



The Bible-Teaching Ministry of Pastor Chuck Swindoll

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

Solomon
LESSONS FROM A FALLEN KING

SIX STUDIES ON THE LIFE OF SOLOMON



INSIGHT FOR LIVING MINISTRIES

SOLOMON LESSONS FROM A FALLEN KING

Six Studies on the Life of Solomon

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SOLOMON

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Welcome to Our Biblical Kitchen!

Studying God's Word for Spiritual Nourishment

People hunger for spiritual truth, but they often have trouble finding it. Pastor Chuck Swindoll counts it his profound privilege to offer spiritual nutrition found only in God's Word—nutrition every soul needs and craves. Solid Bible-teaching stirs people to follow Jesus, praise God, trust in God's plan, and rest in His care. A constant supply of such spiritual nourishment is vital for walking with Christ.

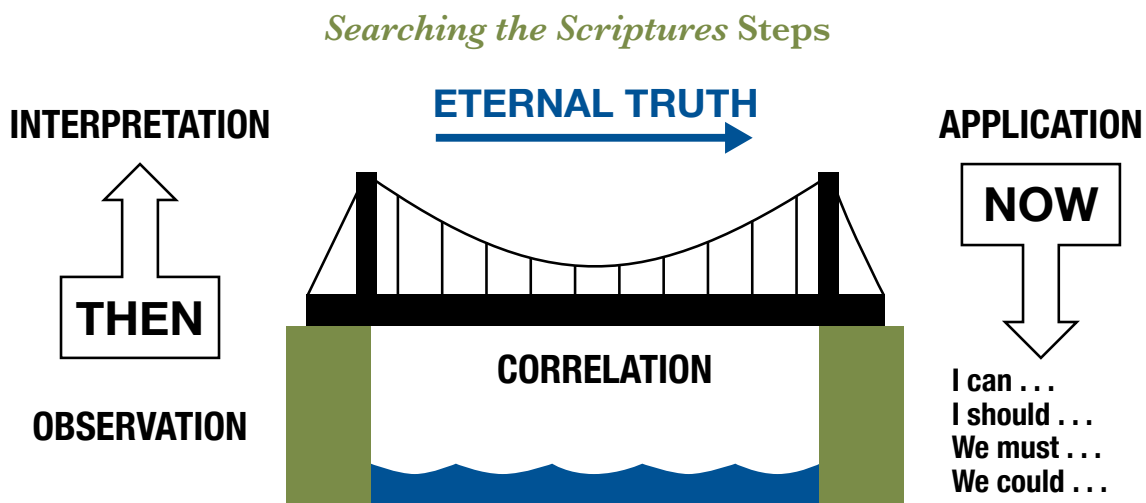
But wouldn't you like to cook up your own biblical meals?

It's easier than you think! Don't be intimidated. You can become your own spiritual chef, and Insight for Living Ministries wants to help you in this journey. The first thing you need is the right method. In his book, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*, Pastor Chuck helpfully explains his simple and reliable Bible-study process, which he learned in seminary and cultivated through his decades of ministry.

In the book, he explains four steps to always use to study a passage from God's Word:

- 1) **Observation:** Thoroughly reading the passage to discover what it says
- 2) **Interpretation:** Deeply understanding the passage to determine what it means
- 3) **Correlation:** Carefully comparing multiple passages to know how they relate
- 4) **Application:** Personally applying the passage to live by its truth

It's important to follow these steps without skipping or rushing. Would a chef leave out an ingredient in his recipe, skip a step in the cooking process, or cut the required bake-time short? No. The meal wouldn't taste as good. Likewise, it's important to perform all four steps to really grasp a biblical passage and incorporate it into your life. Here's a diagram to illustrate the process, and on the next page is a chart to summarize how you can apply each of the four steps.



SOLOMON
Lessons from a Fallen King

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

Bible-Study Review Chart

O B S E R V A T I O N

**Read the
passage
thoroughly.**

Observe the passage by examining:

- 1) The who, what, where, when, why, and how components
- 2) What you can see, touch, taste, hear, and smell
- 3) The logical connections, flow of thoughts, and range of subjects
- 4) What's repeated, emphasized, related, alike, and unlike
- 5) What's written before and after

I N T E R P R E T A T I O N

**Understand
the passage
deeply.**

Interpret the passage by studying:

- 1) The cultural, biblical, and historical context
- 2) The literary genre and use of language
- 3) The author's intent for writing
- 4) The author's beliefs, assumed and stated, about God and life

C O R R E L A T I O N

**Compare
the passage
carefully.**

Correlate the passage by comparing it with:

- 1) Scriptures that correspond in historical events
- 2) Scriptures that correspond in theological principles
- 3) Scriptures that correspond in application points

A P P L I C A T I O N

**Internalize
the passage
personally.**

Apply the passage by:

- 1) Reflecting on your daily habits, attitudes, and relationships
- 2) Inviting the Lord to reveal what you should stop and start
- 3) Asking specific questions about how you should respond
- 4) Pursuing new paths that lead to wholeness and spiritual health
- 5) Aligning your beliefs, desires, thoughts, and actions with God's truth and way

*I have rejoiced in your laws as much as in riches.
I will study your commandments and reflect on your ways.
I will delight in your decrees and not forget your word.
(Psalm 119:14–16 NLT)*

SOLOMON

Lessons from a Fallen King

What Are *Searching the Scriptures* Bible Studies?

Insight for Living Ministries creates *Searching the Scriptures* studies using the Bible-study methods from Chuck's book. These studies accompany each of Chuck's sermons, focusing on the same Bible passages Chuck focused on, and are like recipes for using your biblical cooking skills. They help you navigate your way through God's Word so that you can better understand God's truth and deepen your relationship with Jesus.

Each study follows this path:

- 1) **Introduction**—learn the topic and relevance of the study
- 2) **Prepare Your Heart**—open yourself to God to receive His Word
- 3) **Turn to the Scriptures**—step into the context of the passage
- 4) **Observation**—look at what the passage says
- 5) **Interpretation**—determine what the passage means
- 6) **Correlation**—compare the passage to other passages
- 7) **Application**—respond to the truth you learned
- 8) **Final Prayer**—pray to conclude your time in His Word

How Can You Use *Searching the Scriptures* Studies?

Insight for Living Ministries creates these studies to be used in a variety of ways. They are available as downloadable PDFs at insight.org/studies and through our mobile app. You can type your notes directly into the digital file, or you can print them. Here are the ways folks like to use these resources:

- 1) **Overview.** In 15 minutes, you can read through a *Searching the Scriptures* study to glean Chuck's key points from his sermon and the biblical passage.
- 2) **Deep Study.** You can spend 2–3 hours, all at once or across a few days, digging into the biblical verses and consulting our recommended resources.
- 3) **Small Groups.** These studies ask questions focused on the biblical text as well as on life application. They're perfect for guiding and fostering a small-group discussion.
- 4) **Sermon Preparation.** Pastors and teachers can use these studies for generating ideas during their sermon preparation.
- 5) **Bible-Study Training.** Those who are preparing for ministry can learn how to study the Bible and use these studies for practice or for help delivering a devotional.

