

## Compromise

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We live in one of the most difficult and dangerous ages. Some might say, "That is not true. Living when the apostles lived had to be more dangerous, as living in the apostle's time they lived in constant danger for their lives."

Indeed all that is true. However, that danger promoted closeness to God. The danger we have today is far greater in that it does just the opposite. It promotes an ever-slow separation from God. It is the type of danger we all refer to when we discuss the frog in the water that is being brought to a boil. It happens so slowly, that we really do not know we are in trouble until it is nearly impossible to turn our lives around.

What produces this danger? What is the signature of the time we live in? What is it that will cause the downfall of our nation? It is compromising with the laws of God.

We all live in a nation that has compromised the character it once possessed. And in speaking of the greater churches of God, we live in a time when the vast majority of those we used to fellowship in the Worldwide Church of God have compromised the beliefs they used to hold as valuable, to where many have either gone back into the world totally and joined worldly churches, or have made up new doctrines to live by. Even though they attend a church service, they have just about lost their faith and zeal for this way of life. (I remember one man, just couldn't wait to fill his freezer with crab and shrimp.)

From the Reader's Digest Encyclopedic Dictionary,

Compromise: 1. An adjustment or settlement by mutual concession. 2. To expose to risk, suspicion or disrepute, imperil, to compromise one's reputation....4. An imperiling, as of character or reputation. (In this case with God!)

Though we will not find the word "compromise" in the majority of Bibles, we will find the action of compromise all through the Bible for our teaching today.

**Matthew 25:1-9** "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.'

**Matthew 25:14-15** "For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.

**Matthew 25:24** "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.'

**Matthew 25:31** "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

**Matthew 25:44** "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?'

### **What Were The Compromises In These Examples?**

In the first example, as time when on, all the virgins slept, but five did not compromise with their promise to God to draw close to Him in obedience, prayer and study. As time went by, they continued to pursue a relationship with God. The others just went through the motions.

In the second example, we note that no one was asked to do more than he was capable of. Each man was given tasks he could accomplish. And of course this applies to each of us. Probably all three men were pleased with the opportunity given to them, but one man compromised with the effort needed to achieve a wonderful future with other things and lost all.

The last example is the separating the sheep and goats. It is interesting that goats were used. As cute as they are, goats have an independent streak in them.

The sheep lived what they were taught, following the example of Jesus in applying the law of loving one's neighbor in visiting the poor, sick, the needy and those less fortunate. The goats were so involved in their own lives they noticed no one. Their end was devastating with no second chance.

If there was one scripture that would describe the cause of all these failures what would that be?

**Matthew 13:22** Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

In all three of the above examples this appears to be what took their eyes off the goal. They became smothered by the world around them.

There is a lesson here that perhaps we tend to not notice, and that is God does not offer collective salvation. The fact is that just because one belongs to a specific church does not assure salvation. And once our opportunity is passed, and judgment arrives, it is finished there is no second chance.

One minister upon leaving the Worldwide Church of God promised, "If any of you come with me, I promise, you will be in the place of safety!" That is a promise he cannot keep!

We must—each of us—must understand that our salvation is individual. It is up to us individually to overcome.

### **Do We Ever Stop To Consider Just How Special We Are?**

**Ephesians 1:3-4** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

Now, whether we specifically were called prior to the earth being formed, or that we have been selected for "the end time group" that would be called, it changes nothing—it is still up to us.

**James 1:18** We are a kind of His first fruits.

I would like us to go through one Psalm that we all should consider in these times we live.

**Psalm 73:1-28** Truly God is good to Israel, to such as are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no pangs in their death, but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men, nor are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride serves as their necklace; violence covers them like a garment. Their eyes bulge with abundance; they have more than heart could wish. They scoff and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walks through the earth. Therefore his people return here, and waters of a full cup are drained by them. And they say, "How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?" Behold, these are the ungodly, who are always at ease; they increase in riches. Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence. For all day long I have been plagued, and chastened every morning. If I had said, "I will speak thus," behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children. When I thought how to understand this, it was too painful for me—until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end. Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awakes, so, Lord, when You awake, You shall despise their image. Thus my heart was grieved, and I was vexed in my mind. I was so foolish and ignorant; I was like a beast before You. Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand. You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. For indeed, those who are far from You shall perish; You have destroyed all those who desert You for harlotry. But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all Your works.

Now, there in God's word is an example of an individual for us to learn from if we are wise enough in this environment to heed it. This example comes from the wisest king to ever live, who was blessed with wisdom that no one could gainsay, and with wealth and ability no human had ever possessed before.

This example comes from a man that was loved greatly by God who had spoken to him twice, and who blessed Him beyond anyone's wildest dreams. He was a man who loved God, and had an intimate relationship with Him. He was the king that built the most beautiful temple to God ever built.

The man was Solomon.

To understand why this compromise seemed so small and insignificant to Solomon we have to understand the time and situation of Solomon's reign. It was much like America today.

David had basically conquered the whole world—

**Psalm 18:43-44** You have delivered me from the strivings of the people; You have made me the head of the nations; a people I have not known shall serve me. As soon as they hear my name they obey; the foreigners submit to me.

Kings he did not even know trembled at the mention of David's name.

