



What Shall It Profit a King?

Mark 8:36 (KJV)

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Ecclesiastes 12:13 (KJV)

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

Jesus asked a question that reaches far beyond wealth and power. He asked what a person gains by possessing the whole world but losing his or her soul.

The question applies to every person. A king may have wealth, authority, and recognition. A poor person may have very little. Yet both have a soul that will one day stand before God.

The Bible records the lives of kings who experienced great success. Some received wisdom. Some received power. Some received great influence. Yet earthly success did not guarantee spiritual faithfulness.

This study examines two kings. Solomon had wisdom and wealth. Nebuchadnezzar had power and influence. Their lives teach us an important lesson. What we gain in this life cannot replace our relationship with God.

A King Can Have Wisdom and Still Lose His Heart

Solomon became king after David. God appeared to Solomon in a dream and offered to give him what he requested.

Solomon asked for wisdom to govern God's people. He did not first ask for wealth, long life, or victory over his enemies.

1 Kings 3:11-13 (NLT)

"Because you have asked for wisdom in governing my people with justice and have not asked for a long life or wealth or the death of your enemies—12 I will give you what you asked for! I will give you a wise and understanding heart such as no one else has



had or ever will have! 13 And I will also give you what you did not ask for—riches and fame!”

God gave Solomon extraordinary wisdom. He also gave him great riches and fame. His wisdom became known throughout the nations.

In one famous case, Solomon identified the true mother of a baby when two women claimed the child. His decision revealed the wisdom God had given him.

Solomon also built the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, fulfilling a vision connected with his father David.

Solomon's story shows that God's blessings can be great. It also shows that blessings do not remove our need for obedience.

Solomon's greatest danger was not a lack of wisdom. His danger was trusting wisdom without remaining wholehearted in devotion to God.

The Bible says Solomon had many wives and concubines. Many of his wives came from nations that worshiped other gods.

1 Kings 11:4 (NKJV)

“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.”

Solomon's heart changed over time. His physical life remained successful, but his spiritual loyalty declined.

This is an important warning for every believer. A person can remain active while the heart slowly drifts from God. We can attend church, study the Bible, and serve in ministry while still needing to examine our hearts and renew our devotion to Jesus Christ.

The danger is gradual. Spiritual drift often begins with small compromises.

Jeremiah 17:9 (KJV)

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”

The world often tells people to follow their hearts. Scripture gives us a different direction. Our hearts need God's truth and guidance.

Solomon may have had wisdom, but wisdom did not excuse disobedience. God's blessings did not make Solomon independent from God.

We also need to guard our hearts.

What receives most of our attention? What receives most of our time? What shapes our decisions?

An idol is anything that takes God's rightful place in our lives. An idol does not have to be a carved image. A person, possession, career, entertainment, device, or even ministry can become a distraction when it takes first place.

Jesus must remain our highest priority.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 (KJV) “

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.”

Solomon's life asks us to examine our hearts. Are we becoming more devoted to God, or are we slowly becoming distracted by the things God has allowed us to possess?

Life Reflection

- ☐ Ask God to show you anything that has begun to compete with Him for first place in your life.
- ☐ Examine how you spend your time, energy, attention, and resources.
- ☐ Remember that God's blessings are gifts, not substitutes for obedience.
- ☐ Make intentional choices that keep prayer, Scripture, worship, and devotion to Jesus at the center of your life.
- ☐ Don't assume that past spiritual experiences will sustain you. Continue pursuing God wholeheartedly.

A King Can Fall into Pride and Still Find Mercy

Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon. He ruled a powerful empire and conquered many nations.

Daniel and other young men from Judah were among those taken into captivity. Daniel later became an important witness to God's power before the Babylonian king.

Nebuchadnezzar received dreams that troubled him. God used Daniel to reveal and interpret those dreams.

Nebuchadnezzar also witnessed God's power when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship the golden image he had established.

Nebuchadnezzar had authority, wealth, military power, and influence. Yet the king struggled with pride.

Daniel warned Nebuchadnezzar about the danger of his pride. The king had an opportunity to change his ways.

Instead, Nebuchadnezzar later looked at Babylon and spoke proudly about what he had accomplished.

Daniel 4:31-32 (NKJV)

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"While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven: King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses."

Nebuchadnezzar learned that human authority has limits.

A person may have a position, degree, title, talent, or successful career. None of these things makes a person greater than God.

Pride can cause us to forget the source of our blessings.

Proverbs 16:18 (NKJV)

"Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall."

Humility is not weakness. Humility recognizes God's authority.

Every ability we possess ultimately gives us another reason to thank God. Our work, opportunities, talents, education, and influence should lead us toward gratitude rather than self-exaltation.

Nebuchadnezzar's story also contains hope. God did not leave him without an opportunity to recognize the truth.

After his period of judgment, Nebuchadnezzar lifted his eyes toward heaven.

Daniel 4:34 (NKJV)

"And at the end of the time I Nebuchadnezzar lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever."

Nebuchadnezzar finally acknowledged God's authority.

Daniel 4:37 (NKJV)

"Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down."

The king learned a lesson that every believer needs to remember. Earthly greatness is temporary, but God's kingdom is everlasting.

