



WASTED

A Study of the Life of Solomon

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Wisdom for Life: The Book of Proverbs was created for and taught to a Middle School and High School Bible class at the Karns Church of Christ. The material has been edited and uploaded here for you to use, free of charge, to help meet the needs of your ministry.

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Table of Contents:

Lesson 1: Solomon's Great Beginning.....	3
Lesson 2: Solomon Stopped Growing	8
Lesson 3: Solomon Failed to Guard Against Evil Influences	14
Lesson 4: Solomon Allowed His Strength to Become His Weakness.....	21
Lesson 5: Solomon Allowed His Possessions to Possess Him	27
Lesson 6: Solomon's Regretful Life	33

Lesson 1: Solomon's Great Beginning

I have done plenty of stupid things in my life, have you? You do not even have to bother answering this question because we all know how you are going to answer. Of course, you have. Everybody has done something stupid, right?

Just spend some time watching YouTube videos and you can easily see this question answered on so many different ways. It does not matter whether a person is considered smart, famous, powerful or wealthy; everyone does stupid things from time to time, even the smartest and most popular kid in your class.

Just consider the ridiculous warning labels found on almost every product and package we use on a daily basis. It amazes me some of these warnings have to be in writing, they just seem so obvious. Who doesn't know you should never dry your pet in a convention oven or never drive your vehicle with a sunshield in place? However, the reality is there are people out there who would do the very things the warning label said not to do. For whatever reason, sometimes people do stupid things.

Solomon's Great Beginning

Unlike some people who have to claw their way out of bad circumstances and lots in life, Solomon was not one of those people. In fact Solomon was about as far on the other end of the spectrum as one could be. He was blessed with wonderful opportunities from the very beginning of his life.

This should have been a good thing for Solomon; after all, he had a lot going for him. But like all people, Solomon too made some dumb decisions that cost him. Perhaps what is most unfortunate for Solomon is he should have known better. He should have been more prepared to face these temptations head on and overcome them. Sadly, he did not.

Let's consider a few of the things Solomon had going for him from the beginning that he wasted in order to live according to the desires of his life.

Solomon was Blessed from the Beginning

Consider who Solomon had the privilege of calling his father: King David. Solomon was the son of David and Bathsheba (2 Sam. 12:24). Can you imagine your dad being the only person in the world who is described as a man after God's own heart? Not only that, but just imagine the bragging rights Solomon had! "Your dad may be tough, but my dad killed a giant." How cool would that have been?

He was not just loved by his parents either. The Bible says his heavenly father loved him as well (2 Sam. 12:24-25). Yes, I know...God loves all people, right? But how many of those people has God given a name to signify that love? You see, God loved Solomon to such an extent that He sent a message by Nathan the prophet to call him Jedidiah, which means, "Beloved of the Lord." By giving Solomon such a name, the Lord was demonstrating His special favor for Solomon, even from his birth.

There is no doubt Solomon had a great beginning to his life because he was very blessed from the start.

Solomon was Successful from the Beginning

After King David died Solomon became king and reigned for 40 years (I Kgs. 11:42). What is interesting about Solomon and his reign is how the Bible makes mention of his success as king.

"So the kingdom was well established in the hand of Solomon."

I Kgs. 2:46

While he was king, everything seemed to be going well for Israel. It seemed as if they had not missed a beat since David reigned as king over them. The Bible says Solomon even loved the Lord and worshipped Him all the while walking according to the statutes of his father David (I Kgs. 3:3-4). And remember, David was a man after God's own heart. There are not many other things that could have been said to make the success of Solomon as King any firmer. As long as he was King over Israel, they were in good and capable hands.

Solomon was Different from the Beginning

God appeared to Solomon and told him to ask anything he wished (I Kgs. 3:5). While some people might have chosen fame or fortune for their own personal gain, Solomon was different from most other young people his age. He didn't think like everyone else thought. Solomon realized he was too inexperienced for the task of being king over Israel and asked God to bless him with wisdom (I Kgs. 3:7-9).

Wow! It doesn't matter how many times I read this account, I am always amazed by the maturity of Solomon. When he could have gotten whatever he wanted out of God, he thought not of himself. Instead, he thought of others and how he could better serve them.

God was so pleased with Solomon and his request for wisdom he blessed him with far more than he probably ever imagined. Just listen to what all Solomon received from the hand of God.

“It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. And God said to him, ‘Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.’”

