

SHOW YOURSELF. . .

AND I WILL SEND RAIN



ontrack devotions

JULY

2022

1 KINGS

MONTHLY PRAYER SHEET

"...The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." James 5:16

Who I Will Reach	How I Will Do It	How It Went

Other Requests	Date Answered	How It Was Answered

MONTHLY COMMITMENT SHEET

Name: _____

This sheet is designed to help you make personal commitments each month that will **help you grow in your walk with God**. Fill it out by determining

1. What will push you
2. What you think you can achieve

If you need help filling out your commitments, seek out someone you trust who can help you. Share your commitments with those who will help keep you accountable.

Personal Devotions:

How did I do with my commitment last month? _____
I will commit to read the OnTrack Bible passage and devotional thought _____ day(s) each week this month.

Church Attendance:

How did I do last month with my attendance? _____
I will attend church _____ time(s) this month.
I will attend small group _____ time(s) this month.
I will attend _____ time(s) this month.
(List any other activities you will participate in this month—Bible study, church events, etc.)

Bible Memory:

How did I do with Bible memory last month? _____
I will memorize _____ verse(s) this month.

Outreach:

How did I do last month with sharing Jesus? _____

I will share Jesus with _____ this month.

I will serve my local church this month by _____

TRANSITION

1 KINGS 1:15-27

Today, we begin reading the book of I Kings. It continues our progression through the period of history in which the nation of Israel was ruled by kings. David's rule has come to an end. Solomon would soon be chosen as the next king. There are some important factors to keep in mind as we read through this book. I & II Kings and I & II Chronicles include the same period of history. The Chronicles record only the history of Judah's kings while I & II Kings record both Israel's and Judah's kings. The author jumps back and forth between the kingdoms and it may be a bit confusing at times. It is also important to realize that these are not simply accurate records of historical facts, but books that use history to teach us lessons we need to learn. You will read about godly and ungodly kings. Ask God to use this book to teach you about Himself and how you can more faithfully follow Him. Be open to what God may want to change in your life.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

1 KINGS 1

1 KINGS 1:28-53

FORGIVENESS

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

As we begin our journey through Solomon's life, we see he possesses some of the same traits his father did. He began his rule by demonstrating grace and mercy to those around him. Solomon's brother, Adonijah, tried to take the throne deceitfully. Had he become king, he most certainly would have had Solomon killed in order to make his position secure. In spite of these actions, Solomon chose not to follow the accepted practice of the day even though Adonijah clearly indicated his desire to be king. Had Solomon killed him, it would not have demonstrated power and authority. It would have shown that he was fearful and insecure not only in his position, but also in the God who had placed him there. Solomon knew that sometimes forgiveness demonstrates more power than retaliation or repayment. God would eventually take care of the problems that Adonijah caused. Solomon was content to wait. Is there someone in your life that you've struggled forgiving? Maybe it is time for you to reach out to them in kindness!

EXTRA READING
1 KINGS 1

Imagine the emotion that was felt as David, lying on his death bed, gave his final charge to Solomon. He must have carefully thought through what he wanted to say on this important occasion. Solomon, knowing that his father's death was imminent, would have carefully listened to each word. David's charge began with the phrase "So be strong, act like a man." He wanted Solomon to stand up and be a man. The kingdom could not afford to have a fearful and weak leader. It required a man who could step up and lead people even when leading was difficult. The only way that Solomon could achieve this would be to make God the center of his life. David told Solomon he must observe (study and read) the Bible. He must walk (live consistently with what he saw in the Bible) in the ways of God. He must also keep (obey and follow) the Bible. If he did, he would not only be a great leader, but would prosper in everything. Likewise, we will succeed if we observe, walk according to, and obey the Bible. Are you? Use today's questions to take a closer look at your life.

SAY WHAT?

What can you do in order to read the Bible more fully?

SO WHAT?

How can you live more consistently with what the Bible teaches?

NOW WHAT?

