



More Lessons: Dangers of an Unguarded Heart (1 Kings 11:1-13)

Notes: Week Nine

1 Kings 11:1-13 (HCSB)

Solomon's Unfaithfulness to God

11 King Solomon loved many foreign women in addition to Pharaoh's daughter: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women² from the nations that the LORD had told the Israelites about, "Do not intermarry with them, and they must not intermarry with you, because they will turn you away from Me to their gods." Solomon was deeply attached to these women and loved them. ³He had 700 wives who were princesses and 300 concubines, and they turned his heart away from the LORD.

⁴When Solomon was old, his wives seduced him to follow other gods. He was not completely devoted to Yahweh his God, as his father David had been. ⁵Solomon followed Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Milcom, the detestable idol of the Ammonites. ⁶Solomon did what was evil in the LORD's sight, and unlike his father David, he did not completely follow Yahweh.

⁷At that time, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, the detestable idol of Moab, and for Milcom,^[a] the detestable idol of the Ammonites, on the hill across from Jerusalem. ⁸He did the same for all his foreign wives, who were burning incense and offering sacrifices to their gods.

⁹The LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from Yahweh, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. ¹⁰He had commanded him about this, so that he would not follow other gods, but Solomon did not do what the LORD had commanded.

¹¹Then the LORD said to Solomon, "Since you have done this^[b] and did not keep My covenant and My statutes, which I commanded you, I will tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. ¹²However, I will not do it during your lifetime because of your father David; I will tear it out of your son's hand. ¹³Yet I will not tear the entire kingdom away from him. I will give one tribe to your son because of my servant David and because of Jerusalem that I chose."

Footnotes:

- a. [1 Kings 11:7](#) Lit *Molech*
- b. [1 Kings 11:11](#) Lit *Since this was with you*

Holman Christian Standard Bible - *Study Bible*¹

1 Kings 11:1-13

11:1-43 This chapter describes Solomon's failures, which began in the early years of his rule.

11:1-2 David had also married foreign wives, but they did not change either his religious life or that of the nation. Solomon's wives, on the other hand, were known devotees of their national deities. Solomon's Hittite wives had historical ties with the old Hittite aristocracies of the preceding millennium. Ruth, the Moabitess, showed that there was no offense in marrying a foreigner who had converted (**Ru 4:13**).

11:3 Solomon's many political marriages demanded respect for the resident princesses and the political groups they represented, especially when he was old and needed help in controlling the empire (**vv. 14-40**). Princesses probably designated his political wives in contrast to his 300 ordinary harem women, or concubines.

11:4-8 These religious compromises were likely seen as politically expedient acts of courtesy to Solomon's foreign wives, comparable to extraterritorial privileges that allow embassies in our time to conduct themselves according to the laws and customs of their native land, but these common-sense principles conflicted with faith in God and God's covenant with Israel. Both Ashtoreth (Astarte, Ishtar) and Milcom (Molech) were international deities worshiped under numerous names in different countries. Chemosh, by contrast, was a god of Moab, probably a god of war.

11:9-13 Two divine visions were not enough to keep Solomon faithful. His departure from the Lord produced a sentence of judgment, the execution of which was deferred and mitigated on account of his father David's faithfulness and on account of Jerusalem's reputation as Yahweh's city (**v. 32**).

1. Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., *HCSB Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "1 Kings 11".

The Apologetics Study Bible²

1 Kings 11:1-13

11:1 Solomon did this in direct disobedience to [Dt 17:17](#). Most of the marriages were designed to seal political alliances.

11:2 The term "intermarry" is an idiom used for more than just marriage. While the context clearly centers upon marriage, it is the entire cultural package that went along with marriage (economic, political) and the negative moral influence of close association with unbelievers that was in view here.

11:5 "Milcom" was the national deity of the Ammonites; the name apparently means "the king," and was identified with Chemosh, the deity of Moab, by Jephthah in [Jdg 11:24](#). Some suggest Milcom is the same god as Molech, see [Jr 49:1](#).

11:6 "Did what was evil"; literally "The Evil." This expression with the definite article, referring to idolatry, is very common in the Former Prophets: Jos, Jdg, 1 and 2 Sm, and 1 and 2 Kg (see [Ex 20](#)). The use of capitalization captures the original intent. Of all sin, the greatest in the eyes of the biblical authors was idolatry, and they often wrote of it this way.

11:11 "Since you have done this," can mean, "since this idolatry is your habitual practice."

NLT Life Application Study Bible³

1 Kings 11:1-13

11:2 Although Solomon had clear instructions from God *not* to marry women from foreign nations, he chose to disregard God's commands. He married not one, but many foreign women, who subsequently led him away from God. God knows our strengths and weaknesses, and his commands are always for our good. When people ignore God's commands, negative consequences inevitably result. It is not enough to know God's Word or even to believe it; we must follow it and apply it to our daily activities and decisions. Take God's commands seriously. Like Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, we are not as strong as we may think.

