

## A Biblical Pursuit of the Simplified Life Less External Complexity

### Opening thoughts

- We are spring cleaning our lives
- Key text

**Luke 8:14**

The thorny ground represents those who hear and accept the message, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. And so they never grow into maturity.

- The origin of Stress. "All Stressed Up and No Where To Go" – By Lori Borgman

### The down fall of King Solomon – A man who had it all

#### 1 Kings

1. Chapter 3 – A simple prayer of humility:

**3:7** LORD my God, now you have made me king instead of my father, David, but I am like a little child who doesn't know his way around. **8** And here I am among your own chosen people, a nation so great they are too numerous to count! **9** Give me an understanding mind 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 nation of yours?"

**10** The Lord was pleased with Solomon's reply and was glad that he had asked for wisdom. **11** So God replied, "Because you have asked for wisdom in governing my people and have not asked for a long life or riches for yourself or the death of your enemies-- **12** I will give you what you asked for! I will give you a wise and understanding mind such as no one else has ever had or ever will have! **13** And I will also give you what you did not ask for--riches and honor! No other king in all the world will be compared to you for the rest of your life! **14** And if you follow me and obey my commands as your father, David, did, I will give you a long life."

2. Chapter 4 – A good beginning – Solomon exercises wisdom.
3. Chapter 5 & 6 – Builds the temple – the fulfillment of his dreams
4. Chapter 7 - Builds a palace for himself that is greater than the temple.
5. Chapter 8 - Asks Gods blessing – prayer of dedication
6. Chapter 9 - God warns him.
7. Chapter 10 – Queen of Sheba visits – Solomon becomes wealthy beyond his dreams – [666 Shekels of Gold].

10:14 Each year Solomon received about twenty-five tons<sup>[a]</sup> of gold. [*Hebrew 666 talents or 23 metric tons*].

8. Chapter 11 – Solomon takes of wives from different nations – he becomes political and powerful.

**11:9** -The LORD was very angry with Solomon, for his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. 10 He had warned Solomon specifically about worshiping other gods, but Solomon did not listen to the LORD's command.

9. Chapter 12 – Kingdom is divided and eventually lost.

## Lessons learned from Solomon's mistakes

**Ecc. 2:4-11** 4 I also tried to find meaning by building huge homes for myself and by planting beautiful vineyards. 5 I made gardens and parks, filling them with all kinds of fruit trees. 6 I built reservoirs to collect the water to irrigate my many flourishing groves. 7 I bought slaves, both men and women, and others were born into my household. I also owned great herds and flocks, more than any of the kings who lived in Jerusalem before me. 8 I collected great sums of silver and gold, the treasure of many kings and provinces. I hired wonderful singers, both men and women, and had many beautiful concubines. I had everything a man could desire! 9 So I became greater than any of the kings who ruled in Jerusalem before me. And with it all, I remained clear-eyed so that I could evaluate all these things. 10 Anything I wanted, I took. I did not restrain myself from any joy. I even found great pleasure in hard work, an additional reward for all my labors. 11 But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless. It was like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere.

**Ecc. 5:10** Those who love money will never have enough. How absurd to think that wealth brings true happiness!

10. The greatest tragedy – coming to the end of your life and realizing that it was miss spent.  
11. Miss-used gifts will lead to an empty life. God grants us all gifts and talents and the free will to use them as we might.  
12. Things that complicated Solomon's life will also complicate our lives:
- Putting personal comfort and security a head of God – His palace was bigger.
  - Becoming entangled in work and schedules – His fathers values were not passed onto his son Rehoboam.
  - Money and positions of prestige & power override simple obedience.
  - Becoming entangled in wrong or unrighteous relationship.

## The Solution: Re-evaluate - Re-focus - Re-organize

1. Re-evaluate – Taking a hard contemplative look at your life.
- Ask questions, “Has my life become too complex and complicated?” “Am I spending this great gift of life the very best way possible?”

- Three points of evaluation - Time, energy (emotional and physical) & money
- Lessons from the Amish in Shippensburg, Indiana
  - JOY – Jesus – Others – You
  - Humility – Simplicity – Family & Community
  - Anything that detracts from this is removed.
  - Most technology is seen as a distraction
- 2. Re-focus & re-prioritize – What needs pruning in my life?
  - Seek God, pray & make a plan of action for reformation.

### **The power of pruning – John 15**

1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. 3 You have already been pruned for greater fruitfulness by the message I have given you. 4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful apart from me.

- The only way to get more out of life is to choose less:
  - Less stuff
  - Less unnecessary activity
  - Less of wanting more.
  - Less of self.
- Brian Scudamore - CEO of 1-800-GOT-JUNK - "It's difficult for people to get rid of junk. They get attached to things and let them define who they are. If there's one thing I've learned in this business, it's that you are what you can't let go of."
- Life is temporary and short – we came into the world with nothing and we will leave it with nothing – so why do we spend the bulk of it trying to accumulate material things?

**Psalm 90** – "You turn people back to dust, saying "Return to dust!" For you, a thousand years are as yesterday! They are like a few hours! You sweep people away like dreams that disappear or like grass that springs up in the morning. In the morning it blooms and flourishes, but by evening it is dry and withered.... Seventy years are given to us! Some may even reach eighty. But even the best of these years are filled with pain and trouble; soon they disappear, and are gone.

- 3. Re-organize – Prune [Ex. - Pruning roses – cutting them way back is what makes them thrive.]
  - Time & schedules.  
Psalms 90 12 Teach us to make the most of our time,  
so that we may grow in wisdom.
  - Energy – investing in the right things - getting those things out of our lives that are

draining us of vitality:

- Clutter – clean the house and sell the stuff you haven't used in two years.
- Simplicity is the antidote to feeling overwhelmed.
- Unrighteous relationships – extramarital sex will complicate your life.
  
- Money –
  - It is easier to get a camel through the eye of a needle than a person with extra financial baggage.
  - Debt first (Rocky & Teresa - testimony)
  - Learn to live on less – render down your life. (Gas prices will require spending less on something else.)
  - A single income is a gift - if possible.

## **Matthew 6 Teaching about Money and Possessions**

19"Don't store up treasures here on earth, where they can be eaten by moths and get rusty, and where thieves break in and steal. 20Store your treasures in heaven, where they will never become moth-eaten or rusty and where they will be safe from thieves. 21Wherever your treasure is, there your heart and thoughts will also be. 24"No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. 25"So I tell you, don't worry about everyday life--whether you have enough food, drink, and clothes. Doesn't life consist of more than food and clothing? 26Look at the birds. They don't need to plant or harvest or put food in barns because your heavenly Father feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than they are. 27Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? Of course not. 28"And why worry about your clothes? Look at the lilies and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, 29yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. 30And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today and gone tomorrow, won't he more surely care for you? You have so little faith! 31"So don't worry about having enough food or drink or clothing. 32Why be like the pagans who are so deeply concerned about these things? Your heavenly Father already knows all your needs, 33and he will give you all you need from day to day if you live for him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern. 34"So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.

## **Paul on Contentment**

**Philippians 4** 11I have learned how to get along happily whether I have much or little. 12I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. 13For I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need.