

# Finishing Well (1 Kings 9-11)

1. INTRO - How do you ruin your life?
  - a. Do you want your life to count? Do you want it to end w/ a legacy that matters?
  - b. Solomon: ends very poorly (1 Kings 11)
  - c. What led to Solomon's decay into idolatry and failure?
2. Worldly Wisdom
  - a. Behaving like and trusting in the world
    - i. King Hiram's twenty towns that were good for nothing
      1. Due to power, Hiram still sends him wealth and gold
    - ii. Ex: Just b/c you can get away with something doesn't mean that you should. Just b/c it's "the way business is done" doesn't mean it's the way YOU should do it. The wisdom of the world is different from God's
    - iii. Solomon was behaving like a shrewd businessman rather than a godly king (as king his job was to rule as steward of YHWH)
  - b. Throughout Scripture, Egypt is a metaphor for sin, paganism, idolatry
    - i. Behave like an Egyptian = trusting in yourself, false gods instead of God. Look at Solomon in these chapters
    - ii. V16, Pharaoh does what Israel could not or would not
    - iii. V16, Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter early in his reign
    - iv. V17-18, He still feared Egypt b/c he rebuilt border fortresses for protection
      1. Deep down he knew it was wrong and dangerous
      2. He feared them rather yet trusted them rather than fearing God and trusting in Him
    - v. V19, Building an Egyptian army (horses)
    - vi. V20-23, A detailed description of his Egyptian slavery
    - vii. V24, A house for his Egyptian bride
    - viii. Solomon isn't behaving like an Israelite and definitely not a king seated on YHWH's throne. He's behaving like his father in law, Pharaoh
  - c. Being influenced by the world, behaving like the world
3. Excessive Wealth
  - a. Solomon had lots of money - and God blessed him with that, but you see Solomon's attitude towards money changing as he gets older
  - b. He used to use his resources for the good of the nation and the people
  - c. Chapter 4: wealth described as food and provision for the nation
    - i. Sitting in peace under your vine and fig
  - d. Chapters 9 & 10: wealth is all about Solomon and the politicians
    - i. 9:26-28, Sent ships far and wide to gather not just treasure, but exotic treasure... "And why not?! He's rich, let him enjoy his life!"
      1. 17 He must not acquire many wives for himself so that his heart won't go astray. He must not acquire very large amounts of silver and gold for himself.

2. Is 16 tons of gold from a foreign land a lot?
  - a. 1 Ounce of gold is \$1,340 (Tuesday)
  - b. 16 Ounces in a pound... 2,000 lbs in ton
  - c. \$686,080,000 as part of your gold collection - not because you need it but because you're bored
- ii. Beyond that, he received 25 tons (\$1.07 billion) year in tribute. What do you do w/ all that money?
  1. Help people, right? No - make 300 shields. Each today would be worth \$85,760 in gold at 4 lbs each
  2. Build an ivory throne and cover it in gold...
  3. All his utensils, all his plates, everything
  4. Queen Sheba says, "How happy are your servants (e.g. the people of the court who benefit from you)." Not how happy is your nation.
- iii. Wealth changes you. The more you have the harder it is to let go.
- e. Solomon's heart changed. He started valuing temporary over eternal
4. Numerous wives who influenced his heart → Read 1 Kings 11:1-8
  - a. Solomon loved women. Solomon loved sex. There's no other explanation for having 700 wives and 300 concubines.
  - b. They whispered in his ear, teasing him, wooing him, but it wasn't just his body - they turned his heart
  - c. Solomon wanted to please his wives. After all, they pleased him.
    - i. There is great danger in living to please people instead of to please God.
    - ii. Goes back to living in fear of people instead of in fear of God.
  - d. Living in fear of his wives, pleasing them, he abandoned his morals, his ethics, his wisdom and his faith
    - i. Chemosh - human sacrifice
    - ii. Milcom - child sacrifice, a bronze statue, arms reached out, w/ the head of a bull. They would heat it up from the bottom while the arms held the baby. Eventually the statue would heat up entirely and they would beat drums, chant, and pray as it died.
    - iii. Solomon did this on the hill across from the temple mount...
  - e. Read 11:9-13
5. What does this mean for us? How are you finishing? You say, "I don't know, I'm only 20." What are you walking towards? Finishing well/poorly is incremental decisions
  - a. **Wisdom - Do you behave like and trust in the world or God? Do you behave like and trust in the king of this age or the king of heaven?**
    - i. What are you living for? The American Dream?
  - b. **Wealth - What do you value? What are you pursuing? Where are you investing?**
    - i. Parable of the sower → thorns of wealth and the concerns of life
    - ii. Wealth is supposed to be a tool in your hand, never your master
    - iii. Your resources don't belong to you. Did you know that? Solomon forgot it.

