

Kings Series #4 - "Guard Your Heart" 1 Kings 11:1-8

I. INTRODUCTION

A. A Realistic Picture

1. Scripture never blinks at the defects of it's heroes
2. It's portraits do not smooth out the wrinkles or lighten the blemishes of the men and women presented in it's pages
3. Even David, though a man after God's heart, is shown to with all his faults and failures
4. This is one of the great proofs of the inspiration of the Bible
5. What other history or record of a people presents such a realistic picture of it's heroes as the bible?
6. In both the OT and NT, while we do see the evidences of great faith, we also see the testimony of great failure
 - a. Moses risks his life to lead an entire nation out of slavery; then cannot keep his own temper and badly misrepresents God before the people
 - b. David slays Goliath; then lies with Bathsheba and murders her husband
 - c. Peter, in a flash of enlightenment declares Jesus as the Messiah; then just a short time later becomes the mouthpiece for the devil
7. The bible is less the history of God's people as it is a record of God's grace, shown to those who so desperately need it
8. Even the heroes of the faith are shown with all their faults, because they, like everyone else have to trust in God's grace

B. Today

1. No where is that lesson more poignantly revealed than in the life of Solomon
2. Here was a man who enjoyed the absolute consummate pleasures the world has to offer
 - a. he had fabulous wealth
 - b. he had unlimited power
 - c. he was honored by the world's greatest leaders
 - d. his fame had spread to the ends of the earth
 - e. if there was anyone in all of history who might be said to have lived a life that enjoyed the very best that the world can offer, it was Solomon; the son of David, king of Israel
3. Everything Solomon had had come from God
 - a. he knew this and confessed it in his prayer to the Lord
 - b. he knew he was king because God had set him there
 - c. he knew his health, and his wealth, his power and his fame were all the blessing of God
 - d. why, God had even appeared to him, not once, but twice
 - e. and He had called Solomon to follow hard after Him with all his heart as his father David had

4. As a young man, Solomon did so
 - a. he was loyal to the Lord
 - b. and demonstrated this loyalty by building the temple
5. But as Solomon matured in years, it seems he failed to mature in spirit
6. The fervency and devotion that marked his early years cooled
7. And his last years stand today as mute testimony to what happens if we fail to maintain a heart of loyalty to the Lord

II. TEXT

A. Vs. 1-3

{1} But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites;

{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.

{3} And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart.

1. In Deuteronomy 17, God had expressly commanded the kings of Israel to refrain from doing three things
 - a. first = they were not to multiply horses to themselves, especially by going to Egypt to get them
 - b. second = they were not to multiply an abundance of silver and gold
 - c. third = they were not to take more than one wife

 - d. the reason they weren't to multiply horses was so that they keep their trust in God to protect them, rather than in the technology of their military
 - e. the reason they weren't to accumulate vast treasures of gold and silver was so that they might maintain their trust in God to supply their needs, rather than their treasury
 - f. and the reason they weren't to multiply wives, was because many wives would turn the kings heart away from the Lord to foreign gods
2. Solomon failed to heed the Lord's 3-fold command
3. Chs 10 & 11 spell out how he not only violated these commands, but he did so with a flair
 - a. he amassed horse and chariots, and even produced them for sale to other nations
 - b. silver and gold flowed through the streets of Jerusalem like water
 - c. and wives - well let's just say Solomon was a busy guy!
 - d. he had 700 wives and as if that wasn't enough, 300 mistresses
4. It's rather interesting to see how some of the commentators try to explain this
 - a. they say that because v. 3 says they were princesses, we need to understand that Solomon married most of these gals as political alliances
 - b. and indeed we know that this was a common practice in the ancient

- world for kings to seal treaties by uniting their children in marriage
- c. but come on - there weren't 700 tribes, let alone nations in that area at that time
- d. other commentators say that Solomon was just trying to enlarge the size of his harem, in the oriental tradition of thus enlarging his splendor and sense of wealth
- 5. Maybe there was some of that which motivated Solomon, but the real reason for his taking so many women is spelled out for us in vs. 1 & 2

v. 1 = "King Solomon loved many foreign women"