I Kgs. 3:10-14

Solomon, who only desired wisdom in order to lead God’s people, was blessed with not only wisdom but riches, honor, power and popularity. God even promised Solomon there would never be anyone else like him. Solomon was and would always continue to be different than those around him.

Friends, Solomon had all the potential in the world to make a great impact. He had no excuse. He had it great from the beginning. He was blessed, successful and different...three ingredients that should have added up to a remarkable life of influence and good.

Instead, as we will see throughout the rest of this series, Solomon wasted the opportunities God had blessed him with. Little by little, Solomon travelled down a long

road far away from God and caused himself a lot of heartache and misery along the way.

It's important for us all to remember... it's not just about how well you start, it's about how well you finish!

May we all make the most of the opportunities God places before us and never be wasteful.

Lesson 2: Solomon Stopped Growing

When you think of a giant, what comes to your mind? Typically speaking, when people think of giants they think of really tall, strong and intimidating individuals who strike fear in the people around them.

Now, what if we placed the word spiritual in front of the word giant? What does the term spiritual giant mean to you? When I think about this term, I think about individuals who have a deep relationship with God. These are the kind of people I look up to as Christians. They are the kind of people I want to be like as I continue to grow in my walk with God. Spiritual giants are the kind of people I expect to see when I get to heaven.

We all know someone who could probably be classified as a spiritual giant. In fact, there are probably people attending the same congregation as you who would be considered by many as a spiritual giant. Maybe it's because of their Bible knowledge or prayer life. Perhaps it's because of their love and concern for other people. Whatever the reasons, all congregations have spiritual giants.

I want you to imagine though, that one day you receive some shocking news. This is the kind of news that can destroy families, relationships and churches. Imagine you learned that one of the people you considered to be a spiritual giant was not really a spiritual giant at all? How would you feel? How would your congregation take such news? My guess is you, as well as the congregation as a whole, would be crushed to learn such news. It could even be totally devastating.

Solomon Appears to be a Spiritual Giant

As we learned in the last lesson, Solomon had a great beginning. He was blessed, successful and different from everyone around him. He had all the ingredients

for an incredible relationship with God. Just consider some of the things Solomon did in his life that gave the appearance he was a spiritual giant.

1. **Solomon built the house of God** (I Kgs. 6:38). Solomon put into action what his father had desired to do in building the temple of the Lord. Solomon spent seven years working on a massive permanent place to meet between God and man. The temple was reserved for worship and various religious activities by the priest. By constructing this temple, Solomon was demonstrating his love for God.
2. **Solomon prayed a heartwarming prayer before the people** (I Kgs. 8:22-53). You can learn a lot about a person from the things they pray about. In this prayer, Solomon led the people in a beautiful manner praying for God's forgiveness of Israel's future sins and shortcomings if they repent and confess Him as Lord.
3. **Solomon challenged the people to be obedient to God** (I Kgs. 8:54-61). Like any remarkable leader, Solomon stood before the people and issued them the challenge of complete obedient and faithfulness. What's interesting is this wasn't for faithfulness to Solomon, but instead it was for faithfulness to God.
4. **Solomon led the people in worship and sacrifice** (I Kgs. 8:62-66). After the temple was completed, Solomon led the people in worship and celebration, both for the dedication of the temple and for the Feast of Booths. These celebrations lasted a total of 14 days. Imagine us today celebrating and worshipping for 14 days. Most people probably wouldn't be too happy about that would they? Yet, that's exactly what Solomon did.

5. **God promised Solomon success as long as he obeyed Him** (I Kgs. 9:1-9). It is apparent at this point in the life of Solomon that God was very pleased with him and his leadership. God even told Solomon as long as he continued to obey Him he would prosper and the throne of his kingdom would be over Israel forever.

All of these things combined add up to what appears to be one spiritual giant. Based on what we know and have read so far, Solomon would seem to be a good candidate for someone to look up to and admire.

Solomon's Collapse as a Spiritual Giant

Early in my career as a student of public education, I made really good grades. I was often rewarded for doing so well in school. Unfortunately, somewhere along the way things changed. By the time I was in high school my grades were not nearly as good as they were a few years earlier. As I have gotten older and completed college and graduate school, I realize something about my time in high school. It wasn't that I was no longer smart and couldn't do the work. The problem was I fell into the same trap many students fall into; I became an academic minimalist. I simply did just enough to get by and that was it.

When I read about Solomon it seems to me that he fell into this same trap. The difference is Solomon was not an academic minimalist, but rather he was a spiritual minimalist. I personally feel as though Solomon did just enough to get back and that was it.