In what areas do you need to obey and follow the Bible more closely?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING

1 KINGS 2

1 KINGS 2:13-46

KEEPING HIS WORD

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

At first glance, this section of Scripture seems to be depressing, but a closer look reveals attributes of God that should be an encouragement to all of us. The point of this passage is that God will be faithful to His Word. In spite of the graciousness of Solomon, Adonijah was still determined to secure the throne. By asking Bathsheba for Abishag's hand in marriage, he was in essence requesting the kingdom. If someone had the former king's harem, he would then have rightful claim to the throne. To secure Solomon's rule, God brought judgement to Adonijah. Solomon then removed Abiathar from the priesthood because he rebelled by supporting Adonijah. These events fulfilled what God said would happen in 1 Samuel 2. It also established the line of Eleazer/Phinehas as priests that God promised in Numbers 25. God finally judged Shimei for his treatment of David in 2 Samuel 16. Shimei brought this judgment on himself and Solomon could never have been accused of revenge or harsh punishment. This passage should be a great comfort to us. Since God kept His word in this case, we can trust Him to keep His word to us.

EXTRA READING
1 KINGS 2

If you could have anything in the world that you wanted, what would it be? If one wish could be granted, what would you wish for? Would you choose what Solomon did in today's reading? God often communicated with people in the Old Testament through dreams. But the dream of Solomon was unique because it was a two-way conversation. God came to Solomon and told him that He would give him whatever he asked for. Solomon was humble enough to know that if he were to lead the people, he must have help from God. He recognized that wisdom from God was vital for his success. He did not ask for anything that would make his life comfortable. In fact, his request would not be personally beneficial at all. He cared about his people and wanted only what would enable him to effectively govern them. God was so pleased, He gave him what he asked for and so much more. When we are selfless in our personal pursuits, God often blesses us with our desires anyways, just like He did for Solomon!

SAY WHAT?

What do you think most people would ask for if God made the same offer to them?

SO WHAT?

If we could look inside your heart to see what you desire most in life, what would we discover?

NOW WHAT?

How can you become more selfless in your personal pursuits?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING

1 KINGS 3

1 KINGS 4:20-34

SMALL SIN

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

Solomon began his reign as a great man of God. In this chapter, we see the beginning of the cracks in his life that will lead to his downfall. Let's take a closer look. It soon became obvious to everyone, even those from other lands, that he was a wise man. According to verse 31, his fame spread throughout the world. In spite of his reputation, he was not wise enough to follow God in the small areas of his life. In Deuteronomy 17:16 God had clearly stated that the kings of Israel were not to acquire many horses for themselves. Solomon was in clear violation of this specific command. He may not have heard that point of the law or, he may have felt that it was a bit unreasonable. In either case, his disobedience was clear and God did not overlook it. As we shall see in the days to come, Solomon not only failed in the small areas, but ultimately failed in the major areas of his life as well. We must make sure that we know what God wants us to do in every area. We must never allow ourselves to become disobedient in any area of our lives. Remember, there is no such thing as a small or insignificant sin.

EXTRA READING

1 KINGS 4

Why was Solomon the one to build the Temple instead of his father, David? Does the answer reveal another principle of Scripture? Although David was a man who loved God with all his heart, there were things in his life that kept him from being the one to build the temple in which a Holy God would dwell (2 Samuel 7). David shed much blood in his lifetime. God wanted a man of peace to build the temple. God told David that He would bless him and never take His love away from his family as He had with Saul, but He would not allow David to build the temple. His son, Solomon, was God's choice to do the building. He equipped Solomon with great skill and wisdom. He gave Solomon peace throughout the land so that he could devote his full attention to the project. Like David, there may be times that we have a desire to do something specific for God. But, God may have someone else in mind for that job. Instead, we might be the ones who are to prepare the way for someone else to accomplish the task. We need to allow God to use us in the way He chooses. We must not rush ahead when God is holding us back.

SAY WHAT?

Name some of the areas in which we can, with sincere desire, move ahead of God?

SO WHAT?

Why is it so easy to rush ahead without waiting for God?

NOW WHAT?

