

Leadership Lessons from Kings

The Ironic Life of Solomon

Rough Transcript

Patrick Morley

Patrick Morley:

Hello man. Welcome to Man in the Mirror Bible Study. I'm Pat Morley, and today we're going to be looking at the ironic life of Solomon. Please turn in your Bibles if you have one to First Kings chapter 11, verse one.

Just by way of review here, we started by looking at the King Asa in this short series, and we talked about the difficulty of learning how to be a humble leader who lives by faith and finishes well. We talked about the Harvard Business School. You can learn a lot of things there, but the one thing you can't learn is how to be a humble leader who lives by faith and finishes well.

There's a tremendous lesson that we learn about how to finish well and how to live successfully from Solomon. We learn about Solomon's charge from his father, David. When David his time drew near to die, he charged his son this way. He said, "I'm about to go the way of all the earth. So be strong, act like a man, and observe what the Lord your God requires. Walk in obedience and keep his decrees and commands. Do this so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go." And Solomon took up the cause. We know that there was no one like him in history. He was a trillionaire. He was a man of great power. And then God came to him in a dream one night. It's a gift. Let me give you whatever you ask for. Solomon didn't ask for riches and fame and wealth. He asked for wisdom to govern his people.

And then in the Second Chronicles, in one of my favorite texts, I like it in my paper Bible. God said to Solomon, "Since this is your heart's desire and you have not asked for wealth, riches, or not, nor the death of your enemies. And since you have not asked for a long life, but for wisdom and knowledge to govern my people over whom I've made you King. Therefore wisdom and knowledge will be given you, and I will also give you wealth, riches, and honor such as no King who is before you ever had and none after you will have."

So Solomon was really set up for life and he had incredible respect among all of the nations because of God's favor.

He wrote the great wisdom literature of the Bible in Proverbs and in the book of Ecclesiastes. In the book of Proverbs, he wrote a text, which we looked at in some depth in our study on the four voices Proverbs 4:23, "Above all else, guard your heart. For everything you do flows from it." And then in Proverbs chapter three, he says, "my son, don't forget my teaching. Keep my commands in your heart. They will prolong your life many years. They will bring you peace and prosperity. Let love and faithfulness never leave you. Write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name with both God and man."

WHY DIDN'T SOLOMON FOLLOW HIS OWN ADVICE?

So the question that I want us to look at today, and this was the first circle, why didn't Solomon follow his own advice? We find the answer to this in our texts for the day First Kings chapter 11, beginning at verse one. We read, "King Solomon, however," and just pause right there. You know that what's about to come is not going to be good. "King Solomon, however, he loved many foreign women besides

Pharaoh's daughter," and then they're listed out. And then in verse two, "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 other gods. Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love." And we know from the scripture here that then he had 700 wives, the royal birth and 300 concubines and his wives led him astray.

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.

The problem for Solomon was the however. What is a however? A however is a distraction. It's something that makes us think that Jesus Christ alone isn't enough to make me happy. I need to have something else. I love God, but however... Now one thing I want you to see, and this is the real problem here. What's really going on, and the real problem, the problem is not that Solomon didn't love God. He did love God. And follow this carefully if you will. You can love God and still live in open disobedience to him. Solomon loved God and God loves Solomon, but he lived in this open disobedience to him and the idols that he made of these foreign gods resulted in him suffering a terrible consequence. We see it in verse six.

So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord. He did not follow the Lord completely as David his father had done. And then in verse nine, "The Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord." The hood appeared to him two times. Down in verse 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.'"

So even though Solomon loved God, he lived in open disobedience to God. God's favor does not depend on our heredity. God's favor depends on our behavior. So every man watching this, if you have children, you knew before you had children that they would do things that were wrong. Things that would be in the Old Testament, uses the word, evil. Evil's kind of a pejorative word today. We tend to throw the baby out with the bath water when we say somebody is evil. But it just means doing something wrong, doing something sinful. The analytical definition of the term.

You knew that your children were going to do wrong things, but you still wanted to have them. And even when they do those things, you still love them. God certainly still loves Solomon. Solomon is in Heaven. We know that Solomon is in Heaven because in First Chronicles chapter 17, verse 13, God said, "I will be his father and he will be my son. I will never take my love away from him as I took it away from your predecessor." He's talking to David about Solomon. "I will never take my love away from him." So God doesn't stop loving us when we have a however, but there are consequences when we live in open disobedience to God.

And so the reason that this matters so much for you and I in our leadership is that we have the opportunity to identify these howevers before they get out of hand and make a change.

So I'm going to ask you now, what are your howevers or what is your however? And where are you living in open disobedience to God?

I'm going to give you the Big Idea is a powerful opportunity, a big opportunity here for each of us, that this could be one of the most important days of the year for us. Here's the Big Idea; **No matter how far you've gone down a wrong road, the only solution is to turn back.**

For Solomon there I'm sure were many points along the way where he was made aware that he was living in an open disobedience to God. But he chose to keep going down the wrong road and not turn back. God is always putting people into our lives to point out how we are going down wrong roads and giving us the opportunity to turn back.

