

The Bareness of the Busy Life

by Don Currin

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prioritizing worship and communion with God in order to avoid the barrenness of a busy life and to experience spiritual growth and maturity.

Duration: 48:08

Topics: "Busyness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the book of Ecclesiastes and the life of Solomon. He describes Solomon as a burned-out preacher who got too busy for God and neglected his own spiritual life. Solomon boasts about his great works, possessions, and achievements, but realizes that he has not kept his own vineyard, which represents the work appointed by the Lord. The preacher emphasizes the importance of prioritizing worship and maintaining a personal relationship with God, rather than getting caught up in worldly success.

Transcript

For those of you who did not bring your children with you to the conference, I must say that I grieve with you to some degree because already the conference has had a tremendous impact upon my children. And probably the most profound thing that God has used in their lives is the humanness of the speakers as well as many of you. My boys have rubbed shoulders in recent days and weeks with Brother Ed Moore, Brother Charlie Orr, with Harold Vaughn, and with the satirists to some degree, as well as other people connected with the fellowship.

And the impression I'm getting is that God can use those guys and maybe there's hope for them. But, you know, if there's one thing that I've noticed that's consistent in the life of every man and woman of God that God has used in the history of His Church, and that is the humanness of them. There was a man that L.E. Maxwell, the founder of Prairie Bible Institute, quite often referred to in his lectures and sermons, a man by the name of Sandu Sundar Singh.

And here was a man that was very much caught up in the very presence of Christ. And there was a quality and a spirit of worship in his life that was very profound as people got around him and sensed the presence of the Lord. But on one occasion he was passing through a village and he stayed with a layman and his wife there in India and came into their home and that night the layman and his wife had three children.

And after supper, here this man was, as colossal as he was in his spirituality, he got down on his hands and knees and played with their children and rolled them in the floor and then tossed them in the air. And for a couple of hours he played like that with the children. And when it was time for the children to go to bed, the parent says, It's time, children, to retire for the evening.

The children looked at their parents and said, Mama, Daddy, can Jesus put us to bed tonight? Can Jesus put us to bed tonight? You see, the man was so tender and so gentle and so demonstrated the character of Christ that these people momentarily lost the ability to differentiate between reality and fantasy. The man was so much like Christ. Recently I was with a pastor in Georgia and he told me that a young pastor went to visit Dr. Jack Hudson, who was the pastor of Northside Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, for many years.

And he asked him a question. He said, Dr. Hudson, you've known many of the giants of the faith and men in your era who have made a profound impression on the lives of many people for Christ. What would you say is the most outstanding feature, the most consistent thing that God has used in these men's lives? And, of course, this young preacher was thinking that he would say, Well, all these people were people of prayer or possibly they were men of the word or they were soul winners.

But completely threw him for a loop when he said, If there's one thing that I've noticed that's consistent from life to life, and that is that every one of these men were gentlemen. They were gentlemen. And, you know, I believe that many times when we come to a conference like this, we're so reserved and spiritually sophisticated that we do not show our human sides.

And I think that we need to learn a lesson that even when it comes to these small children, as well as in our relationship with one another, we need to show ourselves to be human. Amen? Well, this morning, if you would, take your Bibles, please, and turn to the Song of Solomon, chapter 1. The Song of Solomon in chapter 1. I want you to look with me at one verse of Scripture as we preview the life of Solomon this morning. I suppose there are many titles that I could give the message.

One would be the neglected vineyard. Still another would be the sin of neglected communion. Probably a better title would be the flesh that you know not of.

Still even a more appropriate title would be filled barns and empty hearts. But I believe that if a title best epitomizes the content of this message this morning, it would be the title the barrenness of a busy life. The barrenness of a busy life.

It's one thing to come to a conference of this caliber and receive a fresh infusion of grace and experience revival in a very personal way. But in order to preserve that work of God in our own hearts, we must give diligence, brethren, to make sure that we neglect not, consistently neglect not, the secret place of communion with our God. This morning I want you to look at a man that I believe was very transparent as he relayed where he was in his spiritual life.