Download the Digital File of this Study Guide





INSIGHT FOR LIVING MINISTRIES

SOLOMON

Lessons from a Fallen King

Six Studies on the Life of Solomon

King Solomon stood at the pinnacle of wisdom, fame, and fortune—which made his fall all the more tragic!

Join Pastor Chuck Swindoll in this fascinating dive into the life of Solomon, the king of Israel, whose initial humility and faith impressed God but who later turned astray and reaped the bitter seeds he had sown.

Learn from this infamous king's highs and lows as you seek to follow Christ, cultivate a godly life, and leave an honorable legacy!

1. **Stepping into Big Sandals**
Selected Scriptures
2. **Solomon in Living Color**
Selected Scriptures from 1 Kings
3. **Signs of Erosion**
Selected Scriptures
4. **When the Heart Is Turned Away**
1 Kings 11:1–9
5. **How God Deals with Defiance**
1 Kings 11:9–28, 40
6. **Sound Advice from an Old Rebel**
Ecclesiastes 11:9–12:7



INSIGHT FOR LIVING MINISTRIES

SOLOMON LESSONS FROM A FALLEN KING

Six Studies on the Life of Solomon

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INSIGHT FOR LIVING MINISTRIES

SOLOMON LESSONS FROM A FALLEN KING

STUDY ONE

Stepping into Big Sandals

Selected Scriptures

Solomon was born with a silver spoon in his mouth. He stepped into a fabulous dynasty with the brightest hope for the future that you could imagine.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

SOLOMON became king at the best of times. His father, King David, had polished the kingdom to a shine. Israel's coffers were overflowing, the nation was united, and the worship of God was vibrant. When the people lifted their praise, they sang the psalms David wrote. They loved their godly king, who modeled a spiritual passion they longed to emulate.

No young monarch could have hoped for a finer foundation on which to build his own rule . . . or had a higher standard to live up to. Solomon was stepping into big sandals when he became king.

Have you ever had to step into big sandals? Perhaps you were the one to inherit the family business. Maybe your parent or sibling had a standout talent, and everyone measured your ability by his or hers. Maybe your boss left unexpectedly, and the reins of leadership fell to you.

Young Solomon was unsteady and overwhelmed at first. But when he honestly expressed his need for God's help, God blessed him—not because Solomon deserved it but because of his humble heart. That's a trait anyone can live up to.



Stepping into Big Sandals

Selected Scriptures



PREPARE YOUR HEART

As you embark on this study of Solomon, open your heart to receive the truth God has for you in His Word. Pray David's prayer as a start and then write your own.

*Open my eyes to see
the wonderful truths in your instructions.* (Psalm 119:18)



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Out of his nineteen sons, David picked Solomon to wear his crown.¹ Why Solomon? How did David know that Solomon was the one? Read David's recounting of Solomon being chosen in [1 Chronicles 22:6–10](#). What did David say to his young son?

Two of Solomon's older brothers, however, made a play for power. Absalom attempted a coup but was killed by David's top commander, Joab ([2 Samuel 18:9–15](#)). Adonijah tried to steal the throne while his aging father was infirm ([1 Kings 1:5–13](#)). The prophet Nathan alerted David of Adonijah's scheming, and from his sickbed, David ordered a quick coronation for Solomon ([1:28–40](#)).

The Lord had His hand on Solomon, guarding him from rivals and guiding him into his destiny. Let's go back to the beginning of Solomon's life to see how he grew into the wisest, richest, and most renowned king of Israel.



Observation: Solomon's Rise and God's Blessings

Observation is the foundational phase in *Searching the Scriptures*.² Ask yourself while reading, "What does the passage say?" Don't rush. Notice the context, action, and dialogue. Observe characters, contrasts and comparisons, and cause-and-effect. Accurate interpretation depends on careful observation.

Stepping into Big Sandals

Selected Scriptures

Birth to Coronation: “Long Live King Solomon!” (1 Kings 1:34)

Solomon was born in the stormy aftermath of David’s adultery with Bathsheba, murder of Bathsheba’s husband Uriah, and shameful cover-up ([2 Samuel 11](#)). David had sunk to his lowest point spiritually. And yet, into this pit of sin, the Lord shined His light of hope through the birth of Solomon.

Birth and Naming

After the baby conceived by David’s adultery died, Solomon was born. What do you observe in [2 Samuel 12:24–25](#) about the birth? What does *Solomon* mean (see [1 Chronicles 22:9](#))? What message from God did his second name, *Jedidiah*, convey to his mother and father?

Childhood and Training

Because God used Nathan to confer upon Solomon a special name, it’s possible that the prophet also took the young prince under his protective tutelage through the turbulent days ahead. Scan [2 Samuel 13–18](#) and list some of the abuses and violence that tore apart David’s family.

Imagine young Solomon’s trauma as he watched his family tear apart. And yet, Solomon was walking with God when he came of age—thanks to Nathan’s godly influence.

*Don’t think your child is doomed if he or she has suffered even horrible events.
One godly life can change a person’s life and make up for the hard years.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll*

Inauguration and Reign

Solomon was probably in his early twenties when he became king. Review the account of his crowning in [1 Kings 1:28–35](#). Reflect on David’s counsel for his son in [1 Kings 2:1–4](#), and ponder the wonders of Solomon’s reign in [1 Chronicles 29:23–25](#). Write down your observations. What impresses you about Solomon?

Stepping into Big Sandals

Selected Scriptures

Forty Years as King: “The LORD His God Was with Him” (2 Chronicles 1:1)

Solomon’s humble character proved he was worthy of the throne. When the Lord offered Solomon anything he wished, Solomon responded:

“I am like a little child who doesn’t know his way around. And here I am in the midst of your own chosen people, a nation so great and numerous they cannot be counted! Give me an understanding heart so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong. For who by himself is able to govern this great people of yours?”
(1 Kings 3:7–9)

How did God answer Solomon’s request, according to [1 Kings 3:10–13](#)?

“The LORD his God was with him,” penned the chronicler (2 Chronicles 1:1), and the Lord exalted him greatly. In the following chart, read the passages and describe the blessings God showered on Solomon.

Blessing	Description
Wisdom 1 Kings 4:29–34	
Riches 1 Kings 10:14–22	
Fame 1 Kings 10:1–9, 23–24	

“Judah and Israel lived securely, everyone under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon” (1 Kings 4:25 NASB). An incredible prosperity fell on the people during Solomon’s reign.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Stepping into Big Sandals

Selected Scriptures



Interpretation: A Model to Follow

At the beginning of his reign, Solomon lived by his father's final words to him: "Take courage and be a man. Observe the requirements of the LORD your God, and follow all his ways" (1 Kings 2:2–3).

Thinking back on the passages you observed, what character qualities in Solomon stand out?

These early years were abundant and peaceful for Solomon and the nation. If Solomon could speak, what counsel would he give regarding this season of his life? What truth is God conveying through Solomon's example?



Correlation: Praise God in Every Circumstance

From a family in crisis to a kingdom of untold abundance—Solomon experienced the lowest lows and the highest highs. Through it all, he learned to lean on God in every circumstance. Perhaps Solomon quoted [*Psalms 103:1–5*](#) in praise as he pondered his life at this stage. In what ways had God redeemed Solomon and his family?