Well, this could be a big day for you because I'm going to show you how you can turn back. The next thing we're going to talk about is the process of turning back.

THE PROCESS OF TURNING BACK

First thing up is stop yanking on the leash. We have a little dog we love. This little dog, but this dog is always yanking on the end of the leash. No matter how far I take the dog on a walk, the dog always wants to be two feet beyond the end of the leash. The dog is not content with the limits that I have set. And when we are not content with the boundaries that God has set for us and we're yanking on the leash, we are susceptible to coming up with a however. We're susceptible to coming up with some kind of a decision, a distraction, a change to our narrative that says Jesus Christ alone isn't enough for us. We need something else to be happy because we're yanking on the end of the leash. Stop yanking on the end of the leash.

Secondly, make a list of your howevers. Solomon would make a very quick list. They turned his heart after other gods. He made idols. He was obviously a sex addict having 1000 women in his life. So he could make a list of his howevers. What are yours? Make a list of yours. It might be that you're a sex addict. It might be that you're addicted to pornography. It might be that you're involved in some kind of hateful speech. I told you in the last message my verse for the year is Proverbs 22:11, "He who loves a pure heart and his speeches gracious will have the King for his friend." Or whatever other issue it is. Maybe a secret thought life. It might be some kind of an overt activity. I read an article called I Believe in All Nine of the 10 Commandments. It might be that you just don't see any need to have a respect for God's Sabbath, one of the 10 commandments, and it's become however for you.

So you love God, but you're living in open disobedience to him. Make a list of those things. Stop yanking on the leash. Make a list of your howevers.

And then in the questions that are downloadable, the third question always deals with some kind of specific application. This week I have given you a number of different things that you could pray if they're applicable for you. And I'm going to go ahead and give you an opportunity to pray these little short prayers right now to the extent that you feel that they're applicable.

The first one, and you can say this silently to yourself or out loud, if you want to. God, I confess, I need to turn back. This was part of the process of turning back. Stop yanking on the leash, make a list of what they are, and then confess that you need to turn back.

Second, I confess I don't want to turn back, but I want to want it. Please change my heart.

A third prayer, I want to love and obey you with my whole heart.

Next, I want to abide in you and you and me. I fully surrender to your will and lordship. Is that the desire of your heart? Pray these with me.

I choose to be humble and not insist on having my own way. I choose to be content with what you provide. And finally, I will live by faith in Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.

You'll have another opportunity if you take a look at the download questions to have these and you can print them out and keep them in a safe place and pray them any time you feel like you're have a distraction coming on, a however cropping up, something that is starting to take you down the wrong road. These are short prayers that can help you turn back. The Big Idea for today, **no matter how far you've gone down a wrong road, the only solution is to turn back.**

PROTECTING YOURSELF GOING FORWARD

Finally, protecting yourself going forward. Well, I think this Proverbs chapter four, verse 23 is a good place to start, "Above all else, guard your heart for it is the well spring of life. Above all else, guard your heart. For everything you do flows from it." When you guard your heart, then you are more apt to recognize a however when it's a cute little cuddly problem that you can hold in your hand. Rather than

being left unattended, like as in the case of Solomon and you may have a however that has been left for so long, it is an addiction. It is a big problem for you, but you can still turn back. But going forward, once you've cleared that up, you can knit these howevers in the butt early by guarding your heart on a regular basis.

Solomon wrote the book of Ecclesiastes, and it seems to me that he wrote it later in his reign. He had already built up great buildings and vineyards and had merchant ships. And he had experimented with every possible source of meaning. And he concludes that book of wisdom in chapter 12, verses 13 and 14 with these words. "Now all has been heard. Here is the conclusion of the matter. Fear God and keep his commandments. For this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil."

I can't help but think that Solomon must've been reflecting back on how he let his howevers get out of hand and how God decided to take his kingdom, the kingdom of Israel, and break it into two kingdoms into two divided kingdoms as a result of his sin. As a result of his however, as a result of him turning his heart after other gods. God still loved him. He's certainly going to be in Heaven, but God's favor depends on our behavior. We can't say that we love God and then live in open disobedience to him and expect that we're not going to receive a consequence or a discipline for that and the solution for all that. Whenever you become aware of a however, no matter how far you have gone down a wrong road, the only solution is to turn back.

Let's pray. Our dearest father, thank you for your word. Thank you for the example that you've preserved, the story that you preserved for us of Solomon getting off track, going too far down the wrong road, not turning back and suffering a tremendous consequence. And then also for reminding us that you didn't withdraw your love. You just withdrew your favor. Father, we pray that you would help us identify every however that we have, that we would stop yanking on the leash, that we would humble ourselves and turn back. And we ask this in Jesus name, amen.

Men, I hope that is an important message for you. One that can help you take some stock. I hope you'll engage in this process that we've talked about. This process of turning back. Thank you.