Do you know the problem with becoming a spiritual minimalist? Eventually striving to meet the minimum requirements becomes too for one to handle. Let me give you an example. A lot of us attend church service three times a week. If you are a spiritual

minimalist, you will one day get to the point where attending three times a week seems extreme and you will cut back and attend less often. I have seen it happen time and time again.

This appears to be what happened to Solomon. When one reads about his life early on, you get the feeling prayer and worship is something important to him. But the more you continue to read of his life, the less you see him praying and worshipping. In fact, outside of making sacrifices three times a year during the “important annual feast” (I Kgs. 9:25), we don’t read of Solomon praying or worshipping anymore. Little by little Solomon began to change until one day his heart was no longer completely devoted to the Lord God.

“Now King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the people of Israel, ‘You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.’ Solomon clung to these in love. He had 700 wives, who were princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart. For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and did not wholly follow the LORD, as David his father had done.”

I Kings 11:1-6

Solomon's Heart Problem

Solomon's biggest problem came from within; from the depths of his very own heart. How could Solomon, someone with so much upside and potential, allow his heart to be turned away from God? How could he allow his life to be wasted?

The more we are around those we love the more we grow to love them. For example, I love my wife more today than the day I married her. My love for her continues to grow with each passing day we are together. The more time I spend with her, the more our relationship grows. Somewhere along the way Solomon stopped growing in his walk with God and eventually his heart turned away from Him.

I'm sure you feel the same way, but I do not ever want to stop growing in my relationship with God and allow the devil an opportunity to turn my heart away from Him. I want to do everything in my power to guard against this, don't you? The Bible even speaks of guarding our hearts.

"Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life."

Proverbs 4:23

If this is true of you, consider with me a few ways to continue growing in your relationship with God.

1. **Start while you are young** (Ecc. 12:1). If we start while we are young, we can have a solid relationship with God before we encounter a life of too many distractions.
2. **Make your life about fearing God and keeping His commandments** (Ecc. 12:13). We won't be able to help but grow if we fear God and make our lives about obeying Him.

3. **Remember your goal** (Phil. 3:12-14). If we have a goal, we will continue to grow. Make your goal having a lasting and obedient relationship with Jesus.
4. **Immerse yourself with other people who want to grow** (Prov. 12:26). The Bible teaches that one man sharpens another (Prov. 27:17).
5. **Spend time talking and listening to God through prayer and Bible study** (Psa. 119:129-130). We can't grow in what we don't know.

Solomon had it all and was blessed immeasurably from the beginning of his life, but he was a minimalist when it came to the things of God. He failed to continue growing in his relationship with his heavenly Father.

What about you? Are you continuing to grow in your walk with God on a daily basis? Are you a better Christian today with a deeper relationship with God than you were a year ago? If not, why not? We ought to know God better, love Him more and be more faithful in living for Him if we have been a Christian for any length of time.

My hope and prayer is for all of us to not waste our lives and the opportunities God has given us to grow in our walk with Him.

Lesson 3: Solomon Failed to Guard Against Evil Influences

How often have you done something just because one of your friends was doing it? If you are honest with yourself the answer to this question might shock you. In reality just about everything we do, we do because of someone else.

Think with me for a minute about this. Have you ever watched a movie just because a friend did? Have you ever participated in an activity just because one of your friends was doing it? Can you remember a time where you said something you should not have said just because you were with a certain person or group of people? Has there ever been a time where you ignored reaching out to someone because you were afraid of what your other friends would think?

We've all been down this road before. More times than not, we do the things we do because of the influence other people have on us. This is not necessarily a bad thing. Our friends and loved ones can have a positive influence on our lives. I have seen this work in my own life. These are the kind of people we need to be spending our time with.

The problem comes when the people around us have a negative influence on our lives. Again, I have seen this work in my own life as well as the life of many young people I have worked with over my years in ministry. When we fail to guard our hearts and lives against evil influences, we will be affected. Craig Groeschel, the author of *The Christian Atheist* and *Weird*, tweeted not long ago, "It's impossible to live the right life when you have the wrong friends."

Solomon is a great example of this very statement. Although he was a man who had everything going for him, he failed to guard against the evil influences

around him. This failure brought about a downward spiral in the life of Solomon that eventually led to his heart being turned away from God. Let's notice what happened in the life of Solomon due to his failure to guard against evil influences.

Solomon Loved Those He Shouldn't

Solomon surrounded himself with the wrong crowd, especially women, and eventually fell in love with them.

"Now King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, from the nations concerning which the Lord had said to the people of Israel, 'You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.'"