With what blessings did the Lord crown Solomon that were more valuable than all the gold in his treasury?

Stepping into Big Sandals

Selected Scriptures

Through God's grace and through His Spirit, we can handle our blessings. God just keeps getting all the praise and all the glory. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Forget None of the Lord's Benefits

When we receive God's abundance, it's human nature to forget the source. Take time to think of the blessings the Lord has showered on you. Drawing from Solomon's example, you can find them in at least four possible parts of your life.

First, *your mind*. When we ask for wisdom, the Lord dispenses it “to all generously” (James 1:5 NASB), not just to Solomon. In what areas of wisdom and knowledge has God blessed you? *Acknowledge Him*.

Second, *your stability*. Solomon's name means “peace,” and during his lifetime, “all of Judah and Israel lived in peace and safety” (1 Kings 4:25). What peaceful stability has God granted you during your lifetime? *Praise Him*.

Third, *your possessions*. Christians sometimes are made to feel guilty when God blesses them materially. But we can receive from His hand with gratitude, knowing it all comes from Him. Consider what God has given you. *Thank Him*.

Stepping into Big Sandals

Selected Scriptures

Fourth, *your hope*. Solomon in all his glory foreshadowed the Prince of Peace, Jesus, who came to secure our salvation and will one day return, arrayed in far greater glory. Through Solomon, God gave David's family hope, despite their sin. What hope has Christ given you? *Trust in Him*.

Solomon stepped into big sandals when he became king after David, but with God's help, he flourished. And so can you when you are called to do something great. Close your study with praise on your lips.

*The LORD is compassionate and merciful,
slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. . . .
He has removed our sins as far from us
as the east is from the west. . . .
For he knows how weak we are;
he remembers we are only dust. . . .
But the love of the LORD remains forever
with those who fear him. (Psalm 103:8, 12, 14, 17)*



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for sending Your Son—the Prince of Peace—to give His life in ransom for my sins and as a guarantee of a future kingdom of peace over which He will reign forever. All I am and all I have, my hope and my security rest solely in Him, my true glorious King. In His name, amen.

ENDNOTES

1. For a list of David's eight wives and nineteen sons, see the chart, "David's Family," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament*, eds. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 460.
2. See the online article, "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)" for an overview of the *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method.

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SOLOMON LESSONS FROM A FALLEN KING

STUDY TWO

Solomon in Living Color

Selected Scriptures from 1 Kings

Solomon deeply loved the Lord. He walked with God, and he modeled godliness. God was with Solomon before He exalted him.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

ILLUSTRATING God's care for His creation, Jesus pointed to the lilies of the field and made an interesting comparison:

"They don't work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are." (Matthew 6:28–29, emphasis added)

For His analogy to have impact, Jesus chose history's most glorious king. The prince of Persia or the monarch of Babylon wouldn't do. Only Solomon suited His point, because in intelligence, wealth, and wisdom, Solomon outshined all others. Solomon stood alone at the pinnacle of human glory.

Even in Solomon's day, his glory was legendary. When accounts of Solomon's splendor reached the queen of Sheba in Africa, she shook her head in disbelief. She caravaned all the way to Jerusalem to find out whether the reports were true. What she saw took her breath away.

When the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, the house which he had built, the food at his table, the seating of his servants, the attendance of his ministers and their attire, his cupbearers and their attire, and his stairway by which he went up to the house of the LORD, she was breathless. (2 Chronicles 9:3–4 NASB)

Solomon's wisdom especially astounded her. She exclaimed, "I had not heard the half of your great wisdom! It is far beyond what I was told" (9:6). Through the biblical account, let's follow the tracks of this ancient queen's caravan to Jerusalem and see for ourselves the many manifestations of the wisdom of this great man.



Solomon in Living Color

Selected Scriptures from 1 Kings



PREPARE YOUR HEART

When people seek wisdom apart from the Scriptures, they neglect the wisest words ever recorded. Pray for insight from God's Word as you study. Use the following space to write your prayer.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

First Kings picks up Israel's history about 971 BC, just before David's death when Solomon was crowned. The book's purpose is not just to record history but to teach spiritual truth through history. Bible scholar Thomas Constable points out the central lesson Israel illustrated:

God intended that the nation Israel demonstrate to all people how glorious it can be to live under the government of God.¹

During this brief window of time, the world caught a glimpse of the blessings of life in God's kingdom. God reigned *through* Solomon. Under this divine co-regency, Solomon reached the height of human potential and the nation blossomed—"all of Judah and Israel lived in peace and safety" (1 Kings 4:25).



Observation: Solomon in Living Color

We can see manifestations of Solomon's wisdom expressed in four areas of his life. As you read the verses below, *observe* the descriptions, repeating phrases, and key words. Locate unfamiliar places on a map in the back of your Bible or in an online [Bible map](#) of Israel during Solomon's day.

Solomon—Man of God

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom," Solomon wrote (Proverbs 9:10 NASB), and his life modeled this truth. What qualities of Solomon's heart toward God do you observe in [1 Kings 3:7–9](#)?

Solomon in Living Color

Selected Scriptures from 1 Kings

Solomon's prayer of dedication at the temple and his blessing of the people in [1 Kings 8:22–59](#) express deep spiritual passion. It's a long passage, but don't hurry through. Take time to dwell on Solomon's words. What aspects of his relationship with God do you observe, even in his posture before God? Note the "if-then" structure and the themes that repeat.

What crucial points do you see in Solomon's concluding charge in [8:60–61](#)?

Solomon's prayer of dedication is one of the longest prayers in the Old Testament. "It's all for Your glory," Solomon declared to the Lord. He really was a man of God. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Solomon—Author and Composer

Solomon was what we might call a Renaissance man. What expertise in the arts and sciences do you observe in [1 Kings 4:29–34](#)?

Solomon outpaced the smartest minds—"all the wise men of the East and the wise men of Egypt" and even "Ethan the Ezrahite and the sons of Mahol—Heman, Calcol, and Darda" (4:30–31). Unfamiliar names to us, but they were the Einsteins, the Nobel and Pulitzer Prize winners, and the elite scholars of Solomon's day. Intellectually, Solomon was in a league of his own.

Solomon in Living Color

Selected Scriptures from 1 Kings

Solomon—Administrator and Architect

Solomon also excelled in administration and architecture, rivaling the best of today's CEOs and designers. *First Kings 4:1–19* lists those to whom he delegated responsibilities and details the masterful way he administered his government. What were some of the projects Solomon oversaw, according to *Ecclesiastes 2:4–6*?

His crowning achievement was the temple he built for the Lord. Read *1 Kings 6*. What impresses you about the craftsmanship and elegance of this structure?

Solomon—Diplomat and Equestrian

How did Solomon display wise diplomacy in his relationship with the king of Tyre, according to *1 Kings 5:1–12*?

Solomon also cornered the equine market. Horses and chariots were signs of military might, and he had plenty. How did Solomon build up his forces in *10:26–29*?