What changes can you make to become a person who will wait and help others accomplish God's plan?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING

1 KINGS 5

1 KINGS 6:1-13

BLESSINGS

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

Why did God give to Solomon the warning found in verses 11-13 of this chapter? What was God's concern for Solomon as he built the temple? What issue was He addressing in His message to Solomon? The temple was quite a structure. It must have been a source of great pride for the people as they built it. They could have easily concluded that God was pleased with them and that He would always dwell with them in such an incredible building. He did not want the nation of Israel or Solomon to conclude that this temple was a guarantee of God's presence. He wanted to reinforce that obedience, not a magnificent building, was the key to pleasing God. If they chose to disobey Him, His presence would not be with them even though they had a glorious temple. Likewise, if we want God's presence in our lives, we must walk in obedience. Being moral, reading the Bible, and going to church does not guarantee God's blessing. Following Jesus does.

EXTRA READING
1 KINGS 6

As you read through the details given of the building process for the temple and Solomon's palace, did you notice any principles at work? What about the principles given to us in 1 Corinthians 12? God gave to different people the skills needed to complete the work. Each skill was vitally important to the work. It would have been easy for someone like Hiram to conclude that he did not have any real contribution to make to the work of God. After all, how could God use a craftsman in bronze to impact people for God's kingdom? God gave Hiram that specific skill so he could do a specific job to help with the completion of the temple. Although these are not spiritual gifts like the ones mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12, it does remind us that God has given to people not only spiritual gifts to help the church grow, but also personal skills and abilities to help the church grow. We too often assume that the church only needs teachers, preachers, and musicians. What skills has God given to you? How can you use them in your church to influence the lives of people? Use today's questions to get started!

SAY WHAT?

List common skills that people often think are not used in church?

SO WHAT?

How might someone use those abilities at church?

NOW WHAT?

What are some abilities God has given to you, and how can you begin to use them in your church?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING

1 KINGS 7

1 KINGS 8:1-21

GREAT START

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

Have you ever looked forward to something you thought would be great, only to find it was not as you had imagined? Since we have the advantage of looking back, we know that this exciting beginning will soon turn to disaster. The nation of Israel became unified under Solomon. They built a monument to the only true God. In a short time span however, they became divided and worshipped other gods. In today's reading, Solomon claimed that he was the fulfillment of the promise God made to his father David. While he was the fulfillment in terms of building the temple, he was not the fulfillment God was ultimately talking about. In fact, his commitment to obey God would not last very long and God would have to remind him that his reign depended on complete obedience. Solomon shows us that a great beginning is no guarantee of a great ending. As you continue reading through the life of Solomon, pay attention to how his downfall comes about. It will help you avoid making the same mistakes Solomon did. Remember, that while you may be in a position to serve God now, that is no guarantee you will be later.

EXTRA READING
1 KINGS 8

As you read through Solomon's prayer, what did you notice? Can we follow this pattern when we pray? Let's look closely at it and find out. First, Solomon affirms that there is no god who compares to our God (vv 23-24). We see that Solomon took time to praise God and acknowledge who He is. Second, he recognized his need for God's continual presence and protection (vv 25-30). He realized that he was completely dependent on God and His work. Third, he realized that God's continual forgiveness in his life was necessary (vv 31-54). Solomon knew that he would need God's mercy and grace every day of his life. It was not a prayer of pride or a prayer that demanded what Solomon wanted but one that recognized who God is and who he was. This prayer acknowledges the need for God in every area of our lives. How do your prayers compare to this one? Do you take time to tell God how much you love Him and how great He is? Do you pray for His protection and watch care over your life? Listen carefully to your prayers and see how they compare to this one. You might be surprised. His prayer should serve as an example to follow.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

1 KINGS 8

1 KINGS 9:1-9

GOD'S CONCERN

SAY WHAT?

What do people mistakenly believe will earn the blessings of God in their lives?

SO WHAT?

Why is it so easy to fall into the trap of trusting in that kind of a list?

NOW WHAT?

