

BIBLE BRIEFING

“The Things We Do for Love”

First Kings 11:1-13

1 Kings 11:1 But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, *and* Hittites -

1 Kings 11:2 from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, “You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.” Solomon clung to these in love.

1 Kings 11:3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart.

1 Kings 11:4 For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David.

1 Kings 11:5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.

1 Kings 11:6 Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as *did* his father David.

1 Kings 11:7 Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that *is* east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon.

1 Kings 11:8 And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

1 Kings 11:9 So the LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice,

1 Kings 11:10 and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the LORD had commanded.

1 Kings 11:11 Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, “Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant.

1 Kings 11:12 Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son.

1 Kings 11:13 However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen.”

Introduction

Solomon disobeyed God exponentially. He didn't marry a Gentile woman; he married **seven hundred** Gentile women, and had another

three hundred as concubines. (A concubine was inferior to a wife, but something much more than a mistress. She had legal rights).

Solomon disobeyed to the thousandth power, as it were. He did it, the text says, for love. He loved many foreign women; he clung to [them] in love.

How do you love a thousand women? You don't, really. **You can't!** You'd only see each of them briefly once every thousand and ninety-five days! There's no time for romance; or for relationship.

The account in our text is true; but it is also intended to teach us something spiritual. Solomon's love for these pagan women illustrates a love for the world, and the things of the world. It shows us that love, on the level of the world, is a physical, fleshly excess that eliminates and destroys any real opportunity to experience the deep, satisfying love that comes from following God.

You can have the world, and have it in some excess. Maybe not as much as Solomon; maybe more. Some of you might remember the claims of basketball star Wilt Chamberlain. He claimed to have had sex with 20,000 different women. It worked out to 1.2 per day every day from the age of 15. To his moral credit, he claimed none of them were married!

- being changed to bring change -
Excess cannot satisfy the deepest part of you. And it will lead to ruin.

This passage describes the things we'll do for love – the love of the world. And it describes the things God does for love – His love for us.

The things we'll do for the love of the world are presented in verses one through eight.

1 Kings 11:1 But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites -

1 Kings 11:2 from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love.

Solomon's life was filled with alluring, foreign women. Take away a couple of letters from the word 'allure' and you're left with *lure* – like a fishing lure. The allurements of the world are lures that, if you strike at enough, will hook you and reel you in.

For Solomon, the lure was Gentile women. For each of us, it will be something else; or several something else. Think Pinocchio on *Pleasure Island* and you'll understand the situation as it really is.

God didn't say that multiple intermarriages would be dull or boring; He didn't say there was no pleasure in them. He said it would **turn away your heart** from Him. He said, in essence, that it was something physical that could never satisfy you spiritually and ultimately the way a relationship with Him can.

1 Kings 11:3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart.

What will we do for the love of the world? We will abandon ourselves to our physical lusts. Go after the world, and the things in the world, and you will always want for more. It's never enough. Your physical appetites, left to themselves, are voracious.

What can happen when your appetites are in control? You can sink to a place where you will literally sell yourself to satisfy your lusts.

1 Kings 11:4 For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David.

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We encounter the pagan gods **Ashtoreth, Milcom, Chemosh, and Molech.**

The Gentiles in Solomon's day believed the processes of nature resulted from the interactions between gods and goddesses. It followed that they also believed that ritually imitating the gods would stir the gods to action on behalf of the worshipers. **Ashtoreth** was a goddess of fertility and harvest. If a Canaanite farmer wanted the gods to increase his crops, then he only had to imitate the divine, sexual intercourse between the male and female deities. Therefore, to increase his crops, the farmer engaged in sexual intercourse with a sacred prostitute from the temple of **Ashtoreth**.

Milcom and **Molech** are two names for a similar pagan god. We're told in Scripture, and in history, that to him were offered living children.

Worshiping **Chemosh** included burning children in sacrifice, and performing rituals for the dead.

What will we do for the love of the world? We will call evil good. When you love the world, and the things of the world, your values gradually erode until you will call evil good.

1 Kings 11:8 And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

Solomon expended great wealth on these projects. Resources that could have benefited the work of the Lord were siphoned off and wasted – flushed away down the cesspool of the world's excesses.

What will we do for the love of the world? We will waste all of our resources – including time and talent – on things that have no lasting value.

Enough of that! Let's turn our attention to God's love for us. We see it in the remaining verses. Yes, the Lord is described as **angry**; yes, the Lord acts in judgment. But His reactions only reveal how much He loved Solomon and desired something far better for him.

1 Kings 11:9 So the LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice,

Twice the Lord had personally appeared to Solomon. Can you even begin to get a handle on the privilege Solomon enjoyed? He was in a small company of individuals to whom the Lord had revealed Himself so intimately.

The thing that inspired the Lord's anger was that Solomon's heart had turned from the Lord. Solomon may have still been going through the motions, still worshipping the Lord; but his heart belonged to the world. He had left his first love for the Lord.

If you want to be concerned about something, be concerned that we do not become like the New Testament Church at Ephesus. They had everything going on... Except that they had left their first love for Jesus. In their case, it wasn't from worldliness. There was no obvious sin to repent from. Theirs was a drifting away from relationship into religion.

1 Kings 11:10 and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the LORD had commanded.

The command was to not intermarry, because it would result in Solomon's [going] after other gods. Why didn't Solomon listen? Why don't we? Sometimes it's because the consequences are not so immediate.

Solomon had married the daughter of the Egyptian Pharaoh early in his reign. Nothing horrible happened to him. In fact, it was after his marriage to her that he requested and received wisdom from God; and that he built the magnificent Temple that God came and inhabited.

Somehow this one Gentile woman became another... and another... and another... Until he was married to seven hundred and had another three hundred concubines.

By the way: God is so merciful! It would almost be better, would it not, if He acted immediately? But it wouldn't be love.

1 Kings 11:11 Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant.

There are always consequences when our hearts turn away from the Lord. They may be long in coming; but they come, and, when they do, we are saddened by them.

1 Kings 11:12 Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son.

1 Kings 11:13 However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen."

Solomon was, in a sense, living out his father's legacy. It was David, you remember, who was passionate about building the Temple for God. God said He would stand with Solomon until Solomon's death for the sake of his father.

Think of it this way. In generations past, husbands and wives who had difficulties stayed together for the sake of their children. It's not so common anymore. It's an expression of a deep love, a selfless love, for others. It sacrifices happiness for the greater good of others.

God exhibits that kind of love here. Because He loved David so much, He would stay with Solomon until Solomon's death.

Even afterward, He would fulfill His promises to David. David's line would not fail; Jerusalem would not cease to be His city.

The things God will do for love!

1. He warns us for our own good, in order to give us what it is we truly desire – a deep, settled, satisfying life in relationship with Him.
2. When we disobey His clear words, He will delay judgment, showing mercy and giving opportunity for you to repent.
3. He will keep His promises - no matter your disobedience. He remains faithful even when we are unfaithful.

No one has ever said it better than John, the apostle of love:

1John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

1John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

1John 2:17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

But more than that! It is for love that we turn to the Lord from the world:

1John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

1John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

1John 3:3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

First love for Jesus can be kindled and rekindled. We need not leave it; we can return to it.