Here was a man whose mind was broad, deep, and varied. I see in Solomon a wedding of authentic godliness and academic excellence. They can coexist.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Solomon in Living Color

Selected Scriptures from 1 Kings



Interpretation: The Purpose of Solomon's Temple

Solomon's temple was constructed with the finest materials and the highest quality workmanship. Taking seven years to build it, Solomon designed the temple to represent heaven on earth. The inner sanctuary was overlaid with solid gold. In this gleaming chamber stood two golden cherubim with their 15-foot wings stretching wall-to-wall. The angels towered over the ark of the covenant—the centerpiece of the Lord's relationship to Israel.

On the day of dedication, “The glorious presence of the LORD filled the Temple of the LORD” (1 Kings 8:11). God was dwelling with His people.

Reflect on a portion of Solomon's prayer of dedication in [1 Kings 8:27–30](#). What was the purpose of the temple in Israel's covenant relationship with God?

In the rest of the prayer, Solomon painted scenarios in which the nation would desperately need God—when people sin, when famines strike, and when enemies attack. According to [8:48–51](#), what must the people do? What promise from God did Solomon claim?

What principle can you draw about God and how He relates to those who come to Him in humble repentance?

You know why they called the Most Holy Place the sanctuary? Because that's where God dwelt. Technically, no building should ever be called a sanctuary. Today, the Christian is the sanctuary. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Solomon in Living Color

Selected Scriptures from 1 Kings



Correlation: You Are a Temple

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit filled not a building of gold but the bodies of ordinary people who had put their faith and hope in Jesus Christ (*Acts 2:1–4*). Christians are the temple of God now. What points did Paul make in the following verses as implications of this marvelous truth?

1 Corinthians 3:16–17: _____

1 Corinthians 6:19–20: _____

2 Corinthians 6:15–18: _____

Summarize what these verses say about following God in wisdom today.

Solomon was able to say to others, “Let your heart be wholly dedicated to God, completely and thoroughly.” I find in him genuine humility, personal integrity, and real scriptural loyalty. He followed the Scriptures to the letter.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Shine like Solomon

Solomon shined “in all his glory” because he walked closely with the God of glory. Later, sadly, Solomon gave his heart to others and fell into moral compromise. During this formative, golden age of his reign, however, while he was building the temple and growing in wisdom, Solomon’s heart was wholly devoted to God.

Solomon in Living Color

Selected Scriptures from 1 Kings

In what ways can you model Solomon's spiritual devotion, based on what you've observed in him?

Solomon modeled excellence in many areas of applied wisdom—the arts, natural sciences, architecture, administration, business, and diplomacy. Does Solomon's devotion to learning inspire you to grow in a particular area of wisdom?

Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple modeled how all of us can relate to our Savior. What is your daunting situation? Do you need to come to God—through Christ and in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit—in humble prayer for mercy and grace? Use the Final Prayer section of this study to express your heart for the Lord and need of Him.



A FINAL PRAYER

Write your prayer here.

ENDNOTE

1. Thomas L. Constable, in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 485.

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

SOLOMON LESSONS FROM A FALLEN KING

STUDY THREE

Signs of Erosion

Selected Scriptures

Fortune, fame, power, and pleasure—Solomon had it all. God trusted Solomon with these things in abundance, but he fell into traps laid by the flesh.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

EROSION happens all the time, and the signs are everywhere. Jagged mountain peaks bear the marks of the wind's wear-and-tear. Old wooden barns sag into heaps of scrap from years of exposure to the sun. Rust eats through iron girders on bridges. Invasive insects consume massive oaks from the inside out. Trees that once stood the test of tornadoes collapse in a rain shower—because of internal rot and ruin.

Flowing water is the most powerful erosive force. The Colorado River carved out the Grand Canyon by cutting through limestone, displacing boulders, and washing away tons of sediment. Pebble by pebble, grain of sand by grain of sand, the erosion process goes on and on—slowly and silently, with a force that is imperceptible and unstoppable.

What is true in nature is true in the soul. A person's character can erode, compromise by compromise, sin by sin. People rarely notice spiritual erosion at first. It may take years, but erosion will have its way. Eventually, granite-like character—even character as solid as Solomon's—can deteriorate into a gaping moral void.

In this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study, we'll witness Solomon's spiritual erosion. It began imperceptibly. No one noticed when the first gaps formed, but, tragically, the fissures grew and eventually led to his downfall.





PREPARE YOUR HEART

God gave us the Scriptures “to teach us what is true” (2 Timothy 3:16). Use the following space to invite the Holy Spirit to help you learn what God has for you today.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

For many years, Solomon was a towering monument to God’s blessing. “And the LORD his God was *with him* and *exalted him* greatly” (2 Chronicles 1:1 NASB, emphasis added). The word *exalted* is from the Hebrew term *gadal*, which means to “become great or important, promote, make powerful . . . to do great things.”¹

The Lord exalted Solomon by giving him “knowledge as vast as the sands of the seashore” (1 Kings 4:29)—seemingly limitless understanding of the arts and sciences. Solomon’s ornate temple to the Lord was an architectural wonder. His exquisite palace, pools, resorts, stables, and fortresses were the envy of the world. From all corners of civilization, people praised the glory of Solomon.

Solomon’s image was flawless, but under the surface, erosion was eating away his character. Let’s examine some of the cracks that led to his tragic collapse.



Observation: Subtle Traps and a Deteriorating Life

To look beneath his polished exterior, turn to Solomon’s own words in Ecclesiastes. In this book, Solomon confesses all the ways he sought the “good things’ in life” (Ecclesiastes 2:1). What did Solomon pursue, according to [Ecclesiastes 2:2–10](#)?

Signs of Erosion

Selected Scriptures

His extravagant lifestyle laid traps for him. Describe the miseries that ensnared his soul, according to [Ecclesiastes 2:11, 18–24](#).

Solomon was a man with unlimited resources. Unlimited wisdom. Unlimited riches. And yet, he wound up empty because the major focus of his life shifted. Nothing satisfied any longer. Unless God is in the center, giving direction and stability, boredom sets in. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Over time, Solomon's spiritual passion faded in the blinding light of his fame, fortune, and pleasure. Erosion never happens suddenly. It starts quietly and progresses gradually. A chip here . . . a crack there. A compromise here . . . a crumbling conviction there.

In the chart below, record the subtle compromises you observe in the verses within each area.

Compromise	Description
Unwise Alliance 1 Kings 3:1; 7:8; 9:16, 24	
Unholy Involvement 1 Kings 3:2–3	
Unresolved Conflict 1 Kings 9:10–14	
Unrestrained Preoccupation 1 Kings 11:1–3	

Signs of Erosion

Selected Scriptures

While Solomon flirted with sin, how did he ease his conscience? The way we all do, by rationalizing and excusing. We can imagine Solomon telling himself:

- *Marrying daughters of foreign kings is good diplomacy.*
- *Unloading worthless property is just smart business.*
- *Sacrificing to idols shows tolerance to all faiths.*
- *Great kings deserve to be indulged.*

Where did Solomon pick up his compromising ways? To some extent, from his father.



