

What Can Spoil Our Legacy?

How to Leave a Legacy Series, October 29 & 30, 2022 | 1 Kings 11:1-13
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What can spoil our legacy?

What is our legacy? The word "legacy" usually refers to something we leave behind after death.

We may leave behind something tangible like a possession or something intangible like values, encouragement, or faith.

Here at Valley, we talk clearly about legacy. We want to impact the world for Christ.

So, let's use this definition of "legacy." **Legacy: the long-lasting impact of our lives.**

What, then, can spoil our legacy?

I learned an important lesson about what can spoil our legacy at the dentist's office years ago.

I grew up with fluoride in the water, so I had strong teeth and few problems growing up.

Then, when I was in my early thirties, my dentist started to see something troubling on my x-rays. My teeth looked fine on the outside; there was no sign of a hole or a problem. However, my x-rays showed something that just seemed "off." He decided to watch my teeth closely.

Then, on one visit, he became convinced that two of my rear molars had cavities.

When he opened the first tooth to fill it, there was a massive cavity. Ultimately, all eight of my rear molars had cavities and needed to be filled.

Even though the teeth were strong and healthy on the outside, there was decay underneath.

When it comes to life and legacy, there are times when everything looks good on the outside.

However, decay underneath is what can spoil a legacy.

Let's back up and review what we've said about legacies so far:

In week one, we said that we need to start building our legacy the right way.

In week two, Pastor Brandon added that we need to build that legacy the right way.

If you missed either message, they are available online.

Here in week three, we are going back to the life of King Solomon to ask what can spoil our legacy.

King Solomon was constantly pulled in two directions. He was doubleminded.

God gave Solomon incredible wisdom AND Solomon repeatedly ignored it.

God made Solomon King of Israel AND Solomon ran it like a multi-national empire.

As King of Israel, Solomon trusted the Lord AND he trusted in many foreign alliances.

King Solomon recognized the Lord as the true king of Israel by building a magnificent room called the Holy of Holies in the Temple. Here's an artist's rendering. AND Solomon built his own throne room that made clear who had the real power in Israel. Here is another artist's rendering.

Solomon followed the ways of the Lord AND he chased the desires of his own heart. Solomon was pulled in two directions. He was of two minds. He was doubleminded.

What can spoil our legacy? As we think about starting and building a legacy the right way, we don't want to spoil that legacy along the way.

If we hope to impact the world for Christ, then doublemindedness can spoil our legacy. Let's look at the life of Solomon today for details.

Solomon's doublemindedness caught up with him.

Solomon's doublemindedness caught up with him in 1 Kings 11:1-10:

Now King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the people of Israel, "You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. He had 700 wives, who were princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart. For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and did not wholly follow the LORD, as David his father had done. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem. And so he did for all his foreign wives, who made offerings and sacrificed to their gods.

And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he did not keep what the LORD commanded.

Throughout his reign, Solomon had a problem with women.

Solomon began his reign by entering into an alliance with Pharaoh, king of Egypt. They sealed their alliance through marriage. Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter.

In Exodus (34:16), the Lord explicitly forbade Israelite men from marrying foreign wives.

Moses specifically forbade the Israelites from marrying foreign women in **Deuteronomy 7:3-4:**

"You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. ..."

King Solomon ignored this command, but he was just getting started.

Ultimately, he married 700 wives, many foreign. Plus, Solomon had 300 concubines.

Solomon sinned and was committing adultery through these many so-called marriages.

Solomon's heart was divided between obeying the Lord and following his own desires. He is doubleminded.

His problem with women became a problem with idolatry.

Solomon allowed his foreign wives to continue worshipping the gods of their homelands. Ashtoreth, the Canaanite fertility goddess, is the consort of Baal, Israel's old addiction. The identities of Chemosh and Milcom are a bit tough to pin down exactly. However, Molech is a god associated with human trafficking and human sacrifice involving children. The worship of Molech by Israel is considered a low point for the nation. Not only did Solomon allow his foreign wives to bring their false gods to Israel, but Solomon began to worship them himself. His heart was divided between the LORD and the gods of the nations. He is doubleminded.

Solomon's problem with idolatry became a very public problem.

Solomon built public places of worship for these gods east of Jerusalem. With the blessing and example of the king, the people followed behind. Solomon's heart was divided between leading the people to the LORD and leading them toward the gods of his foreign wives. He was doubleminded.