I Kings 11:1

Due to Solomon's failure to guard against these women and their wicked nations, he set himself up for failure. Perhaps it didn't seem like that big of a deal to Solomon, but it was to God. He did not want his people to intermarry with pagan nations.

"When the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than you, and when the LORD your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction.

You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the LORD would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly. But thus shall you deal with them: you shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and chop down their Asherim and burn their carved images with fire. For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.”

Deuteronomy 7:1-6

It was a BIG deal to God, wasn't it? He wanted these pagan nations devoted to complete destruction. God did not want there to be any chance His people would intermarry with these heathen nations.

Solomon's failure to guard against these evil influences had a big part to deal with his spiritual downfall. These evil influences caused Solomon to allow his heart to be turned away from God (I Kgs. 11:3-4).

The Bible is very clear about guarding our hearts and lives from wicked and evil influences. It is repeated over and over throughout scripture.

“Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.”

Proverbs 13:20

“Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.”

Proverbs 20:17

“Abstain from every form of evil.”

I Thessalonians 5:22

Solomon Worshipped Those He Shouldn't

It simply started as love. What could possibly go wrong? So what, Solomon fell in love with and married women from nations God had forbidden His people from marrying. They were in love. Isn't that all that matters?

The problem with not guarding against evil influences and falling in love with them is eventually you begin to see things the same way they do. Solomon, who was the son of David, a man after God's own heart, allowed his wives to turn his heart away from the one true God to the manmade gods they and their people worshipped. Solomon completely disobeyed God's command not to have any other gods before him.

“You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God.”

Exodus 20:3-5

Hanging around those he should not caused Solomon to worship those he should not. The people we spend the most time with have the biggest influence on our lives. There is only one of two ways for this to go: 1) We lift them up to where we are spiritually; 2) They knock us down to where they are or where they are not spiritually.

Our friends can cause us to worship something other than our heavenly Father. For example, our friends can influence us in worshipping sports, material things, popularity, acceptance and even our friends. It is important we guard our hearts so we do not start worshipping something we shouldn't.

Solomon Obeyed Those He Shouldn't

Solomon went along with the evil influences around him and chose to be disobedient to God. He may not have flat out said, "I'm going to be disobedient to God." However, by choosing to obey and serve the gods of his wives, he was inadvertently choosing to be disobedient to God. Our first allegiance is always to God and God alone.

"You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve."

Matthew 4:10

You and I must be careful to not allow others to influence us to become disobedient to God. Whether we realize it or not, not only can our friends intentionally cause us to be disobedient to God, but sometimes they can cause us to unintentionally become disobedient to God as well (I Kgs. 13:1-30). Thus, we must guard closely who we choose to be our friends and influences.

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

John 14:15

Solomon Suffered Consequences

How many times has someone suffered unfortunate consequences just because of who they were with? You see it all the time. People pay a big price because they were at the wrong place at the wrong time with the wrong group of people.

Solomon did not guard against evil influences and his heart was turned away from God to wicked women and their gods. Because of Solomon's failure to listen to God, he had to pay a price.

"Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, 'Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant.'"

I Kings 11:11

Friends, anytime we fail to listen to God and act in disobedience to Him, we will have a price to pay. The day will come when we reap what we have sown (Gal. 6:7).

You are who you spend the most time with. It's impossible to live the right life with the wrong friends, just ask Solomon.

My prayer is that you will guard your heart and life against all the evil influences around you.

Remember, it is always easier to fall down the mountain with someone rather than climb up the mountain carrying someone. Choose your friends carefully.

Lesson 4: Solomon Allowed His Strength to Become His Weakness

What would you consider to be your greatest strength or blessing from God? As a kid, I considered my greatest strength to be my athletic ability. I really felt God had blessed me with the level of athletic ability He did so that I could use it to bring Him glory and honor, at least that's what I told myself.

Unfortunately, my greatest strength also became one of my biggest weaknesses. You see, I was so into sports and being the best that I could be, I allowed myself to be carried away with practices, film and games. Before I knew it, my life was completely wrapped up in a game. The blessing God had given me had become sort of a weakness in my life. It affected my relationships with my parents, friends and even with God.

There is nothing wrong with having strengths, they are blessings from God. The problem is when we invest so much into our strengths and blessings that they eventually become weaknesses in our lives.

