

Faithfulness is a must

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[0 : 0 0] other acts that Solomon completed. And then it finishes by saying that Solomon became a boat builder, which, you know, very jealous of because I always wanted to be a boat builder. And he gets to build these big ships, which is quite important geographically. It actually, we won't go into it because I've already had one divergent track this evening already. So we're going to pick it up here, verse one through to verse nine. Now hear God's word. As soon as Solomon had finished building the house of the Lord and the king's house and all that Solomon desired to build, the Lord appeared to Solomon a second time as he had appeared to him at Gibeon. And the Lord said to him, I have heard your prayer and your plea, which you have made before me. I have consecrated this house that you have built by putting my name there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time.

And as for you, if you will walk before me as David, your father walked with integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you and keeping my statutes and my rules, then I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever. As I promised David, your father saying, you shall not... Do you know, I am really... I was like deeply concentrating then. I was... Sorry. Sorry. Just in case you're wondering, that's my child. Okay. Just in case you don't know. Verse 6. Was I on verse 6? I have no idea. Verse 5. Sorry. Then I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever. As I promised David, your father saying, you shall not lack a man for the throne of Israel. But if you turn aside from following me, you and your children, and do not keep my commandments and my statutes that I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them. Then I will cut off Israel from the land that I have given them and the house that I have consecrated for my name. And I will cast out of my sight and Israel will become a proverb and a byword among the peoples, among all the peoples. And this house will become a heap of ruins. Everyone passing by will be astonished and will hiss and they will say, why has the Lord done thus to this land and to this house? Then they will say, because they abandoned the Lord their God who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt and laid hold on other gods and worshiped them and served them.

Therefore, the Lord has brought all this disaster on them. Well, may God bless his word to us this evening in both formats, the reading and the exposition. But before we come back, well, if you can make your way again to 1 Kings 9, as you are doing that, I reminded you last week that when you're dealing with God, there are always four possibilities. When we looked at Solomon and his wealth, and we considered the possibilities there, that you can be poor without God, or you could be rich without God.

You could either be rich with God, or you could be poor with God. And of course, to be poor with God is so much further ahead and better than it is to be rich without God. So, without too much difficulty, it becomes very easy to order these things. But I also said that God's 1-2 may be different than your 1-2, meaning that while it's possible to be poor and have a relationship with God, and be rich and have a relationship with God, we might prefer to be rich and have a relationship with God than poor or moderately well-off. But our 1-2-3 or 1-2 may be entirely different than God's 1-2 or 1-2.

[4 : 2 9] 1-2-3, because of one, the corrupting power of wealth, and secondly, because he knows our heart much better than ourselves. Now, the same type of thing happens now in 1 Kings 9, but rather in the terms of commitment. And the way commitment works is really straightforward. The reason we make commitments is because the world changes. Okay? I'm going to say that again. The reason why Christians are called to make commitments is because we live in a changing world. And one of the ways that we don't change along with a changing world is by sticking to the things that we commit ourselves to. So, if you imagine it like an anchor on the bottom of an ocean, and

your commitment is the dropping of an anchor.

So, you can be thrown around a bit by the world, but you will not move because you are anchored in that position. Now, if you remove your commitment, then of course you will go wherever the wind and the waves take you. Ephesians 4, Jesus says the same thing, and the book of James says the same type of thing as well. That we can be carried along by the factors of the world because we're not anchored to anything in particular. So, as a straightforward definition, we make commitments, or a commitment, at least a Christian commitment, is that which stops us from moving with the world. Okay? So, how can we not change in a negative way in a changing world? Well, by making the type of commitments that God would have us make. We see that here in 1 Kings 9, but we see it in answer to Solomon's prayer.