**c. Wives - Who influences you?**

- i. Don't be a fool, your relationship influences you deeply. Be careful who you date. Be careful who you marry.
- ii. They might not force you to throw your child on the altar of Milcom, but they might force you to get an abortion.
- iii. They might convince you to throw your child into the arms of a world that is politically correct, immoral. god-hating
- iv. They might tell you that there's no way you are dragging them or your kids to learn about that myth called Jesus Christ.

6. Bottom Line: I want you to finish well.

- a. Happens starting today, incremental moment by moment decisions to walk in the ways of God and not the world - to follow Christ, no one else - at any cost
- b. How about you? You should be able to look back over the last year, five years and see progress, not a downward spiral. What do you see?
  - i. Ask someone - ask me: How have I grown? Changed? Not grown?
- c. I want you to finish well. Not like Solomon.
- d. May 20, 2000, John Piper preached a message at Passion OneDay which shaped a generation of pastors and missionaries. Here is an excerpt which shook me to my core:
- e. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=1&v=mfpmbmsvu3A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=mfpmbmsvu3A)
- f. *You don't have to know a lot of things for your life to make a lasting difference in the world. But you do have to know the few great things that matter, and then be willing to live for them and die for them. The people that make a durable difference in the world are not the people who have mastered many things, but who have been mastered by a few great things.*

*If you want your life to count, if you want the ripple effect of the pebbles you drop to become waves that reach the ends of the earth and roll on for centuries and into eternity, you don't have to have a high IQ or a high EQ. You don't have to have good looks or riches. You don't have to come from a fine family or a fine school. You just have to know a few great, majestic, unchanging, obvious, simple, glorious things, and be set on fire by them.*

*But I know that not everybody in this crowd wants their life to make a difference. There are hundreds of you — you don't care whether you make a lasting difference for something great, you just want people to like you. If people would just like you, you'd be satisfied. Or if you could just have a good job with a good wife and a couple good kids and a nice car and long weekends and a few good friends, a fun retirement, and quick and easy death and no hell — if you could have that, you'd be satisfied even without God.*

*That is a tragedy in the making.*

*Three weeks ago, we got word at our church that Ruby Eliason and Laura Edwards had both been killed in Cameroon. Ruby was over eighty. Single all her life, she poured it out for one great thing: to make Jesus Christ known among the unreached, the poor, and the sick. Laura was a widow, a medical doctor, pushing eighty years old, and serving at Ruby's side in Cameroon.*

*The brakes give way, over the cliff they go, and they're gone — killed instantly.*

*And I asked my people: was that a tragedy? Two lives, driven by one great vision, spent in unheralded service to the perishing poor for the glory of Jesus Christ — two decades after almost all their American counterparts have retired to throw their lives away on trifles in Florida or New Mexico. No. That is not a tragedy. That is a glory.*

*I tell you what a tragedy is. I'll read to you from Reader's Digest what a tragedy is. "Bob and Penny . . . took early retirement from their jobs in the Northeast five years ago when he was 59 and she was 51. Now they live in Punta Gorda, Florida, where they cruise on their thirty foot trawler, playing softball and collecting shells."*

*That's a tragedy. And people today are spending billions of dollars to persuade you to embrace that tragic dream. And I get forty minutes to plead with you: don't buy it. With all my heart I plead with you: don't buy that dream. The American Dream: a nice house, a nice car, a nice job, a nice family, a nice retirement, collecting shells as the last chapter before you stand before the Creator of the universe to give an account of what you did: "Here it is Lord — my shell collection! And I've got a nice swing, and look at my boat!"*

*Don't waste your life; don't waste it.*

7. Don't finish like Solomon. Don't waste your life. Don't be distracted by wealth, relationships and the wisdom of the world. Walk with God. Make your life count.
  - a. Choose to be consumed by the things that matter and to walk in them daily

## Discipleship Group Questions

2 Timothy 4:1-7

- What does this passage teach about God? (What does it teach about his characteristics, his desires for our lives, his commands, etc?)
- What does this teach about mankind? (What are our defaults? What should we avoid? What should we pursue? How can we see ourselves in this passage?)

- What should you do to live in obedience to this teaching? (Is there a sin to avoid, a different way to think, or an action to take?) Come up with a tangible action step for you or your group.
- Who do you know who would benefit from hearing about this passage? Share it with him or her.