

THE LIFE OF SOLOMON: SOLOMON'S WIVES

SESSION #21: 1 Kings 11:1-13

TEXT:

v. 1 King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites.

v. 2 They were from nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love.

v. 3 He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray.

v. 4 As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been.

v. 5 He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites.

v. 6 So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord; he did not follow the Lord completely, as David his father had done.

v. 7 On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites.

v. 8 He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.

v. 9 The Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice.

v.10 Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the Lord's command.

v.11 So the Lord said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates.

v.12 Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son.

v.13 Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen."

INTRODUCTION:

(Cow Pies & Candle Lights by G. T. Burton)

THE NIGHTMARE

I dreamt one night my life on earth
 Had marched its final beat,
 And all at once I found myself
 Before the Judgment seat.
 The Master bade me enter in,
 And join the Heavenly crowd,
 Check out a crown, a harp, a robe;
 And pick a fleecy cloud.

But ere I touched those gates of pearl,
 Or trod the golden Street,
 This fellow poked me in the ribs,
 And showed me to a seat.
 He snatched away my starry crown,
 And whisk my harp away,
 Then scrapped the gold up off the street;
 Just left the bed of clay.

He picked the pearls from off the gate,
 And leased my mansion out,
 Then left me one wet leaky cloud
 To make my way about.
 He left just one old scratchy robe,
 And a halo bent with age,
 He even ripped the hymn book up,
 and took my favorite page.

I thought I'd left this guy behind,
 And reached a happy land,
 Where I was safe forever more
 Within the Master's hand
 I should have known I'd not escape
 This demon's harsh caress,
 He chased me clear beyond the grave;
 The man from I.R.S.

(Cow Pies & Candle Lights by G. T. Burton)

DOGMATIC

Ridin' through a sleepy town
 Randy Jones and Bugger Red
 Observed a pair of weathered churches
 That both looked sort'a dead.
 Red wondered why two churches,
 'Cause they looked like they wuz twins,
 It looked like they would combine and work
 Together fightin' sins.
 Randy said he knew the facts
 When them churches worked as one,
 'Way before the disagreement came,
 Before their fight begun.

"One church got along just fine
 'Till a group got up and split.
 They got to studyin' about old Moses,
 And this bunch had a fit.
 That church sez Phraoh's daughter
 Found Moses in the cat-tails,
 Those folks all knew she'd found him there, but
 They don't know the details.
 So that's the disagreement,
 This'n says they've been misled,
 She sez she found him in the rushes,
 But ... that's just what she said".

p. 56

(Charity: A Collection of Poems by Gail T. Burton by Gail T. Burton)

HE KNOWS MY NAME

As the tick of time winds slowly down
and the silver thread grows thin,
I wonder what my life has brought,
and what its worth has been.

I've gained no wealth of earthly goods,
I have no fame to show.
No monument, my name inscribed,
where public gardens grow.

I've led no group in public change
or done things that heroes do.
My name's not even recognized
beyond a special few.

But God above knows who I am;
my name is in His book,
He knows my feelings and my thoughts,
and even how I look.

But best of all, He knows my heart,
and His spirit dwells within.
I've been adopted as His child,
that's more fame than I could win.

p. 30

(The Humor of the American Cowboy by Stan Hoig)

Cowboys generally liked their meat well done, and the old cow hand who bowlegged his way into an El Paso restaurant was no exception. He ordered a big steak, telling the waitress he wanted it well done. But when she brought it, the meat was anything but burned. The cowboy asked her to take it back to be cooked some more, but she insisted that the steak was done.

"Done, heck!" exploded the old cowboy. "Out where I come from, cows have been hurt worse than that an' got well!"⁴

⁴Frank M. King, *Wranglin' the Past* (Pasadena, Calif.: Trail's End Publishing Co., 1935), p. 97.

Cowboy's also had special ways of expressing themselves. For instance when a cowboy got bucked off of a bronc, these are some of the statements you would hear from him:

(Cowboy Slang: Colorful Cowboy Sayings! by Edgar R. "Frosty" Potter)

- Got up with three handfuls of something he didn't want.
p. 13
- I didn't break nothin', but all my hinges, bolts an' nuts was shore loosened.
p. 13
- After that ride all I needed to make me a cripple was a tin cup an' a handful of pencils.
p. 14

(More Holy Humor by Carl and Rose Samra)

Country singer Barbara Mandrell said that when her son Nathan was born, she always sang three songs to him: "Jesus Loves Me," "This Is the Day the Lord Has Made," and "Jesus Loves the Little Children." She said: "I wondered which of these would be the first song that Nathan would sing on his own. It was none of those three. The first song he sang was 'All My Ex's Live in Texas.'"

— *The Detroit News*

p. 35

(Holy Humor: Inspirational Wit and Cartoons by Cal and Rose Samra)

A Sunday school teacher asked her class: "Who decreed that all the world should be taxed?"

"The Democrats," a young girl answered.

"If God had wanted us to vote, He would have given us candidates."

—Jay Leno

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(1001 Humorous Illustrations for Public Speaking by Michael Hodgin)

Formidable Dilemma

A man, his wife, and his mother-in-law went on a safari in Africa. They hired a guide and set out into the jungle. One morning the married couple awoke to find the mother missing. After a lengthy search, they found the woman in a clearing, face-to-face with a huge lion. The terrified wife cried out to her husband, "Dear, what should we do?" The husband replied, "Not a thing. The lion got himself into this mess; let him get himself out of it."

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Nehemiah 13:26 (God's Word)

I said, "Wasn't it because of marriages like these that King Solomon of Israel sinned? There wasn't a king like him among all nations. God loved him, and God made him king of all Israel. But his non-Israelites wives led him to sin.

Baxter says:

Alas, the glory of the Solomonic period was short-lived. Soon were Israel's sons to lament, "How is the gold become dim!" The fault was Solomon's alone. The following sentences, picked from chapter xi., tell the story of his failure. "But king Solomon loved many strange women." "Solomon clave unto these in love." "His wives turned away his heart after other gods." "Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord." "The Lord was angry with Solomon." "The Lord said: I will surely rend the kingdom from thee." It was this infidelity of Solomon which precipitated the disruption into the two kingdoms.

pp. 101-102

McNeely says:

Solomon's life ended in disaster. Riding the crest of power has plunged many complacent men into defeat. Solomon undoubtedly came to believe that his sagacity, power, and prestige would see him through any difficulty. Power attracts enemies, but external opposition did not threaten Solomon as did his internal difficulties. It was on these internal problems that the writer of Kings first focuses attention.
p. 57

Lockyer says:

No Bible king so belied the promise of his early days as Solomon, on whom prosperity produced so fatal an apostasy. Farrar speaks of Solomon as "the brilliant soldier and trafficker who grew into an uxorious, a ruined and an apostate autocrat. The story of Solomon is the story of one whose heart was perverted and his will enervated by luxury and pride."
p. 113

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown say:

Solomon's extraordinary gift of wisdom was not sufficient to preserve him from falling into grievous and fatal errors. A fairer promise of true greatness, a more beautiful picture of juvenile piety, never was seen than that which he exhibited at the commencement of his reign. No sadder, more humiliating, or awful spectacle can be imagined than the besotted apostasy of his old age; and to him may be applied the words of Paul (Gal. 3:3), of John (Rev. 3:17), and of Isaiah (14:21). A love of the world, a ceaseless round of pleasure, had insensibly corrupted his heart, and produced, for a while at least, a state of mental darkness.
p. 257