1 Kings 9 is God reminding Solomon that he is a God who keeps his promises. He makes promises, but he also keeps promises. And Solomon has to recognize that everything that he has in the kingdom, all the joy that he has, the temple, the people, the fact that there is no war, there is prosperity amongst the people. Everything that he has is a promise that has been kept by God to his people. Everything that he has. Now, like anybody, the moment you get used to something, it's tempting, or it shouldn't be tempting, but it's easily, you're easily caused to forget how you got there. And you begin to think, well, it's always been like this. And if it's always been like this in your lifetime, you can't imagine it any other way. Now, those people who have lived through difficult times, you take World War I and World War II, let's say World War II, and then have seen how dramatically the world has changed for the better, in many ways, are able to look at it with a great deal of perspective that someone like me, born in the 70s, can't look at it unless I read history books. But I'm still missing that tangible experience that they've had. Solomon and David and God's people have had both. They've had it bad, and now they've had it good. And now that they've had it good, God reminds Solomon why it is so good. Why have you got it so good? And here's the reminder that he gives them in this answer to this prayer. Another thing that we're supposed to recognize here, when you're reading the Old Testament, realizing that Jesus said that everything in the Old Testament is about him, where is Jesus in 1 Kings 9? Well, where is Jesus in the whole of 1 Kings? Well, Jesus is the king that we're waiting for. He is the true and better king, the king that will last forever, whose kingdom will last forever. The trouble is, we only know that because we live on this side of Jesus' resurrection. But all of these people live on the other side of the advent of Jesus, which means that they would have looked at Solomon in the assumption that he was God's promised king, that he was the one who was going to establish a kingdom that would last forever. Now, imagine those kind of expectations, not on Jesus, but on Solomon. Because we have the benefit of being able to look back and go, it was obvious that it wasn't Solomon. Well, of course it's obvious to us, because we've got the wealth of history to look at, and also the privilege of being able to be on this side of the resurrection of Jesus, where we've experienced the power of his resurrection. But all of these people here are living in a kingdom on earth, thinking the kingdom of God's coming.

The kingdom of God is actually coming. We have peace all around us. We have a temple. We have God's presence. We have sacrifices being made. How much better can it get? They almost have everything.

[9 : 53] Now, they still have death. They still have sorrow. They still have pain. But generally speaking, they have a lot. You would have imagined, if you were living there, this is the good life.

And they would have looked at Solomon as they looked at David, that this must be the promised one, that this must be the promised king, that this must be the one whose kingdom will truly last forever.

Imagine those kind of expectations that the people would have. God makes a promise, and we are constantly looking all the way through the Old Testament to see how those promises are being kept. And we get to Solomon and think, could this be it? Now, we know it's not. It's Jesus.

So, here's the summary, at least, of these first few verses. 1 Kings opens verse 1 by saying something pretty important. And the first thing is this, that 1, the temple is built, but then it goes on to say that Solomon had finished everything that he desired to build. Now, I think the writer of 1 Kings puts that in on purpose, to say, almost to say that the Lord's building, that's done and dusted, that was finished a while ago, but we've had to wait around because Solomon's been busy building everything that he has. And of course, his house being, you know, double the size, or if you do the floor plan, as Gerald pointed out, four times the size, okay, than the temple. You know, Solomon

has been busy with what he has desired to build. Then verses 2 through to 9, we have this prayer of Solomon going up and God's answer to Solomon's prayer. And it's very, very simple. If you are committed to me, you will remain committed. If you are committed to me, you will not waver, you will not swerve, and my presence will be with you continuously. It'll be with, my name will be upon the temple, my presence will be with you. However, however, if you fail to commit, if you fail to commit, and you turn from me and serve idols, serve other gods, then the temple which you love, and which I have put my name and glory upon in many ways, will be taken from you. I will leave it in a heap of ruins. And that's exactly what God does further down the line. But he also says that Israel will become a proverb and a byword. Now, you've got to understand this in a couple of different ways. One, what does it mean? But two, who's saying it? Who's saying it? Who's speaking about the temple in this way? Who's speaking about Israel, the chosen people of God, in this way? And the one king wants to highlight our attention. It's God who's saying these words. God who made all of these promises and has kept all of these promises is now saying that these promises are conditional.

[13:07] Now, I don't want to get too technical, okay, but here's a little bit of, here's a little bit of theology for you. Throughout the Old Testament, you have different covenants. You have an Adamic covenant, the covenant made with Adam, a Noahic covenant, a covenant made with Noah, the Abrahamic covenant, the covenant made with, obviously, Abraham, Mosaic covenant, Davidic covenant. And all of these covenants are agreements between these people and God, given the circumstances that they live in.

The covenant made with Abraham was what you would call an unconditional covenant, meaning that whatever Abraham did or did not do, God was always going to fulfill his promise that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand on the shore, that that promise was always going to come about. But when we get to Moses, we see God give the Ten Commandments and lay out a new covenant.

