

Little Compromises (2001)

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We live in one of the most difficult and dangerous ages in man's history. Some may feel this is untrue, citing the harrowing times the apostles lived in, when their lives were in constant danger. This is true, but the danger they faced promoted closeness to God.

The danger we face today is far greater because it does just the opposite, promoting an ever-so-slow separation from God. This kind of danger parallels what the frog in the slowly boiling water faces. Our peril increases so slowly that we fail to realize we are in hot water until it is nearly impossible to turn our lives around.

What produces this danger? What is the signature of the time we live in? We can boil it all down to compromising with God's law.

We live in a nation that has compromised the character it once possessed. Likewise, many of our former brethren have compromised the beliefs they used to hold as very valuable. Many have returned to the world completely, even joining mainstream churches. Others have watered down doctrine or chosen new ones. Some, even though they attend church services among us, have lost their faith and zeal for God's way of life.

Even a little compromising is deadly, leading to greater compromises until a person is so far removed from God that no relationship with Him is possible. God has included an example of this in His Word. It comes from the life of the wisest king ever to live, whom God blessed with wisdom that no one could gainsay and with wealth and abilities no man ever equaled save Jesus Christ. God greatly loved this man and spoke to him on two separate occasions, blessing him beyond his wildest dreams. The man is King Solomon.

He ruled wide regions, but in his strength, he failed to see the need to obey God fully in what He commanded the kings of Israel to do. We know that the fruit of Solomon's failure ripened in his old age, but he planted its seeds in the beginning of his reign. Notice the areas in which he compromised:

- » He multiplied horses (Deuteronomy 17:16; I Kings 10:26-29).
- » He multiplied wives (Deuteronomy 17:17; I Kings 11:1-8).
- » He multiplied wealth (Deuteronomy 17:17; I Kings 10:14-23).

Was Solomon unaware of these instructions set down for all the kings of Israel? Of course not. He knew God commanded him to write a copy of the law for himself (Deuteronomy 17:8-20). Solomon must have known that it was wrong for him to do these things, but because of his great wealth and might, he considered these "minor infractions."

God wants His kings to rely upon Him in war. He does not want them to have their devotion to Him turned by the gods of foreign wives. He does not want them to feel proud and powerful in their wealth and might. Though these things seemed insignificant to Solomon, they are very important to God. This misjudgment initiated Solomon's separation from God.

When he was tender of heart and greatly needed God to help him rule Israel, Solomon drew close to God, walking softly and carefully, being obedient to God in everything. As he became secure in knowledge, wealth and power, though, he began to forget the God who called him and gave him everything he possessed.

His reasoning may have taken this course: "When I imported horses from Egypt, there were no adverse consequences, so what would be wrong with taking another wife and increasing taxes?" The danger of such reasoning is that small compromises weaken character, and over time lead to major sins. For Solomon the results were devastating. His experience is a warning to us not to follow the same careless path.

Psalm 111:10 brings out a major principle: "A good understanding have all those who do His commandments." Solomon's "minor" compromises gradually but inexorably distorted his understanding of God's laws. He slowly drifted further and further from God, so that when he was old—when he should be strongly finishing the race—he allowed his wives to turn his heart from God.

We live in a world that sees no sin in compromise. Has this society, and the confusion in the greater churches of God, caused us to ignore the laws, principles and statutes written in God's Word? In these perilous times, it is of the utmost importance that we resist the urge to compromise, particularly in what we perceive as the "insignificant areas." It is here that Satan makes his most effective inroads. Once we compromise, the process of sin begins, and godly character, which God values so highly, is soiled and begins to erode away, opening the way for sin on a grand scale.

Solomon went from disobeying an "obscure" admonition to flagrantly breaking several of the Ten Commandments. If this can happen to wise Solomon, it can certainly happen to us. We must learn from his example to avoid those "little compromises" that lead to big sins.