

## The Weekly Word

July 7-13, 2014

Summer is in full swing. Don't forget your Bible reading. Happy reading...  
Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

### Monday, July 7: 1Kings 3- Seeds of his downfall...

This is a wonderful chapter. Solomon's request for wisdom is, for me, one of the exemplar moments in the OT. Invited to ask for anything, Solomon asks for wisdom. This was an incredible moment of perspective and insight, especially for a young man.

But in my reading this morning I noticed something I have glanced past when I have read this chapter previously. What I noticed is mentioned in verse 1. *Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt and married his daughter. He brought her to the City of David until he finished building his palace and the temple of the LORD, and the wall around Jerusalem.*

Before asking for wisdom, Solomon had already planted a "weed" in his garden. *Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt and married his daughter.*

Wasn't Israel directed NOT to marry outside the covenant people? Wasn't Israel supposed to trust in the Lord and not other earthly alliances?

Early on in his kingship Solomon planted a few seeds from the "dark side," which I know from reading the Bible will draw him away from the Lord later in life.

As I ponder and pray about this, God is reminding me of 3 things. One, small sins harbored and nurtured can lead to bigger issues. Two, sin has its consequence. And three, after recognition and confession of sins in our lives, praying prayers of cleansing and shutting entrances for that sin in one's life can be appropriate and effective in helping us move forward in truth and grace and freedom.

So consider your life... any amends need to be made with the Lord???

*Lord, I do not want any open 'doors' for sin in my life. Reveal to me places that still need forgiveness and areas or aspects of my life where I remain particularly vulnerable to sin. Lord, my prayer is to be a man after Your own heart... Through Jesus, I pray. Amen.*

### Tuesday, July 8: 1Kings 4- Created to live in relationship...

Behind every great person is a cadre of supporters, associates and lieutenants who enable the great person to do what he/she does, run what he/she runs, and so on.

In my culture here in the US we regularly think that we can make it on our own. The rugged individualism of our US forefathers still thrives in us to this day. As I entered my second decade of life, the pop/folk duo of Simon and Garfunkel released one of their mega hits, *I am a Rock*. The haunting individualism and isolationism of this song is driven by the refrain

I am a rock,  
I am an island.

I am alone, I can do it alone. I don't need anyone else.

How wrong they were. We all need people. We need the practical life skills that they bring so we can live. That's what Solomon's list of officials speaks to me.

But as I ponder this more, I realize that possibly more important than the life skills people bring that allow me to live is the relational connections they provide that support me emotionally and relationally. God designed us to live in relationship with others.

The Simon and Garfunkel song mentioned above closed on an eerie note of isolationism

I am a rock,  
I am an island.  
And a rock feels no pain;  
And an island never cries.

That may be true, but a rock feels no love and an island never sings either...

God created us to live best in relationship with Him and with others. We may be imperfect and things go wrong in our relationships but a life devoid of relationships is a sad truncation of life.

The beauty and wonder of the Lord is that He invites us to live in relationship with Him and when we do, He plants us in a church... a body of other Christ-followers so that we can live in relationship with others as well.

I hope you are walking with the Lord. A faith-filled relationship with Jesus is gift without measure. And so is living as part of His people, imperfect as we are...

Think about it.

*Lord, thank You for wanting a relationship with us. I am blown a way. You, the perfect God, invites me and others to know You, learn from You and walk with You. Certainly Lord, You are the greater and I the lesser. Certainly I need to submit to You and Your will but I still get to live in relationship with You. I can call out to You any time and You will be there. What a joy, what a wonder, what a gift! Thank You.*

*Through Jesus, I pray. Amen.*

### **Wednesday, July 9: 1Kings 5- Building a life in Christ...**

The temple for the Lord was a mighty undertaking. Wood contracted from Lebanon. Stone quarried from the Israeli hills. Nearly 200,000 workers. And this does not include preparing roads and carts and tools needed to quarry and carry all these building supplies from the field to the work sight, which was atop Mt Zion.

As I was picturing all this, I began to picture the building of the Temple as a metaphor for building my (our) spiritual lives. Growing in Christ-honoring maturity takes an all-in effort...