And I think there's something that we can learn from the content of this morning's message. The Song of Solomon, chapter 1, verse 6. Solomon says, Look not upon me because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me. My mother's children were angry with me.

They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard have I not kept. They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard have I not kept. Watchman Nee, in his commentary on the

Song of Solomon, said that the vineyards is referring to the works organized and arranged by man, while the vineyard is the work that the Lord has appointed.

You say, well, what is that work that the Lord has appointed? None other than our own personal communion and worship of Jesus Christ. They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard have I not kept. Do you know I've discovered these days in my Christian life that if I don't take the time in the morning to allow the Holy Spirit to order my steps, the world and men and the evil one will order my schedule for me throughout the day.

And friend, may I encourage you that before you begin the day and before you entertain the person of any man, you must secure the presence of God. And through that securing of the presence of God, we must know, we must discern the ways of the Lord. You know it has benefits, for I have discovered that I can accomplish a lot more monetarily, physically, in this temporal world, when I have first of all secured the presence of God for the day.

But I find that many times other vineyards replace the vineyard my time with the Lord. You say, like what? Well, many times my ministry can become a vineyard that I have to resist often times and constantly be on guard against that I don't even allow working for the Lord to replace my time in fellowship with Christ. I wonder what vineyards you have.

There are secular vineyards and there are sacred vineyards that many times cut into our time with Christ. And here is a man that I believe in the early days of his life and ministry, he spent much time in secret prayer. He spent much time in intimate communion with this God.

But there came a day when good things took the place of the best thing. And may I remind you this morning, remember in the Christian life, that good is always the enemy of best. And if Satan can get you locked into doing good things to the exclusion of the best thing, it will not be long before he starts getting you to substitute evil things for that which is good.

It is a dowered, slow death process. You see, I look at Solomon's life. And of those years of ministry when he was king over Jerusalem, they consisted of forty years.

The first four years were characterized by blessing. This man loved God. I believe he could identify with the psalmist who said, as the heart panteth after the water brook, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

I believe that he prioritized worship. And every day, as we'll see in a few moments, he spent time in secret prayer, secret devotion with this God. And throughout the day, Christ was his very life.

But for the next twenty years, his life was characterized by business or building. You find him building a number of things. Engaged in many architectural endeavors.

But the Scripture tells us that he built the temple of the Lord, he built his own house, he built the walls in Jerusalem, he built Milo, a home for his Egyptian wife, he built barns for his chariots and barns for his horses, and he rebuilt the cities that had lied in waste for years. The man was addicted to building. But then you move to the last sixteen years of his life, and that's characterized by spiritual barrenness.

For there he becomes an adulterer. An idol worshiper. And may I say to you this morning, friend, that long before Solomon ever compromised the commandments of the Lord, thou shalt have no other gods before me, thou shalt not commit adultery, he compromised his communion with Christ.

Now you know what it makes for good preaching these days to curse some certain groups or denominations or movements today. For after all, the leaders of those movements, many of them have fallen into immorality. But I want to tell you something, friend, whether it's a charismatic, whether it's a fundamentalist, whether it's an evangelical, we've got just as many people being sucked into immorality today.

But regardless of who they're identified with, before they ever lost their virtue and their ministry, they lost their fellowship with their God. They became weakened in their spirit, and therefore, when temptation came, they did not have enough spiritual substance in their life to wall off the attacks of the enemy. And possibly I'm addressing some this morning, that you would never in those early days of your relationship with Christ, when you walked with Him, you would never compromise your virtue.

You would never gaze upon unholy things. You would never engage in unholy conversation. But not any longer, it seems as if you've been desensitized, and the reason you have is because you've been too busy for God, and therefore, due to being involved in all these other vineyards, your spirit has become so weakened that you've been sucked in to some of the evils of this present evil age.

So it was with Solomon. Four years of blessing. Twenty years of building.

Sixteen years of spiritual barrenness. Now, let's get to the details. Turn with me, if you would, to 1 Kings 2. There are two accounts of the life and ministry of Solomon in the Inspired volume, and this morning we're going to look at one of those.