Joseph Parker says:

We may be quite certain that all processes of this kind come to one of two ends: either outward pomp conquers religious conviction, or religious conviction sanctifies worldly pomp, taking out of it all harmfulness, and turning it to necessary conveniences and uses. In the case of Solomon, worldly pomp seems, for a time at least, to have dominated his mind. The idea seems to have occurred to him, why not be magnificent in "gods" as well as in horses and in chariots? A man who had everything that heart could wish, might surely, so he reasoned, permit himself to add any number of gods to his pantheon, and, in indulging this imagination, he might even suppose that so strong was he in his own faith that he could control all these gods, and make them merely decorative of great central verities.

p. 335

J. Vernon McGee says:

Solomon is the most colossal failure in the pages of Scripture. ". . . For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required . . ." (Luke 12:48). He had the greatest opportunity of any man who ever lived. He began by failing to remove false religion (1 Kings 3:3). What was at first only a spot is now a plague of leprosy. He had a harem of one thousand wives, pagan women, who turned his heart away from the Lord. For this reason God stirred up enemies against Solomon and allowed Jeroboam to rise to prominence and finally split the kingdom.

p. 270

I think it would be good for us to PREPARE OUR HEARTS before we look at these 1 Kings 11:1-13 by listening to MOSES as he gave the children of Israel the Lord's mandate before they entered into the land.

Deuteronomy 10:12, 13

And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the Lord's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?

v. 1 King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Besides a **king** being forbidden by God to increase the number of his horses . . . a king was also forbidden by God to marry **many** wives "or his heart will be led astray" . . . This is precisely what happened to **Solomon**. . . . Solomon's pagan **wives** led him into idolatry just as God had warned . . . p. 508

Deuteronomy 17:16, 17

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.

As we can see, Solomon has been in VIOLATION on every one of these WARNINGS given by Moses in instructing the children of Israel with regard to their king who would rule over them in the land they were preparing to move into.

"KING SOLOMON, HOWEVER, LOVED MANY FOREIGN WOMEN."

We have FIVE DIFFERENT TYPES listed besides "PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER." There are:

1. "MOABITES,"
2. "AMMONITES,"
3. "EDOMITES,"
4. "SIDONIANS," and
5. "HITTITES."

Isaiah 31:1-3

Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the Lord. Yet he too is wise and can bring disaster; he does not take back his words. He will rise up against the house of the wicked, against those who help evildoers. But the Egyptians are men and not God; their horses are flesh and not spirit. When the Lord stretches out his hand, he who helps will stumble, he who is helped will fall; both will perish together.

McNeely observes:

Strangely, there is seemingly complete silence concerning the Law of Moses throughout the history of the kings. Whenever it is mentioned, the reference is only general. But the Law had clearly prohibited foreign marriages (Deut 7:1-5). With the newness of the great worship center scarcely gone, declension set in because of indulgence in the very things God had exhorted His people not to do.

p. 58

Delitzsch says:

The idolatry into which Solomon fell in his old age appears so strange in a king so wise and God-fearing as Solomon showed himself to be at the dedication of the temple, that many have been quite unable to reconcile the two, and have endeavoured to show either that Solomon's worship of idols was psychologically impossible, or that the knowledge of God and the piety attributed to him are unhistorical. But great wisdom and a refined knowledge of God are not a defence against the folly of idolatry, since this has its roots in the heart, and springs from sensual desires and the lust of the flesh.

p. 166

Matthew Henry says:

He gave himself to women, which his mother had particularly cautioned him against. Prov. xxxi. 3, *Give not thy strength unto women* (perhaps alluding to Samson, who lost his strength by giving information of it to a woman). His father David's fall began with the lusts of the flesh. The love of women has *cast down many wounded* (Prov. vii. 26) and *many* (says Bishop Hall) *have had their head broken by their own rib.*
p. 377

How different Solomon's life would have been had he been faithful to Shulamuth that he writes about in the Song of Solomon. This kind of moral integrity would have protected him from the demise that we are witnessing in the text before us on this occasion.

I was reading Ann Landers the other day and she had a very interesting article called:

50 Years Of Love A Honeymoon Delight

DEAR ANN LANDERS: Last weekend, we celebrated my parents 50th wedding anniversary. This morning, they left on a long-awaited trip to Hawaii. They were as excited as if it were their honeymoon.

When my parents married, they had only enough money for a three-day trip 50 miles from home. They made a pact that each time they made love, they would put a dollar in a special metal box and save it for a honeymoon in Hawaii for their 50th anniversary.

Dad was a policeman, and Mom was a schoolteacher. They lived in a modest house and did all their own repairs. Raising five children was a challenge, and sometimes, money was short, but no matter what emergency came up, Dad would not let Mom take any money out of the "Hawaii account." As the account grew, they put it in a savings account and then bought CDs.

My parents were always very much in love. I can remember Dad coming home and telling Mom, "I have a dollar in my pocket," and she would smile at him and reply, 'I know how to spend it.'" When each of us children married, Mom and Dad gave us a small metal box and told us their secret, which we found enchanting. All five of us are now saving for our dream honeymoons. Mom and Dad never told us how much money they had managed to save, but it must have been considerable because when they cashed in those CDs, they had enough for airfare to Hawaii plus hotel accommodations for 10 days and plenty of spending money.

As they told us goodbye before leaving, Dad winked and said, "Tonight, we are starting an account for Cancun. That should only take 25 years" —
LOVING DAUGHTER IN ABILENE, TEXAS

DEAR LOVING DAUGHTER: I don't know when I have read a more heartwarming story. Your parents were marvelous role models for their five children. Please give them my warm, good wishes on their 50th, and ask them to drop me a postcard from Hawaii. It is truly one of the most romantic garden spots in all the world.

v. 2 They were from nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love.

The word "however" in verse 1 and the word "NEVERTHELESS" in verse 2 cause us to be concerned about Solomon's future.

"[All of these] many foreign women . . . WERE FROM NATIONS ABOUT WHICH THE LORD HAD TOLD THE ISRAELITES, 'YOU MUST NOT INTERMARRY WITH THEM, BECAUSE THEY WILL SURELY TURN YOUR HEARTS AFTER THEIR GODS.'"

Patrick & Lowth say:

He not only married them, but had a great affection to them; whereby his heart was easily alienated from God.

p. 334

Exodus 34:16

And when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same.

Deuteronomy 7:1-4

When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you—and when the Lord your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the Lord's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you.

Delitzsch points out:

The treaty with Hiram of Tyre, which enabled him to execute the intended state buildings in Jerusalem, was followed by alliances for the establishment of a widespread commerce both by sea and land, through which ever increasing treasures of gold and silver, and other costly goods, were brought to the king. As this accumulation of riches helped to nourish his inclination to a love of show, and created a kind of luxury which was hardly reconcilable with the simplicity of manners and the piety of a servant of God, so the foreign trade led to a toleration of heathen customs and religious views which could not fail to detract from the reverence paid to Jehovah, however little the trade with foreigners might be in itself at variance with the nature of the Old Testament kingdom of God.
p. 167

Matthew Henry says:

Solomon was master of a great deal of knowledge, but to what purpose, when he had no better a government of his appetites?
p. 377

The LORD'S STATEMENT is very clear here:

"YOU MUST NOT INTERMARRY WITH THEM."