- Felling the timbers of sin in my life and dragging them away through confession and repentance.
- Quarrying the Word of God to build a strong, sturdy and secure foundation for my life.
- Setting in place the habits and disciplines needed to construct a life of faithfulness to my Lord God.
- Roofing my life with the covering of a church community that helps me grow and walks with me through life's many ups and downs.
- Adorning the walls of my life with Fruit of the Spirit and the characteristics of Christ, my Savior.

Yes, all of this takes much effort on my part and yours. Am I giving the effort needed? Are you???

*Lord, I pledge the building of my life to You. I dedicate my life to Your service and Your honor. May it be something beautiful and useful for You. Through my Savior, Jesus, I pray. Amen.*

### **Thursday, July 10: 1Kings 6- A temple fit for the Lord...**

With significant detail, the temple Solomon built for the Lord is described. Solomon was certainly making a statement about his Lord and the honor due His name.

I may not be building a temple for the Lord, but I found myself wondering if my life is building anything of lasting value for the Lord. I asked myself questions like:

What am I building for God?

Are my key relationships building people in the Lord?

Is my giving advancing the name of the Lord?

If I could, would I do something extravagant for the Lord?

And so my meditations went, probing and wondering what I am building for the Lord...

I invite you to ask yourselves similar questions...

*Lord, I hope and pray that my life is actually building and advancing Your kingdom and that I am not just giving You lip service with my life.*

*I love You and I praise You. In and through Jesus, I pray. Amen.*

### **Friday, July 11: 1Kings 7- Am I divided?...**

I always wonder why Solomon spent 13 years on his house and 7 years for the Temple. It seems the way the author narrates the account, he is making a statement that Solomon's house took almost twice as long to build. Then again it was almost twice as large.

Is this a subtle way of saying that Solomon lived a divided life? Dedication to the Lord? Yes, but also dedicated to extravagance on self.

That certainly is something I hear and to my ears this is not good. I wonder if it pointed to a divided heart within Solomon?

In the devotional portion of my morning it certainly drove me to ask questions about my heart and life. Is mine divided?

I recall a sermon I heard once, where the preacher mentioned that the faults we notice in others often reflect the faults we ourselves have. That has stuck with me many years and it is surfacing in my meditations this morning.

*Lord, I know I am no where near perfect. Is a divided heart, generous toward You but never at the expense of personal pleasure? Is this my doing, too?*

*Speak Holy Spirit, speak. Lead, direct and show me. I pray through Jesus, my Lord. Amen.*

### **Saturday, July 12: 1Kings 8-...**

To sit and read this ancient prayer... a prayer, deep, honest, and heartfelt. A prayer of praise and blessings to the God who keeps His Word. A call to faithfulness by God's people. A prayer that recognizes God's grace and prays that God's grace would abound when sin and failure are confessed and repented of.

This is not a prayer of cheap grace and automatic forgiveness for sin. No, it prays for hearts that turn back to the Lord and are received back by the Lord into fellowship.

This is a tremendous prayer for a Saturday, the eve of corporate worship...

I think I will go back and use this prayer as a platform for my morning prayer today...

Join me, with Bibles open, recognizing that the promises to David were ultimately fulfilled in Jesus:

*LORD, the God of Israel, the God of Your church, there is no God like you in Heaven above or on earth below—You who keep Your covenant of love with Your servants who continue wholeheartedly in Your way. You have kept your promise to your servant David and now Jesus, son of David & son of God sits enthroned for eternity as King of kings and Lord of Lords. ...*

*Give attention to your servant's prayer and his plea for mercy, LORD my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in Your presence this day. May Your eyes be open toward Your people night and day... Hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people when they pray to You. Hear from heaven, Your dwelling place, and when You hear, forgive...*

*When we sin, forgive... call us to repentance and forgive our sins and restore us to unhindered fellowship with You.*

*Oh, God, thank You for keeping promises, for sending Jesus and the fulfillment of all You promised to David and his descendants. I praise You and I bless Your holy name... King above all kings. God above all gods. Amen.*

### **Sunday, July 13, 2014, Sunday Worship**

*If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.*

*If you are reading along with me from the PCOG website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at [office@pcogonline.org](mailto:office@pcogonline.org).*

Click here for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.