One is found in 2 Chronicles, and the other is recorded for us here in 1 Kings. And the reason I'm using 1 Kings is because it's more detailed. And I want us to look at some things this morning in these years.

First of all, a blessing. The reason God blessed Solomon, the reason he was able to obtain the fullness, the maximum in blessing, is because his priorities was right. He spent time in secret prayer with this God.

And throughout the day, he worshipped his Lord. Jehovah was his very life. And here in 1 Kings 2, as a result of that, we see the first blessing of the Lord.

And indeed, it is a colossal blessing. For in 1 Kings 2:12, it says, Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father, and his kingdom was established greatly. Why does the Holy Spirit tell us that his kingdom was established greatly? I believe for two major reasons.

Number one, everyone under David's regime recognized that Solomon was God's appointee to reign in David's place. And so they gladly approved of this man reigning over the people of God. But secondly, he had a royal endorsement.

For his own father recognized the good hand of the Lord upon Solomon. And knowing that Solomon was God's choice to rule over his people, he voiced, he verbalized, he noised abroad, that yes, I can place my approval upon this man. And therefore, to have David's endorsement, and to have the people's approval, the Holy Ghost said his kingdom was established greatly.

And you know, friend, to personalize it now, when you first came into the kingdom of God, you became a king and priest in the family of God. You didn't have to go around advertising it. You didn't have to wear certain jewelry.

You didn't have to have certain bumper stickers to project your Christianity. You see, there was a marked difference in your life. And those around you recognized that God was in you and that you had become a part of the kingdom of God.

Your kingdom was established greatly. But then secondly, you'll notice another blessing. For in verses 13 through verse 22, we find the story of Bathsheba being approached by Solomon's brother, Ananias.

And Ananias' intention was to get his mother to go before Solomon requesting Abishag, the concubine, to be his wife. Now you see, unbeknownst to Bathsheba, there was a deceitful motive there in the heart of Solomon's brother. For he knew that if he could get Solomon to consent to relinquishing the ownership of his concubine, that this concubine Abishag was the property of the king and once he obtained it, it was only a part of that process of deceitfully moving in to overthrow Solomon on his throne.

But you see, even before God blessed Solomon with a supernatural gift of wisdom, he was a very discerning man. For he discerned the deceitful motivation of his brother's heart. For we read there in verse 22 of 1 Kings 2, And King Solomon answered and said unto his mother, And why doest thou ask Abishag the Shulamite for Ananias? Ask for him the kingdom also, for he is mine elder brother.

Don't you realize that if I consent to this, it will only be a matter of time before he replaces me as king? So he was a discerning man. This was another blessing of the Lord. And may I say to you this morning, that when you came into the family of God, listen friend, you may not have had a good grasp of the Scriptures, you may not have had a good understanding of the truth of God's Word, but when you watch certain things on TV that were promoted as a religious program, when you came across certain articles or literature that you knew in your spirit as you read them, whether they were own or not, and there was something uncomfortable in your spirit that began to occur, even though you couldn't put your finger on it, even though you had no scriptural basis to back up why you felt so uncomfortable, the spirit of truth of God living within you bore witness with your spirit that it's not right.

It's not right. It's not right. And then later on you found out why it wasn't right.

A blessing of the Lord. Still again, in the context of these years of blessing, you'll notice something else. He was a man of peace.

Look in 1 Kings chapter 3 and verse 1. 1 Kings chapter 3 and verse 1. The Bible tells us, and Solomon made affinity, in other words, he established a working relationship with Pharaoh, king of Egypt. But it's amazing to me that it was not just Pharaoh, it was all the kings who had previously been the enemies of David's father. You see, David was a man of war.

Solomon now is a man of peace. Is it a little wonder why Solomon, under the control of God's Spirit, would pin these words in Proverbs chapter 16 and verse 7, that when a man's ways please the Lord, God will cause even his enemies to be at peace with him? You know, friend, for years I was given the impression that you know a man by his enemies. But I declare unto you, you know a man in his spiritual state if he has any enemies.

That does not go so far as to imply that people are always going to approve of you and agree with your convictions from God's Word. But I want to tell you something. Even though they disagree with you, they can stand at a distance and admire the quality of your Christianity because even though I do not agree with him, I tell you there is a man right there that I respect, I esteem, I believe that they are a true

Christian.