The REASON is given:

"BECAUSE THEY WILL SURELY TURN YOUR HEARTS AFTER THEIR GODS."

What we have here is the LEVERAGE OF LOVE.

How many times have we seen this very fact illustrated in the settlement of the estates of those who have been involved in numerous relationships?

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 anyone 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.'"

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

In 1 Kings 11 the author sadly records Solomon's marriages to women from the nations around Israel. "The Lord had clearly instructed his people not to inter-marry with those nations, because the women they married would lead them to worship their gods. Yet Solomon insisted on loving them anyway" (11:2).

Perhaps Solomon struggled when the first of these foreign women arrived with the envoy from a neighboring state. As the envoy fawned over Solomon and described the mutual benefits of the proposed treaty for Solomon and the people of Israel, Solomon barely listened. Instead his eyes kept moving back to take in the form and beauty of this remarkable woman who stood in his royal court. Surely God wasn't referring to *this* woman when he made such a prohibition against having foreign wives, or else why would God have made her so beautiful?

No doubt Solomon used his great intellect to construct several rationalizations of why God would consider this marriage to be an exception. But in the end Solomon deliberately decided to disobey God's Word and follow the lust of his heart.

Somewhat later in life Solomon came to a sad realization. "All people spend their lives scratching for food, but they never seem to have enough" (Ecclesiastes 6:7). Solomon had an appetite for beautiful women, and his appetite was never satisfied.

p. 54

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

All the water in the world, however
 hard it tried,
 Could never, never sink a ship
 unless it got inside.
 All the evil in the world, the
 wickedness and sin,
 Can never sink your soul's fair craft
 unless you let it in.

—A. C. Hoffman

p. 32

Let us take a few moments to MEDITATE upon the LAST PHRASE in verse 2:

"NEVERTHELESS, SOLOMON HELD FAST TO THEM IN LOVE."

Let me just make this one OBSERVATION:

Making choices contrary to the Word of God and to the will of God will always have serious consequences.

"SOLOMON HELD FAST TO THEM IN LOVE."

He never really learned to say "No."

1 Corinthians 9:27

but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

1 Thessalonians 4:3, 4

For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,

(Oswald Chambers: Abandoned to God by David McCasland)

Oswald's letters during this week speak of his refusal to view God's call in terms of "usefulness," as others defined it.

December 27:

I am not appealed to on the line that I am of more use in certain places. It is with me where He wills. Bless the Lord He guides. Pay attention to the source and He will look after the outflow.

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Their engagement provided a context of confidence and trust in which they could open up to each other. Since only quoted fragments survive of Oswald's letters to Biddy, we are left to guess at what she wrote to him. Reading these fragments of his letters to her is like listening to one end of a telephone conversation, but the bits and pieces reveal the love that was deepening between them. Throughout January 1909, he poured out his soul and described what he saw for their life together.

With what power those words of His come back to me about you—a help answering to Him. Let me tell you what I see in outline. All comforts and comrades and countries are held lightly, all at His command. Can you, out of your love to Him and me forego every other interest saving the interest of His Cross?

Do you know how it costs to write this—by grace mine eyes have looked on Jesus. I dare not think of that. Oh I know you will rise to any height of self-sacrifice—but you understand how many misgivings I have in calling you to come with me.

I cannot give you any other warned couple as a specimen of what it will mean. We will be the two sent out by Him. I need you to keep me strong in the way He calls.

I have no home to offer you. I have no money to give you. I have the great wild world and His commission—Go and make disciples.

I am solemn with the awakening to the grandeur of His call—follow me.

I see loyalty to Him and nothing else and you will help me to be loyal to Him.

pp. 157-8

Ezekiel the prophet describes for us how the Lord feels in these situations in:

Ezekiel 16:6-20

"Then I passed by and saw you kicking about in your blood, and as you lay there in your blood I said to you, 'Live!' I made you grow like a plant of the field. You grew up and developed and became the most beautiful of jewels. Your breasts were formed and your hair grew, you who were naked and bare. Later I passed by, and when I looked at you and saw that you were old enough for love, I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness. I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign Lord, and you became mine. I bathed you with water and washed the blood from you and put ointments on you. I clothed you with an embroidered dress and put leather sandals on you. I dressed you in fine linen and covered you with costly garments. I adorned you with jewelry: I put bracelets on your arms and a necklace around your neck, and I put a ring on your nose, earrings on your ears and a beautiful crown on your head. So you were adorned with gold and silver; your clothes were of fine linen and costly fabric and embroidered cloth. Your food was fine flour, honey and olive oil. You became very beautiful and rose to be a queen. And your fame spread among the nations on account of your beauty, because the splendor I had given you made your beauty perfect, declares the Sovereign Lord. But you trusted in your beauty and used your fame to become a prostitute. You lavished your favors on anyone who passed by and your beauty became his. You took some of your garments to make gaudy high places, where you carried on your prostitution. Such things should not happen, nor should they ever occur. You also took the fine jewelry I gave you, the jewelry made of my gold and silver, and you made for yourself male idols and engaged in prostitution with them. And you took your embroidered clothes to put on them, and you offered my oil and incense before them. Also the food I provided for you—the fine flour, olive oil and honey I gave you to eat—you offered as fragrant incense before them. That is what happened, declares the Sovereign Lord. And you took your sons and daughters whom you bore to me and sacrificed them as food to the idols. Was your prostitution not enough?

v. 3 He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray.

You will notice immediately that the Lord's warning is fulfilled.
In verse 2 He says:

"You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods."

Here in verse 3:

"HIS WIVES LED HIM ASTRAY."

Patrick & Lowth say:

He was so delighted in their company, that they turned away his thoughts from serious business; yea, from God himself.

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1st Girl: My pastor said we could have sixteen husbands.

2nd Girl: Are you sure about that?

1st Girl: Why, yes. At the last wedding at the church I heard him say, "Four better, four worse, four richer, and four poorer!"

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Sometime back I found a little poetic piece on King Solomon:

King Solomon

Solomon, Solomon,
Wonderfully wise,
How could you get married
To one thousand wives?

If God gave you wisdom,
Then how could you falter,
With wife after wife
Building idol and altar?

Your life in old age
Fills me with distress;
Why did you slowly
Love God less and less?

If you were so wise,
I hardly can see
How things will go better
With simpleton me!

Deuteronomy 17:14-17
1 Kings 11:1-13

v. 4 As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been.

You will notice in verse 4 the word "HEART" occurs THREE TIMES.

Solomon wanted to have his cake and eat it too!

Here we see a graphic ILLUSTRATION of the POWER OF THE SENSUAL.

1 Thessalonians 4:3, 4

For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,

Proverbs 4:23

Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Solomon did not abandon Yahweh but he worshiped other gods as well. . . . he compromised his affections. Apparently he concluded that since he was a great king he should live like the other great kings of the world even though it meant disobeying God's Word.

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EVIL INFLUENCE

Some people who are naturally kind and decent become monsters of iniquity when they listen to the wrong advisors. This is what happened to Charles IX of France. He had a loving, sensitive nature as a young person, but he gradually became evil through the influence of his villainous mother. Eventually he grew so wicked that he issued an order which led to the death of more than 25,000 Huguenots in the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. Many years later when Charles was on his deathbed, the memory of this terrible deed caused him to cry out, "Asleep or awake, I see mangled forms of the Huguenots passing before me. They make hideous faces at me; they point to their open wounds and mock me." He died this way because he had allowed himself to be swayed by a wicked person.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

We anticipated seeing "everything" during that 36-hour layover in London. Instead we shivered in our hotel room or sat wearily waiting in the air terminal. Hardly a tourist's dream-come-true! But that's where we met our neighbor, the Hindu. It was November 1968, and the mass exodus of Asians from East Africa had begun.

