

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
November 9, 2016**

1 Kings 11:9–12:33. Solomon’s apostasy and Jeroboam’s Golden Calves.

Mark 7:14–8:10. Sin comes from within.

Proverbs 3:6–3:12. Wisdom and the love of God.

COMMENTS.

1 Kings 11:9–12:33. Outline: Solomon’s apostasy (**11:1-43**); Jeroboam institutionalizes idolatry (**12:1-33**). Observe 1 Kings 11:6: *And Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD fully, as David his father had done.* Although David sinned against the Lord, his reign was not evil because he never fell into the contemptuous practice of idolatry. This practice brought God’s judgment, which entailed Israel’s division into two kingdoms.

Solomon’s reign has been harsh on many Israelites. They have become slaves to his building projects, which have taken them away from their families and land. Now the people ask Rehoboam for an easier life—but he refuses. The narrative sounds rather like the story of Exodus, with Rehoboam as Pharaoh and Jeroboam as a new Moses, calling for justice and liberation. Solomon had asked God for wisdom, but his son takes the advice of hot-headed friends. The result is that Jeroboam wins the support of the northern tribes, while the southern kingdom shrinks to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Both stray from God’s way. Rehoboam chooses oppression and Jeroboam chooses idolatry. Jeroboam is insecure. He fears that his people will still be drawn to worship in Jerusalem, and then revert to a king of David’s line. To avert this, he sets up a religion of his own, with idols, shrines, and priests. Governmental leaders are well known for their attempts to control and garner the support of their people.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. Note the nature of apostasy, *departure from the Lord*. Solomon loses his desire to serve God and becomes a slave to his lust for women. Human beings will always seek their greatest good. If it is not God, then some other “good” will determine the direction of their lives. At that time it was the old Canaanite gods. Ashtoreth is the goddess of fertility, who is worshiped in bloodshed and sex. Molech is a god who is worshiped with child sacrifice. Solomon provides places of worship for them, and then joins in himself! Rehoboam walked with the Lord for three years after becoming king (2 Chron. 11:17), but in the fourth year of his reign, when his throne was secure, he and all Judah turned away from Jehovah to worship idols (2 Chron. 12:1–2). “And he did evil because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord,” 2 Chron. 12:14. The phrase “forsaken the commandment of the Lord” frequently occurs in the record of the reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel. David had warned Solomon about this sin (1 Chron. 28:9, 20) and so had the Lord Himself (1 Kings 3:14; 9:4–9; 11:9–13). As we have noted in our last few Bible classes, love for God requires right thinking and right wishing. It is not as if someone can just make himself love the Lord as a brute act. Everyone already loves what he thinks is his greatest good, and no amount of will power can change that. This shows the importance to guarding our spiritual lives, our hearts—for what we feed our heart will further develop its appetite in that area. Of course, only God can lift up our hearts, giving them supernatural capacity for Him. But He only does this for those who want it, which is why we are commanded to

depart from evil and do good and pursue the good (Psalm 34:14). If Solomon, Jeroboam, and Rehoboam had continued to walk with the *Lord by proper knowledge and proper love* they would never have developed a love for evil, they never would have seen evil as a good. Solomon would not have allowed sexual parties devoted to murdering babies, and Rehoboam would never have institutionalized the worship of golden calves. But by departing from the Lord, they turned to darkness, which is the case with every man whether that darkness is Mammon or Moloch. Evil always stultifies the spiritual life. Only a life in the Lord by *proper knowledge and proper love* will protect the believer from spiritual degradation.