The thing is, the covenant is conditional. It's a conditional covenant. And so this covenant that Solomon is dealing with God with is not the Abrahamic one, although it is all tied up. It's actually the Mosaic one, where God is already laid out in Exodus and in Deuteronomy in particular, the conditions to receiving God's blessings and the curses when you walk away from God.

So Solomon already knows this. He knows what's expected of him as a king. He knows what's expected of the people of God. And God is just reminding him, okay, the way that you remain, the way that you remain stable in a world that's changing is by remaining committed to me. However, you remove that commitment and you worship other gods and you serve them, you serve yourself and serving idols, then the temple will be taken from you and Israel will become a byword.

The important thing here is to realize that God takes care of his own glory. And this is what we're going to see over and over again. So I have four very short considerations. Here's the first one.

[15:26] Here's the first one to start with. The first is this, that faithfulness is the only response to God, which is what God deserves. The only response to God, which God deserves. Now we can respond to God in a whole number of other ways that can be consistent with faithfulness, but the way it's measured, the way commitment is measured, is always faithfulness to the covenant. I have said this, and your measure of faithfulness will depend entirely on whether or not you're doing, you're keeping what I've said to keep, or you're not keeping what I've said to keep, okay? And if God's people keep his covenant, then that is deemed by God as their faithfulness and blessings follow. So here's the first point. Faithfulness to God is a must. There's just no doubt about it.

Faithfulness to God is a must. That's the first consideration, and probably the most important one, given everything else that will follow. Faithfulness, or to put it as I did originally, we make commitments in a world that changes so that we don't change with a changing world in a negative way. Why? Because faithfulness is an absolute must. Here's the second consideration. The covenant is a conditional covenant. And what that means is that every decision and action that Solomon makes has consequences.

What's a consequence? Have you ever thought about it? I thought pretty long and hard about a consequence because I wasn't entirely sure I knew what it meant. Here's what I believe the scriptures teach about consequence. I don't believe anything happens ad hoc, and I don't believe anything happens outside of God's will or ordination of all things. So we hear Jesus speak in Matthew that not even a bird, not even a sparrow, can fall to the ground apart from the will of my father. Okay, if that's true, and it certainly is true, Jesus said it was true, and we have no reason to

doubt the Son of God, what does it mean?

Well, it means that a consequence is not a consequence as though it is absent from God, but rather a consequence is God's response to our decisions and actions.

In other words, if all things happen in accordance with God, then all of Solomon's decisions and actions are met by God's responses. Well, it was the consequence of his action. Well, it certainly was the consequence of his action, but who administered the consequence? Who actually made sure that that was the consequence? Well, I would say the God who holds all things together. And so the second thing to realize here is that in a conditional covenant and in a relationship with God, all of our decisions, actions, even us who are not Solomon, and all of our actions are always met, always met with a response from God. Now, I can't tell you how God is responding to you at this moment. I have no idea. I don't know how God is responding to you with the things that you're thinking. I have no idea how God is responding to you with the things that you are doing. I have no idea what God is going to do with you in the responses that he administers, that he ordains over your life. But I can certainly tell you that his responses will be responses to decisions and actions that you have made along the way. And his will is that which he constantly moves you in for the good, for the good. As we said last time, if you remember, that blessing is the type of blessings that we like, the good blessings. But we said last time that curses are also a blessing. They don't appear as blessings, but if a curse is meant to turn people around to God, then those judgments that God pronounces upon people to get them to turn around, to turn back to him, are still a blessing. Okay? We call them curses, we call them judgments, because that's what God calls them, but because they are not something we enjoy. Okay? They are not something we enjoy. They cause us to straighten ourselves out. And so the second consideration is this, that whatever decision Solomon makes through his life, same for you. And whatever action you do is always met with a consequence. But that consequence is not absent from God, as though it happens without God knowing about it, or it happens, yeah, yeah, God's just happy for it to happen. No, not at all. It is God responding.

[20 : 38] A consequence is God responding. It's not outside of what he is ordaining. And so if Solomon and the people of God turn from God and turn to worship idols and to serve those idols, God will do what he promised. He will respond. And his response will be to destroy the temple and to make Israel a byword. In other words, the very temple that God says ought to be decked out with all this gold to reflect the glory of God. He doesn't mind having put all that work into it, having established all of it through his own promise, if it all comes to a ruin, because faithfulness is more important. Okay? I want you to understand what's happening here.

That all of this glory that reflects on God in such a wonderful way in the nation of Israel, all of God's people, which God will bring to an end if it stops reflecting his glory.