When a man or a woman's ways please the Lord, God will cause even his enemies to be at peace with him. And then notice another blessing. 1 Kings chapter 3 and verse 11.

He was an individual with extraordinary discernment. And there are gifts and abilities that many of you possess this morning that Solomon did not possess. But there was a gift that he possessed that most people in the family of God do not own for themselves.

And that is the gift of wisdom. What a discerning man he was. But even beyond that, what a man of wisdom.

What a man of extraordinary wisdom. 1 Kings chapter 3 and verse 11 tells us, And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast thou asked riches for thyself, nor hast thou asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment, behold, I have done according to thy words. God responded to his request.

God answered his prayer. Because there was those days when the practice of his life was worship. He spent time in quality worship with this God.

Some years ago, a young man approached Major Ian Thomas. And he said, Major Thomas, tell me everything that you know about devotions. And Major Thomas in that English accent said, What does that mean? And then he went on to say, Unless your intention is to meet with, to worship with, and to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.

You know, it's sad to say these days many of us are devoted to our devotions. And the reason we get nothing out of our devotional time with the Lord is because we're committed to our devotions rather than committed to the essence of our devotions, and that is the Lord Jesus. Is devotions a means to an end to express devotion to Christ? Or are we devoted to our devotions? Finney said it like this, Is it devotions? Or devotion? And these days in Solomon's life, I believe it was devotion.

For it was not just a place, an appointed time, and a place where he worshiped God, but throughout the day he made that his priority. Notice still another blessing. Not only was the man of wisdom, but in 1 Kings 3, verse 12, the rest of the verse tells us that God also with that wisdom gave him an understanding heart.

He says, Lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart. The word understanding there could be translated compassion. I believe this man had the ability to suffer with, to feel with those people that he interacted with.

And even this was a virtue of the grace of God, the goodness of the Lord. But you'll notice still again in 1 Kings 4, verse 31 now, that he was blessed with much fame, for God had exalted him in due time. The Scripture tells us that he was wiser than all men.

And then notice in the latter part of verse 31, And his fame was in all nations round about. His popularity escalated. But then in verse 32, since it's so convenient being the very next verse, still another blessing.

He was a brilliant man. 1 Kings 4, verse 32, tells us that he spake three thousand proverbs and his songs were a thousand and five. I believe the thing that gave life to that ability was the very presence of the Lord in his life, because worship was his practice.

Now, there was a day when Solomon moved from glorifying and enjoying and worshiping his God, making that his priority, to a time when doing things, involvement in other vineyards, took the place of his communion with Christ. Now, I want you to look with me now, if you would, in 1 Kings 6. Look at the latter part of the chapter there in verse 37. In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the Lord laid.

I believe, by the way, that the building of the temple under Solomon's leadership was the will of God for Solomon's life. But beyond that, one day he stood back in amazement and admiration as he looked at the temple and he began to worship the work of his hands. And he said, If I can build that for the Lord, can you imagine what I can build for Solomon? So the scripture goes on to tell us in verse 38, And in the eleventh year, in the month of Bul, which is in the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it, so was he seven years in building it.

But, please don't pause. Continue to read. Chapter 7, verse 1. I love the structure of the King James.

But, notice that big, bold transitional conjunction. But, Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house. Notice, brethren, it took him almost twice as long to build his own house as it did for him to build the house of the Lord.

It's as if the Holy Spirit is saying to us, those years when he walked with God and fulfilled the purpose of God in his life in building the temple, it took him a period of seven years. But, but, here was the mistake. Here's where it began to go downhill.

Here's where it began to digress in his fellowship with his God. But, Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house. The consequences were disastrous.

The Scripture tells us in Proverbs 15 that he that is greedy of gain troubles his own family. May I say to you this morning that gain can be defined as when we do not operate within the limitations of God's provision. God may bless you a lot more monetarily than He does me.