Solomon Allowed His Strength to Become His Weakness

There is no doubt Solomon's greatest strength was the blessing of wisdom God gave him. And while this strength proved to be a great asset for many years, it also became a great weakness for Solomon. It became a weakness because Solomon started trusting in his own wisdom instead of in the wisdom of God. Consider just a couple of the reasons Solomon's wisdom proved to be his greatest weakness.

First, Solomon started thinking instead of praying. Early on in the life of Solomon, it seemed he had so much potential. When he was given the

opportunity to receive whatever his heart desired, Solomon asked God to grant him wisdom as he led the people of Israel. It appeared Solomon was on the right track. Sadly, this godly wisdom was short lived. After Solomon's prayer of dedication for the temple (I Kgs. 8), we don't read about prayer in his life anymore.

Prayer is an important aspect in the life of anyone who wants to have a relationship with God. When we need guidance, pray. When we need support, pray. When we are feeling lonely, pray. When we are struggling, pray. Prayer is an important resource for all of us.

For whatever reason, Solomon stopped praying and began thinking. Apparently, he didn't think he needed God's guidance in decision making any longer. Solomon began relying on his own wisdom instead of the insurmountable wisdom of God.

The second reason Solomon's wisdom proved to be his greatest weakness was because he began to think he was the exception to the rule. The Old Testament Law prohibited the king from multiplying three things: wives, horses and gold.

"When you come to the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say, 'I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me,' you may indeed set a king over you whom the LORD your God will choose. One from among your brothers you shall set as king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother.

Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the LORD has said to you, 'You shall never return that way again.' And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold."

Deut. 17:14-17

Even though he knew what was recorded in the Law, Solomon broke all three prohibitions (I Kgs. 10:14-29; I Kgs 4:26). Although he was blessed with wisdom, Solomon made several bone-headed decisions that cost him and the people tremendously. For whatever reason, he seemed to think he was above the Law of God.

Our Weaknesses are Born Out of Our Strengths

If you stop and really think about it, our weaknesses are born out of our strengths. What I mean by this is typically our strengths are what lead to our weaknesses. Let me give you a couple of examples. Let's say you are a laid back individual who doesn't get upset very easily. This would be considered by many as a strength. The problem however, occurs when this is carried too far and we don't get done the things we need to get done, or possibly worse, we fail to stand up for a great cause because we are too laid back.

Do you see how this strength can very easily lead to a weakness? Consider another example: Perhaps you are very good at something, let's say sports. The reason you are good is because you put a lot of time and practice into your craft

(sport). The problem comes when we carry this too far and end up spending too much time sharpening our craft to the extent that we neglect people and things we shouldn't.

We have all been extremely blessed by God with many wonderful talents and abilities. However, let's all guard against allowing those strengths to become weaknesses in our lives.

Guarding Against our Strengths Becoming our Weaknesses

Solomon had more potential to do great things in service to God and others than many of us will ever have. His life was set up to make one huge impact for good. Regrettably, this never happened because Solomon wasted his life by not guarding against his strength becoming his weakness.

Like Solomon, you and I must guard against allowing the strengths God has blessed us with to become our weaknesses. We all have strengths we heavily rely on. If we're not careful, the very things we are good at and rely on so often will be the very things that cause our downfall.

With Solomon in mind, what can we do to guard against our strengths becoming our weaknesses?

1. **Don't allow yourself to be carried away with your strengths.** It is very easy for us to be filled with a sense of pride and arrogance because of our strengths. At some point we begin to think we are the best, or that we can't be knocked down because we are too strong. It was Solomon who said, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18). If we allow ourselves to be filled with pride when it comes to our strengths, the fall will be devastating.

2. **Praise God for blessing you with the strengths you enjoy.** Although deep down Solomon knew the truth as to where his strength came from, he began to act as if he were responsible for his great wisdom. Solomon took the focus off God and placed the focus on himself. You and I would do well to remember the reason we are strong in certain areas of our lives is because of the blessing of God. James reminds us, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change” (Jam. 1:17). If we will remember to continually praise God for our strengths, we will keep the focus off ourselves and on God where it truly belongs.
3. **Realize someday your strengths will be gone.** Solomon never stopped long enough to consider that the blessing he was enjoying would someday be gone. The Bible teaches it is appointed for man to die once (Heb. 9:27). For some of us, we will die too soon and so will our strengths. For others, however, we might live long and prosperous lives while our strengths leave us prematurely. Just consider all the professional athletes, actors and actresses, musicians and successful business people who are still living but whose strengths left them long ago. If we want to guard against our strengths becoming our weaknesses, we must live with the realization that someday our strengths will be gone.