Today England is home for over one million Asian immigrants, of whom over 600,000 are Hindus. When we arrived in North Leicester as missionaries in 1973, fifty thousand became our neighbors: the families living beside us, our doctor, greengrocer, pharmacist, and best friends.

Some surmise that if geographical isolation from India does not cause Indians to forsake Hinduism, western culture will. Instead, in the European religious climate of universalism, Hinduism thrives. Empty church buildings are converted into temples. Carey Hall, the large Baptist church named after William Carey who left his pastorate in Leicester in 1783 to reach Hindus in Burma and India, now houses Leicester's largest Hindu temple. Public school buildings are rented weeknights to teach Indian languages and religions.

— By Neale & Barbara Goetsch

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator 1.0)

Montgomery & Gehman translate verse 4 in the following way:

And it was, when Solomon grew old, that his [Grr. foreign] wives perverted his heart after other gods, and his heart was not at one with YHWH his God, as was his father David's heart.

p. 232

Lange observes:

Here we see plainly how a godly man may gradually fall into sin. He first allows himself too much liberty. He ventures into danger, and then perishes therein. . . . He who scorns danger, who by marriage and by a wilful intrusion upon certain positions exposes himself to it, or who even ventures in his daily course to much into the world, under the pretext of liberty; he who indulges in the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life instead of enjoying with gratitude and moderation the gifts of God, such an one becomes the slave of sin, and falls under the wrath of God. The heart is first inclined, then wanders upon evil paths, and at last does openly what is displeasing to the Lord.

p. 131

Lange says further:

Even as in youth exuberance of life and strength opens the door to temptation, so likewise does the weakness of old age. But an old gray-haired sinner is much more abominable in the sight of the Lord than a youth.

p. 132

Lockyer says:

Religious apostasy and indulgence in polygamy brought upon Solomon's ruin. His idolatrous mistresses and consorts brought into the royal household the worship of their native deities, for whom shrines were built in Jerusalem (I Kings 11:1, 7). Divine chastisement fell upon Solomon for his adultery and idolatry. Although he commenced to walk in David's godly ways, he sacrificed in high temples. He tried to mix the worship of God with heathen rites. The high places Solomon built for Ashtaroath and other heathen deities appear to have remained for more than 350 years.

p. 114

Joseph Parker says:

Does the word "old" so change the tenor of the text that it may be read thus: Solomon having lost his early mental vigour, or having become weary with the vain experiences of life, or having seen an end to all things under the sun, little cared what happened to him; this decay, therefore, must not be traced to any voluntary action on his own part, but must be rather regarded as an excuse for what would seem to be a shameful apostasy? We cannot consent to have the text read thus; otherwise it might appear at least to give us licence to follow in the same lines. No. We must insist upon it that as a man grows old he should grow wise; that as he advances in years he should consolidate in faith; and at the end should have become master of himself and of his circumstances, and worthily represent the spiritual education under which God has caused him to pass.
p. 337

(Fénelon: Meditations on the Heart of God by François Fénelon)

Saint Augustine tells us that for too long we have been dragging around with weak wills, longing after good but not putting forth the effort to bring it about.
p. 70

The old cowboy said it right:

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

A lot of a man's religion is in his wife's name.
p. 12

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

SOLOMON ALLOWED HIS LOVE FOR GOD TO GROW COLD

Solomon's pursuit of pleasure and his benign neglect of God's Word caused a subtle transformation in his own life. This crack in his moral foundation was the most insidious because it happened so slowly that he never saw the change until it was too late. But over time his love for God grew cold, and his heart grew callous. "In Solomon's old age, [his wives and concubines] turned his heart to worship their gods instead of trusting only in the Lord his god, as his father, David, had done" (1 Kings 11:4).

p. 55

Let us REFLECT for a few moments on the phrase at the beginning of verse 4:

"AS SOLOMON GREW OLD."

The AGING PROCESS causes us to be vulnerable to making some very poor decisions in our lives. The question is no longer:

"What can I still achieve?" but

"What am I going to get out of this?"

The TEMPTATION is to:

LET UP,

LAY DOWN,

LIVE FOR THE MOMENT, and

LET OTHERS DO THE WORK.

I'VE BEEN THERE, DONE THAT!

I am living by the law of trying everything I have missed to this point!

With aging, comes the possibility of losing your passion.

With aging, we switch over from:

SERVANTHOOD to ENTITLEMENT.

With aging, motivation and achievement are history.

Satan is a master at using this kind of thinking to accomplish his purposes in our old age.

v. 5 He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites.

Matthew 6:24

"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.

2 Kings 23:13

The king also desecrated the high places that were east of Jerusalem on the south of the Hill of Corruption—the ones Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the vile goddess of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the vile god of Moab, and for Molech the detestable god of the people of Ammon.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Ashtoreth was a **goddess of** sex and fertility whose worship involved licentious rites and worship of the stars. She was a vile goddess . . . **Molech** worship involved human sacrifices, especially children, which was strictly prohibited by the Law (Lev. 18:21; 20:1-5).

p. 508

McNeely says:

David had made many alliances by marrying for political expediency. Solomon followed in his steps. The heir to the throne, Rehoboam, was a son of an Ammonite wife.

p. 58

WHO IS YOUR GOD?

"When man dethrones God, he deifies and worships himself. Think of the gods of the heathen, as mentioned in the Bible—Moloch, Baal, and Mammon. The worship of Moloch was the descent of man into the realm of awful cruelty, that of Baal took men through the depths of impurity, and that of Mammon debased its devotees to the lust which dreams that power lurks in possession. Moloch, Baal, and Mammon were the gods of the heathen; and these are they that men are worshipping until this hour. These gods go by other names in this enlightened 20th century, yet the world is crowded with idolaters who worship them.

"In the great cities today are hundreds of men who are offering human sacrifices to the Moloch of their lustful cruelty. Such care not how many people die in the struggle, so long as the base cravings of their hearts are satisfied. Great numbers of men worship Baal, the god of impurity. How true this is may be shown by the fact that last night there were thousands of prostitutes on the streets of our cities. Is it realized that all the horrible carrying away of the life of young manhood and womanhood in this terrible whirlpool of impurity is worship? It is the homage of the man who, losing his God, worships at the shrine of a fallen Venus. Mammon worship is another evil form of devotion which is cursing the age. A sad proof of the power of Mammon is when a man worships the things that provide him with provision and food. Are there not a great many today who worship their business instead of God?"

—G. Campbell Morgan
(in *Intercessors of America* Newsletter,
Feb 1993)

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

(Prayer—The Great Adventure by David Jeremiah)

I'm frequently asked, "Do you believe in the ecumenical movement?" I usually respond with a saying of C.S. Lewis: "There is no clever arrangement of rotten eggs that will ever make a good omelet." The ecumenical movement is a misguided, human attempt to take all organized church—regardless of what any individual denomination believes—and force them together into some sort of outward unity. I don't believe in that, and neither does the Bible.

p. 199

v. 6 So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord; he did not follow the Lord completely, as David his father had done.