But you see, friend, it's when we go out of those God-given provisions and we seek to secure things that God does not bring into our life on His own, that's when we begin to get in trouble and that's when we begin to bring disaster upon the lives of our family. And here is the man addicted to building now. So he's moving from the years of blessing into the years of building or busyness.

And I want you to look with me here, if you would, at some of the spiritual repercussions of when a man gets too busy for God, neglects his time with the Lord, and loses his fellowship with Christ. What happens when a man's fellowship with God fails because he's too busy for the Lord? Look with me, if you would, in 1 Kings 9. It's very beautifully laid out for us in these verses. First of all, I want you to look with me in verses 10 through 13.

The Scripture tells us that it came to pass at the end of 20 years when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the Lord and the king's house. Now Hiram, the king of Tyre, had furnished Solomon with cedar trees and fir trees and with gold according to all his desire. Then King Solomon gave Hiram 20 cities in the land of Galilee and Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him and they pleased him not.

Well, why not? Verse 13. And he said, Which cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother? And he called them the land of Kabul unto this day. The word Kabul in the Hebrew means worthless, filthy, rubbish.

In other words, he gave him cities that were nothing more than a dung heap. And so, friend, we learn our first lesson. That when a man gets too busy for God and he loses his fellowship with God, it will be reflected in his relationship with other brothers.

In other words, when you are too busy for the Lord and you lose your fellowship with Christ because other vineyards have crowded out that time with the Lord, your relationship with others will become more and more meaningless. You see, if we give people anything at all, we give them out of our abundance. Or we might give them something that is used.

It's real easy for us to feel good about ourselves come holiday season when we go through all of our closets in our house and we rid it of everything that either we've outgrown or might have a tear or a worn place on it and we take it down to the Salvation Army or the Goodwill Store and we feel real good that I'm providing for others. But when is the last time you made a sacrifice to minister to someone's need that you put into your own self-life? Some years ago, when the Lord began to show me the principle of giving living, and may I say this morning that I am far from arriving in that area, there is still a great deal of greed in me, but God is mortifying it by His Spirit. But God began to teach me the principle of giving living and we came to the end of our fall campaign of meetings and crusades and God is so blessed financially we were able to completely eliminate all of our indebtedness and we were financially free and we had a thousand dollars that we laid aside and this was going to be our nest egg for the future.

At the time, my wife and I, we had three children and we said, you know, this is a good beginning for us. But God began to impress upon me the need to minister to the needs of others that God had allowed me to hear that they were in dire need. So I shared with my wife, I said, you know, I really believe that God wants us to give that money to some friends and some ministries.

Of course, my wife, she's got the gift of mercy and giving and of course, she was just delighted, you know, to hear that God had worked in her husband's life. So she had no reservation, she just rejoiced. So we went down and we closed out the savings account and transferred the funds over into our checking account.

We wrote about eleven checks, sent them out across the country. Now, I'm a Jacob, I'm a conniver, a manipulator at times. And in the back of my mind, I was thinking, well, you know, Christmas is coming on and every year at Christmas time, we get some real nice gifts from people.

All these Christmas cards that come from the States and some of the brethren in Canada, you know, sometimes in those cards there's some nice gifts. And this year, because I've given this money away, I just know that it's made such an impression on God that God's going to knock the bottom out of heaven. So as I depleted all those funds, you know, I just couldn't wait for Christmas to come.

And so the cards started coming in, opened up those Christmas cards and looked in them. And Christmas Day came. Of all the cards that we received, only two of them had checks in them.

And both of them were for ten dollars. And I'm really struggling. And I'm saying, God, did we not make a mistake? And He said, no.

Because your motivation for giving should never be to get. You give to glorify Me. And you see, friend, just as sure as we begin to give, to get, it's just like God to knock all the fleshly props out from underneath us.

And so He did me. And along the way, we find out that my wife is expecting our fourth child. And I really was frustrated.

I got angry. And by virtue of the fact that I became so unglued and so angry and murmured before my family was an indication that my walk with God was not as strong as it should be. And when I began to go back and evaluate, I found that during that Christmas season and even before, the ministry had taken the place of my communion with Christ.