Solomon was blessed by God from the very beginning of his life. It appeared his life had success written all over it from the moment he entered the world as a son of King David. God loved Solomon and blessed him with amazing wisdom, but sadly, Solomon failed to apply that amazing wisdom to his own life. His greatest

strength became his biggest weakness because Solomon failed to guard his heart against arrogance and pride.

Let us learn from the life of Solomon and not waste the strengths God has blessed us with by allowing them to become our greatest weaknesses.

“Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.” (Prov. 4:23).

Lesson 5: Solomon Allowed His Possessions to Possess Him

What do you consider to be your favorite possession? Why is this your favorite possession? My 2 year old son's favorite possession just happens to be anything sports related. It does not matter whether it's a basketball and goal, baseball and bat or a golf club and ball. All three of these possessions seem to be my son's favorites.

Any time we travel we have to carry at least two of these three items with us in order to keep him happy. It does not matter where we are going or how long or little we are staying. Every time we leave home for a trip we have to carry these items with us or he will not be very happy with momma and dada. He wakes up first thing every morning with one of these three things on his mind.

What I have noticed with my son and his favorite possessions is something we all struggle with. He is what some might call possessed by his possessions. This simply means all he generally thinks about are those items he enjoys playing with. Granted, he can't help it, he's only a baby who doesn't know any better. But what about you and me? We know better don't we?

Now, you may be thinking, wait a second. I'm not possessed or owned by my possessions. Oh, really? How often do you have your favorite possession with you? How many hours a day do you spend with your favorite possession? My guess is too many. Also, consider for a moment what would happen if you lost your favorite possession (EX: smartphone).

Most of us would not be too happy about losing such an important part of our life and we would do everything we could in order to find that little device. If we failed to find it one of two things would happen: 1) We would be devastated if it were something that

could not be replaced, 2) We would go get another one if it were something that could be replaced. If either of these things were to happen, it just might be that our possessions possess us.

Solomon's Dangerous Life

Solomon lived a dangerous life. The reason I say this might come as a shock to a lot of you. He did not live a dangerous life because he was involved in any type of extreme sport or crazy activity. He lived a dangerous life because he had been abundantly blessed by God.

"It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. And God said, 'Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked of yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days.'"

I Kings. 3:10-13

God was so pleased with Solomon's request for wisdom that He gave him so much more than just wisdom. God blessed Solomon with an abundance of blessings. He was rich, famous, powerful, wise and oh yeah, he was the king. Because of Solomon's riches and great wisdom, people from all over where seeking to spend time with Solomon.

“So King Solomon became greater than all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. All the earth was seeking the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart. They brought every man his gift, articles of silver and gold, garments, weapons, spices, horses, and mules, so much year by year.”

I Kings. 10:23-25

Solomon's success as a rich and wise king grew to such extent people would come to hear his wisdom and bring gifts for Solomon to enjoy. Solomon had it all. In fact, in the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon tells us about some of the physical things he enjoyed as the most popular man on the face of the earth.

1. **PLEASURE** (2:1-2) – Things that brought him joy, laughter and that all consuming “good” feeling we all long to have.
2. **WINE** (2:3) – This can bring acceptance by others; covers up feelings and hurts by temporarily causing one to forget their pain and sorrow.
3. **POSSESSIONS** (2:4-7) – Provides a false feeling of security, success and happiness
4. **MONEY** (2:8a) – False idea of happiness; the more people have the happier they will be.

5. **WOMEN** (2:8b) – Brings about a feeling of success and importance.
6. **POPULARITY** (2:9a) – Brings about a sense of acceptance and love.
7. **WISDOM** (2:9b) – A feeling of success and the ability to make great decisions.

As far as Solomon was concerned, he had everything his eyes desired and he denied his heart nothing (2:10). Does this list sound familiar? Aren't these some of the very things we seek after and desire today? I've met and seen a lot of people who would love to live the life Solomon lived. I imagine, in the mind of many, it just couldn't get any better than the life Solomon enjoyed on a daily basis.

QUESTION: Of all the things Solomon enjoyed, which one would be the toughest for you to fight against desiring and seeking after?

What if we had an opportunity to sit down and talk with Solomon about his life? Do you think he would say all the pleasures he enjoyed made for a great life? Do you think he would encourage us to pursue the same types of pleasures today? Consider the following words from the very mouth of Solomon.

"And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil. Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun."

Ecclesiastes 2:10-11

Solomon lived the kind of life most people would desire to live and yet, he said it was all vanity (meaningless). In the end Solomon found out his physical blessings were worthless.