Wiersbe says:

Solomon had wisdom for everybody else but would not apply it to himself (Rom. 2:21-24). The man who wrote Proverbs 4:23 did not obey it (v. 4; 1 Kings 8:61). The king was required to write a personal copy of Deuteronomy and study it (Deut. 17:18-20), so surely Solomon knew Deuteronomy 7:1-11; 17:17. It is one thing to know the Word but quite another thing to do it (James 1:22-25).
p. 202

The life of Edgar Allen Poe is one of the most tragic of all American writers. Within a brief span of forty years he literally went from riches to rags. Raised by foster parents who loved him deeply, he was provided with an education that matched his genius in his field of interest. He attended private schools in England. He was schooled in Richmond at the University of Virginia. He even spent a period of time as a cadet at West Point.

Poe, in his heyday, was unparalleled as a literary critic, editor, poet, and author of short stories. Most of us have probably had our spines tingled by *The Pit and the Pendulum* or *The Tell-Tale Heart* or *The Raven*. His works have indeed left their mark.

But the mark left by his life is another story. Poe lost his young bride through a bitter case of tuberculosis. By that time, alcohol and drug abuse, along with involvement in the occult and Satanism, had proved to be his undoing. Depression and insanity plagued his short life, eventually leaving him unconscious in the gutter of a windswept street in Baltimore. Four days later he died, having never regained consciousness.

Poe began his life with money and brilliance, which quickly brought him prestige and fame. But it was only a matter of time before he became a ragged, penniless bum.

This tragedy, the slow slip from riches to rags, happens not only to individuals but to churches as well. The church at Corinth was just such a case. Its beginning was so rich that it seemed invincible. Like Poe, it went from riches to the beggarly rags of spiritual poverty before it finally ended up in the gutter.

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator 1.0)

2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me, Says the Lord Almighty." Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

As one gentleman prayed:

"Oh, Lord, help me to cooperate with You so You won't have to operate on me!"

(God's Little Instruction Book: Volumes I, II & III by Honor Books)

To know the will of God is
the greatest knowledge,
to find the will of God is the greatest
discovery,
and to do the will of
God is the greatest achievement.

p. 153

(A 5th Portion of Chicken Soup for the Soul: 101 More Stories to Open the Heart and Rekindle the Spirit by Jack Canfield & Mark Victor Hansen)

Don't Hope, Friend . . . Decide!

While waiting to pick up a friend at the airport in Portland, Oregon, I had one of those life-changing experiences that you hear other people talk about—the kind that sneaks up on you unexpectedly. This one occurred a mere two feet away from me.

Straining to locate my friend among the passengers deplaning through the jetway, I noticed a man coming toward me carrying two light bags. He stopped right next to me to greet his family.

First he motioned to his youngest son (maybe six years old) as he laid down his bags. They gave each other a long, loving hug. As they separated enough to look in each other's face, I heard the father say, "It's so good to see you, son. I missed you so much!" His son smiled somewhat shyly, averted his eyes, and replied softly, "Me, too, Dad!"

Then the man stood up, gazed in the eyes of his oldest son (maybe nine or ten) and while cupping his son's face in his hands said, "You're already quite the young man. I love you very much, Zach!" They too hugged a most loving, tender hug.

While this was happening, a baby girl (perhaps one or one-and-a-half) was squirming excitedly in her mother's arms, never once taking her little eyes off the wonderful sight of her returning father. The man said, "Hi, baby girl!" as he gently took the child from her mother. He quickly kissed her face all over and then held her close to his chest while rocking her from side to side. The little girl instantly relaxed and simply laid her head on his shoulder, motionless in pure contentment.

After several moments, he handed his daughter to his oldest son and declared, "I've saved the best for last!" and proceeded to give his wife the longest, most passionate kiss I ever remember seeing. He gazed into her eyes for several seconds and then silently mouthed, "I love you so much!"

They stared into each other's eyes, beaming big smiles at one another, while holding hands. For an instant they reminded me of newlyweds, but I knew by the age of their kids that they couldn't possibly be. I puzzled about it for a moment, then realized how totally engrossed I was in the wonderful display of unconditional love not more than an arm's length away from me. I suddenly felt uncomfortable, as if I were invading something sacred, but was amazed to hear my own voice nervously ask, "Wow! How long have you two been married?"

"Been together fourteen years total, married twelve of those," he replied, without breaking his gaze from his lovely wife's face.

"Well then, how long have you been away?" I asked.

The man finally turned and looked at me, still beaming his joyous smile. "Two whole days!"

Two days? I was stunned. By the intensity of the greeting I had assumed he'd been gone for at least several weeks—if not months. I know my expression betrayed me, I said almost offhandedly, hoping to end my intrusion with some semblance of grace (and to get back to searching for my friend, "I hope my marriage is still that passionate after twelve years!"

The man suddenly stopped smiling. He looked me straight in the eye, and with a forcefulness that burned right into my soul, he told me something that left me a different person. He told me, "Don't hope, friend . . . decide."

Then he flashed me his wonderful smile again, shook my hand and said, "God bless!" With that, he and his family turned and strode away together.

I was still watching that exceptional man and his special family walk just out of sight when my friend came up to me and asked, "What'cha looking at?" Without hesitating, and with a curious sense of certainty, I replied, "My future!"

Michael Hargrove

pp. 72-74

v. 7 On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Chemosh worship was equally cruel and licentious. The **hill east of Jerusalem** . . . may have been the Mount of Olives . . .
p. 508

Gaebelein says:

Ashtoreth, a Phoenician goddess, was worshipped with impure rites. Milcom (Molech) was the idol-god of the Ammonites. Chemosh was the sun-god and war-god of the Moabites.
p. 272

McNeely observes:

Three heathen gods were given prominence in the religious system promoted by the king. Ashtoreth, also known as Astarte, was associated with fertility rites and her worship undoubtedly included star worship as well. Milcom was known also as Molech. Molech worship was the national religion of the Ammonites. The rites involved the offering of human sacrifice. The third deity to be recognized was Chemosh, national god of Moab. To satisfy his wives, the king threw away every important blessing of God.
pp. 58-59

v. 8 He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.

We read back in verse 1 that:

"King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women."

Now, here in verse 8, as far as providing religious freedom for these women:

"HE DID THE SAME FOR ALL HIS FOREIGN WIVES, WHO
BURNED INCENSE AND OFFERED SACRIFICES TO THEIR GODS."

Patrick & Lowth say:

For what was granted to one, the rest would be apt to claim; or else complain of unkindness to them. It is an astonishing thing that a man of his wisdom should not rather have converted them all to his religion, than be seduced by them so much as to favour theirs. But he took no pains with them, having given up himself wholly to his pleasures; and growing conceited, perhaps, of his great wisdom, thought he could reconcile his religion with theirs; and find a good meaning in all their superstitions.
p. 335

Haldeman says:

They did not protest against his household of foreign women, against his gross idolatry, his sacrifice to Moloch and to Ashtaroth together with all their abominations. They were not moved to protest against the dishonor done to the God of Israel; they were interested only in making lighter their own burdens.

The people themselves were as far away from God and spiritual things as Solomon had been. They did not ask for a cleaner administration at the hands of his son, they asked simply for greater comfort.

Self interest destroys zeal for God and blinds the eye to the claims of others.