11:3 For all his wisdom, Solomon had some weak spots. He could not say no to compromise or to lustful desires. Whether he married to strengthen political alliances or to gain personal pleasure, these foreign wives led him into idolatry. You may have strong faith, but you also have areas of weakness—and that is where temptation usually strikes. Strengthen and protect yourself where you are weak because a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. If Solomon, the wisest man, could fall, so can you.

2. Kirk E. Lowery, "Notes on 1 Kings," in *The Apologetics Study Bible: Understanding Why You Believe*, ed. Ted Cabal, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 518-519.

3. *Life Application Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 532.

[11:4](#) Solomon handled great pressures in running the government, but he could not handle the pressure from his wives who wanted him to worship their gods. In marriage and close friendships, it is difficult to resist pressure to compromise. Our love leads us to identify with the desires of those we care about.

Faced with such pressure, Solomon at first *resisted* it, maintaining pure faith. Then he *tolerated* a more widespread practice of idolatry. Finally, he became involved in idolatrous worship, *rationalizing* away the potential danger to himself and to the kingdom. Because we want to please and identify with our loved ones, God asks us not to marry those who do not share our commitment to him.

[11:5-8](#) Ashtoreth was a goddess that symbolized reproductive power—a mistress of the god Baal. Molech was the national god of the Ammonites and was called "detestable" because its worship rites included child sacrifice. Chemosh was the Moabites' national god. The Israelites were warned against worshipping all other gods in general and Molech in particular ([Exodus 20:1-6](#); [Leviticus 18:21](#); [20:1-5](#)).

[11:9, 10](#) Solomon didn't turn away from God all at once or in a brief moment. His spiritual coldness started with a minor departure from God's laws ([3:1](#)). Over the years, that little sin grew until it resulted in Solomon's downfall. A little sin can be the first step in turning away from God. It is not the sins we don't know about but the sins we excuse that cause us the greatest trouble. We must never let any sin go unchallenged. In your life, is an unchallenged sin spreading like a deadly cancer? Don't excuse it. Confess this sin to God and ask him for strength to resist temptation.

[11:11-13](#) Solomon's powerful and glorious kingdom could have been blessed for all time; instead, it was approaching its end. Solomon had God's promises, guidance, and answers to prayer, yet he allowed sin to remain all around him. Eventually it corrupted him so much that he was no longer interested in God. [Psalm 127:1](#), written by Solomon, says, "Unless the LORD builds a house, the work of the builders is wasted." Solomon had begun by laying the foundation with God, but he did not follow through in his later years. As a result, he lost everything. It is not enough to get off to a right start in building our marriage, career, or church on God's principles; we must remain faithful to God to the end ([Mark 13:13](#)). God must be in control of our lives from start to finish.

Life Essentials Study Bible⁴

A Principle to Live By

1 Kings #13: Moral Compromise

from 1 Kings 11:1-8

We should not compromise our love for God by engaging in any form of immorality.

In spite of the extraordinary wisdom God gave Solomon, he failed to apply it in his own life. He proceeded to violate God's commandment to never marry Canaanite women ([Dt 7:1-3](#)). Furthermore, he violated God's standard of monogamy introduced in the original creation ([Gn 2:24-25](#)). Though God tolerated polygamy because of the way sin impacted the culture, He still warned any future king in Israel never to "acquire many wives for himself so that his heart won't go astray" ([Dt 17:17](#)). What God had warned against happened! The pagan women he had brought into his harem "seduced him to follow other gods," which compromised his love for God ([1Kg 11:4](#)).

Jesus taught that it's impossible to serve two masters ([Mt 6:24](#)). Though he was speaking about God versus money, the principle applies to any form of idolatry, including sexual immorality. Paul spoke to this issue:

Therefore, put to death what belongs to your worldly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry. ([Col 3:5](#))

Reflection and Response

In what ways is blatant immorality, as it is promoted in the world today, dulling our love for God and interfering with our commitment to serve Him wholeheartedly?

4. Gene Getz, *Life Essentials Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2011), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 446.

A Principle to Live By
1 Kings #14: Finishing Well
from 1 Kings 11:9-13

**Even though we have had a strong beginning in our walk with God,
we must not assume that we'll automatically continue on the path God has designed for us.**

Solomon's great beginning and his expansive witness in the world did not keep him from a tragic end. Though God allowed him to serve as king until he died, 10 tribes were eventually taken from him and given to his servant Jeroboam.

The apostle Paul urged all who put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation to continue to "walk worthy of the calling [we] have received" ([Eph 4:1](#)). We are to be on guard consistently so that we "no longer walk as the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their thoughts" ([Eph 4:17](#)). Rather, we are to "walk in love, as the Messiah also loved us and gave Himself for us" ([Eph 5:2](#)). This means we are to "walk as children of light," which will enable us to discern "what is pleasing to the Lord" ([Eph 5:8-10](#)).

This is a daily process, and it calls for diligence. The key to finishing well, Paul stated in conclusion, is to "be strengthened by the Lord" by putting on "the full armor of God" ([Eph 6:10-11](#))—something Solomon failed to do.

Reflection and Response

What was Paul's personal strategy for finishing well? (See [1Co 9:24-27](#).)