Interpretation: Like Father, Like Son

David acquired wives, ignoring God's prohibition ([Deuteronomy 17:17](#)), and so did Solomon—which led both father and son into big trouble.

Solomon sunk even deeper, however. He offered sacrifices to God “on the high places” where pagans worshiped ([1 Kings 3:3](#)), which David never did, and Solomon married foreign wives who brought their idol worship with them ([11:1–3](#)).

What virtues and vices in David multiplied in his son?

What timeless principles can you draw by comparing Solomon with his father?

Signs of Erosion

Selected Scriptures



Correlation: Pride, the Primary Cause of Erosion

The lessons from the Old Testament carry over into the New. The apostle Paul warned the Corinthians to avoid the ways of the Israelites. His warning could have referred to Solomon's sins too.

What warning does Paul give in *1 Corinthians 10:11–12*?

If you had been in Solomon's court, what warning would you have given him? Have you ever tried to warn someone like Solomon? Did he or she listen?

Solomon started walking with a swagger. He had the world by the tail! Nobody was as brilliant, rich, gifted, and capable as him. A man like that doesn't need to be accountable, right? . . . Wrong. Having no accountability ultimately spelled disaster. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Strong Warnings

How could such a wise man as Solomon act so foolishly? We can point to at least two causes of the king's folly.

First, *he willfully ignored the counsel of Scripture*. The law of Moses forbade Israel's kings from marrying many wives and forming alliances with idol worshipers. Solomon snubbed these commands and set in motion the forces of erosion.

Second, *he had no accountability*. We have no record of anyone confronting Solomon like Nathan confronted David. With no checks on his behavior, Solomon's river of sin overflowed its banks and flooded his whole life, as well as the nation.

Signs of Erosion

Selected Scriptures

Are there any signs of spiritual erosion appearing in your life that are similar to what you studied in Solomon? Any unwise alliances? Unholy involvements? Unresolved conflicts? Unrestrained preoccupations?

The Lord points out these signs to protect you from disaster. He doesn't want anything to affect your walk with Him. Have you seen erosion impacting your relationship with the Lord?

What steps can you take to shore up your spiritual foundation? Perhaps there's a sin to confess? A command to obey? A friend who can hold you accountable?

Paul warned the one who thinks he or she is "standing strong" to "*be careful* not to fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12, emphasis added). Watch out for Solomon's traps of boredom and disillusionment that come from extravagant living. Watch out for the rationalizations, compromises, and weakening convictions that undermine greatness. Stop the erosion, and you'll be wise. Wiser than Solomon!

Signs of Erosion

Selected Scriptures



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I give You full access to every chamber of my heart. Inspect me thoroughly. See if there are any signs of erosion that I have overlooked. Help me stay true to the commands of Your Word. Give me not only wisdom but also the strength to live wisely. In Christ's name, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. Elmer B. Smick, "gadal," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 1, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 151.

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

SOLOMON LESSONS FROM A FALLEN KING

STUDY FOUR

When the Heart Is Turned Away

1 Kings 11:1–9

Unlimited freedom inevitably leads to disaster. Nobody on earth can handle unrestricted unaccountability.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

WHY do people who once loved God turn their hearts away from Him? Usually, there isn't one clear reason; rather, a combination of factors contributes to a person falling away.

Sometimes *overexposure* to the things of God causes cynicism. The wondrous truths of Scripture that once stirred awe induce little more than a yawn.

Another factor is *overindulgence*. When people are given too much for nothing, they don't value what they have. They toss aside blessings from heaven, unappreciative of the treasures they hold in their hands.

Being *overpromoted* to positions of responsibility and privilege can lead to shallow professionalism. The focus becomes maintaining a flashy image rather than deepening spiritual roots.

Could overexposure, overindulgence, and overpromotion have led to Solomon's spiritual failure? Perhaps so. David fought for his crown, but Solomon's was handed to him. Solomon had it all. A vast fortune, widespread fame, unlimited power, and innumerable pleasures. Was it all just too much for anyone to handle wisely, even for the man who wrote the book on wisdom?

What turned Solomon's heart away from the One who gave him so much? In this *Searching the Scriptures* study, we'll analyze Solomon's descent into failure . . . so we can avoid tumbling down after him.



When the Heart Is Turned Away

1 Kings 11:1–9



PREPARE YOUR HEART

“Search me, O God, and know my heart,” prayed David in Psalm 139:23, a prayer he surely taught Solomon as a boy. Open your study with this line on your lips as you pray for wisdom from God’s Word.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Solomon started his reign with wholehearted devotion to God. He took after his father in so many ways, perhaps no one thought much of his first recorded compromise. It barely lifted an eyebrow of those around him.

Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and married one of his daughters. He brought her to live in the City of David until he could finish building his palace and the Temple of the LORD and the wall around the city. (1 Kings 3:1)

Solomon’s heavenly Father, however, would not have approved of that marriage, and Solomon knew it. He brought his new wife from Egypt to David’s city but not into David’s house, saying, “My wife must not live in King David’s palace, for the Ark of the LORD has been there, and it is holy ground” (2 Chronicles 8:11). He thought he could keep his personal life separate from his spiritual life.

After completing the temple, Solomon shifted his focus to building his Egyptian wife a new palace ([1 Kings 9:24](#)), elevating her to high standing in his kingdom. Without realizing it, Solomon was inviting her idolatrous and immoral influence into his heart.

These actions might seem insignificant, but they reflect an attitude of Solomon putting his desires first and tolerating what God condemned. In other words, he failed to take God seriously. Did God notice? Certainly! The Lord appeared to Solomon three times to let the king know His mind.

When the Heart Is Turned Away

1 Kings 11:1–9



Observation: The Lord's Appearances and Solomon's Failure

Observation is the process of seeing what the text says—the facts, setting, context, and characters. The biblical author often repeated key words for emphasis, so mark those in your Bible or make notes. As you examine God's appearances to Solomon, notice similar themes weaving through the passages and an increased intensity in tone.

The Lord's Appearances—1 Kings 3:3–14; 9:1–9; 11:9–13

We're familiar with the Lord's *first* appearance to Solomon from previous studies. Review the affirming words God told Solomon in [1 Kings 3:3–14](#). Take a closer look at [3:14](#), which is like a postscript on a letter. What was the Lord reminding young Solomon?

The Lord's second encounter with Solomon was less affirming and more cautioning. It occurred in [9:1–9](#) after Solomon completed the temple. Note the strong tone, particularly in the last half. What was God's warning to Solomon?

No more warnings in the Lord's final message. It was time for judgment. Write down all the details you see in [11:9–13](#).

How had Solomon veered so far off track between God's first and third appearance? Let's follow his downward path.

When the Heart Is Turned Away

1 Kings 11:1–9

Solomon's Failure—1 Kings 11:1–8

The author of 1 Kings detailed Solomon's sins, first, as they related to his marriages. What did Solomon do that so displeased the Lord in [1 Kings 11:1–3](#)?

But Solomon did more to desecrate the Lord's name. In addition to his marriages, what other horrific sins did Solomon commit in [11:4–8](#)?