This protest of the people while it brings into view how far Solomon had departed from God, and how responsible he was for their unhappy state under his son, at the same time shows clearly enough how far they had fallen from the plane of righteousness and truth.

p. 398

Robert Robinson had been saved out of a tempestuous life of sin through George Whitefield's ministry in England. Shortly after that, at the age of twenty-three, Robinson wrote the hymn *Come, Thou Fount*.

Come, Thou Fount of ev'ry blessing,
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.

Sadly, Robinson wandered far from those streams and, like the Prodigal Son, journeyed into the distant country of carnality. Until one day—he was traveling by stagecoach and sitting beside a young woman engrossed in her book. She ran across a verse she thought was beautiful and asked him what he thought of it.

Prone to wander—Lord, I feel it—
Prone to leave the God I love.

Bursting into tears, Robinson said, "Madam, I am the poor unhappy man who wrote that hymn many years ago, and I would give a thousand worlds, if I had them, to enjoy the feelings I had then."

—Kenneth W. Osbeck, *101 Hymn Stories*, p. 52

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator 1.0)

v. 9 The Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice.

"THE LORD BECAME ANGRY WITH SOLOMON."

You then have the REASON He does:

"BECAUSE HIS HEART HAD TURNED AWAY FROM THE LORD,
THE GOD OF ISRAEL, WHO HAD APPEARED TO HIM TWICE."

Back in verse 2, the Lord had made it clear that they were not to:

"intermarry . . . because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods."

Then in verse 4 we read:

"As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods."

Now, here in the HISTORIC STATEMENT is made of that fact in:

"THE LORD BECAME ANGRY . . . BECAUSE HIS HEART HAD
TURNED AWAY."

Wiersbe says about "ANGER":

Anger. God's blessings are given by grace, but they are enjoyed by obedience. Solomon was disobedient, and yet surely he knew that the covenant included warnings about disobedience (2 Sam. 7:14; 1 Kings 3:14; 9:4-9).

p. 202

Lange says:

If a Solomon can fall, a Solomon brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and walking in the ways of God in old age, a Solomon, the wisest man of his time! how necessary is it for us all to watch. Without watching, the greatest wisdom may become foolishness, and the highest spiritual condition may end in the wrath and judgments of God.
p. 132

Our text tells us that the Lord "HAD APPEARED TO HIM TWICE."

I think it would be good for us to MEDITATE on what the Lord said on the TWO PREVIOUS APPEARANCES and then what is said on this THIRD AND FINAL STATEMENT from the Lord in verses 11-13.

APPEARANCE #1:

1 Kings 3:5-14

At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." Solomon answered, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day. Now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?" The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both riches and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. And if you walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life."

APPEARANCE #2:1 Kings 9:2-9

the Lord appeared to him a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon. The Lord said to him: "I have heard the prayer and plea you have made before me; I have consecrated this temple, which you have built, by putting my Name there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there. As for you, if you walk before me in integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father when I said, 'You shall never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.' But if you or your sons turn away from me and do not observe the commands and decrees I have given you and go off to serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. Israel will then become a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples. And though this temple is now imposing, all who pass by will be appalled and will scoff and say, 'Why has the Lord done such a thing to this land and to this temple?' People will answer, 'Because they have forsaken the Lord their God, who brought their fathers out of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, worshipping and serving them—that is why the Lord brought all this disaster on them.'"

APPEARANCE #3:1 Kings 11:11-13

So the Lord said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates. Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary titles these remaining verses in our passage (verses 9-13) as:

His sentence from God (11:9-13)
p. 508

What is happening today in many of our standard brand denominations? One of the first exposes of the beliefs of our future ministers was made by *Redbook* magazine in August of 1961. The publishers hired one of the top pollsters in the nation to survey a full representation of our seminaries which are supposedly preparing men for Christian service in the Protestant churches. Here are some of the results—compare them carefully with what the Bible says about apostasy.

Of the ministers in training, 56 percent rejected the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, 71 percent rejected that there was life after death. 54 percent rejected the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. 98 percent rejected that there would be a personal return of Jesus Christ to this earth.

(From Parson's Bible Illustrator 1.0)

(The Book of Wisdom by Multnomah Books)

There are two kinds of people: those who say to God, "Thy will be done," and those to whom God says, "All right, then, have it your way."

C. S. Lewis
The Great Divorce

p. 452

(The Transforming Power of Fasting and Prayer: Personal Accounts of Spiritual Renewal by Bill Bright)

The proper good of a creature is to surrender itself to its Creator . . . In the world as we know it, the problem is how to recover this self-surrender. We are not merely imperfect creatures who must be improved: we are, as Newman said, rebels who must lay down our arms . . . To surrender a self-will inflamed and swollen with years of usurpation is a kind of death . . . Hence the necessity to die daily: however often we think we have broken the rebellious self, we shall still find it alive.

—C. S. Lewis

The Problem of Pain
p. 77

(Triumph Against Trouble: Finding God's Power in Life's Problems by W. Phillip Keller)

My Faithfulness

I am the faithful God. I do not change, you can trust Me completely. Look to Me, lean on Me, and rest in Me.

The words I have spoken are true, My promises are dependable, My covenants are reliable. All I have given you through My Son I have sealed forever with My holy vow.

My faithfulness gives you confident hope, a sure foundation, and an anchor for your soul. I will never fail you.

In faithfulness I keep what you have committed to Me, I perform My ministry through you, and perfect My love within you.

I cared for you as a child. I will not forsake you as an adult (in old age).

I have provided for you in times of need and I will care for you in the future.

You will never be disappointed as you trust Me. You will never be put to shame.

"Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God" (Deut. 7:9).

—compiled by Roy Lessin

p. 106

v.10 Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the Lord's command.

Baxter says:

The sun of Solomon's glory set in dark clouds. Not all the gorgeous apparel of his costly wardrobe could hide the ugly blot on his character. Not only had Solomon abused marriage; he had filled his great harem with women from those nations against which Israel had repeatedly received Divine interdict—Moab, Ammon, Edom, and others, and had even built "high places" for their abominable deities. The *king's* behaviour being such, what more likely than that the *people* would quickly sink, too? Solomon had forfeited further Divine favour. The wisest of all men had become the greatest of all fools, for he had sinned against light and privilege and promise such as had been given to no other man in all the earth.
p. 102

The old cowboy says it right:

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

Wanderin' around like a pony with the bridle off don't get you to the end of the trail.
p. 84

(To Follow Him: The Seven Marks of a Disciple by Mark Bailey)

THE AUTHORITY AND FOCUS OF OUR LIVES CHANGE

This third mark of committed discipleship, saying no to ourselves, could be defined as the renunciation of ourselves as the authority and focus of attention in our lives. Instead, we're to focus on the Person of Jesus Christ as the Lord who has all authority; He's the One in charge. He is the Head over all.

When I was in sports, one of my coaches had a sign on his office door that said in big, bold letters, "The coach is not always right, but he's always the coach." And just under that, in slightly smaller letters, it said, "Therefore, when I say jump, you jump and ask how high on the way up." Then, in smaller type, it added, "And then ask how long I'd like you to stay in that position."

It was the coach's statement of authority. Regardless of who the reader was, he was the coach, and you were to do what he said. Similarly, Jesus Christ says, "Follow Me," and the only correct response is, "Yes, Sir. Right away, Sir. How high, Sir? How long do you want me to stay up, Sir?"

Maybe jumping isn't our favorite thing to do. Maybe we'd prefer sprawling on a couch somewhere or strolling through the park. Maybe what God wants us to do seems too difficult, too far, too awkward, too permanent, too much. But to be His disciples, we must deny ourselves and submit to His authority. What we want to do should not be our focus.

