

## STUDY GUIDE

**PLEASANT RIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**BUILDING HIS CHURCH**  
**SPIRITUAL COMPROMISE**  
**1 KINGS 11:1-13**  
**02/04/2018**



### MAIN POINT

We must guard against spiritual compromise, for God holds His people accountable for their sins.

### INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**What are some things you have way too many of? How did you come to possess so many of these?**

**Has this been a problem in your relationship with your family or neighbors? What, if any, compromises have you had to make in order to deal with the problem?**

In some areas of life compromise has value. Finding common ground heals broken relationships. It can restore diplomatic relations between feuding nations. It can reduce disagreements between husbands and wives. Reaching a win-win solution can make friendships stronger. Yet there are some areas where compromise is harmful. Never is this more true than in our spiritual lives. God is a holy God who cannot compromise His holiness. Therefore, neither should His people. When we ignore God's clear statements of right and wrong, we sin. God holds Christians accountable for their sins regardless of position, age, or previous faithfulness.

### UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 KINGS 11:1-3.**

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**Read Deuteronomy 7:1-4 and 17:17. Why did God forbid the Israelites from intermarriage with their Canaanite neighbors? What problems did God say could come from intermarriage? How would God punish such actions?**

**How had Solomon disobeyed God's command?**

**What was Solomon's weakness? Why didn't his legendary wisdom keep him from crossing the line into disobedience and sin? What can we learn from this?**

**What weakness leads your heart astray and hurts your relationship with God? With others? With health and long life?**

Spiritual compromise sometimes occurs very suddenly and sometimes happens gradually over time. Like Solomon, we can be led away from God by things we love. We should take seriously the Lord's warnings and avoid actions leading to spiritual compromise.

**ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 KINGS 11:4-8.**

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**Solomon's initial disobedience was in marrying foreign women who worshiped other gods. Where did this choice eventually lead Solomon? Why do you think verse 4 notes that this was "when Solomon was old"?**

**What role did Solomon's wives play in his idolatry? What can we learn from Solomon's example about the influence of others on our spiritual life and health?**

**What accounts for Solomon's change of heart from his earlier devotion to the Lord? What could Solomon have done to avoid this spiritual compromise?**

**What may keep Christians today from confessing and repenting of sins that lead them into spiritual compromise?**

We risk compromise when we allow our culture to mold and shape us, instead of us being salt and light, influencing our culture. When we recognize symptoms of spiritual compromise, we can confess our disloyalty and return to a wholehearted devotion to the Lord.

**ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 KINGS 11:9-13.**

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The fulfillment of God's judgment against Solomon did not have to wait long. Early in the reign of Solomon's son Rehoboam, the tribes of Israel rebelled against his harsh leadership. Only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained loyal to Rehoboam, along with the Levites (2 Chron. 11:12-13). They became the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The rest of Israel followed Jeroboam, who had been a servant of Solomon (1 Kings 11:26,31).

**Solomon's failure to obey God brought judgment. What special privileges from God had Solomon experienced? Why did Solomon turn his back on the Lord who had blessed him in so many ways?**

**How does it make you feel to read that the Lord was angry with Solomon? How did God plan to punish Solomon? How do we see God's grace even in this judgment?**

**How did God remain faithful to His earlier promises even in this judgment?**

**How much do you think tolerating idolatry within his own household paved the way for Solomon's own participation in idolatry?**

## **APPLICATION**

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**What steps will you take to strengthen and protect your weaker areas so that you can prevent a fall into spiritual compromise?**

**What contemporary gods (literal or figurative) do people worship today? What people or things in your life draw your attention and affection away from the one true God?**

**Who would be hurt if you compromised your spiritual integrity and commitment to the Lord? Does reflecting on these consequences help you remain faithful? Explain.**

**When we tolerate sin today in our families, our workplaces, or our communities, are we and our children more likely to give in to temptation in that area? Can you give examples where you have seen this happen?**

**Have you been affected because someone else compromised his or her spiritual integrity and commitment to the Lord? How have you seen God's grace and redemptive power at work even in situations like this?**

## PRAY

Conclude your study in prayer, asking God for help in guarding against spiritual compromise and in growing in faithfulness. Thank Him for His grace, and that His judgments are always just and fair. Ask Him to make group members undivided in their devotion to Him.

## COMMENTARY

### 1 KINGS 11:1-13

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11:1–3 After the glowing report in 10:14–29, these verses are the literary equivalent of a blow to the face. Despite all his obvious strengths, the king has a very evident weakness for women, especially foreign women. Besides Pharaoh's daughter, he loves Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women. Altogether he accumulates "seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines." Like the marriage to the Egyptian princess, most of these unions probably were politically motivated. Such linking of nations was intended to foster peaceful relations between normally combative countries. In a straightforward secular kingdom this practice would be good politics.