You see, friend, how you treat your fellow man and the sacrifices that you make for him reflects your relationship with the Lord. Have you noticed the words of our dear brother, the Apostle John, in 1 John 3, verse 17? Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion, how dwelleth the love of God in him. And may I say to you this morning, that regardless of what you say about your walk with God and how strong it is, friend, if you're not sensitive to the needs of others, I tell you, you are deceived.

You're deceived. Number two. There's a second thing that you'll notice in Solomon's life that's an evil repercussion, very devastating in his life as a result of being too busy for his God.

And that is, you'll notice, that he becomes more occupied and obsessed with things. Look with me, if you would, in verse 15 now, as we just continue to read. Verse 15 of chapter 9. And this is the reason of the levy which King Solomon raised for to build the house of the Lord.

Notice, as I said a little while ago, he's addicted to building. And his own house. And Milo.

That's the home for his Egyptian wife. And the wall of Jerusalem. And Hazor.

And Megiddo. And Gezer. For Pharaoh, king of Egypt, had gone up and taken it with fire and burned it.

Notice verse 17. It didn't stop there, though. And Solomon built Gezer and Bethlehem, but neither.

And Balath and Tanmor in the wilderness, in the land. And all the cities of store that Solomon had. And cities for his chariots.

And cities for his horsemen. And that which Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion. The man was obsessed with things.

And once again, the second thing that you'll notice here is that when a man gets too busy for his God, like Solomon did, and his relationship and fellowship with Christ begins to wane, he's going to become a lot more involved and interested in this world's wealth, the things of this life. Once again, citing the words of our dear brother, the Apostle John, he said, Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loved the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Notice he didn't say the Father wasn't in him. Notice he didn't say that Jesus wasn't in him. He said the love of the Father is not in him.

There's a third thing that I want you to see this morning that a man will experience when he gets too busy for his God, because his fellowship with God weakens. And that's in verse 25 of chapter 9. Notice here that his personal worship of Christ lessens, becomes nonexistent, ultimately. The Scripture tells us, And three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar which he built unto the Lord.

Hold your finger there for a moment and turn back with me to 1 Kings 3 and verse 4. Now, 1 Kings 3 and verse 4 is in the context of those years of blessing when Christ was first. And he walked with Jehovah. Notice in those days what consumed his life.

1 Kings 3 and verse 4 it says, And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was that great high place. A thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar. Up to this point in time, from the day that it began to rain to this particular time, was about three years.

And in Gibeon alone, friend, he offered over a thousand sacrifices of worship. Do you know what that means? Up to this point in time, just in Gibeon, he offered a sacrifice of worship each day. Not to mention all the other places that he offered sacrifices unto his God.

But now I want you to see that he's lost touch with God because he's too busy for Him how often he worships Him. Once again, chapter 9 and verse 25. And three times in a year.

A year! Yes, he has no time to worship God. And may I ask you this morning, how much time do you spend in quality worship and communion with your Christ? Listen to the words of Hudson Taylor. He says, referring to Song of Solomon 1.6, when Solomon said, they made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard have I not kept.

He said, our attention is here drawn to a danger which is pre-eminently one of this day. The intense activity of our times may lead to zeal in service to the neglect of personal communion. Such neglect will not only lessen the value of the service, but will also tend to incapacitate us for the higher service.

Let us never forget that what we are is more important than what we do. And that all fruit born when not abiding in Christ must be fruit of the flesh and not the spirit. As wounds when healed often leave a scar, so the sin of neglected communion may be forgiven, but the effect remain permanently.

You say, well, Brother Curran, what happened to Solomon? Look now in 1 Kings 11. 1 Kings 11. Once again, I love the structure of the version.

For you'll notice that big, bold, pronounced conjunction is therefore, which marks another transition in Solomon's life. But, but, King Solomon loved many strange women. What does the word but mark? Now he's moving from the years of building or business to the years of spiritual barrenness.

He loves many strange women. God had already told him in verse 2, look at the latter part of the verse, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods, but Solomon claimed unto these in love. In verse 3 it says, and he had 700 wives.

