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Evaluating Success

CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY 153rd General Assembly

***DUE TO CROSSOVER DAY, THERE WILL BE
NO TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDIES***

TUESDAY @ 12 NOON in 123 CAP

Capitol Commission Bible Studies are held every week on Tuesdays. *Normally, two times are available for Bible study (this week being an exception due to the late hour of Crossover Day):* (1) a legislative Bible study from 9:00-9:30am in 417 CAP; and, (2) an open-to-all Bible study from 12:00-12:45pm in 123 CAP *(where we have ministry donors provide lunch)*. The *weekly* Bible study is nonpartisan and non-denominational.

I pray that this study will be edifying to you. My sole intent is to serve you, and to be a resource to you for pastoral care, counsel, and prayer. **Please accept my study in the Word of God, as evidence of my desire to serve you.**

– Dr. Ron J. Bigalke, Georgia State Minister, Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission Bible Study

is

Tuesday, 1 March 2016

I Kings 9 – “Evaluating Success”

An addiction to success can develop in our lives when we do not know how much is enough and what to do when we attain our goals. In evaluating his first twenty years as king, one could easily affirm that Solomon was amazingly successful. Solomon was at the point in his life wherein he needed to direct his mindset from one of success to that of significance, in order to prevent his achievements from dwindling into failures. If one desires a picture of “success as heaven measures it, of greatness as God views it, don’t look for the blaring of the bands on Broadway; listen, rather, for the tinkle of water splashing into a basin, while God incarnate, in a humility that makes angels hold their breath, sponges the grime from the feet of His undeserving disciples” [Dr. Paul Rees, as quoted from *Bible Expositor*, in Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations* (Rockville, MD: Assurance Publishers, 1979) 1371-72].

ACHIEVING SUCCESS

(*I Kgs 9*) Chapters 9—11 of 1 Kings detail the closing years of Solomon’s life and recount his backsliding. In chapter 9, God issued both a promise and warning in relation to worship (esp. in terms of

the Temple). The people were reminded that the building itself (i.e. the Temple) was not a mere guarantee of God’s blessing. Even today, God’s people may be tempted to trust in preceding endeavors or outward displays of success, rather than relentlessly pursuing “the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (cf. Phil 3:12-14).

As the two books of Kings reveal the progress of God’s people throughout the period of the monarchy, it will be evident that Israel trusted more in outward displays of religion as opposed to pleasing God by means of inner transformation (cf. Lev 20:26; Rom 12:1-2; 1 Pet 1:13-16). Being a recipient of immense spiritual privileges can sometimes deceive one into thinking he or she is immune to God’s discipline. First Kings 9 reminds us that immense privileges always enlarge responsibilities as opposed to lessening them.

When he had finished building the Temple and his own palace, Solomon had accomplished all that he desired. At that moment in time, the Lord appeared to him again (1 Kgs 9:1-2); although, this occasion was different in that God did not ask Solomon what he wanted (cf. 3:5). God warned the king what would occur if he did not measure success by what God desired from him (9:3-9). The remainder of 1 Kings will recount the history of God’s people to a point where God’s promise would be intensely relevant (cf. Deut 28:36-37; 58-68; Josh 23:15-16).

Similar to all God’s leaders, Solomon was granted a choice, and that meant his responsibilities were significant, especially because his kingdom could reap the benefits of both economic and political independence. Nevertheless, as Jesus said, “From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more” (Luke 12:48). For this reason, the writer of 1 Kings (9:10—10:29) addresses Solomon’s ability to govern the people of God.

Solomon invested much to finance and maintain his building projects. To make recompense for his massive debt, “King Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee” (9:11). The cities were evidently part of Asher’s tribal inheritance (cf. Josh 19:24-31), which meant that Solomon was surrendering the Promised Land.

Solomon invested greatly in military protection by building a network of regional fortress cities. However, the projects were not without cost because much finances and manpower were necessary. The cities were built by forced labor (9:15, 20-22; cf. 4:6). Moses and Samuel warned the people that a king would tax them excessively, in addition to demanding their labor for personal benefit, and would generally enrich the kingdom at other’s expense (Deut 17:16-17; 1 Sam 8:11-17). Solomon’s kingdom was mighty, yet his personal ambitions were crushing to his people, and would eventually rupture into rebellion.



Capitol Commission Bible Study

due to Crossover Day, there will only be an afternoon Bible Study

Tuesday (1st of March) @ 12 Noon – 12:45pm, 123 CAP

lunch provided from friend sponsorship by First Baptist Douglas



Enhancing Trust

First Kings 9:1 asserts that when King Solomon finished building the Temple and the royal palace, all he “desired to do” was accomplished. Solomon began his building projects in the fourth year of his reign (6:1), and it took him twenty years “to build the two houses” (9:10). If he ascended the throne at approximately twenty years of age, then he was in his early forties *when he accomplished all he “desired to do.”* He was slightly beyond the halfway point of his forty-year reign (11:42).

APPARENT SUCCESS CAN DIMINISH WHAT WILL GENUINELY ENDURE, IF WE DO NOT MEASURE OUR LIVES BY GOD’S STANDARDS.