There are several problems, however, with what Solomon has done. First, he has disobeyed Moses' law for marriage, which constitutes a breach of the agreement Solomon makes with God in 1 Kgs 3:1–14; 6:11–13; and 9:1–9. Moses says in Deut 7:3–4 and Exod 34:15–16 that Israelites must not intermarry with noncovenant nations. Why? Because God says "they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods" (Deut 7:4). Judgment will then result. Second, Solomon has broken Moses' commands for kings (cf. Deut 17:14–20). Moses explicitly says, "He must not take many wives or his heart will be led astray" (Deut 17:17). Indeed, all of Moses' dire predictions come true in Solomon's case. His wives do lure him into idolatry. Solomon, however, is responsible for his own actions. He knows better but does not act on this knowledge.

Third, Solomon has evidently fallen into the emotional trap of wanting to be like pagan kings. Moses counsels kings to remain as close to the people as possible (Deut 17:14–20). Kings who become too wealthy desire possessions and women more than they desire to serve God and the people, Moses warns (Deut 17:14–20). Solomon has clearly forgotten this admonition. He has competed with other kings and queens in wisdom and splendor and has won (cf. 1 Kgs 4:29–34; 10:1–13, 23–25). These victories are gifts from God (1 Kgs 3:10–15). Competing in wives is outside of God's will and promise to bless, though, so the process can have no positive result.

11:4–8 What occurs in this passage must have sickened the author of 1, 2 Kings and any original readers committed to the Lord. In Solomon's old age his wives influence his devotion to God, and he worships "other gods." How did this outrage occur? "His heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been." In other words, his heart was no longer wholly God's. The Lord had ceased to be the major factor in his life. Once this shift occurred, the next steps into idolatry became more natural and easier to accept.

Other than their link to his wives, Solomon's choice of gods makes no sense. In the ancient world polytheists tended to worship the gods of nations who had conquered their armies or at least the gods of countries more powerful than their own. Ironically, Solomon worships the gods of people he has conquered and already controls. What could he possibly gain from such activity? The whole episode makes no sense, just as idolatry itself makes no sense.

Who were these gods Solomon worshiped? The fertility goddess Ashtoreth had been a stumbling block to the Israelites since they arrived in Canaan (Judg 2:13). Perhaps it is fitting for Solomon to worship a sex goddess. Molech was an astral deity (Zeph 1:5) to whom human sacrifices were offered (Lev 20:2–5; 2 Kgs 23:10; Lev 18:21; Jer 32:35). Chemosh, like Molech, probably was also an astral god. Besides these deities, Solomon probably worshiped other gods as well (1 Kgs 11:8). Thus, the miraculously blessed heir of David, leader of the covenant people, has broken the most fundamental command of all: “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exod 20:3).

11:9–13 Of all the sins recorded in Scripture, God takes idolatry the most seriously, for no other sin has the capability of wrecking the entire covenant by itself. When this sin is committed, God acts swiftly, justly, and redemptively, as Israel discovers in Exodus 32–34; Numbers 20; and the entire Book of Judges. It is natural, then, to read that God “became angry with Solomon.” The Lord has revealed himself to Solomon, blessed him, and honored him. In return Solomon has turned his back on the Lord.

Therefore, God speaks to Solomon again. Unlike 1 Kgs 3:1–15; 6:11–13; and 9:1–19, however, the Lord now censures Solomon. God says, “Since this is your attitude I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates.” This declaration reminds readers of 1 Sam 13:13–14, where Saul’s sin leads Samuel to tell Saul his kingdom will not endure, for “the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the LORD’S command” (13:14). Whereas David ascended to power because of Saul’s power, now David’s son has sinned in a way that causes God to limit the kingdom of David’s descendants.

Only one thing keeps Solomon on the throne at all, and that is the promise the Lord made to David in 2 Sam 7:1–17. For David’s sake the Lord allows Solomon to remain in power. Further, for David’s sake his descendants will continue to rule a fragment of the covenant nation. Despite these concessions to David’s memory, however, the punishment is clear, irrevocable, and stunning. Solomon’s sin will soon cause the nation to crash from the heights it has achieved. His idolatry will lead to idolatry among the people. Israel has begun the long road to exile, though they do not know yet that their actions entail such consequences.

Paul R. House, 1, 2 Kings, vol. 8, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 166–168.