By the way, some people say, you really believe that Solomon was an adulterer? Listen, you don't have 700 wives and 300 concubines and not be an adulterer. Somebody said it took him three and a half weeks just to kiss them all goodnight. And he had 700 wives, princesses and 300 concubines and his wives turned away his heart.

Look at verse 4. Once again, the latter part of the verse. And his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. And look at the sad commentary in verse 6. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father.

He did evil in the sight of the Lord. You say, Brother Curran, what happened to Solomon? I want you to take your Bibles now and turn with me, one final reference, to the book of Ecclesiastes and chapter number 2. Once again, let me remind you that the book of Ecclesiastes was penned by Solomon. I love his transparency.

For now he's come to the end of his row. He's looked back on all these vineyards and he recognizes that they were all vanity and vexation of spirit. And I just want to begin reading in verse 4. Follow with me if you would.

I suppose if I could give the book of Ecclesiastes a title, I would entitle it The Diary of a Burned-Out Preacher. And here's a man that epitomized burnout because he got too busy for God. Spent no time with Him any longer.

And he realized that it had disastrous effects, eternally speaking. And in verse 4 of chapter 2, he says, I made me great works. I built me houses.

I planted me vineyards. I made me gardens and orchards and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits. I made me pools of water to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees.

I got me servants and maidens and had servants born in my house. Also, I had great possessions of great and small cattle. Verse 8, I gathered me also silver and gold.

The middle part of verse 8, I got me men singers and women singers. Verse 9, So I was great. Do you notice consistent pronoun in those statements? Solomon was an eye specialist.

Verse 10, And whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them. I withheld not my heart from any joy. Now notice he takes inventory before the Lord.

Verse 11, Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought and on the labor that I had labored to do. And behold, all was vanity, worthlessness, and vexation, oppression of spirit. And there was no profit.

He's speaking in regard to eternity. There was no eternal profit under the sun. I like what one commentator said.

The reason there was no eternal profit is you'll notice where his perspective was. It was under the sun, not above the sun. He lost his focus of Christ.

Some years ago, I picked up a religious periodical. You get a lot of magazines and newsletters from various sources through the mail, and obviously you don't have time to read everything. The reason I always was interested in this particular religious periodical was because in the back of the magazine, the editorial, the fellow always had something to say.

It was very transparent. He would relate what he was seeing in the church in North America and then relate out of his own heart many times. One day I picked up that magazine when it came through the mail and thumbed to the back like I normally did and I began to read.

This fellow, who was a well-known preacher in the States, if I called his name, probably many of you would know him. He said, When I was 30 years of age, the greatest desire of my life was to build a big church. He said, I wanted to have the buildings, budgets, and baptisms.

I wanted to flourish in the nickels and noses. And he said, God gave me that. And he said, When I became 40 years of age, the greatest desire in my heart was to be a great preacher.

He said, I wanted to be able to teach the Word of God, expound the Scriptures, and when called on the last moment to preach, he said, I always wanted to give that impression that I was ready to deliver. And he said, God gave me that. Then he went on to say, He said, Now that I'm 50 years of age, the greatest desire in my life is to know God, to enjoy God, and to glorify Him forever.

That was just six months before his church called him on the carpet for making obscene phone calls and being involved in adultery with a woman in the church. But you can see that deep down inside, beyond all the corruption that was going on in his life presently, he realized something. God had enlightened him.

And he recognized the importance, the priority of worship and fellowship with his God. What if, then, when he was in Bible school and around all of his preacher peers and those religious professors that had such an impression upon his life in their early formative years of his Christianity, what if they would have said to him, Brother, brother, listen. Building a big church is not where it's at.

You let God build a church. And if God gives you a big church, then great. Being a great preacher, that's not what God desires for you.

You let God make you the preacher that He wants you to be. Don't strive to obtain it in your flesh. Brother, the number one priority of your life is to know your God, to enjoy your God, and to glorify Him forever.

You know what I'm convinced of, Friend? He'd still be in the ministry today. But he's shipwrecked because he got too busy for God. And whether you're a preacher or a layman today, guard that time with the Lord.

There's no greater thing that you can do on this side of eternity than to spend time in worship and communion with your Christ.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/22/SID22135.mp3>

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