Mark 7:14–8:10. Observe how Christ responds to the Pharisees' legalism as they link sin with dirt. For them, washing is a mark of holiness. Now they criticize Jesus' disciples for not washing their hands before eating food. Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah, who says that human rules can hide a hostile heart (Isaiah 29:13). Jesus teaches that it is not what we eat that makes us sinful (**7:15**). Sin is in our hearts already. Food goes into our stomachs, not into our hearts (or wills). Immorality, pride, and greed are not caused by food. They spring from the evil that is already present in human nature. Following this (**7:24-30**), Jesus leaves Israel and goes towards Tyre—a cosmopolitan area on the Mediterranean coast. A Gentile woman seeks Him out and begs Him to drive a demon out of her daughter. Jesus resists the woman's request. His task is to feed the children (Israel). He must not get sidetracked into tossing little crumbs to dogs (Gentiles). The woman accepts what Jesus is saying, but still tries to persuade Him. Of course, Israel must be fed; but isn't it quite natural for Gentiles to benefit too—even if they are no better than dogs under the table? Jesus can't possibly refuse her request. She returns home to find that her daughter has been freed from the evil spirit. In **7:31-37**, Jesus heals a man who is deaf and dumb. In this healing, the prophet Isaiah is quoted, '*the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.*' These are physical cures with spiritual meanings. One day people will no longer be spiritually blind and deaf. The lines of communication with God will be open. Then Mark records Jesus feeding the 4,000 (**8:1-10**). This time there are some 4,000 people who have been with Jesus for three days in the wilderness. They are hungry, and Jesus feeds them all from seven loaves and a few small fish.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. In response to the legalism of the Pharisees, Jesus declares (**7:14-16**) that the source of life with God is from within, not from without. Moreover, He was declaring null and void the entire Mosaic system of "clean and unclean" foods—He would explain this later to His own disciples. The more important point is that life with God has always been a matter of the heart. The ceremonial purity was simply a matter of exterior obedience from inner love of God. Moses made it clear in Deuteronomy that God wanted love and obedience to come from the heart, and not be merely outward obedience to the rules. Deuteronomy 6:4 "*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! 5 "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.* Deuteronomy 10:12 "*And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.* Deuteronomy 30:6 "*And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.* Deuteronomy 30:20 "*that*

you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them." It all comes down to loving God—life in God *by proper knowledge and by proper love*. In sum, anything that is done that is not out of love for God collapses into some form of legalism. Love for God is the one and only way of breaking the curse of legalism, which comes in a vast array of flavors, from ceremonial washings to simply quoting Bible verses, something which even characterized the Pharisees. When we live in legalism, there is the gestation of frustration, bitterness, and self-righteousness. When we live in God, there is the gestation of the fruit of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, humility, and self-control.

Proverbs 3:6–3:12. The son is told to trust in God and not lean on his own understanding (5–6), to fear God and not be wise in his own eyes (7–8), to honor God and not fail to give to Him (9–10), and to appreciate God and not misunderstand His discipline and its value (11–12). These verses follow an alternating pattern of commands and rewards: commands (1), reward (2), commands (3), reward (4), commands (5–6), reward (6), commands (7), reward (8), command (9), reward (10), commands (11), reward (12). The rewards include longevity and prosperity (2), favor with God and people (4), fewer problems (6), health (8), prosperity (10), and awareness of God's love (12). One of the problems in our society is that kids are no longer even aware of these core principles. One by one they are being removed from society with devastating results.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. This section ends with the love of God. Wisdom is more than a matter of knowing rules of right and wrong; it is a matter of knowing God's love. Moreover, without love for God these principles are quickly forgotten. Those who love the Lord trust in the Lord rather than in their own wisdom. They fear and honor Him and accept His discipline. Love for the Lord, not just their awareness of certain principles, is what protects them. There is a radical difference between living rightly because one is oriented to principles and living rightly because one is oriented to God. The former ends up in legalism; the latter cultivates love. In other words, it is one thing to love my neighbor because the Word commands it. It is another to love my neighbor because of my love for God. For example, if a believer loves his neighbor out of his love for God, there is no temptation to implacability. However, if he loves his neighbor simply because of some code, he will likely need to continue to confess sins when his neighbor does something that he does not like. Only life in God *by proper knowledge and proper love* brings true wisdom and life abundant regardless of the circumstances of life or the neighbors.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and by proper love,

Pastor Don