

# The Danger of Drifting Away From God

1 Kings 11:1-14 (Solomon's plight)

## Intro

In the past decade and half it has been difficult for the Church of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Not because of external threat, but because of widespread moral and spiritual defection within our ranks. Never has there been a better time to be reminded of the important goal of finishing well.

The Christian life is not a sprint—it's a marathon. It's not enough just to *begin* well. To be faithful in the Christian life requires *finishing* well—usually after a long, sometimes grueling race.

Many Christians *do* finish well. But, sad to say, some do not. Some bail out after only a few years, simply giving up on the Christian life and faith. Others continue to go through the motions—all the while bogged down in a swamp of spiritual stagnation.

The Bible's wisest fool (oxymoron!), **Solomon** didn't finish well:

- No man began with more promise than he did.
- Yet a good beginning does not mean a good finish.
- Solomon drifted away and ended in failure - can it happen to us?

Solomon was amazing, the smartest man in the world, and the richest man in the world, and one of the most powerful in the world. He seemingly had it all, but there was one thing that changed everything, he did what God told him not to do.

The spiritual journey of king Solomon perhaps is one of the saddest we find in the Scriptures. When we consider the great spiritual heights of Solomon and the great wisdom God had given him, it seems impossible how he could fall into idolatry.

Towards the end of his life, Solomon's spiritual life and relationship with God deteriorated rapidly and his heart became cold and indifferent. Actually Jesus said this truth, "*Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold...* (Matt. 24:12).

Solomon came to a point where his heart hardened toward God. Solomon never renounced the Lord, but his heart was not completely devoted to the Lord.

It did not happen overnight. Slowly his heart was becoming desensitized. He tolerated sin in his life and household.

Once he became accustomed to sin and comfortable with it, he began to take part in idolatry with his wives. Solomon's life stands as a solemn warning against ungodly relationships that can only destroy the believer's relationship with God.

## The Beginning of Solomon's Spiritual Journey

First let us look at the beginning of Solomon's spiritual journey.

2 Samuel 12:24-25 When he was born he was loved by the Lord.

Later we read in I Kings 3:5 the Lord appears to Solomon in a vision and asks him what he wants. Solomon asked the Lord if he could have wisdom in order to govern his people justly and discern good from evil.

Solomon began his reign with the blessing of the Lord. God made Solomon prosper. In 1 Kings 10:23 we read that king Solomon outdid all the kings of the earth in wealth and wisdom, and all the world courted him, to hear the wisdom which God had put in his heart.

Solomon had everything, he was talented, well-educated, intelligent, wealthy and women in abundance. Moreover he was blessed with the personal presence of God in his life.

The greatest contribution of Solomon was the building of the temple which took half of his reign, about 20 years. The building of the temple was directed by him and he truly served and pleased God.

### **Solomon Didn't Finish Well**

But toward the last half of his reign darkness came upon Solomon's heart and he eventually turned away from God.

In 1 Kings 11:1-3 we read the tragedy:

- Solomon was a lover of too many women.
- He had a strong emotional attachment to his foreign women. His women led him astray.
- God had warned his people not to marry foreign people because of the religious differences.

-In 2 Corinthians 6:14 we read, *"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion has light with darkness?"*

Solomon admits in Ecclesiastes 7:26, *"I find more bitter than death the woman who is a snare, whose heart is a trap and whose hands are chains. The man who pleases God will escape her, but the sinner she will ensnare."*

Solomon confesses and says, *"But I have not found a woman among all these (these thousand)-one who is pleasing to God"* (Eccl. 7:28).

Solomon may have been a great man but he had a great weakness.

Verse 1 - he loved many foreign women,

Verse 2 - he held fast to them in love.

Solomon had an oversized harem of 700 wives and 300 concubines.

Solomon at first resisted the pressure of his 1,000 wives to worship their idols but eventually he tolerated, and identified with them and eventually he compromised his faith.

*"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."* (1 Kings 11:4).

Before we allow pressure of sin to overwhelm us we must counter-act it by overcoming evil with good and not simply co-existing with its influence, or presence in our lives.

Solomon's heart was turned away from God. Now I am sure that this didn't take place the first day he imported all these wives and concubines. It was a gradual thing.

Over your lifetime, the enemy of our souls will bring people into your path to turn your heart away from God. No one is exempt from these temptations. What is worse is that sometimes the people that will turn you away from God could be a relative, a work associate or even someone who attends church.