Solomon introduced the worship of three foreign gods in Israel—[Ashtoreth](#), [Milcom](#) or [Molech](#), and [Chemosh](#). He built pagan shrines to them on what is called today in Jerusalem “the hill of evil counsel” on the south ridge of the Mount of Olives. The pagan temples would have been in clear view of the Lord's temple. Such brazen blasphemy!

Consult your Bible-study tools for further information about the despicable practices associated with these false gods. What facts do you discover?

Ashtoreth was the goddess of Canaanite fertility. Milcom was the god of authority. Worship of Chemosh involved child sacrifice. It's interesting that when there is backsliding, the three characteristics of these gods—sensuality, pride, and cruelty—are often present. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Analyzing the Steps to Failure

Interpretation seeks to understand the meaning of the details we observed in the passage. Let's highlight four lines from 1 Kings 11:1–6 and draw truths from them. Based on each line, write down a step that leads to a person turning his or her heart away from God.

When the Heart Is Turned Away

1 Kings 11:1–9

“Now King Solomon *loved many foreign women*” (1 Kings 11:1, emphasis added).

Step 1:

“The LORD had clearly instructed the people of Israel, ‘You must not marry them, because they will turn your hearts to their gods.’ Yet Solomon insisted on *loving them anyway*” (11:2, emphasis added).

Step 2:

“In fact, *they did turn his heart away* from the LORD. In Solomon’s old age, they turned his heart to worship other gods” (11:3–4, emphasis added).

Step 3:

“Solomon *did what was evil* in the LORD’s sight” (11:6).

Step 4:

Reflect on Solomon’s descent into failure. We’re not ancient kings and harem-building isn’t our temptation, but the dangers of sin’s allure, defiance, and tolerance are just as real. What makes Solomon’s steps into ruin just as deadly for God’s followers today?

Solomon played with the things of God. He wasn’t committed to them. The lines of resistance to sin had already crumbled when he grew older. What a formidable figure Solomon could have been, but he was not.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

When the Heart Is Turned Away

1 Kings 11:1–9



Correlation: Commands for Israel's Kings Ignored

God indicted Solomon based on a section of the Mosaic law that contained instructions for Israel's kings. Read the following verses and write down how Solomon violated God's mandates for monarchs.

Prohibition	Violation
<i>Deuteronomy 17:16</i>	<i>1 Kings 10:26–29</i>
<i>Deuteronomy 17:17a</i>	<i>1 Kings 11:1–3</i>
<i>Deuteronomy 17:17b</i>	<i>1 Kings 10:14–21</i>

In addition to these “must-nots,” God gave one ultimate “must.” Each king must keep a copy of the law with him and “read it daily as long as he lives” (Deuteronomy 17:19). What was the value of regular reading of the Scriptures, according to *Deuteronomy 17:19–20*?

The purposes of daily Scripture reading for kings were to “learn to fear the LORD,” prevent them “from becoming proud,” and prevent them “from turning away from these commands in the slightest way” (17:19–20). How important it is to make reading and applying the Bible a daily habit for everyone!

God is so practical. He knows how to cement truth in our minds.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Concluding Reminders

Let's sum up Solomon's actions that led to his downfall.

- 1) He willfully ignored God's written Word.
- 2) He flaunted his own desires.
- 3) He resisted being totally committed to the things of God.
- 4) He pursued the satisfaction of ungodly companions.

When the Heart Is Turned Away

1 Kings 11:1–9

Despite God's direct warning and even after God pronounced judgment, Solomon never repented. His heart had turned away, and it wasn't turning back. How tragic.

The good news for us is that *no one who has slipped needs to stay in that condition*. How gracious is God who offers anyone a second chance through the forgiveness and restoration of Christ.

Do you need a fresh start in any area in which Solomon struggled? What area might that be?

What might be your first step in the right direction? With whom can you share your heart for God?

Solomon's own words must have come back to haunt him in his old age after years of giving his heart away to everyone and everything but the Lord.

*Guard your heart above all else,
for it determines the course of your life.* (Proverbs 4:23)

How true, Solomon! If you had only followed your own counsel! But we can . . . starting now. Keep your love for God burning brightly and guard the flame every day.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, more than anything, I desire my love for You to be always strong. May I never turn my heart from You but always keep my heart devoted to You. Keep me from falling for sin's allure and always keep me true. In Christ's name, amen.

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Study 4 • Page 7

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SOLOMON LESSONS FROM A FALLEN KING

STUDY FIVE

How God Deals with Defiance

1 Kings 11:9–28, 40

God's attitude toward insolence, defiance, and rebellion is severe. He does not wink at defiance. He deals with it.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

IF you've ever dealt with defiant people, then you know how they tend to respond when confronted. First comes the *selfish* tirade: "I want my own way!" Selfishness hardens into *stubbornness*: "I won't quit until I get what I want!" Then comes chilling *indifference*: "I don't care who gets hurt." Followed by determined *resistance*: "I refuse to listen to counsel." And, with a final slam of the door, flagrant *contempt*: "I don't care about the consequences!"

But consequences always come—when the defiant one's flight into rebellion inevitably crashes to earth. The consequences may include disease, pain, ruined relationships, wrecked future, and even jail.

Solomon warned those who defy God: "a treacherous person is headed for destruction" (Proverbs 13:15). Solomon would know. He was at the peak of his potential, an admired and respected king in his forties or fifties. But he defied God by marrying foreign women and worshiping their idols. He was behaving like an unsupervised, reckless teenager with a no-limit credit card. Eventually, however, his account came due.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Perhaps you've suffered consequences for sin. Or you know someone who is headed for trouble. Solomon's downfall is a grave warning and can be difficult to read. Share with the Lord your fears, heartache, or concern for others or yourself as you step into these biblical scenes.



How God Deals with Defiance

1 Kings 11:9–28, 40



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Solomon wrote from his own experience that the defiant will “eat the bitter fruit of living their own way” (Proverbs 1:31). Solomon’s bitter harvest grew from a lifetime of sowing seeds of sin. He sowed the seed of *compromise* when he married Pharaoh’s daughter ([1 Kings 3:1](#)). He scattered more seeds through his unrestrained, unaccountable *extravagance* ([Ecclesiastes 2:1–11](#)). In his latter years, he sowed his most noxious seeds when he turned from worshiping God to *idolatry* ([1 Kings 11:1–8](#)).

These seeds sprouted and grew into thorny vines that strangled any good fruit Solomon’s life may have produced. He lost his distinctiveness as God’s royal representative. His lush lifestyle spiraled into cynicism, boredom, and disillusionment. His unchecked independence enslaved him to his own lusts, and his heart hardened in defiance toward God—who had no choice but to swing a sickle of judgment through Solomon’s sin-infested life.



Observation: A Cascade of Consequences

The Lord is slow to anger, but He is not soft on sin. He is supremely compassionate, but He will not tolerate defiance. Let’s take a sobering look at how God dealt with Solomon and the consequences that rained down on him, his family, and his kingdom.

Divine Anger—1 Kings 11:9–13

Read [1 Kings 11:9–13](#) using your skills of observation. Record the charges against Solomon, the cause-and-effect sequence, and the words or concepts that repeat for emphasis. Don’t overlook the Lord’s mercy in His judgment.

