to become a Bible Study Fellowship teaching leader. It was the longest time I had ever been away from my child. I missed my family and could hardly wait to see my husband and son again.

As I jumped out of the car, my four-year-old son, J.P., gave me an enormous grin and sprang into action. As I caught him up in my arms, we twirled around in a couple of circles to celebrate our reunion. My exuberant child squeezed me tightly as he shouted, "Oh, Mommy, Mommy! When I saw you right now, it was just like I saw you brand-new!"

Sometimes applications are instant. My son's precious words reminded me of how God sees me through His Son's shed blood on Calvary. If I have confessed my sin and accepted His forgiveness, I am a new person. Instead of seeing my transgressions and mistakes of the past, He sees me clothed in Jesus' righteousness. He sees me as brand-new and beautiful!
pp. 118-19

(A Passionate Commitment: Recapturing Your Sense of Purpose by Crawford W. Loritts)

The story is told of David Brainerd, the famed missionary to the Native Americans of the eighteenth century, who one day was speaking to a small group of people. As he was speaking, the chief, evidently under great conviction, interrupted Brainerd. With his horse in tow, he said, "The chief gives his horse to God."

He sat down and Brainerd continued to preach. It wasn't enough. The chief interrupted a second time and determined to give the most treasured of his possessions: "The chief gives his headdress to God."

Once again he sat down and Brainerd continued to preach. Finally, still deeply disturbed, the chief jumped to his feet and said, "The chief has nothing else of value to give to God, so the chief presents himself to God!"

How many of us are like that Indian chief, giving bits and pieces of our lives, but not the all-important gift of ourselves? We opt for an à la carte Christianity; you know, pick and choose whatever happens to be tasteful and satisfying to our spiritual appetite at the time. *We* maintain control and dictate to God what He can or cannot do. We reserve the right to choose the areas of our lives He can control. We post "no trespassing" signs over certain sections and "limited access" warnings over other areas.
pp. 46-47

(The Power of Personal Integrity: Becoming a Person of Character in a Drifting World by Charles Dyer)

William Longstaff, an English businessman, made a decision to live a life of integrity and holiness. He wrote a simple poem explaining what living such a life meant to him—and years later his poem, "Take Time to Be Holy," was set to music. This simple poem "may have been the only poem he ever wrote. . . . A businessman at heart, Longstaff wrote no flowery or pious-sounding verses, but these down-to-earth thoughts."³

Read Longstaff's words carefully—and make them your own as you decide *now* to live a life of integrity.

*Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in Him always, and feed on His Word;
Make friends of God's children; help those who are weak;
Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.*

*Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;
Much time spend in secret with Jesus alone;
By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be;
Thy friends in thy conduct his likeness shall see.*

*Take time to be holy, let Him be thy guide,
And run not before Him whatever betide;
In joy or in sorrow still follow the Lord,
And, looking to Jesus, still trust in His Word.*

*Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul;
Each thought and each motive beneath His control;
Thus led by His Spirit to fountains of love,
Thou soon shalt be fitted for service above.*

3. William J. Petersen and Randy Petersen provide the background for this hymn in this devotional for May 31 in *The One Year Book of Hymns*, edited by Robert K. Brown and Mark R. Norton (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 1995). pp. 224-225

(In His Image: Reflecting Christ in Everyday Life by Michael J. Wilkins)

As we close this chapter, consider the words of the great American preacher, philosopher, and theologian, Jonathan Edwards:

On January 12, 1723, I made a solemn dedication of myself to God, and wrote it down; giving up myself, and all that I had to God; to be for the future, in no respect, my own; to act as one that had no right to be himself, in any respect. And solemnly vowed to take God for my whole portion and felicity; looking on nothing else, as any part of my happiness, nor acting as if it were.³

3. Jonathan Edwards, *Personal Narrative*.
p. 88