THE COST OF COMPROMISE (1 KINGS 11:1-13)

LESSON OVERVIEW: Today's society is full of distractions, temptations, and seductions that appeal to our senses and challenge our virtue. Those of us in positions of prominence or status are often subject to various temptations and challenges. This can be especially true of those in spiritual leadership. Even though God blessed Him with wisdom, treasures, and prosperity, Solomon forgot the LORD in his reign because of worldly temptation. God gives us promises and power to remain true to Him regardless of our difficulties.

LESSON GOALS: The class will learn from Solomon's mistakes of the reality and nature of today's temptations. They will learn that remembering God's Word and His promises is the best way to remain pure in an ungodly world. Lastly they will realize the consequences of succumbing to temptation.

KEY THEMES AND TERMS IN THIS LESSON: To turn away, foreign wives, disloyalty, idols, statutes, abominations, to tear away.

I. THE ROOT OF SOLOMON'S COMPROMISE (1 KINGS 11:1-8): The tone for this entire passage is set with the first word of verse 1, But. All Solomon's accomplishments and the praise of men were annulled by the word, “but”, and what follows it. He had strong affection for strange women. The women Solomon loved were foreign or unfitting for a Jew to love or possess. Though not forbidden, Solomon established a trend by marrying the Pharaoh's daughter. Solomon was probably exposed to foreign women of high standing through his shrewd political dealings. He also could have been granted these women by the nations that he collaborated with in building the temple. He loved women of the nations the LORD had commanded the Israelites to drive out from their presence. He may have seen the women as a mean to an end and wasn't discerning as he ought to have been. It is also notable that he loved many women. Solomon wasn't content with one wife and was never satisfied and felt the urge to acquire more and more.

Verse 2 shows that Solomon was guilty of direct disobedience to God's Word. The LORD had instructed Israel to not intermarry with women of such nations. Unitig with one was not a true marriage because they would be unequally yoked (2 Cor. 6:14). This was a very direct command with no room for tolerance. The main reason was the influence and impact associating with women who had different gods than Israel. These women would turn their hearts away from the LORD. Their wives would bend or twist their loyalty to Yahweh and cause them to pursue strange gods. Marriage would cause the men of Israel to seek to please their wives and not just the LORD (1 Cor. 7:32-33). The LORD is a jealous God and would have His people worship or serve no other god but Himself. Thus He strictly forbade the Jews to marry those of other nations or other gods. Yet, Solomon clung to his
wives in love, which is to say he caught them and then adhered and attached himself to them.

Verse 3 shows the LORD’s warning to be true in Solomon’s case. We see the excess and magnitude of his folly. His heart was geared to acquiring women, so the women became his goal and his directive. Solomon’s wives did turn his heart away, just as God had foreseen. Verse 4 says that when Solomon was old he turned after other gods. Many years of pursuing and cherishing foreign women had taken its toll. Solomon may have considered his behavior innocent or thought he was immune to seduction and unable to fall into idolatry. Solomon didn’t fall into sin, he gradually slid into sin. He forgot that even if we think we are standing firm we must be careful lest we fall (1 Cor. 10:12). He wasn’t loyal (of a perfect heart) to God as David his father had been. Even in His promises in 1 Kings 3, God had warned Solomon of the importance of obeying His commands. He should have flown from foreign women, but he followed after them. Though technically not immorality, we can apply 1 Thess. 4:3 to Solomon’s folly.

Verses 5-8 show specifically how Solomon sinned against the LORD. He pursued detestable gods of other nations and even built altars for sacrificing to foreign deities. What started as an unhealthy appetite for women led to complete spiritual ruin in Solomon’s life. He didn’t fully follow the LORD. Partial obedience is still disobedience. For years Solomon still sacrificed to the LORD though he married foreign women. Over time, he started giving his allegiance to other gods and idols. The term abomination is used to describe these false gods. These were filthy and disgusting in the eyes of a holy God. These gods would be filthy and disgusting to other believers, and a detestable thing not fitting for saints of that day. Solomon was the polar opposite of the Thessalonians in 1 Th. 1:9. Solomon turned away from the living God in order to serve idols. Solomon also led his wives to greater devotion to these gods. He became a spiritual leader in a sense, but he led his families in sin and rebellion against the LORD.

II. THE RESULT OF SOLOMON’S COMPROMISE (1 KINGS 11:9-13): Verse 9 shows that the LORD became enraged and furious with Solomon because of his idolatry through foreign wives and gods. He was angry because Solomon had turned from following Him, even though twice He appeared in person to Solomon telling him of His promises if he obeyed Him fully. Normally the LORD would have sent a prophet to declare His Word, but Yahweh appeared Himself to Solomon because He loved the king. Therefore He chose to reveal Himself a third time to Solomon, but this time it was to pronounce judgment on Solomon and his kingdom.

God declares Solomon’s disobedience in that He had not kept His commands and statutes. Solomon could have no reply to the LORD’s accusations, for He was guilty. He might have been able to deceive Israel, but He couldn’t mock God. He was to reap what he had sown for
many years. *(Gal 6:7-8)* None of the sacrifices he’d previously made to God could save Solomon, for to do righteousness and justice is more important than sacrifice *(Prov. 21:3)*. Because Solomon had done this, the LORD promises to tear the kingdom from him. Much as His heart had been torn from loyal devotion to Yahweh, God would tear the crown from Solomon’s family. He says he’ll give the kingdom to his servant. The servant he spoke of is Jeroboam, who was the supervisor over slave labor. Jeroboam would later rebel against Solomon. In His anger, God still relents because He remembered David’s faithfulness. He would leave one tribe to David’s family and not tear all of Israel from David. The faithfulness of a father saved his future. But the treachery of his son spoiled their heritage. God also does this for the sake of Jerusalem.

God acted so that His Name wouldn’t be profaned. For God to overlook Solomon’s idolatry would not have been consistent with His holiness. Solomon may have thought his sacrifices and early devotion to God would offset his sin of foreign wives and idolatry. Compromises in integrity and purity are always accompanied with negative consequences.

**QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION:**

1. How do we resist the temptations to compromise our faith and values?
2. What are some common distractions and obstacles that might hinder our faithfulness?
3. What was Solomon’s ultimate downfall?
4. Why does compromise lead to negative consequences?
5. Do we consider sin and rebellion an abomination?
6. What verses or promises in Scripture should we remember to stay devoted to God?