The same warning appears in other biblical accounts. Lucifer's pride led to his fall. Saul's pride contributed to his disobedience as king. Haman's desire for honor and position eventually turned against him.

Pride can grow when a person cares more about recognition than obedience.

God calls His people to serve with humility.

We are not called to make ourselves great. We are called to make Jesus Christ known.



Life Reflection

- Give God credit for every ability, opportunity, and success He has given you.
- Ask yourself whether you are more concerned with recognition or obedience.
- Practice humility by serving others without needing recognition.
- When God reveals pride in your heart, respond quickly rather than defending yourself.
- Remember that God can restore us when we humble ourselves and turn our hearts toward Him.

Two Kings, Two Responses

Solomon and Nebuchadnezzar both teach us about the value of the soul.

Solomon had wisdom, wealth, influence, and a covenant relationship with God. Yet his heart drifted toward idolatry.

Nebuchadnezzar had political power, military strength, and immense influence. Pride brought him down, but humility brought him to acknowledge God.

The contrast gives us an important question:

What will we do when God reveals the condition of our hearts?

Repentance requires a response.

Luke 13:3 (NIV)

"I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."

Repentance is more than feeling sorry. Repentance turns the heart back toward God.

Grace does not give us permission to continue in sin. Grace calls us to walk in obedience.

Proverbs 28:13 (NKJV)

"He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy."

The Bible gives us hope. When a person confesses and forsakes sin, mercy is available.

Nebuchadnezzar eventually acknowledged the Most High. His story shows that God can humble a proud heart and restore understanding.

Solomon's story gives another warning. Spiritual drift can happen slowly. A person may continue religious activities while the heart becomes divided.

Therefore, we must examine our hearts regularly.



How is your prayer life?

Is prayer still a priority, or has prayer become something you do only when you need help?

Do you read Scripture only for encouragement, or do you also allow God's Word to correct you?

Do you serve God because you love Him, or only because serving has become familiar?

Are there compromises that you have allowed to remain?

Are there people, possessions, ambitions, or activities that receive more attention than God?

These questions are not meant to condemn us. They are invitations to return to wholehearted devotion.

Life Reflection

- Respond honestly when God reveals something in your heart that needs to change.
- Don't hide or excuse sin. Confess it and turn away from it.
- Invite God's Word to correct you, not simply encourage you.
- Make prayer a daily priority, not something reserved for moments of crisis.
- Remember that repentance is an expression of God's grace and an invitation to return to Him.

The Value of the Soul

Jesus returned to the central question in Matthew 16:26 (KJV):

“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

Imagine possessing everything the world can offer. Imagine having money, influence, possessions, comfort, and recognition.

Then imagine standing before God.

The earthly crown will not matter. The palace will not matter. The bank account will not matter. The title will not matter.

The condition of the soul will matter.

Our souls have eternal value to God.

2 Peter 3:9 (KJV)



“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

God's desire is for people to turn to Him.

Jesus Christ came to provide salvation. The King of kings is greater than every earthly king. His kingdom will never end.

A Modern Picture of Integrity

A recent story illustrates this principle.

A young man named Jaydon Cintron reportedly found \$10,000 in a restroom while working. No one appeared to be watching him. He could have kept the money, but he returned it.

His response reflected a simple conviction. He wanted to do what Jesus would do.

The story presents a powerful question: What do we value when nobody is watching?

Integrity reveals what is inside the heart.

The amount of money was temporary. The choice to act with integrity reflected a deeper value.

The lesson connects with Jesus' question. Money can be gained and lost. Possessions can disappear. Careers can change. Human recognition can fade.

The soul has eternal value.

Life Reflection

- Choose integrity even when no one else will know what you have done.
- Let your relationship with Jesus shape your decisions when there is no external accountability.
- Remember that obedience is valuable even when it receives no recognition.
- Ask whether your private choices reflect the faith you profess publicly.

3. Who Are You Before Jesus?

The most important question is not how others see us, but how Jesus sees us.

Paul instructed the Corinthian church:



“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?”

— 2 Corinthians 13:5, NASB

Self-examination is part of Christian growth.

Am I still walking closely with Jesus?

Am I obeying His Word?

Am I still faithful when the answer to prayer is delayed?

Am I still thankful when circumstances are difficult?

Am I allowing God to change my heart?

Does my private life agree with my public confession?

Matthew 7:21–23 gives one of the most sobering warnings from the words of Jesus:

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

These verses remind us that spiritual activity is not the same as spiritual relationship.

Some people will point to their religious activities and accomplishments, yet Jesus will tell them that He never knew them.

Jesus is looking for people who know Him and obey Him.

Our goal should never be to impress people with our spirituality. Our goal is to know Jesus and become more like Him.



Life Application

Take a few quiet moments to place your life before God. Ask Him to search your heart and reveal anything that has taken His rightful place.

Choose today to:

- Guard your heart against spiritual drift.
- Walk in humility when God blesses you.
- Repent quickly when God reveals compromise.
- Protect your prayer life and commitment to Scripture.
- Choose integrity when no one is watching.
- Keep Jesus Christ at the center of every area of your life.
- Live with eternity in view.

Examine your heart:

What matters most to me right now?

Does the way I live demonstrate that my soul is more valuable to me than anything this world can offer?

What is one change God is asking me to make today?

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