Where Solomon Went Wrong

There are probably many reasons Solomon's life spiraled out of control when it came to his physical possessions possessing him, but consider these three significant ones.

1. **Solomon lacked self- control.** Of all the qualities one can possess on a personal level, self-control is one of the most important. Why is this? If we do not have self-control, we will end up doing a lot of stupid things over the course of our lives. This can clearly be seen in the life of Solomon. He gave in to all his heart desired. When Paul was discussing the fruit of the Spirit, the last one he mentioned was self-control. Apparently, self-control is an important quality to exhibit in our lives.

QUESTION: In what areas of our lives do we most need to exhibit self-control?

2. **Solomon tired to find fulfillment in all the wrong places.** Solomon used his possessions to find happiness. He gave in to everything in hopes of finding the one thing his life was missing. Like Solomon, many of us spend our lives trying to find fulfillment in things that can never provide lasting fulfillment. The reason for this is because all these things pass away (**I John 2:15-17**).

QUESTION: What are some of the things we use to try to find fulfillment today?

3. **Solomon allowed “THINGS” to replace God in his life.** Solomon struggled with his possessions owning him. God didn’t have his heart, all his material possessions did. As Christians who are living in the midst of greed and covetousness, we must guard our hearts against allowing “THINGS” to replace our love and desire for God. Jesus said our life does not consist in the abundance of our possessions (**Luke 12:15**). In the end, what does it profit us if we gain the whole world but lose our soul (**Matthew 16:26**).

QUESTION: What “THINGS” most often compete with God for our hearts?

Solomon, a man who was truly blessed by God in so many different areas of his life, wasted his life because he was too focused on his possessions and less concerned with being whole heartedly obedient to God.

Near the end of his life, looking back on all he had acquired and enjoyed throughout his life, Solomon came to the realization that everything was meaningless, save for serving God and whole heartedly following after Him.

May you and I all come to this same realization before our lives pass us by!

Lesson 6: Solomon's Regretful Life

Do you have any regrets? Are there things in your life you wished you could go back and do over again? What would you consider to be one of your greatest regrets at this point in your life? I would probably consider one of my greatest regrets to be the times I hesitated to mention Jesus to my friends. I think a lot about how many friends I have let come in my life and leave without speaking to them about Jesus. It is shameful. I may never get those opportunities back and that's a scary thought.

Regrets are a part of life. No one is perfect, thus we can all look back on things we wished we would have done differently. Solomon was no different. During the last part of his life, I believe Solomon looked back over his life with lots of regrets.

Solomon's Big Regrets

The older one gets the more conscientious of life one gets. Solomon, now at a much later point in his life, looked back over everything he had obtained and done and came to an important conclusion.

"Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity."

Ecclesiastes 1:2

Solomon realized all of his activities and labors were meaningless. He even compares them to chasing after the wind (Ecc. 2:11). Think about that for a

moment. Have you ever tried to go out and chase after the wind? Probably not, but if you have you quickly learned it is pointless, you can never catch the wind.

Looking back over his life, Solomon began to see and feel a life full of regret. Now in the latter part of his life, Solomon came to see what I pray you and I will come to see. If one sets the course of his life for the purpose of pleasure, possessions and power, one will someday come to the point of regret. Solomon not only came to the point of regret, he came to the point of hating life.

“So I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me, for all is vanity and a striving after the wind.”

Ecclesiastes 2:17

Solomon’s Big Realizations

What do you think happens to get a person to the point of regret? I’m sure there are plenty of things that can happen to get a person to this point, but one of the main reasons people come to have regrets is because somewhere along the way they come to some solid realizations.

It appears to have taken a long time, but eventually Solomon came to such realizations himself. We are not told what happened or what caused Solomon to come to such realizations, but apparently something did in fact happen. Now, knowing his days are numbered, Solomon looks back on his life with regret. How could he have let things get to such a point as they did?

There’s a part of me that wishes we knew what came over Solomon, but then there is the other part of me that realizes it doesn’t matter. It does not matter

what caused Solomon to come to such conclusions, what's important is that he did.

Let's consider four realizations Solomon eventually came to which caused him to look back over his life with regret.