V. 2 = "Solomon *clung* to these in love."

- 6. Whatever other motivations he may have had, whatever *rationalizations* he may have used to talk himself into it,
- 7. The *real* reason he took so many women was simply because he desired them
- 8. His first wife, Pharaoh's daughter was his legitimate wife; and he should have remained content with her
- 9. But like virtually every other man who has ever lived, he had an eye problem
 - a. when he saw a beautiful gal, he lusted after her
 - b. and because he was king, with great wealth and power he was able to take whatever he wanted
 - c. as he says in the book of Ecclesiastes 2:10 "Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them."

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- 10. The nations listed in v. 1 were all nations God had told the Jews they were not to intermarry with, lest they turn their hearts away from the Lord and cause them to worship false gods
 - 11. Solomon knew of this prohibition, but he chose to ignore it

B. Vs. 4-8

{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.

{5} For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.

{6} Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as did his father David.

{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.

{8} And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

- 1. There is some debate if Solomon ever repented and came back to whole hearted devotion to the Lord before his end
- 2. It would seem that he didn't, that his last years were marked by compromise and apostasy

3. Many years later, during the reforms of King Josiah, the altars Solomon had built for these pagan idols were still standing on the Mt. Of Olives
 4. If Solomon had repented, there's no doubt he would have destroyed them
 5. That they stood till the time of Josiah proves Solomon never returned to the Lord
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6. The writer tells us that this happened when Solomon was old
7. Though his apostasy didn't break out till his last years, it's seeds had been planted and were growing for many years
8. Solomon's youth was marked by a fervent and passionate devotion to God
9. But that passion cooled and the devotion failed
10. May Solomon be a lesson to all among us who have walked with the Lord in fervent devotion for many years
 - a. just as we say that it is never too late to turn to God
 - b. so let it also be recognized that it is never too late to fall away from Him either!
11. In Pilgrim's Progress, as Christian and Hopeful are drawing close to the Celestial City, they pass a hill in which there is a door
 - a. when they open it, smoke rolls out to meet hem
 - b. it is dark inside, and hot
 - c. and they hear the cry of anguished voices from deep below
 - d. it is an opening to hell, and though they are very close to the gate of heaven, still, there is the chance that some would turn aside to destruction
12. Christian, never grow slack or lazy in your pursuit of God
 - a. never grow complacent in following after the Lord
 - b. never sit back and take your leisure, thinking you have gone far enough in spiritual things
 - c. never presume on the devotion of your early days or years as enough to sustain you to the gates of heaven

C. *The Progression Of Solomon's Sin*

1. Let's chart the progression of Solomon's fall
 2. And as we do, let's not the emphasis placed on the heart in these verses
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The First Step in Solomon's fall was "Attraction"

1. V. 1 says that, besides his wife, he "loved" many foreign women
2. This word "love" can refer to either true affection or mere sexual attraction, lust
3. The meaning is left to the context; and here it is clearly to be understood as lust, not love
4. In other words, though he was married, Solomon was attracted to other women
 - a. there were many very beautiful ladies that visited his court
 - b. and seeing them, he lusted for them
5. The first step in his fall was that he allowed himself to be attracted to women he shouldn't have