ACHIEVING SIGNIFICANCE

King Solomon was living the best years of his life, as he was experiencing the pinnacle of his days as both a man and a king. As he reached halftime of his forty-year reign, Solomon was experiencing an enviable and unique experience of knowing that he had achieved all he “desired to do.” At the age of forty-four, Solomon was favored and especially gifted because he was responsible for the “Golden Age” of Israel. History remembers Solomon as one of the most successful kings of his nation.

Slightly beyond the halfway point of his reign, *Solomon’s life appeared – by all standards – to be tremendously successful. Nevertheless, he never emerged from success to significance.* The second half of Solomon’s life was not a success. Solomon’s kingdom was remarkable yet wholly superficial. Solomon failed as a king because he made compromises with God’s standards, which resulted in devastatingly enduring consequences.

Solomon’s life demonstrates several truths. *First, success has the inherent potential to become addictive.* Solomon accumulated greater fame and wealth, yet he lacked a compelling purpose and strategy for the future. His lifestyle became that of self-serving excess. *Second, success can become deceptive* because it may obscure one’s true being and circumstances. All the wealth that surrounded Solomon obscured the fact that his heart was drifting from God.

Near the end of his life, Solomon wrote that a life not focused upon God is meaningless and purposeless. “Vanity of vanities,” he remarked; all is utterly futile without the Lord God (Eccl 1:2). A greater accumulation of “stuff” cannot substitute for a relationship with God. *Third, success can become illusory.* Certainly, no one reading the end of First Kings 10 would imagine that all the resplendent success would disappear within a few brief years, yet that is exactly what occurred.

Evaluating our lives at halftime is especially urgent when experiencing tremendous success. Of course, none of us can “boast about tomorrow” because we “do not know what a day may bring forth” (Prov 27:1), thus we should live each and every day circumspectly. Choices made in the present determine whether we can say, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim 4:7); and, also will ascertain whether we

hear the Lord remark, “Well done, good and faithful slave” (cf. Matt 25:21).

God’s eternal decree has always been to call a people – holy and separate – unto Himself from the world, and that this elect group would be saints (“unique ones”) as they live their earthly lives – holy and separate – unto Him. Therefore, a primary reason for “pressure” (“tribulation”) exerted upon Christians is to produce perseverance (endurance), as the believer is dependent upon the Lord God (Rom 5:3-11). As proven character becomes evident in the Christian’s life, confidence in God is intensified and thus hope “does not disappoint” (v. 5).

Apparent success can diminish what will genuinely endure, if we do not measure our lives by God’s standards. Authentic success can only be determined over longer periods of time. *Genuine success is measured only by perseverance;* in this sense, the life of the believer is not a sprint but a marathon. The aspiration and goal in life should be to persist in the goal of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Phil 3:10-14).

King David set a standard for obedience (e.g. Ps 32; 51). David’s sins are glaring faults upon an otherwise faithful servant. When the prophet Nathan rebuked David, the king repented and lived his life pleasing before God, as he understood the blessedness of forgiveness and trust in the Lord. *The standard of King David is not perfection, but sin that is confessed, and when it is, there is repentance and wrong is made right.* The grace of God should never become an opportunity to sin because persistent disobedience displaces the longsuffering of God (cf. Rom 6:1-4; 1 Pet 4:17). Christians are not perfect, but let us pray that when we are aware of our sin we would repent and finish well the work that God has entrusted to us.

Thank you for allowing Capitol Commission the nobility to provide Bible studies to you. If you have any questions, please talk with us, or contact by email or phone.

About Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission state ministers are pastors-missionaries who teach weekly verse-by-verse Bible studies for legislators, lobbyists, and staff members. The Bible studies are hand-distributed to each legislative office, emailed, and made available throughout the Capitol community. With the Bible as our foundation and authority, the mission of Capitol Commission is obedience to the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) within the Capitol communities of the world.

Capitol Commission is not a lobbying group attempting to garner votes or reform society. Our mandate is to see the hearts and lives of elected officials transformed with the Word of God. Capitol Commission is a ministry of the church seeking to proclaim the gospel message, and to help believers mature through the verse-by-verse teaching of Scripture. In the Bible, we see God’s great love for the world, especially for those who have been placed in authority. This is the foundation for our ministry to you.

The church is instructed to submit and to honor government leaders (Rom 13:1-7), and to pray for their eternal salvation (1 Tim 2:1-4). The desire of Capitol Commission is to witness God transform the hearts and lives of elected officials, lobbyists, and staff members. We apply this mandate to four major areas of making disciples: (1) *evangelize* those who have not experienced saving faith in Jesus Christ; (2) *establish* those who desire to grow in their faith and knowledge of Scripture; (3) *equip* those called to spiritual leadership; and, (4) *encourage* churches to participate as partners with us in ministry.

Bible study luncheon sponsored by:



Bible study copies made by:



NEXT CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDIES:
Tuesday, 8th of March @ 9:00am in 417 CAP
and again (with lunch) @ 12 NOON in 123 CAP