Solomon was like the ancient Roman god, Janus.

Janus is the Roman god whose name is associated with the month "January." Janus was the god of entrances, thresholds, and transitions. He is the embodiment of change and transition. Janus is portrayed with two faces, one face pointing forward and one face pointing backward. That's why his name is associated with January, the month that points forward to a new year while also pointing back toward the old.¹ Like Janus, Solomon had two faces, two minds. He was always pulled in two directions, always with one foot standing on the ways of the Lord and one foot standing on the ways of the world. He was doubleminded.

Sin spoiled Solomon's legacy.

Solomon himself expressed his own misgivings about the legacy he was building.

Solomon is most likely the author of the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes represents his darker reflections later in life when he reflected on his legacy-building efforts.

In **Ecclesiastes 1:2-3** Solomon bemoans,

Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity. What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?

He reflected on the effort he put into pursuing pleasure—gold, silver, wealth, food, and sexual pleasure. In **Ecclesiastes 2:11** he concludes,

Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.

¹ <https://classicalwisdom.com/mythology/gods/janus-roman-god-of-time-and-transitions/>

Even trying to leave his legacy to an heir was emptiness in his mind. In **Ecclesiastes 2:18-19** Solomon concluded,

I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity.

Solomon himself was in anguish about his own doublemindedness.

Then in 1 Kings 11:11-13, the LORD judged Solomon:

Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant. Yet for the sake of David your father I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen."

Solomon's sin led to God's judgment on Solomon's legacy.

The Lord's judgment began with a clear indictment. He had commanded Solomon to keep God's statutes and commands single-mindedly. Solomon had disobeyed the Lord.

The judgment is clear. God will take the kingdom from Solomon and give it to another.

However, God was gracious at the same time. Because of God's great love for David, the Lord will not take the kingdom away during Solomon's lifetime. Furthermore, God will leave the House of David with one tribe, Judah, along with Jerusalem and the Temple.

That was God's judgment.

Sin spoiled Solomon's legacy during his own lifetime.

1 Kings 11 tells about the way that two foreign enemies rose up during Solomon's reign to challenge the Israelite leader and his empire.

However, the most serious challenge was from within.

One of his own servants, Jeroboam, rose in influence.

Solomon himself recognized Jeroboam's talent and promoted him quickly in the bureaucracy.

Then God sent a prophet to Jeroboam who announced that God would take ten tribes away from the House of David and give them to Jeroboam to rule.

Solomon heard about the prophet's message and sought to kill Jeroboam, but the future king of Israel escaped to Egypt, where he stayed safely as long as Solomon lived.

Sin spoiled Solomon's legacy further after his death.

To us, Solomon's legacy is probably his great wisdom recorded in two books of the Bible. It is also the Temple he built in Jerusalem that helped us to understand God and his plan better. That's Solomon's legacy from the point of view of history.

However, to the Israelites living in the days after his death, Solomon's legacy was high taxation, imperial controls, and a system of forced labor. They loved the benefits of empire but languished under the price empire required of them. That was Solomon's legacy to them.

After Solomon died, his son, Rehoboam, became king. The people of Israel came to Rehoboam to ask him to relieve some of the tax burdens and their forced labor burdens. Rehoboam refused, and the ten tribes of Israel rebelled and made Jeroboam their king. The Kingdom of Israel was divided in two. A divided kingdom is also part of Solomon's legacy.

As is doubleminded devotion to the Lord. From that point forward, the people of Israel and Judah usually had part of their mind focused on God and his ways while part of their mind was focused on the gods and ways of the nations. That is also Solomon's legacy.

Sin spoiled Solomon's legacy.

Sin can spoil our legacies, but genuine repentance can renew them.

Sin can spoil our legacy.

Doublemindedness along the way can keep us from starting or building a legacy the right way.

However, some of us seem to be single-minded in our devotion to God and dedicated to building a legacy the right way.

Still, sin underneath the surface can do unseen damage the way that decay underneath my fluoride-reinforced enamel did unseen damage to my eight molars.

When the sin of doublemindedness and the sins we commit in our doublemindedness have finished their work and come to the surface, our legacy is spoiled. The tooth crumbles.

Even King David's sin could have spoiled his legacy, but David repented.

