

A Subtle Flaw

I read once about a biology teacher who conducted an experiment with a frog. The frog was placed in a large beaker of cool water. Under the beaker was placed a Bunsen Burner with a low flame so that the water heated slowly.

The temperature rose so gradually that the frog was not aware of the change taking place. Within two hours the frog was dead, boiled to death.

The change of temperature occurred so slowly that the frog neither tried to jump out nor released a murmur of complaint.

Those who observed this experiment did not realise they were witnessing a profound principle of life.

This principle is summed up in one word – deterioration. The silent toll of creeping decay.

There is a living lesson of this creeping decay in the recorded life of King Solomon found in the Christian Bible.

Solomon was a natural to take over the throne of his father King David.

As heir-apparent Solomon was taught by God's prophet Nathan and groomed and prepared for kingship by his mother Bathsheba, refined under the eyes of King David and matured by the hand of God.

No doubt about it, the mark of excellence and the seal of approval was upon Solomon.

Although Solomon was young when his father died, he was thoroughly prepared to reign over Israel.

King David's gifted son for the first few years of his kingship characterised the attitudes and acts of wisdom, loyalty, diplomacy, faithfulness and efficiency.

1 Kings 3:3 [NIV] *“Solomon showed his love for the LORD by walking according to the statutes of his father David, ...”*

Solomon follows the example of his father and was in harmony with God's way of life.

Solomon's achievements, power, international influence and wealth were nothing short of remarkable [see **1 Kings 4:29-31, 1 Kings 10:23-24**].

Solomon sought wisdom, happiness and pleasure, brimful and heaped high.

Solomon was the wealthiest man who ever lived, a multi-billionaire by today's standards. Solomon, as this world would look at it, really had it made!!

Slowly, imperceptibly, things began to change.

Solomon began to allow some compromises to enter his life.

He allowed himself to wander into a bit of pride, then lust, idolatry and licentiousness. Solomon became unreasonable, even cynical of things he once held in high esteem.

Layers of dust collected in the majestic temple he had built to honour the almighty God who had given him so much.

Solomon turned his attention to another pet building project, edifices for the gods he and his many pagan wives were serving.

Solomon simply drove too fast and travelled too far in his own life, forgetting the God who had given him everything he then had.

Solomon had forgotten to check his character deterioration level.

The finish to Solomon's now sordid life came prematurely.

His so-called success story became a sad story.

Solomon left the nation he had ruled so well at the beginning, confused and in a conflict that would eventually be divided by war.

Ecclesiastes 2:26 [NIV] *“To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.”*

This verse sums up Solomon's journey through life, from wisdom to meaningless.

When we leave God out of our life it does end up meaningless.

Such deterioration is never sudden.

No vegetable garden all of a sudden becomes overrun with weeds.

No building all of a sudden crumbles.

No marriage all of a sudden breaks down.

No strong nation all of a sudden becomes an average power with little influence.

No human being suddenly becomes immoral and base.

Slowly, ever so slowly, certain things are accepted that once were rejected.

Certain things once considered harmful are now secretly tolerated.

Little by little we let down.

At the outset it appears harmless, perhaps even exciting, but as moral corrosion joins spiritual decay the gap between right and wrong in our life becomes a deep ravine.

Proverbs 14:12 [NIV] *“There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.”* This was written by Solomon and he ought to know it is true.

1 Corinthians 10:12 [NIV] *“So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!”*

Be careful about changing our standards or priorities to fit in with our personal desires.

We need to be cautious about becoming inflated with thoughts of our own importance.

Be alert to the pitfalls of misguided prosperity and worldly success.

Ask God daily to give us wisdom and understanding.

Remember the example of Solomon who deteriorated from a humble young man full of wisdom to a vain fool in a rather brief span of years.

The memory of that frog in a beaker and the laboratory experiment can keep up all out of “*hot water*”.