How can you maintain a life of obedience in order to experience the blessing of God in your life?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

It has been 12 years since God appeared to Solomon in chapter 8. As you compare these two appearances, in what ways are they different. It would seem as if God were becoming more concerned with Solomon's need to understand that he must walk before Him in holiness and be obedient to all of His commands. Solomon's obedience enabled God to quickly elevate him to the throne, but if he continued his disobedience, the throne could be taken away in a moment. The blessing of God in Solomon's life was a result of his obedience, not because he built the temple or because he held the position of king. It would not be difficult to eventually think that once the temple was completed and the throne established, that he could expect God's continued blessing. That simply was not the case. We also must remember that God's blessing is not connected to the family we are in, our church attendance, or our morality. In fact, the blessing of God on our lives has nothing to do with the things we have done in our past. Blessing is connected to obedience now. Are you in a position for blessing?

EXTRA READING

1 KINGS 9

In this passage, we see that what God had warned Solomon against, was unfolding in his life. We would do well to learn from Solomon's failure. What begins as a questionable act, soon leads to direct disobedience. Solomon's wisdom not only provided him fame, but also great wealth. Solomon used his wealth to buy for himself things that God had prohibited him from having. Both the Mosaic law (Dt 17:16) and God personally forbid kings to have great numbers of horses, not to mention accumulating great amounts of silver and gold. While he could debate whether or not the number of horses and the amount of wealth directly violated those commands. He could not get around the fact that he got them from Egypt. These were specific commands he violated. Solomon justified what he had done but soon found himself in direct violation of God's specific command. Like Solomon, people today often allow areas of their lives that are questionable to remain. We know from examples in Scripture that compromise ultimately leads to sin. Do not allow questionable matters to ultimately lead to disobedience.

SAY WHAT?

What activities do people participate in that could fall into the questionable category as it relates to sin?

SO WHAT?

What kind of justification do people use to excuse behavior that may be wrong?

NOW WHAT?

How can you avoid crossing the line of compromise and then fall into sin?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING

1 KINGS 10

1 KINGS 11:1-13

HALF-HEARTED

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

Today, we see the results of a life of compromise and justification. Solomon had become a man whose goal in life was no longer to pursue righteousness with all his heart. His motivation was not to stay as far away from sin as possible. What began as a small area, like the number of horses he owned, moved to a heart that was not fully devoted to God. Unlike his father David, Solomon had become halfhearted in his walk with God. His great beginning led to a disastrous end. God had warned him and, even after being warned, he did not change. As a result, God eventually removed Solomon from the throne. For us, a clear sign that someone is fully committed to God is his desire to do whatever is right. Fully committed people are not concerned with how close they can get to sin. Fully committed people pursue righteousness with a passion. Halfhearted people walk the fence. Which one are you? Are you heading in the same direction that Solomon did?

EXTRA READING
1 KINGS 11

MEANINGLESS

ECCLESIASTES 1:1-11

For the next several days, we are going to be reading through the book of Ecclesiastes. It is entered here in the On Track because it is essentially an autobiography of Solomon. Since we have just finished reading about his life, it is a good time to take an even closer look before we continue with the rest of the kings. This book tells the story of a man who used the blessings of God in his life for his own personal pleasure rather than God's glory. Solomon warns us in this book not to make the same mistakes he did. He discovered how foolish it is to look for satisfaction in any place other than complete obedience to God. This book reveals that all earthly goals and ambitions produce only emptiness. Solomon's life illustrated this principle quite clearly. He asked complex questions as he searched for the answers to life's dilemmas. In the end, Solomon came to understand the importance of obedience. This book shows us that those who seek satisfaction apart from God will find emptiness. As you read, ask God to help you avoid making the same mistakes Solomon made.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING
ECCLESIASTES 1

ECCLESIASTES 2:1-11

LEFT EMPTY

SAY WHAT?

What does it look like to pursue only what makes you happy?

SO WHAT?

What are some of the consequences of pursuing these things?

NOW WHAT?