When the Lord deals with our defiance, it’s a “tearing” experience. He rips away the things that were important to us. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

How God Deals with Defiance

1 Kings 11:9–28, 40

Human Adversaries—1 Kings 11:14–25

Not all of Solomon's judgments came after his death, however. What trouble did the Lord stir up to disrupt Solomon's kingdom of peace, according to [1 Kings 11:14–25](#)? Locate the regions of Edom and Aram on your [Bible map](#) to see how they surrounded Israel.

Defiance stirs up God's anger. He has a right to be angry. We've broken His holy plan. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Internal Rebellion—1 Kings 11:26–28

The threats from these vengeful kings were mere annoyances compared to the agony of rebellion from within Solomon's circle of friends. Who rebelled against Solomon in [1 Kings 11:26–28](#)? What message did the Lord give through the prophet Ahijah, according to [11:34–37](#)?

Defiant people need to hear strong words. They're not listening to the quiet movements of God. Often, He must be very firm. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Personal Frustration—1 Kings 11:40

Rich and powerful Solomon was used to getting his way. What was he prevented from doing in [1 Kings 11:40](#)? What frustration must he have felt?

How God Deals with Defiance

1 Kings 11:9–28, 40

Carnal attitudes lead to defiance, which results in personal misery. Defiant people want freedom, but they find themselves in bondage.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: God's Anger in Perspective

Interpretation examines key biblical concepts to discover their meaning. The author of 1 Kings stated plainly, “The LORD was very angry with Solomon” (1 Kings 11:9). What is the nature of God's anger? Let's find out.

Humans erupt in anger when they don't get their way. God's anger or wrath is different. His anger is rooted in His holiness, and it is His just response to sin. It has a relational component as well, because it is often associated with His divine jealousy ([Psalm 79:5](#)).

When His people turn away from Him, they are like unfaithful spouses seduced by false love. As a jealous husband, God goes after His wayward loved ones to bring them back to Himself, their true love. His discipline toward Christians is always restorative.

Consult your resources or the online article, “[Does God Get Angry?](#)” at [gotquestions.org](#) to discover more about divine anger. How is God's response to sin an essential component of His love and justice?

God is jealous for our hearts. When we walk against His way, He deals with us. He is patient, loving, merciful—but He is also jealous.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Divine Anger Averted through Christ

Defiance and rebellion run through the fiber of the human soul. What dark threads do you see in Paul's description of humankind's sinful nature in [Romans 1:28–32](#)?

How God Deals with Defiance

1 Kings 11:9–28, 40

To satisfy the demands of His justice and holiness, God must deal with defiance. What did God do to save humanity from certain judgment for sin, according to [Romans 3:23–25](#)?

What is God's remedy for sin, according to [1 John 4:9–10](#)?

Find hope in the forgiveness in Jesus Christ. Turn over to Him the defiant spirit that is like acid eating away at you. He will release you from your bondage to sin.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Reversing the Spiral of Defiance

Take a moment to review your recent thoughts, feelings, and actions. Do you see in yourself any signs of defiance lurking in the shadows? Have you been waving any rebel flags in your heart?

- “I want my way.”
- “I won’t quit until I get it.”
- “I don’t care who gets hurt.”
- “I refuse to listen to counsel.”
- “I don’t care about the consequences.”

If so, you’re on track with Solomon, but your path doesn’t have to end as his did. You can reroute to the cross with an honest prayer of confession and a desire to follow Christ’s way.

How God Deals with Defiance

1 Kings 11:9–28, 40

Use this space for reflection and confession if needed.

Another application of this study might be extended and focused prayer for a loved one who is spiraling downward. Selfish, stubborn, indifferent, resistant, and full of contempt, he or she is headed for disaster.

Having seen how God deals with defiance, perhaps now you're better equipped for a heart-to-heart conversation with this person. What might you say?

Now, close your study in prayer, asking the Lord for an open door with this person and releasing him or her into God's hands.

God must deal with defiance firmly to break the bondage of sin, but His goal is to restore people to a thriving relationship with Him and set them once again on His way of peace. God showers our lives with forgiveness and hope when we return to Him.

How God Deals with Defiance

1 Kings 11:9–28, 40



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, work in my life. Replace my defiant spirit with a heart for Christ in submissive obedience and trust. Do the same in the lives of those I love, so that we may walk together, spiritually arm-in-arm, seeking Your face and following Your way. In Christ's name, amen.

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Study 5 • Page 7

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SOLOMON LESSONS FROM A FALLEN KING

STUDY SIX

Sound Advice from an Old Rebel

Ecclesiastes 11:9–12:7

The one message that lingers from the life of Solomon is this: the time to walk with God is now, not later.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

PUTTING off doing something important is called procrastination.

The term, *procrastination*, is based on the Latin root, *crastinus*, which means “tomorrow”—the favorite word of those who procrastinate.¹ They know what they should do, and they fully intend to do it . . . tomorrow. But when tomorrow comes, they delay the task until the next day. When that day comes, they put it off to the next day and the next, forever writing their *shoulds* on tomorrow’s to-do list.

Eventually, procrastinators reach the end of their lives, never getting around to doing what they intended. And then it’s too late.

Solomon knew what he should’ve done. Early on, God etched Solomon’s priorities in the bedrock of his kingdom: “Follow me and obey my decrees and my commands as your father, David, did” (1 Kings 3:14).

Solomon started well by building the temple for the Lord (6:1–14). Then crafting luxury palaces, cavorting with foreign dignitaries, and courting idolatrous women led his heart astray. Perhaps he thought, *I’ll obey the Lord’s commands tomorrow—after I’ve had my fill of fun today.*



Sound Advice from an Old Rebel

Ecclesiastes 11:9–12:7

But *tomorrow* never came for Solomon. After decades of pursuing fortune, fame, and pleasure, all he had to show for his life was an empty soul. Reflecting in Ecclesiastes, Solomon remorsefully wrote,

*As I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless—
like chasing the wind.* (Ecclesiastes 2:11)

Ecclesiastes brims with sound advice from an old rebel who learned life's lessons the hard way. It contains a trove of wisdom that Solomon wished he had obeyed in his younger years and that we can follow . . . today.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

“How much better to get wisdom than gold!” (Proverbs 16:16). Invite the Lord in prayer to pour His riches into your heart as you study His Word.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Ecclesiastes is biblical poetry, specifically, wisdom literature. The book reads like a personal journal, in which Solomon recorded his lifelong search for meaning. His journey to find the “good life” led him to many dead ends, and, in the book, he often shakes his head wistfully: “Everything is meaningless” (Ecclesiastes 12:8). And yet, he kept on searching. In the end, he discovered the one pursuit that offers the greatest satisfaction, and it was right in front of him all along: “Fear God and obey his commands” (12:13).

As his life was closing, Solomon turned to young people to help them avoid his pitfalls. Let’s gather around this wise old rebel and listen to his sound advice.

Sound Advice from an Old Rebel

Ecclesiastes 11:9–12:7



Observation: Solomon's Advice to the Young

Biblical poetry is full of metaphors and figures of speech that add beauty to the passage and make the author's points memorable. Fully engage your imagination as you observe the pictures that Solomon paints with his words.