When Solomon was made king there was not a nation on the face of God's earth that would have considered in their wildest dreams of attacking Israel?

Solomon basically ruled the world. And as time went on, and in that strength, he did not see the need to fully obey God in all that God commanded the kings of Israel to do. He saw no problem with compromising just a little with God's instruction.

Indeed Solomon failed in his old age, but the seeds of that failure were sown early in his reign.

**II Chronicles 9:23-28** And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. Each man brought his present—articles of silver and gold, garments, armor, spices, horses, and mules, at a set rate year by year. Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king at Jerusalem. So he reigned over all the kings from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamores which are in the lowland. And they brought horses to Solomon from Egypt and from all lands.

**Deuteronomy 17:14-20** When you come to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,' you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.' Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his

heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself. "Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.

Was Solomon unaware of the instructions to all the kings of Israel? Of course not, because he knew that he was to write a copy of the law of this book (verses 18-20).

Solomon must have known it was wrong to import horses and chariots from Egypt, but because of his great wealth, and might, he considered this infraction too minor to be taken seriously.

Why did God not want Israel to have warhorses? Because the armored warhorse and chariot would be compared to tanks today, and were devastating when fighting foot soldiers. The nation that had them put their reliance on them because they were such a powerful fighting machine. God did not want that for His people. He wanted His people to put their reliance on Him.

It may have seemed a small thing to Solomon, but it was important to God, and it was the beginning of Solomon's separating himself from God.

**Proverbs 21:31** The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but deliverance is of the LORD

By the end of his reign Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines.

**I Kings 11:1-3** But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites—from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart.

Would this have been something Solomon would have thought of at the beginning of his reign? I doubt that very much. How about us?

When he was tender of heart, needing God very much to help him rule this great people and kingdom, I am sure he walked softly, making sure he walked softly in everything.

But now that he was secure in knowledge, wealth, and power, he began to forget the God that called him and placed him in power, and gave him all he had.

Concerning Solomon's thoughts, could they have gone something like this?

When I imported horses and chariots from Egypt, there were no adverse consequences, so what would be wrong with taking additional wives for political reasons?

Remember we normally do not see the result of sin immediately, but it is always there.

**I Kings 11:4-12** For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as did his father David. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods. So the LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD 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 had commanded. Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son.

Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived, save for Jesus Christ, fell victim to the same temptations that the rest of us so often face—to compromise on what we think are small unimportant concerns—the grey areas—to do things our way rather than God's.

Here is the point of this message: The danger of such reasoning is that small compromises weaken character, and over time, lead to major sins. For Solomon the results were devastating. For us Solomon's experience is a warning of what will befall us if we follow his example of compromise.

**Psalms 111:10** The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and a good understanding have they that do His commandments. His praise endures for ever.

Solomon's series of compromises gradually, but inexorably distorted his understanding of God's laws and ways. In other words, he slowly drifted further and further from God, so that when he was old, unbelievable as it seems, the individual who was so close to God, who built the most splendid temple, who gave us the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon, allowed his wives to turn his heart from the God who had given him everything.

From what seemed the minor infraction of importing horses from Egypt, Solomon eventually condoned and was at least an accessory to the twin sins of murder and idolatry, sins he would never have considered committing at the beginning of his reign.

Solomon now worshipped Ashtoreth, and erected high places for the worship of Chemosh, and Molech whose rituals called for little children to be passed through the fire. (Very similar to the effect of abortion today.)

By Solomon giving his royal sanction to worshipping these pagan deities, he set a precedent that was followed by many of the kings who followed him.

We can see what a little bit of compromise cost the wisest man who ever lived. And what it did to future generations of God's people and their children.

So, what about us who live in a world that feels free to compromise at will? Has this society, and the confusion that surrounds us in the churches of God caused us to ignore the laws, principles, and statutes we see in God's word?

Let take a look at another king who was one of the most righteous kings that ever lived, and see how he dealt with the seemingly insignificant issues of horses.

**II Kings 23:1-2** Now the king sent them to gather all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem to him. The king went up to the house of the LORD with all the men of Judah, and with him all the inhabitants of Jerusalem—the priests and the prophets and all the people, both small and great. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant, which had been found in the house of the LORD.

**II Kings 23:10-11** And he defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech. Then he removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-Melech, the officer who was in the court; and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire.

Josiah upon finding the book of the law removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun at the entrance of the house of the Lord, and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire. And so we note that he did not delay, he did it immediately!

In these perilous times it is of the utmost importance that we resist the urge to use our human reasoning, and compromise particularly in what we perceive as the smaller areas of God's word. Why? It is because it is here that Satan makes his greatest inroads.

**Proverbs 14:12** There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

**Proverbs 16:25** There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

**Jeremiah 17:9** The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?

Once one compromises the process of sin has commenced, and the quality that is of such great value to God—godly character—is besmirched, and begins to erode away, opening the way for sin on a grand scale.

Solomon went from breaking a seemingly obscure admonition to the flagrant breaking of at least two of the Ten Commandments, which in turn breaks them all. If this can happen to Solomon, it can certainly happen to us. We must learn from his example to avoid those little compromises which lead to big sins.

How are to worship God?

**John 4:24** God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

We do not worship in compromise, but rather in spirit and in truth.