How can you avoid making the same mistakes Solomon did?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

In today's reading, Solomon wrote about his pursuit of happiness through pleasure, wisdom, and work. He tried everything to see if it would make him happy. He tried to find happiness in his possessions. He worked to acquire great wealth. It did not make him happy. He tells us, in verse 10, that he was so wealthy, there was nothing he wanted that he did not get. Those things, in the end, did not make him happy or bring any satisfaction whatsoever. He also tried education. He worked to acquire knowledge as though that would bring him satisfaction. Education also left him empty. He concluded that we should enjoy life because all we have comes from God. He totally missed that those who really enjoy life are those who see each day as a gift from God and seek to serve Him with all they possess. Without God, life has no relief from toil, no purpose, and no fulfillment. What are you pursuing? What have you seen in Solomon's life that will motivate you to avoid ending up the way he did?

EXTRA READING
ECCLESIASTES 2

TIMING

ECCLESIASTES 3:1-8

Have you ever heard the phrase, timing is everything? Today's reading can help us understand the truth of this phrase. We can get ourselves in all kinds of trouble if we don't understand what this principle means. Solomon came to the conclusion that God's timing was perfect. He realized that to ignore God's timing is to bring despair, rebellion, and sin into their life. We cannot say we are waiting for God and then take matters into our own hands. Solomon was, at times in his life, unwilling to seek God's advice, but would take control and act upon his own plan. When he did, he brought disaster to his life. People often struggle with God's timing in the same way. We, like Solomon, must come to the point of trust in God's timing and His plan for our lives. There is a time for everything and God knows when that time is right. Don't doubt God's plan. Wait for His timing!

SAY WHAT?

In what areas do we often doubt God's timing?

SO WHAT?

What can happen when you take matters into your own hands?

NOW WHAT?

How can you avoid making this mistake in your life?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING

ECCLESIASTES 3

ECCLESIASTES 4:7-16

CONNECTION

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

What do you think is the number one problem facing people today? What one reason could you give for why people do things they know are harmful or clearly wrong? While there may not be an easy answer to these questions, we do know that a possible answer for many people is connection. Often, a person's main agenda in life is to be liked by others. At times, some willfully do what they know to be wrong just to be liked by their peers. Solomon discovered the futility of seeking popularity and acceptance by peers. He realized that it is better to be poor and be wise than to be a foolish king. He learned from his experience that his position would not bring happiness. He saw that he could spend his whole life climbing the ladder of success only to discover that when he arrives, he is not happy or fulfilled. Those who seek recognition will soon realize that people are fickle and change quickly. Our only concern should be God's approval. It is far more important to please God than it is to please people!

EXTRA READING
ECCLESIASTES 4

If someone told you that you could have as much money as you wanted, how much would you ask for? The big question is how much is enough? Although we seem to know that money does not bring happiness, that knowledge does not stop us from making it our main pursuit. Solomon learned from his experience and from what he observed that those who seek money never find the happiness it claims to provide. Wealth does not provide peace. Solomon eventually learned that money would not make him happy. We must remember that no matter what our financial situation may be, we should never look at money for security or satisfaction. We will only be content when we live in the reality that God alone gives true happiness. He is our security and the source of all we need. Our focus must be on pleasing Him and not on accumulating more for ourselves. As Solomon said in verse 11, "What benefit are they to the owner except to feast your eyes on them?"

SAY WHAT?

How can you tell if a person is pursuing money?

SO WHAT?

What are some of the consequences of pursuing financial gain?

NOW WHAT?

How can you avoid making the mistakes Solomon made?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING
ECCLESIASTES 5

ECCLESIASTES 6:1-9

OUR FUTURE

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

Today, Solomon expresses a principle that James reiterates in the New Testament (James 4:13-17). It is that only God knows the future and it is foolish to make plans without His guidance. Solomon discovered how meaningless it is to pursue possessions, only to die and leave it all behind. Many people work hard to extend their lives and provide for a comfortable future, only to die young or be unable to use what they have set aside. Solomon did not mean that we should not work to ensure good health or plan for the future. His point was that we should not do these things without knowing God's direction for our lives. He also concluded that it is foolish to spend all our time planning and preparing for a future in this life without spending any time planning and preparing for a future in eternity. God directs everything that happens in our lives, even though we may not be able to see it. How foolish to fight or resist His plan for us. We should submit to His plan and strive every day to accomplish what pleases Him. Are you seeking God for direction? Are you willing to take only the path He leads you to?