- a. because he was already married - he should have limited what he allowed himself to gaze on
- b. and because he was a child of God, he should have avoided anything that was prohibited, like these Canaanite women
6. "Attraction" is always the first step in falling
7. Because we live in a fallen world, we are going to encounter things which will appeal to our flesh
8. We won't be able to help that
9. But we don't have to add to problem by going places and doing things that will inflame the desires and heighten the attractive power of sin
10. Just as Solomon could have recognized his sexual weaknesses and instructed his officials to not permit gorgeous young women to enter his court,
11. So you and I need to be honest about the areas of our weaknesses and then set up hedges that will minimize the attractions that inflame our passions
 - a. men, if you have a problem with your eyes - you know there are certain things you cannot put before them; certain magazines, certain shows
 - b. if food is a problem for you, stay out of the donut shop
 - c. if you have a problem with anger, maybe it would be best not to listen to Rush Limbaugh
 - d. if drugs and alcohol are an issue, then don't enter a bar or hang with the old crowd that still does that stuff
12. It's enough of a battle just living day to day that you don't need to add to it by going places and doing things that will only incite sin
13. A young man told Martin Luther that he was struggling with a certain sin and wished he could just be free of the temptation altogether
14. Luther very wisely replied, "Well son, you can't keep the birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from making their nest in your hair."

The Second Step in Solomon's fall was "Pursuit"

1. V. 2 says that he *clung* to these women in love
 2. In other words, he *acted* on the attraction
 3. Because he was king, and because he had the power to do so, he pursued those he lusted after and took them
 4. As I mentioned before, he probably rationalized what he was doing by saying that these were all merely politically expedient alliances, and besides, the size of his harem needed to reflect the splendor of his throne
 5. He may have even gone so far as to reason that having such a large harem would give greater honor to God since God was the one who had so greatly blessed him
 6. We may scoff and mock such gross rationalizations of sin, but do we not do the very same thing when we act on our lusts?
 7. Don't we try to follow some twisted logic to excuse our sin?
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8. What's shocking is to see how Solomon was warned
 9. The Lord has warned him not to marry these women, lest they turn his

- heart to other gods
10. But he disregarded the warning and acted on his lusts
 11. Even so, you and are amply warned in scripture: Do we heed the warnings, or do we plow straight ahead?
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12. Please note something about Solomon here
 - a. he had 700 wives and 300 concubines
 - b. how many did he NEED?
 - c. only one - the first one
 - d. why then did he take all the rest, and why so many?
 - e. how many women does a man need; or for that matter, how many men does a woman need?
 - f. ONE!
 - g. that Solomon had so many is proof the NEED wasn't what drove him/ it was want that drove him
 - h. and because he wanted the wrong thing, it didn't satisfy
 - i. so he kept trying more and more, thinking the next one would be it, but she never was
 13. You see, Solomon's real problem is found right here in v. 2 = He had a heart problem
 14. He had a divided heart
 - a. part of it he tried to give to God
 - b. while the other he tried to give it to the world
 15. The problem is, our hearts weren't designed to be divided
 - a. so really, we can give it to only one
 - b. either we give it to God or to the world, not both
 - c. and if we try to walk some middle road between God and the world, we'll find that our hearts turn away from God wholly to the world

The Third step in Solomon's fall was "Commitment"

1. In v. 3 we read that Solomon married these gals
 2. He entered into an official alliance with them
 3. His attraction moved to pursuit, and that pursuit took him into a regular, daily relationship with them
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4. And so it is with the divided heart
 5. It isn't long until rather than fighting the sin we once thought we would never commit, we are living in it

The Fourth step in Solomon's fall was "Toleration"

1. V. 4 says that "his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God"
2. Because of his alliances with these foreign women, who had not converted to the religion of Israel, Solomon was forced to tolerate the worship of foreign gods in his own home
3. Here was a man who had seen the living God, here was a man who had spoken to God, here was a man who had been blessed by God more than any other