THE CONTROL OF OUR LIVES CHANGES

Why in the world would God ever ask a Christian to say no to himself or herself? Why doesn't God want me to say yes to myself? To understand why God would tell us we have to say no to ourselves, take up the cross on a daily basis, and follow him, we need to look at Galatians 5:16-17, which says, "But I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please."

The nature of the Christian, if left to himself, is always to please the flesh. That's why we end up fulfilling the desires of the flesh if we don't walk by the Spirit. The flesh and the Spirit oppose each other. What the flesh wants to do is not what the Spirit wants to do. What the Spirit wants to do is not what the flesh wants to do. Therefore we cannot do "what the flesh pleases," which means we cannot do what we please and hold ourselves up as Jesus' disciples.

Remember Luke tells us we're to incorporate this characteristic into our lives *daily*, in the everyday, routine, run-of-the-mill events that fill our days as well as in our major life events. For example, when someone cuts in front of you on the freeway, you'd like to tell him off, wouldn't you? You'd like

to tell him how to drive and perhaps even share your suspicions about his intelligence.

I once heard Joe Stowell, the president of Moody Bible Institute, say that the problem with becoming a Christian is that when you get angry at someone, you've lost all the good gestures and vocabulary that could really express what's in your heart. At times we'd really like to say, "You stupid idiot! You scumbag! Where'd you learn to drive, in bumper cars?" But as a Christian you have to sort things out in midstream. You have to deny yourself the language you'd really *like* to use and change the gesture that sprang to mind and instead think, "Well, bless you, brother."

When you're behind the wheel, ready to hurl those ugly words at the thoughtless driver, that's the real you, isn't it? For a second you're about to slip away from the control of the Spirit of God. In his book *Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life*, Chuck Swindoll gives a good example of what it's like to be out of control:

Yesterday I got drunk.

Now wait a minute! Before you pick up your phone and notify six of your closest friends, let me explain. I was the victim of a dentists' drill. As he was about to do his thing on my ivories, he inserted eighty milligrams of *Nembutol* into my innocent bloodstream . . . resulting thereafter in a flow of words and actions that were *anything* but innocent, I am told. I have been informed that a tape recording was made which probably would call into question my ordination as well as cause my old Marine Corps drill instructor to blush. I am sure that the entire dental office—that motley group of rascals—has sufficient information to blackmail me. But they are sworn to secrecy. I hope.

My neighbors probably raised some eyebrows when my dear wife helped me out of the car and I staggered to the door, singing loudly. She informed me that I saw a mosquito and took a rather exaggerated swing at it. That led to a few other verbal expressions totally unlike a man of the cloth. When I awoke on the patio three hours later, my children were still giggling and snickering over my irresponsible homecoming. They also are sworn to secrecy. *They better be!*

Isn't it amazing what happens when the clamps of restraint are loosened? In some cases it's unbelievable! I would never, under normal conditions, declare: "Dentistry is a rip-off!" But I did yesterday. Right in front of my dentist and his drill team. I would not say to a young lady, "You talk too much—get out!" But that's exactly what I said to one of his capable assistants.

Thanks to *Nembutol*, I became an open book with no secret sections or hidden chapters containing guarded, private feelings and thoughts. For several unrestrained hours, my emotions ran rampant, and there's no way to recover the damage or remove the raw facts from that page of my life.²

It's not always pleasant when something happens to us and our inner personalities are revealed, is it? We constantly struggle to keep those hidden quirks under control and not give in to "fleshly" impulses to tell someone off, point out others' stupidity, lose our temper, or do things we later regret. We want to be controlled by the Spirit, but the flesh is always pushing, challenging, pestering us, trying to control us.

2. [Charles Swindoll, *Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life* (Portland, Ore.: Multnomah Press, 1983)], 276.
pp. 74-78

(Fénelon: Talking with God by François Fénelon)

Ah! what will be your blessedness if you will but surrender yourself into the hands of God, permitting him to do whatever he will, not according to your desires, but according to his own good pleasure!
p. 32

(The Power of Brokenness by Don Nori)

"Now you must obediently walk through every door He opens for you," Brokenness advises you. "The issue is never God's unwillingness to direct you. It is always your unwillingness to walk through the door He opens, to accept whatever assignment He gives you, and to take every opportunity He sends your way to prepare you for the future. If you don't see Him moving in your life, it's probably because He's already asked you to do something that you have not yet done, and He's waiting for you to obey."
p. 105

PARABLE OF A WILD DUCK

Some wild ducks were taking their annual northward journey when suddenly a flock of tame ones came into view in a barnyard far below. Leaving his winged friends in flight, one of the migrants landed and mingled for a short time with those on the ground. After eating some of their corn, he flew away. Soon he returned, however, this time remaining somewhat longer. The safety of the farm and the plentiful supply of food were so appealing that he lived among the domestic fowl all summer. When autumn came, he heard the cries of his former companions as they headed southward. He felt a strong desire to join them, but his added weight from eating so much kept him from flying very far. So he settled down and stayed all winter. In the spring he again heard the familiar call of the migrating flock. His eyes gleamed, and he began to flap his wings but made no real effort to fly. That fall the sound of the wild ducks only caused him to raise his head, and from then on he paid no attention at all.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

(31 Days of Prayer: Moving God's Mighty Hand by Warren & Ruth Myers)

Here's a motto for all of us in all we do: "God's will, nothing more, nothing less, nothing else." Pray that you will be open to whatever the Lord wants you to do day by day. Tell Him you simply want to be used by Him, whether in great tasks or lowly ones, whether the results will seem large or small.

p. 38

v.11 So the Lord said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates.

I am reminded of the Lord's words through Samuel to Saul at the time of judgment in his kingdom:

1 Samuel 15:22, 23

But Samuel replied: "Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Solomon's great sin was a change in his **attitude** toward **God** (v. 11). This happened despite the two times God had revealed Himself to Solomon, making promises to him . . . **One of** Solomon's **subordinates** (11:11) was Jeroboam, who tore **the kingdom . . . from** Solomon's **son**.
p. 508

DeVries says:

Speaking to him once again and for the final time, Yahweh threatens to tear the kingship away from him, mitigating this only by specifying (1) that this would actually happen during the reign of his son and (2) one tribe would be retained for David's sake.
p. 142

Lockyer says:

Solomon's grievous fall provides a striking instance of the insufficiency of the highest endowments to preserve man from the grossest folly and sin (John 15:5). The apostasy of Israel's illustrious king was the more glaring, contrasted with God's goodness in appearing to him twice, blessing him so greatly, and warning him so plainly. He came to learn, as all transgressors do, that their way is hard (I Kings 11:14, 21, 26).
p. 114

Patrick & Lowth say:

This was enough to astonish any man, to hear that all his splendour should be so soon eclipsed, if he were not perfectly stupefied: and it is likely it did make him reflect upon his folly; and, as many think, moved him to write the book of Ecclesiastes.
p. 335

v.12 Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son.

How gracious of the Lord to delay judgment in honor of David, his father.

"I WILL TEAR IT OUT OF THE HAND OF YOUR SON" and that son is REHOBAM.

v.13 Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The **one tribe** . . . left in Rehoboam's hand was Judah. Actually two tribes were left (Judah and Benjamin) but Benjamin was small and the two became known as the Southern Kingdom of Judah.
p. 508

I think it would be good for us to stop for just a moment and MEDITATE on:

Deuteronomy 6:5

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

The Lord wants our TOTAL HEART DEVOTION. He also wants our OBEDIENCE. Solomon has failed on these two counts and the result is losing his kingdom.