What did Solomon affirm about youth in *Ecclesiastes 11:9*? What did he offer as an important reminder?

What additional reminder did Solomon write in *Ecclesiastes 11:10*? Observe this verse in the *New English Translation* as well.

Solomon penned a third reminder in *12:1*. While enjoying the fun of youth, what number one priority must young people always keep in mind?

The next verses elaborate his point that youth should make their relationship with God top priority. List the poetic images Solomon employed in *12:2–5*.

Sound Advice from an Old Rebel

Ecclesiastes 11:9–12:7

Finally, Solomon spoke to his young readers about death—a subject we all must face. What vivid word pictures did Solomon use in [Ecclesiastes 12:6–7](#)?

Death is inevitable—sooner than you expect. Do you think that you have many years left to turn your life around? Maybe not. Right when you think you will seek God, some disease racks your body, and you can't make up for lost time. Solomon's counsel is, "Don't wait!" —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Principles for All Ages

Interpretation digs into the meaning of a biblical passage and discovers valuable gems of wisdom. A principle states truth in a way that applies to all people, in all cultures, and at all times. Review the verses you observed and, under the following headings, write a principle for each subject.

Accountability—[Ecclesiastes 11:9–10](#)

Principle: _____

Priorities—[Ecclesiastes 12:1](#)

Principle: _____

Aging—[Ecclesiastes 12:2–5](#)

Principle: _____

Sound Advice from an Old Rebel

Ecclesiastes 11:9–12:7

Death—*Ecclesiastes 12:6–7*

Principle: _____

Deny it all you wish, but death will happen, unless Christ comes first. The one lesson that lingers from the life of Solomon to this present day is this: the time to walk with God is now, not later. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: A Legacy of Wisdom and Foolishness

When Solomon died, he left behind a legacy that was a mixed bag. In his books, we find some of the wisest words ever written, but in his memoir, we read a tragic tale of foolishness. Solomon soared to the heights of opulence, fame, and knowledge. And yet, he possessed nothing of lasting value when he died. How could that be? Because in his old age, he turned his heart from his Lord.

Solomon passed down both wisdom and foolishness to his son, Rehoboam. Which path did Rehoboam take, according to *2 Chronicles 10:1–15*? How was Rehoboam like his father?

The nation suffered because of Rehoboam's foolishness, which he learned from Solomon. The most important lesson we can learn is don't put off following the Lord.

Rehoboam refused to listen to counsel, and he rebelled against God, just like Solomon had done. That rebellion was duplicated in the entire nation. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Sound Advice from an Old Rebel

Ecclesiastes 11:9–12:7



Application: Solomon's Message to Us

Solomon's solemn reflections on aging and death cause us to think about our own mortality and how we're spending our lives. "Remember that you must give an account to God for everything you do," Solomon advised (Ecclesiastes 11:9). How might this reminder influence your choices today?

Solomon also reminded us that "childhood and the prime of life are fleeting" (Ecclesiastes 11:10 NASB). How do these words guide your priorities today?

Finally, Solomon advised, "remember your Creator now" (12:6). The word, *remember*, means to consciously call something to mind and focus on it. How can you practically call your Creator to mind and focus on Him today? Here are a few ideas to get you started.

- I remember the Creator when I operate with the mind-set that God be glorified in all aspects my life.
- I remember the Creator when I view life as God views it.
- I remember the Creator when I prioritize what is important to God.
- I remember the Creator when my first thought is to please Him.

Throughout your day, say to yourself, "I will consider God's way in this matter, and then I will do it." It's a simple spiritual habit, but what a difference it will make. If Solomon could have his life back, that's how he would live!

Sound Advice from an Old Rebel

Ecclesiastes 11:9–12:7



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, Your Word reminds me that it's never too late to start doing what's right. Help me to be ready when the day of my death comes and I enter Your presence. Make my heart completely Yours today and every day. In Christ's name, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed. (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2014), "procrastinate."

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Throughout our history, God has opened doors for Insight for Living Ministries to share His Word within numerous countries and in a variety of languages. Finding inspiration in Christ's Great Commission, we consider this international outreach essential in our mission. We call this global pursuit **Vision 195**. Our eyes are set on offering Pastor Chuck Swindoll's Bible-teaching resources in *all* 195 countries . . . while our hearts are set on translating these resources into *every* language. It's an audacious goal, but nothing is impossible with God! So, we press on in His mission while remaining sensitive to Christ's leading as He opens doors. Visit insight.org/vision-195.

MINISTRY CHANNELS AND RESOURCES

Pastor Chuck Swindoll's Sermons: Our primary Bible-teaching resource is heard across the world through radio, podcast, and the internet. These sermons are freely accessible on the Insight for Living Ministries mobile app and our website. Visit insight.org/listen.

International Ministries: Insight for Living Ministries ministers in Arabic, Chinese, English, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, and Telugu. Our regional offices are in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Guatemala, India, Lebanon, Poland, Romania, Russia, Spain, and the United Kingdom. We conduct pastor-training seminars through most of our international ministries. Our international headquarters is in Frisco, Texas.

Web Ministries: Through insight.org and social media, we engage thousands of people each day with God's Word. Our free resources—such as our articles, devotionals, videos, and more—teach people biblical truth and foster a deeper relationship with Jesus. Our web store offers spiritual-growth resources including Pastor Chuck's books. Visit insight.org/bible or insight.org/devo.

Searching the Scriptures Ministries: We create free, digital-yet-printable, in-depth Bible studies, called *Searching the Scriptures* studies. They accompany each of Pastor Chuck's broadcasted sermons to help listeners dig deep into God's Word using the same study method Pastor Chuck uses. We develop pastor-training materials based on Pastor Chuck's books that are used for in-person and virtual seminars to equip international church leaders who desire further training but lack access to it. Visit insight.org/studies.

Ministry Events: For decades, Pastor Chuck and Cynthia have cherished gathering with our ministry friends for meaningful experiences and personal connections through tours and cruises. Visit insight.org/events.

Biblical Counseling: IFLM offers personalized, prayer-filled counseling through e-mails, letters, and phone calls to give people a deeper understanding of God's Word as well as biblical support and encouragement for their unique situation.

Reframing Ministries: Colleen Swindoll Thompson encourages and equips caregivers and their families with biblical truth and tools to help people live well regardless of life's circumstances. Visit reframingministries.com.

Paws & Tales: Our children's program engages little hearts and minds to help them discover God's truth and know God's love. Access these creative programs using the Insight for Living Ministries mobile app or by visiting pawsandtales.org.

The Book Shoppe & Coffee: Located at our international headquarters in Frisco, Texas, this bookstore and coffee shop serves as a local footprint of our global ministry. Now, it's a Frisco favorite with its extensive seating, old-world design and atmosphere, books specially selected for all seasons of life, and gourmet coffee and pastries. Visit thebookshoppefrisco.com.

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INSIGHT FOR LIVING MINISTRIES

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES BIBLE STUDIES

SOLOMON

Lessons from a Fallen King

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