His women led him astray by influencing him with their gods and perverse religious practices. Ashtoreth, Milcom, Chemosh and Molech were gods whose worship involved perverted and gruesome practices such as child sacrifices, fertility rites, prostitution and deplorable sexual acts. This eventually destroyed Solomon's spiritual vitality and his intimacy with God.

Hebrews 3:12-13 "*Take care brethren, that none of you has a sinful unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily as long as it is called today, so that none of you may be hardened by Sin's deceitfulness.*"

James 1:14-15 "*...but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*"

### **What Makes Us Drift Away from God?**

1) Our disobedience can make us drift away from God.

In Isaiah 59:2 says, *But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.*

Sin is no less than disobedience to God and it separates us from Him. Do you want to be close to God? Obey Him out of love for Him.

2) Our sinful desires can make us drift away from God.

In Genesis 4 God spoke to Cain and He warned him. He said, "*If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it*" (Gen. 4:7). Our natural desire is to disobey God and lead us to sin. We need to master or rule over sin in order to obey God. Do you want to be close to God? Then control your impulses e desires.

3) Our insecurities and fears can make us drift away from God.

In various biblical passages we encounter a few people who disobeyed God because of fear.

Perhaps one of the well known passages is when King Saul disobeyed God because he feared the people. This is what Saul said, "*I have sinned...I was afraid of the people and so I gave in to them*" (1 Samuel 15:24). Peer pressure can make you fear people and drift away from God. Non-believing family members and friends can influence you to drift away from God. Even a romantic relationship with a non-believer can make you drift away from God. The fear of what people might say or think can make you drift away from God.

### **Conclusion**

The first sign of spiritual deterioration and decline is a loss of one's intimate relationship with the Lord. Regardless of how strong you think your walk with God might be just like Solomon, you may drift away by not paying sufficient attention to God's word and His presence in your daily life. A wholehearted devotion to God is necessary, and we cannot divide our loyalties between God and worldly things. Do you love Him with all your heart, soul, mind and strength?

What caused this disastrous demise in Solomon's life? In one word it was COMPROMISE that led to his fall. And finally all his compromises led to a king with an empty heart, a heart not devoted to God.

Some of you may be thinking if whether or not Solomon was saved in the end? But that is up to God, not with us. Salvation is in the hands of God and God alone because, as the Bible says, God looks on the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). But we believe that Solomon did trust in God and, in spite of his disobedience, he was a son of God.

One compromise had led to another, until Solomon was no longer walking with God. One little step away from the Lord had led to another until the gap was huge.

So it can be with us. One little sin or disobedience can lead to another, before long we find that we have wandered far from our Saviour, the Lover of our souls. Let's not let that happen in our lives.

According to Professor Howard Hendricks of Dallas Theological Seminary, there are 100 or so leaders in the Bible, two-thirds of whom did not finish well.

The greatest accomplishment is in the end when you can say with Paul, "*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith*" (2 Tim. 4:7).

And the greatest goal and compliment at the end of your life is to hear the words from the Lord say, "*Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of the Lord*" (Matt. 25:21).

### No Regrets

In 1904 William Borden, heir to the Borden Dairy Estate, graduated from a Chicago high school a millionaire. His parents gave him a trip around the world. Traveling through Asia, the Middle East, and Europe gave Borden a burden for the world's hurting people. Writing home, he said, "I'm going to give my life to prepare for the mission field." When he made this decision, he wrote in the back of his Bible two words: **No Reserves**. Turning down high paying job offers after graduation from Yale University, he entered two more words in his Bible: **No Retreats**. Completing studies at Princeton Seminary, Borden sailed for China to work with Muslims, stopping first at Egypt for some preparation. While there he was stricken with cerebral meningitis and died within a month. A waste, you say! Not in God's plan. In his Bible underneath the words No Reserves and No Retreats, he had written the words **No Regrets**. Borden finished well.

The Greeks had a race in their Olympic games that was unique. The winner was not the runner who finished first. It was the runner who finished with his torch still lit. I want to run all the way with the flame of my torch still lit for the Lord. I want to continue to shine His light until my final breath.

I am praying that God may give me the strength and the grace to finish well with my torch still lit!  
No reserves, no retreats and no regrets!