EXTRA READING
ECCLESIASTES 6

There are many in the world today who teach that God wants each one of us to be healthy and to prosper financially. In fact, they often teach that it could never be in the plan of God to face difficult circumstances. This chapter illustrates that this philosophy is not what Scripture teaches. Solomon writes that more is learned from adversity than from pleasure. It is during the hard times that we learn who God really is and the kind of people we really are. Difficulty is not one of the most delightful things in life, but it can certainly be the most productive. Even Solomon did not enjoy trials, but he knew they brought growth. Human nature usually wants to avoid uncomfortable or difficult circumstances. We work hard to make life as easy as possible. When God allows a trial to come into our lives, we often try to rid ourselves of it as soon as possible. Very few of us realize that these are the times God uses to make us into the people He wants us to be. It is also why James writes that we are to rejoice when we face trials (James 1:2-4) because they develop perseverance. Is God growing you right now? Are you submitting?

SAY WHAT?

What have been some of the difficult things God has asked you to face?

SO WHAT?

What are some of the valuable lessons you have learned from them?

NOW WHAT?

In what way can you apply this section of Scripture to a situation you are facing right now?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING
ECCLESIASTES 7

ECCLESIASTES 8:1-13

SECRET SIN

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

Have you ever done something wrong and did not get caught? If that has ever happened to you, you understand what Solomon was referring to in verse 11 of this chapter. Solomon discovered that if we do not get caught in our sin, there seems to be no consequences for our actions. Solomon learned that when we think we are getting away with sin, we often feel like we can continue in it because there is no reason to stop. God's gracious delay in punishing sin can lead us to wrongly conclude that He either does not know or does not care what we are doing. Solomon learned that all too well. While it appeared as if he was getting away with sin, his day of judgement was pending. God's delay should not be interpreted as though judgement will not come. Those who do not fear God will one day face the wrath of God for their sin. If you find yourself getting away with your sin, understand that God is simply giving you time to repent. Do not allow yourself to continue in your sin. Think about the sin in your life that you need to confess and then do it! Why not do it today?

EXTRA READING
ECCLESIASTES 8

Solomon wrote about the meaninglessness of pursuing wealth and the uncertainty of life in this passage. The only thing in life that is certain is that one day everyone will die. Solomon's implication was that we should enjoy each day as a gift from God. We can get so caught up in the next thing, that we miss all the pleasures of life right now. Solomon's realization that wealth is not what really matters came too late. Life is short and we should make the most of it. Your current stage in life will be over soon and the opportunities to enjoy it will be gone forever. You may have enough money, but eventually realize you missed out on the relationships you could have built and the difference you could have made in someone's life. Don't be someone who pursues the insignificant and misses what life is really about.

SAY WHAT?

What kinds of things do people pursue?

SO WHAT?

Why do those kinds of things consume us so easily?

NOW WHAT?

How can you avoid the same mistakes Solomon made in this area?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING
ECCLESIASTES 9

ECCLESIASTES 10:1-14

MEANINGLESS

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

As we read today's chapter, we could come to the conclusion that Solomon came to—nothing in life really matters anyway so why bother with the hassle. If you conclude that, however, you will have missed the point. The point is that everything we have is meaningless without God. We can try as hard as possible to land that big promotion only to see someone else get the job. We can work all summer to get ready for the upcoming athletic season only to become injured or have the coach give the position to someone else. We can work hard to build a relationship with someone, only to have them turn away from us in the end. The obvious conclusion is that we have nothing without God and no matter what we have, He is all we could ever want or need. We will only be disappointed if we take God out of the picture. Life's pursuits are only meaningful when God is at the center of all we do. Examine your life. Is He the center?

EXTRA READING
ECCLESIASTES 10

As we reread this chapter, we see the many observations that Solomon made during his lifetime. Use the space to the right to jot down some of Solomon's observations and how they impact you. Take the time to record how they show up in your life, and what you can learn from his wisdom. How sad to watch meaninglessness and hopelessness grow as God becomes less significant in our lives.

SAY WHAT?