CONCLUSION:

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

LESSON #1: We are witnessing in this chapter the culmination of a disobedient lifestyle.

LESSON #2: The love of another woman can surely cause us to make some big mistakes.

LESSON #3: The Lord had made it clear that they were not to "intermarry . . . because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods" (1 Kings 11:2 NIV).

LESSON #4: Solomon never really learned to say "no" in any situation.

LESSON #5: Making choices contrary to the Word of God has serious consequences.

LESSON #6: We can witness the power of the sensual as we see "his wives turned his heart after other gods" (1 Kings 11:4 NIV).

LESSON #7: The temptation of old age is to let up, lay down, live for the moment, and let others do the work.

LESSON #8: O Lord, help me to cooperate with You so You don't have to operate on me.

LESSON #9: If Solomon can fail with all of his wisdom and advantages, let us be forewarned that it can happen to us as well.

LESSON #10: "Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name" (Psalms 86:11 NIV).

Baxter says:

If any man could ever have been satisfied by getting all his heart's desire, than man was Solomon; yet he has put it on record (Eccles.) that everything under the sun is vanity and vexation of spirit. Solomon's is the self-life having its full fling, and at the end turning away sad and sick of it all." p. 103

(Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough: A Guide to Nine Biblical Fasts by Elmer L. Towns)

Pray audibly, "I disown (*insert specific negative influence in your life*)."

These six steps can help you break the influence of things that might otherwise keep you and your family in bondage for generations to come. To summarize:

Six Steps to Freedom

1. I renounce . . .
2. I acknowledge . . .
3. I forgive . . .
4. I submit . . .
5. I take responsibility . . .

p. 39

(Made Perfect in Weakness: The Amazing Things God Can Do With Failure
by Gary J. Oliver)

At this point of the healing process it's critical that we remember the power of God's promises and the name of Jesus. On more than one occasion, God has used the inspired music of Bill and Gloria Gaither to turn my eyes back to Him:

"He Touched Me"

Shackled by a heavy burden,
'Neath a load of guilt and shame,
Then the hand of Jesus touched me,
And now I am no longer the same.
He touched me, Oh, He touched me.
And, oh, the joy that floods my soul.
Something happened and now I know,
He touched me and made me whole.⁴

4. Words by Gloria Gaither. Music by William J. Gaither. © 1971 William J. Gaither. ASCAP. All rights reserved.

p. 54

(God's Little Devotional Book II by Honor Books)

Saviour, fill me with Thy Spirit
As I seek and wait and pray,
Bend and break me, blessed Master —
Make me wholly Thine today.

Lord, I bow in full surrender,
Yielding all I have to Thee:
Come and fill me with Thy Spirit —
Sanctify Thyself in me.

I would tarry in Thy presence
Till endued with power and love:
I would know the mighty fullness
Of Thy Spirit from above.

Will He come in all His fullness
As I now obey Thy call?
Yes, oh, yes, for Thou has promised —
If I come confessing all.¹⁵¹

—Oswald J. Smith

¹⁵¹ *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations*, Paul Lee Tan (Rockville, MD: Assurance Publishers, 1979), p. 2034.
p. 305

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

I don't know what tomorrow brings. God will do what seems good to Him. Sometimes what He wants is hard to accept. Listen to God—there is true freedom, peace, and joy in Him.
p. 19

If anything is capable of enlarging the spirit and freeing you, it is entire surrender to God. Nothing will keep your mind calm, content, and joyful as living like a child in the arms of God.

Christ wants you to follow the will of God and to live it out in the present moment.
p. 129

(Fénelon: Meditations on the Heart of God by François Fénelon)

O God, reign over us in spite of our passions! How could we find anything to love outside of you? May the fire of your love extinguish any other fire! Give us the grace to love you, and we will love you and no other. And we will continue to love you throughout eternity.
p. 84

(More Stories for the Heart: Over 100 Stories to Warm Your Heart compiled by Alice Gray)

The Treasure

Alice Gray

The cheerful girl with bouncy golden curls was almost five. Waiting with her mother at the checkout island, she saw them: a circle of glistening white pearls in a pink foil box.

"Oh please, Mommy. Can I have them? Please, Mommy, please!

Quickly the mother checked the back of the little foil box and then looked back into the pleading blue eyes of her little girl's upturned face.

"A dollar ninety-five. That's almost \$2. If you really want them, I'll think of some extra chores for you and in no time you can save enough money to buy them for yourself. Your birthday's only a week away and you might get another crisp dollar bill from Grandma."

As soon as Jenny got home, she emptied her penny bank and counted out 17 pennies. After dinner, she did more than her share of chores and she went to the neighbor and asked Mrs. McJames if she could pick dandelions for ten cents. On her birthday, Grandma did give her another new dollar bill and at last she had enough money to buy the necklace.

Jenny loved her pearls. They made her feel dressed up and grown up. She wore them everywhere—Sunday school, kindergarten, even to bed. The only time she took them off was when she went swimming or had a bubble bath. Mother said if they got wet, they might turn her neck green.

Jenny had a very loving daddy and every night when she was ready for bed, he would stop whatever he was doing and come upstairs to read her a story. One night when he finished the story, he asked Jenny, "Do you love me?"

"Oh, yes, Daddy. You know that I love you."

"Then give me your pearls."

"Oh, Daddy, not my pearls. But you can have Princess—the white horse from my collection. The one with the pink tail. Remember, Daddy? The one you gave me. She's my favorite."

"That's okay, Honey. Daddy loves you. Good night." And he brushed her cheek with a kiss.

About a week later, after the story time, Jenny's daddy asked again,
"Do you love me?"

"Daddy, you know I love you."

"Then give me your pearls."

"Oh, Daddy, not my pearls. But you can have my baby doll. The brand new one I got for my birthday. She is so beautiful and you can have the yellow blanket that matches her sleeper."

"That's okay. Sleep well. God bless you, little one. Daddy loves you." And as always, he brushed her cheek with a gentle kiss.

A few nights later when her daddy came in, Jenny was sitting on her bed with her legs crossed Indian-style. As he came close, he noticed her chin was trembling and one silent tear rolled down her cheek.

"What is it, Jenny? What's the matter?"

Jenny didn't say anything but lifted her little hand up to her daddy. And when she opened it, there was her little pearl necklace. With a little quiver, she finally said, "Here, Daddy. It's for you."

With tears gathering in his own eyes, Jenny's kind daddy reached out with one hand to take the dime-store necklace, and with the other hand he reached into his pocket and pulled out a blue velvet case with a strand of genuine pearls and gave them to Jenny. He had had them all the time. He was just waiting for her to give up the dime-store stuff so he could give her genuine treasure.

So like our heavenly Father.

pp. 147-8

(The Message: Psalms by Eugene H. Peterson)

Psalm 86: Faithfulness

Help your servant—I'm depending on you!
You're my God; have mercy on me.
I count on you from morning to night.
Give your servant a happy life;
I put myself in your hands!
You're well-known as good and forgiving,
bighearted to all who ask for help.
Pay attention, Yahweh, to my prayer;
bend down and listen to my cry for help.
Every time I'm in trouble I call on you,
confident that you'll answer.

p. 122