That's what you were meant to understand. If the temple is no longer reflecting what it's meant to reflect, and the people of God are no longer reflecting their God who they're meant to reflect, God will make them a byword. That's his response. And that's what Solomon is hearing in how God is responding to him in prayer. Here's the third thing. The third consideration is the importance of God's blessing rather than the work. And what I mean by that is, is that as a church, just like Solomon, we should be always questioning, do we have the Lord's blessing in this?

Because there seems to be a lot that's happening in the church today. Not this church, or just this church, but in the church in the West today that doesn't seem to be attracting the Lord's blessing. Just doesn't seem to be attracting the Lord's blessing at all. A lot of it gets covered up by the fact that a lot of money is thrown in. And like anything, if you throw money at something, it can look good, it can look shiny, it can look wonderful, but only the blessing of God can produce the results.

[23 : 05] Okay? Only the blessing of God can produce the results. I, when I went back to see my mom a few years ago, and I went up to Holy Trinity, of course, we were at church, I decided to park at the top and visit the Rainbow Room. And the Rainbow, it sounds strange, the Rainbow Room was where I had my Sunday school lessons. And it was this derelict shed that I thought was massive at the time. And I walk and I had to get my head underneath, I never remember doing that as a child because there was no need.

I can remember there being an upstairs, but when you looked at the building, you think, how on earth could there ever be an upstairs in this place? It was, now no doubt, it had run down a lot more than when I was in it, but I still remember it as being a, this sort of old barn type of thing. And yet you think of the amount of, probably women, I don't remember any male Sunday school teachers

growing up, but you, all those Sunday school teachers that went in that dilapidated building, dilapidated building, that shared and taught God's word to all of those children.

Okay? Probably without the resources that need, probably without the amount of money that they need. And yet God, by his grace, with the blessing, okay, saves men and women, boys and girls through that building, or through the use of that building. Okay? The issue that we should always be mindful of is whether or not it has God's blessing. And if it doesn't have God's blessing, stop it. Stop, just get rid of it. It may look good. It may look great. But if it isn't, if it does not have the blessing of the Lord behind it, you're wasting your time and a lot of resources.

What Solomon is meant to understand is that God is a God who blesses his people, but he is also meant to understand how to spot that blessing. And that's what God's people are not often good at. Because what happens is we get so used to the blessing of God, we then think, look what we've done.

[25 : 25] And the moment we go, look what we've done, guess what happens? God takes it from us. He takes it from us. And then we go, what's happened? Oh, I know what has happened. It's because we made that decision or that decision. Well, that could be true. That could be true. But sometimes the response of God in terms of blessing falls at whether or not we're actually recognising that what we have is from God or from our own hands. And I've used the illustration again and again, why God sent bread from heaven. You know, the most confusing thing. Every Israelite would have understood that bread comes out of the ground. But they were so used to the fact that bread came out of the ground that they ended up saying that's where bread comes from. And in order for God to remind his people that bread did not come out of the ground, but from him, he decided to send it from heaven. But how long do you think it would take someone living in relationship with God to see bread come down from heaven for year after year after year and then go, well, so it's been like this. You can make the same mistake both ways.

You get so used to thinking it being this way that you miss the fact that it is either attracts the Lord's blessing or it doesn't. What Solomon is meant to understand is that God takes care of his own glory. Okay, God is taking care of his own glory. Let me put it a slightly different way.

God destroys his temple eventually and his people become a byword. And we might be tempted to think God won't do that because it will reflect badly on him. Right? God won't do that because it will reflect badly on him. And, you know, some Christians think they can actually play that game with God.