What did Solomon observe?

SO WHAT?

How do his observations show up today?

NOW WHAT?

What can you learn from Solomon's observations?

THEN WHAT?

What are some adjustments you need to make?

EXTRA READING
ECCLESIASTES 10



ECCLESIASTES 11:1-10

WAITING

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

Solomon says that someone who waits to plant for the perfect moment, will never get it done. To wait for ideal conditions means nothing will ever be accomplished. That can also happen in life. We know now is the time to stop a specific sin, but we hesitate, waiting for the right time. We know we should talk to that person, but we decide to wait for a better time. We wait to exercise, eat right, go to church, or start reading our Bible, but the perfect time never comes. As a result, we never start. Years later, we are still waiting for the perfect time. If we are going to do the right thing, we can't sit around waiting for the perfect moment. Now is the time. What are you waiting for?

EXTRA READING
ECCLESIASTES 11

In this chapter, Solomon concluded his autobiography by drawing together what he has learned from his experiences. He attempted to help us see how futile it is to try to find satisfaction in anything except obedience to God. All earthly goals and ambitions will only produce emptiness. Solomon asked himself profound questions as he searched for answers in life. Solomon eventually came to understand the importance of obedience. He learned that satisfaction will not come apart from God. Solomon also realized that, in the end, all that really matters is what God thinks of us. When our lives are over, we will stand before Him and give an account for what we have done while on the earth. Are you ready for that day? God alone gives meaning and true happiness in this life! Pursue Him alone.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING
ECCLESIASTES 12

1 KINGS 12:25-33

LACK OF TRUST

SAY WHAT?

What things can happen in our lives that can cause distrust and disobedience?

SO WHAT?

Why is it so hard to trust God in these areas?

NOW WHAT?

How can you avoid making the same mistakes Jeroboam made?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

Today, we go back to 1 Kings to begin the journey through the divided kingdom. Israel becomes the northern kingdom and Judah, the southern kingdom. This event fulfilled the words of the prophet Ahijah in chapter 11. God told Jeroboam through Ahijah, that He was going to give to him ten tribes to rule over as king. Because of God's promise to David however, one of his offspring would always rule Judah. To accomplish his plan, God allowed Rehoboam to receive and believe foolish counsel. Ten tribes revolted and sought Jeroboam as their king. Jeroboam did not follow God or trust Him as he had been instructed. In spite of the accurate prediction concerning his kingdom, he was fearful that Israel would desire to return to King Rehoboam. His lack of trust led to insecurity, which resulted in disobedience. Instead of trusting God, he came up with what he thought was a better plan. We are often like Jeroboam. God makes promises, demonstrates Himself to be faithful, and yet we doubt, become insecure and then sin. A lack of trust will always lead to disobedience. Determine today to not allow this progression to happen to you!

EXTRA READING
1 KINGS 12

DISOBEDIENCE

1 KINGS 13:1-26

As you read through this chapter, did you find yourself wondering why God reacted so harshly to this prophet? After all, he had been lied to. While it may seem harsh, it illustrates how important it is to follow the Word of God exactly. God had clearly commanded the prophet not to receive anything at Bethel. His conduct was to be an example to the nation of Israel that God totally rejects false worship. God even told him to return home a different way so as to be able to fulfill His command. When a man came to him and lied, the prophet easily disobeyed what God had commanded. At the very least, he should have questioned the advice he got. Instead of being cautious, he quickly disobeyed. When God's Word is clear, there is never a reason to disobey. When we believe God's will is unclear, we must move slowly and carefully. Do not respond casually to a possible violation of God's Word. When in doubt, don't!

SAY WHAT?

 Observation: What do I see?
SO WHAT?

 Interpretation: What does it mean?
NOW WHAT?

 Application: How does it apply to me?
THEN WHAT?

 Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

1 KINGS 13

1 KINGS 14:1-20

COST OF DISOBEDIENCE

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

In this chapter, we see the consequences of Jeroboam's refusal to trust God. It begins with Jeroboam's son becoming ill. He secretly sent his wife to a man of God in Judah to get help. He wanted God's help, but he did not want his people to know he was asking for it. When his wife arrived in Shiloh, Ahijah told her that the kingdom would be taken from Jeroboam and that her son would die when she got home. Not only would God take the kingdom from Jeroboam, but his children as well. His sin was more blatantly evil than either Saul or Solomon in that he established a pagan system of worship. God also made it clear that the nation of Israel would pay a heavy price, along with Jeroboam, for discarding His laws and disobeying His commandments. He foretold the political instability they would face and that they would be uprooted and scattered one day. Watching these events unfold should motivate us to obey the Bible. Even if you have to stand alone, never disobey what you know to be right. Determine today to obey in every situation!

EXTRA READING
1 KINGS 14

The writer of 1 Kings now shifts our attention back to the Kingdom of Judah. There are two kings of Judah mentioned in this chapter. Abijah, who was not fully devoted to God, and Asa, whose heart was fully committed to God. However, there is one thing that Asa failed to do. Asa was a man who truly loved God and wanted to serve Him. In fact, he accomplished four major tasks because he was committed. First, he removed the sacred prostitutes. Second, he got rid of the idols made by Abijah. Third, he deposed his grandmother and burned the idol she had made. Fourth, he placed the holy items back in the temple. All of those things were great and hard to do. But Asa did not finish the job. He tolerated the high places and did not destroy them. While he himself did not participate in idolatry, he allowed others to. God does not only want us to make sure our own heart is fully committed to Him, He wants us to deal with sin wherever we see it. No matter how small it seems, we cannot tolerate it. If God would not tolerate it then, He will not tolerate it now.

SAY WHAT?

What forms of idolatry (putting something in the place of God) do some people engage in today?

SO WHAT?

How can you keep your own life free from idolatry and put God first?

NOW WHAT?

What can you do to help others keep their lives free from idolatry?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

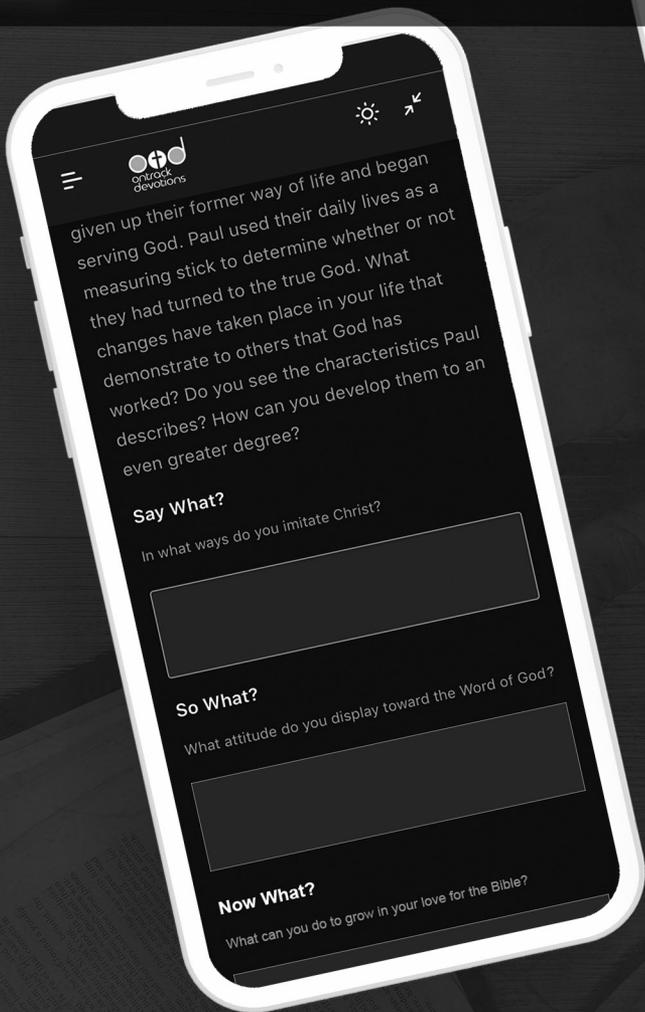
EXTRA READING

1 KINGS 15



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