

LIFE LESSONS FROM FAMOUS FAILURES (Pt. 9)

“Solomon – The Wisest Fool Who Ever Lived” (1 Kings 2:1-4; 11:1-6, 41-43)

INTRO: Some are the finest truths we learn in God’s Word are incarnated in the lives of those in its pages, esp. from the failures. Review . . . All failed! They were real people, thoroughly human and tragically fallible. Real saints with rusty halos. Let’s meet Solomon and learn from him.

I. SOLOMON’S RISE (1 Kings 1-10) – His Splendor

- A. *Birth* – 2nd son born to David and Bathsheba; reared in home plagued by tension and jealousy.
- B. *Anointed* (1 Kings 2:1-4) on his father’s deathbed around 20 (1 Chron. 28:9). When crowned, he was walking with God. He ruled 40 yrs.
- C. *Blessings* – God gave him:
 - 1. Wisdom and knowledge (3:3-14) – marvelous, humble request. “What would you request if God gave you a blank check?”
 - 2. Riches and fame (4:20-27) – had it all with more coming in all the time.
 - 3. Discernment and strength (4:29-34) – gained an international reputation.
 - 4. (10:23-29) None more famous, wealthy, wise.
- D. *Resume* – Author of 3000 proverbs (have 31) and composer of 1005 songs (have 1), administrator, architect, builder (Temple, houses, gardens, parks, etc.).
Summary: He became greatest king on earth – fortune, fame, power, success, wisdom were all his.

II. SOLOMON’S DEMISE (1 Kings 3, 11) – His Shame (Deut. 17:2-5, 15-17)

God instructed Solomon to avoid 4 things

- A. Misdirected WISDOM (1 Kings 3:14) – Rely on God’s Word for wisdom (Deut. 17:18-20). Solomon’s wisdom was a gift (1 Kings 3:3-14). He replaced with his own (Eccl. 1:13-18; 2:15-17).
- B. Misused WEALTH – Kings were not to aggressively seek wealth, but Solomon did (1 Kings 4:25; 7:1-8; 10:23-27) – houses, vineyards, parks, fruit trees, ponds, slaves, herds, treasures, singers, concubines, etc. All for his own pleasure with no credit to God or investment in others (Eccl. 2:1-11).
- C. Multiplied WOMEN – God commanded monogamous marriage (Gen. 2:18-25; Deut. 17:16-17). He over-married pagan women (Eccl. 7:26-29). Like Abraham, Moses, Saul, David. Over 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 3). See Neh. 13:26.
- D. Mixed WORSHIP – He was to be devoted to God (Deut. 17:2-5). Pagan wives drew his heart from God (1 Kings 11:4-13). God gave him a special

name “Jedediah” (beloved of God – this is my beloved son). He was to fear (worship) God (Deut. 17:19; Eccl. 3:14; 7:18; 8:12; 12:13-14).

Result? – How did God respond? Twice, he warned Solomon (3:14; 9:4-7). In time, His patience ended (11:9-14, 34, 36). God was angry. Solomon’s dream of a united kingdom was dashed and he faced God-appointed adversaries until his death. No doubt the wisest fool who ever lived. When he died, no praise or tribute (11:41-43).

III. LIFE LESSONS FROM SOLOMON’S FAILURES

- 1. *Unchecked sinful bents are passed from parents to children.* Sinful tendencies can be generational. Solomon learned about and saw lust active in his father’s life (Exo. 20:5). Later, Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, would be like his father: idolatry, cruelty, polygamy – all from dear old dad!
- 2. *Success makes us vulnerable.* He fell the hardest when at his highest. Past nor present spiritual and material achievements do not guarantee future faithfulness. We must constantly depend on God for guidance and protection. Solomon’s success to have a united kingdom meant more to him than anything. God spoiled his success and divided the kingdom.
- 3. *Disobeying God’s commands and ignoring His warnings brings disaster.* He made unneeded alliances, practiced idolatry and immorality. Each violated God’s law. Twice God tried to warn him (3:14; 9:4-7). God must be taken seriously and followed completely. Incomplete obedience holds seeds for trouble. When God is no longer our main focus, trouble looms. When we ignore God’s Word, we fall prey to whatever influences are around us at the time.
- 4. *Unhealthy associations often turn our hearts from God.* Solomon spent more time with the unbelieving and eventually his heart turned from God (1 Cor. 15:33).
- 5. *Sin always has consequences.* God is displeased (11:9-11). Dreams are dashed. Adversaries to get attention (11:14, 23, 26).
- 6. *God remains merciful to His children.* In spite of Solomon’s failures, God never stopped loving him (2 Sam. 7:11-15).

* * * **SOUND ADVICE FROM OLD REBEL (Eccl.)** * * *

Eccl. is autobiography by same Solomon near end of his life. He looks back over his failures and the emptiness of his selfish, sensual pursuits. His advice is solid:

- 1. (11:9) Never forget you will answer to God.
- 2. (12:1) Set right priorities early and try to keep them. Final words (12:13-14). Solomon ought to know!

CONC: Sound advice from the wisest man who ever lived that became a fool. Failure never has to be final. We can be forgiven. There is hope – but only when we swallow our pride, confess our sins and come to God.