They think they can be quite deceitfully savvy and go, I can get away with this with God because God isn't going to let this happen because it will reflect badly on him. Okay? But God doesn't play that game. Okay? Because God takes care of his own glory and his own blessing. Look with me in verse 9 just to make the point abundantly clear. On the day that the temple lies in ruins, verse 8, if it is to happen, we know in hindsight that it does happen looking back onto it. They will say, so if we go back to verse 8, and this house will become a heap of ruins. Everyone passing by it will be astonished and will pierce. And they will say, why has the Lord done thus? And this to the land and to this house? Then they will say, because they abandoned the Lord their God who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt and laid hold on other gods and worshiped them and served them. What God is saying here is, you need to understand that it will not reflect badly on me, but you. The people, when people in the world look at churches that don't have any lights on on a Sunday evening because they're closed, okay, that doesn't reflect badly on God. Okay? Doesn't reflect badly on God in the slightest. God is more than able to take care of his own glory. But it does have a lot to say, okay, about the people who used to go there or still do, but only on a morning. Okay? That kind of witness reflects out into the world and the world are wise enough to understand that these people who claim this, the opposite is true. So God is saying to his people or to Solomon here, you need to understand that when this happens, if it is to happen, and we know looking back it does happen, that when people pass by and they see it lying in ruins and Israel has become a byword, that doesn't reflect badly on me. It reflects badly on you. Because even the ungodly, even the unsaved know what a confessing believer should be like, roughly. Now, where they learn this stuff,

[29 : 43] I never know. Have you ever had a conversation with someone who's not a Christian and they say, you know, judge not lest you be judged? I mean, what Sunday school did you go to?

You know, I don't know. Where did you come up with these Bible verses? How are you able to quote them to me? Well, it seems that the world is more than capable of being able to learn enough

Bible verses to put us in our place. And this is kind of what God is pointing out here, that the world is able to recognize some of these things. Some of these things. Here's the fourth consideration then, as we close, and probably the most shocking of all. When God warns his people against turning around, a biblical word for that in Hebrews would be called apostasy. The whole book of Hebrews is written to a people convincing them why you shouldn't turn around. You've begun to follow Jesus, now continue, don't turn around. Whatever you do, do not turn around. And the writer of Hebrews is sort of making this point two or three times in a chapter. Here's the reasons for not turning around. Do not turn your back on Christ. Keep going. Keep walking. Let go of the things that are holding you back, but you keep going. Apostasy is when a person is a Christian who has enjoyed all the blessings, you know, tasted of the things to come, enjoyed taste of the Holy Spirit, and the waters of baptism. All of those things, Hebrews 6, and then turns around. And now that life no longer reflects any of that glory. Apostasy is therefore the opposite of repentance. Repentance is turning from the world, turning from sin to Christ. Now here's the important thing with apostasy and repentance. In one turning motion, two things are happening. Okay? In one turning motion, two things are happening. In repentance, you cannot turn to God without turning away from sin. You can't do it because it's the turning motion. So as you turn away from sin, you are turning to God. As you're turning to God, you're turning away from sin. In the one movement, two things are happening. You're turning to God, and in turning to God, you're turning your back on sin by the grace of God. In apostasy, the same thing is happening, but in the opposite direction. You're turning from God to idols, to whatever those idols might be. They're not statues so much anymore, although in some countries they are. But you're turning to them. And what's happening in that, it's exactly the same movement that happened at your conversion, but now it's happening the other way around. The trouble is, is the seeds of apostasy are normally found in a person a lot longer before they surface. What I mean by that is, is that the book of Proverbs, being the wisdom that it has, is very, very clear in teaching us that most things do not happen all of a sudden. They just don't happen all of a sudden. We think in watching a person's life, where on earth did that come from? But Proverbs sort of teaches us very gently by saying, no, no, it's been there a long time, but it's now bearing fruit. It may not be good fruit, or it could be good fruit, but nothing happens all of a sudden. You see the same thing, I think it's in Psalm 132 and 133. [33 : 36] Okay, nothing happens all of a sudden. Fruitfulness takes time. But there is bad fruit and there is good fruit, as Jesus rightly said. Well, Solomon, as we have noted, already has a divided heart.