1. **Solomon came to realize the wise believer and the foolish unbeliever have the same fate** (Ecc. 2:12-16). It did not matter how much wisdom Solomon had or from where that wisdom came from. Eventually his wisdom would be gone and so would he. The wise man, just like the foolish man, has the same fate. They both die and are soon forgotten. By coming to this conclusion, Solomon realized how much of his life was wasted trying to satisfy human wisdom.
2. **Solomon came to realize his riches were fleeting** (Ecc. 2:18-21). Most likely Solomon grew up pretty wealthy; after all, he was the son of King David. However, his wealth was taken to another level because he was abundantly blessed by God (I Kgs. 10:23). The problem is just as quickly as that wealth came into Solomon's life that wealth would leave Solomon (Prov. 23:4-5; Prov. 27:24).

"As he had come naked from his mother's womb, so will he return as he came.
He will take nothing from the fruit of his labor that he can carry in his hand."

Ecclesiastes 5:15

3. **Solomon realized true enjoyment and blessings are found only in God.**

Even though Solomon was very successful in a lot of different ways, he eventually came to realize that it was all from the hand out God. Had it not been for God, Solomon's life would have probably been a little different. It is because of God, that all people, including you and I, have what we have and enjoy what we enjoy. It all comes from the hand of God.

"There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw is from the hand of God, for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment?"

Ecclesiastes 2:24-25

4. **Solomon realized life is only about God.** As Solomon traveled down the road of life, he sought after many things: women, wealth, possessions, power and popularity. Yet, none of those things brought him true happiness. It was only when he realized life was about God and God only, that I believe he started to find what his heart was missing. This realization was so strong and important to Solomon he encouraged others to remember God while they were young (Ecc. 12:1). He did not want others to waste time like he did; he wanted them to serve God. In fact, his last recorded words were for others to develop a deep respect for God and obey His commandments.

“The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.”

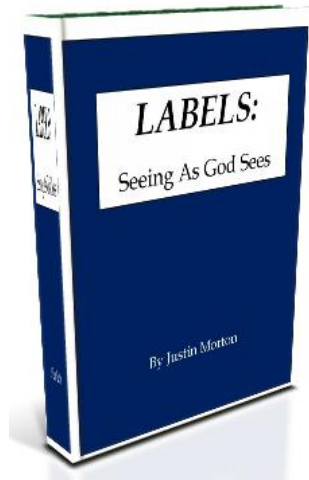
Ecclesiastes 2:24-25

Solomon, in all his wisdom, looked back over his life of regret with some powerful realizations. Realizations that I believe led to his repentance. It appears the book of Ecclesiastes just might be Solomon writing after his repentance and return to the Lord.

What about you? Do you have regrets and things you would like to go back and do differently? Unfortunately, we can't do that. But praise be to God who offers us a way to overcome our past regrets and failures through the means of forgiveness (I Jn. 1:9).

We can't go back and start over from our beginning, but we can start right now and make a new ending.

Other Works Available By Justin Morton

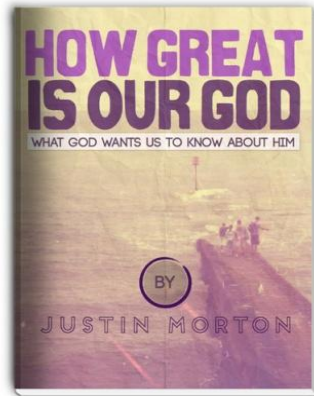


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Lesson 2 – I Have Big Plans for You

Lesson 3 – I Won’t Ever Abandon You

Lesson 4 – I Will Forgive You

Lesson 5 – I Don’t Send People To Hell

Lesson 6 – I Want You!

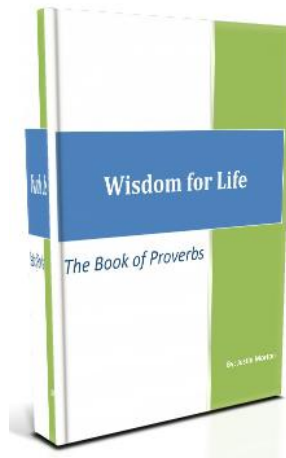
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Lesson 2: Get a Hold of Yourself! Dealing with Anger

Lesson 3: Choose Your Friends Carefully! Dealing with Friendships

Lesson 4: Oh, be Careful Little Mouth What You Say! Dealing with our Words

Lesson 5: Protect Yourself! Dealing with our Reputation

Lesson 6: Avoid the Trap! Dealing with Sexual Temptation

Lesson 7: Get a Move on It! Dealing with Laziness

Lesson 8: Treat them Right! Dealing with our Enemies

Lesson 9: Show Some Respect! Dealing with Parents

Lesson 10: Riches Don't Last Forever! Dealing with Money and Wealth

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Lesson 12: The Heart of the Matter! Dealing with our Hearts

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