King David lusted after a woman and committed adultery with her.

Then, he went further and had her husband killed to cover up what he had done.

His sin had dramatic repercussions immediately and throughout his life.

However, when confronted with his own sin, he admitted it and repented.

He wrote Psalm 51 after being confronted with his sin. In **Psalm 51:1** he admits his guilt:

*Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.*

Then in **Psalm 51:10** David asks God to forgive him, make him completely clean, pull the root of sin out of his life and replace it with a new and right heart:

*Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.*

Repentance is the pathway to grace.

After Solomon built and then dedicated the Temple in Jerusalem, the Lord appeared to him again in a vision at night and promised that repentance would be the pathway to grace for his people. In 2 Chronicles 7:14 the Lord promised,

"... if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

Forgiveness is possible because of Jesus' life, death on the cross, and resurrection.
Repentance is the pathway to grace.

Repentance does not always erase all human consequences for our sin.

David faced conflict for the rest of his reign. It even came from inside his own family.
If we sin, we may indeed see changes in life and changes in the long-lasting impact of our lives.

However, genuine repentance can renew our legacies.

Despite his sin, David was known as a man who loved God with his whole heart and kept the statutes and commandments of God. That's what genuine repentance did for him.
Genuine repentance not only renews us personally, but it renews the legacies we are building.
Genuine repentance says that sin is not the final word on who we are and our legacies.
Genuine repentance adds the asterisk to any legacy-spoiling sin that says, "Yes, but. That sin does not define who this person is or was. Jesus Christ and his grace defines that person."
Genuine repentance begins to renew our sin-spoiled legacies.

How do we deal with legacy-spoiling sins?

Repent and turn to Jesus.

All this talk about legacy is irrelevant if you don't know Jesus.
If you don't know Jesus as Savior, then there is little to no chance you are going to have a long-lasting impact in the world for Jesus.
Whatever legacy you leave is going to be meaningless in an eternal sense without Jesus.
Please understand what's at stake here. Eternity with God versus eternity in hell is at stake here.
Without Jesus Christ as your Savior, you are bound for conscious, eternal death in hell separated from God and life and all goodness. That will be not only your destiny but your legacy without Jesus.
Plus, without Jesus as your Savior, you are almost certain to commit legacy-spoiling sins. When you do, there is no grace to cover over them, to redefine you, and to renew your legacy.
So, your first step if Jesus is not yet your Savior is to repent and turn to Jesus as your Savior.

Repent of your doublemindedness.

This is not only how we deal with our legacy-spoiling sins. It's also how we prevent them.
Legacy-spoiling sins start deep in our hearts. We are pulled in two directions.
We are pulled toward God, and we are pulled toward the world and our own desires.
We're doubleminded like Janus and Solomon.
We say all the right things. We look like we're building a solid legacy. We look like we're impacting the world for Christ.
But Janus-like, we are secretly pursuing our own ends that are at odds with God. We're working too hard, hoarding things for ourselves, lusting after all kinds of pleasures, and worshipping all kinds of gods besides the Lord the God of Israel.
We are living the Solomon life, and that is the weakness that leads us to legacy-spoiling sin.
To deal with or (preferably) avoid legacy-spoiling sins, let's repent of our doublemindedness.

Let's clarify that Jesus is Lord. Let's follow his will, act on his plans, and build for his Kingdom.

Repent of your sin.

When you commit a legacy-spoiling sin, don't hide it. Confess it. Get it out in the open. Repent of it, and let forgiveness flood in. Let grace cover over you. Let healing start. Let Jesus Christ redefine who you are and start renewing your legacy.

When we speak about repenting of sin, however, we aren't just talking about legacy-spoiling ones. Legacy-spoiling sins happen when we let sin sit and fester in our lives. Like decay at the heart of a tooth, they sit beneath the surface, rotting, and weakening everything until sooner or later the tooth crumbles.

Let's repent of all our sin, ask forgiveness, allow grace to cover us over, and rob sin of its power to define and destroy us.

It's not too late until it's too late.

It's not too late to repent and begin following Jesus.

It's not too late to repent of our doublemindedness and follow Jesus whole-heartedly.

It's not too late to repent of our sin.

It's not too late. Until it is.

If you're sitting here today, it's not too late.

Repent. Do it today.