4. But he is forced, because of his own marriages, to tolerate the worship of pagan idols in his home and near the temple of God he had built
5. Again, we see the emphasis on the heart
 - a. his heart turned after these other gods, these pretenders, these empty and useless idols of stone and wood
 - b. and the loyalty to God that marked his early years grew dim and died out
6. Can I be so bold as to speak a few words to those of you who are single?
7. Listen to the counsel of Scripture and do not become yoked together with unbelievers
 - a. for just as Solomon's wives turned his heart away from the Lord, so will that unbeliever you are pursuing
 - b. please don't think it will be different with you
 - c. the road of sorrow is well lined with those who once thought as you do
8. In fact, let me be so bold as to say to all of you who are single and all of you young people, Don't fall in love!
9. That's right, DON'T FALL IN LOVE!
10. The usual response I get to that advice is, "How can I keep myself from falling in love?"
11. The answer is simple – what you've fallen into isn't love, it's *raw physical attraction*
 - a. it's simple desire
 - b. love is much more than that
 - c. love is a tough minded commitment to seek the highest good for another
 - d. you don't *fall in love*, you rise to it by committing yourself to serve and care for another
 - e. love asks, what can I give to make this other person better off
 - f. people don't *fall I love*, they *fall in lust!*
 - g. they are more concerned with what they can get, rather than what they can give
12. So again I say, don't *fall in love*
13. Guard your heart - Guard your desires - Don't let your desire for someone drive you to action
14. Rather, put your desire on hold, hold it in check, at least until you know what kind of a person this is
 - a. do they love the Lord?
 - b. and how much? You'd better hope they love the Lord more than you!
 - c. then, besides that, do they have the kind of character and personality that you really want to spend the rest of your life with?
 - d. before you let your emotions and desires carry you away into some land where you only see through rose colored glasses, check that guy or gal out real well first

The Fifth step in Solomon's fall was "Devotion to Sin"

1. In vs. 5-8 we read how he "went after" the pagan gods and even built altars

- for them in Jerusalem
2. From a mere toleration of sin, he moved to becoming a full fledged pagan
 3. Think of it, the man who had built the majestic temple and had seen it filled with the cloud of God's glory, now was building altars and shrines to grotesque little idols whose worship was the most debased and corrupt practices you can imagine
 - a. Ashtoreth was a fertility goddess who was worshipped by ritual prostitution
 - b. Molech and Chemosh were worshipped by offering infants as sacrifices
 4. How could Solomon, a man known down through the centuries for his great wisdom fall to such a level of sin and apostasy?
 5. Good question - but the answer is rather simple
 6. But the answer is found right in our text
 7. Verse 6 says that "he did not fully follow the Lord"
 8. And the reason he didn't fully follow the Lord was because he had a divided heart
 9. He tried to love both God and the world
 10. But God will not play second fiddle
 11. In fact, He will not abide competing affections
 12. If we reserve even a small part of our hearts for anything other than God, then he will abandon us to that thing until we have learned how utterly empty a divided life is

III. CONCLUSION

A. *The Point*

1. The point of all this is this: We must not have a divided heart
2. We must give all of our heart, every last room and corner, to the Lord
3. And we need to guard our hearts to make sure that over time, they don't *become* divided
4. It is not enough to make a good start - as did Solomon
5. We need to make sure we also finish with a single heart

B. *A United Heart*

1. David prayer in Psalm 86

{11} Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name.

{12} I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, And I will glorify Your name forevermore.

2. He asked the Lord to "unite" his heart
 - a. that word "unite" means to make ONE
 - b. to make it single and undivided
3. David knew his own tendency to be divided in his affections, like his son, David had a problem with the women
4. And though he failed at times, still he fought it and resisted the attractions of the world

5. In Psalm 139 he asked the Lord to search his heart and try him thoroughly so that he would not be deceived but would have an accurate diagnosis of himself and thus know what to watch for and what sins to resist
6. This is what each of us must do
7. We need to ask the Lord to search us, and to try our hearts
8. When we find some corner or some closet that is not given to the Lord, we need to bring it to Him and ask that He would unite all our heart to love and serve Him and Him alone
9. As it says in Proverbs 4:23, keep your heart with all diligence, because out of it come the issues of life
10. Love the Lord your God with ALL your heart
11. Reserve all your love and devotion for the Lord alone and tolerate nothing that would compete for that affection

C. *Falling?*

1. And if you find that you are following Solomon's example this morning
2. Then know that it is not too late to return to the Lord