And the author here in 1 Kings 9 wants to point out that that division is located in one person in particular. Not just Solomon, but here we have the mention of Theroux's daughter twice in the chapter. We have it in verse 16, and then we have it near the end. In fact, I'll give you the exact verses as we move through. But what we begin to see is that while Solomon's daughter cannot be blamed for anything, or if this is to say that it's all the woman's fault, you know, I certainly wouldn't say that. I wouldn't think it either, because hopefully my understanding is shaped by Scripture. But the power of influence is great, and probably no greater than in a wife. Okay? Proverbs indicates this as well, that the influence that comes from a wife to a husband, or the other way around, but it does seem to indicate the wife to the husband, is an incredibly powerful influence. And people, therefore, must be careful who they marry, because of the controlling influence that other person can have over them. I think it's, I don't think, I don't think I'm at all surprised that the church throughout the West has more women in it who are stronger than the men. I'm not just trying to tickle your ears here, women, but I think it's quite obvious that when I look out, not, you know, generally speaking, you see a lot of strong women, but not always a lot of strong men. And you see a lot of women within marriages who are clearly, who clearly wear the trousers and shouldn't, but have never been told that they shouldn't be by the husband. That this is, okay, there needs to be a balance here. Go read Genesis, that the woman is the helper to the male, which means that she has qualities of strength that he doesn't have. But if you read on the same use, the same word, but it uses that the woman's desire will be for her husband, men shouldn't get excited about that, to think that my wife is going to find me incredibly attractive for the whole of her life, that her desire is going to be for me, that I can, it doesn't matter what day I walk into the room, what I look like, my wife is just going to think I'm drop dead gorgeous. It's disappointing when you realize that that just isn't the case. And so your husbands walk in and you know, wives, you know, perhaps you do, perhaps you do feel that way about your husband, perhaps it's, it's just, the word desire is to rule

over. It's the same word in the, in the, in the issue over Cain and Abel, that Satan is at the door and his desire is for you. It's that oppressive rule. Now, what does it mean? What it means is, is this, that Solomon's wife could be the most beautiful woman in the world in her character.

She may not have a harmful bone in her body, but she's still a sinner, just like we all are. And sinners, those who are not God's people, have tremendous influence over those who are God's people. And Solomon knows that he should never have married someone outside of God's covenant people, but lo and behold, he just went ahead and done that very thing. And so that desire, okay, like I said, I don't know her, she may be an incredibly nice woman, but nevertheless, when a person doesn't deal with their own sin, that sin has to have an outlet. And if you're married, one of those outlets is within that very marriage itself. Let me give you another example. What about Lot's wife?

Okay. One of the interesting things I find about Lot and his wife is that we know from the story that she looked back. But you've got to ask yourself the question, why? Okay. God sent two angels saying that judgment would come down upon the city. Don't look back or else you'll be turned to a pillar of salt. So here we have Lot and his family and they're all running. We assume that they're running out.

[38 : 24] And Lot's wife looks back. Okay. And she's turned to a pillar of salt. Okay. But why? Well, if you backtrack the story, you'll remember that Abraham's herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen were not getting on with each other. They are falling out. And so Abraham took Lot to the side and says, right, let's decide where we're going to farm. And Abraham, even though he had the right, said to Lot, you can choose. You can either go left or you can go right. You can choose even the best pillar of land for yourself. And whatever you choose, I will go in the opposite direction. Okay. Then it says this, that Lot chose the land near Sodom. It doesn't say that he went to Sodom, but he chose the land near Sodom outside the city. But a few years later, a few years later, when the angels came down to tell him that God was going to judge the city, where is he? He's in the center of town. Well, how does he get there? I think the same longing that his wife had when she looked back on what she was leaving behind was exactly the same type of longing, which led them into the city in the first place.

That desire to live there, that desire to be there. And the reason I think that is because Lot says something incredibly interesting to the angels. When the angels say to him, we'll just stay in the city overnight. And Lot goes, you can't do that. You can't do that. You're going to have to go out. You can't stay here. And don't you want to ask the question, Lot, you live there. Why do you live in a city that you don't want anybody else to stay in? Okay. You add up all these things, there has to be an influencing factor of why he was there with his family. And I think, without blaming his wife, for the fact that she looks back, and Jesus quotes it in the context of longingly, longingly looking back, that that's what led him into the city in the first place. The issue here is influence. Apostasy in a person's life is caused by being under the influence. A strong influence that over time makes one step, two steps, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, ten, nine, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, and suddenly, in a few steps over a few years, the distance that you have covered away from the Lord is great. Here's the conclusion.

One of the things that we have seen over and over again in the life of Solomon is that when he is faithful to God, it looks so good. And yet his desire, as pointed out in verse one, is highlighted again for us to understand that he is a man with desires, and he is a man who loves to fulfill his own desires. And though he does everything that the Lord wants, it appears, he does everything that the Lord asks for, it appears.

Nevertheless, he is still controlled by the desires that he has for so many other things. In other words, he's a man who serves God, but not one who is totally committed to his ways. That is the Lord's ways. And that is why eventually Solomon drifts.

[42 : 17] Faithfulness. So in a final thought, faithfulness is a must. We make commitments in a changing world so that we don't change negatively along with the world. Amen.