

## **Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides** **(January 16<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup>)**

### **Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)**

1. If you could live anywhere in the world (outside of Perham) for a year, what would it be?

### **Bible Study Questions**

1. If you have been reading in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings, what have you been learning? What do you notice about God? Who do you identify with? What questions do you have?
2. Read Deuteronomy 17:14-20. What do you notice about the role of a king? Why does God not want them to amass wealth, horses, or wives?
3. Read 1 Kings 10:23-29 and 11:1-6.
  - What does Solomon do here in disobedience to God's design for the king?
  - What do you think inspires Solomon to go in these extravagant pursuits?
  - What ended up being the result of these pursuits? (You can also read Ecclesiastes 2:4-11)
4. Pastor Michael talked about Solomon not trusting that God would be his source of blessing. His life mantra was God plus other things that he thought would bring fulfillment. How do we do that same thing today?
  - Is there something in your life that you are pursuing or fantasizing about that you think would bring you fulfillment apart from God?
5. Read God's promise to Jeroboam in 1 Kings 11:34-39

- How would you respond to a promise like that? How would it impact your walk with God?

### **6. Read 1 Kings 12:11-33 and 13:33-34**

- Why does Jeroboam fear his people returning to Jerusalem for worship?
  - Pastor Michael made the comment that God's design for Israel and Judah to be two separate nations that would unite in worship seems very unpractical. What are some of the commands of Jesus that seem unpractical today?
  - Jeroboam sets up his own religious system because he doesn't trust God's plan. What examples do you see today of people trying to bring about good things in ungodly ways?
7. The people of Israel were devastated by Solomon's decision to not trust that God alone was his source of blessing and by Jeroboam's decision not to trust God's plan. Their lack of trust caused them to make self destructive choices. How do we guard against that today in both our lives and in the church?

**January 16th**  
**The Tragic Story of Sol and Jerry**  
**1 Kings 1-11**

**Intro:** In 1<sup>st</sup> Kings we find the story of two men who were given incredible promises by God, Solomon and Jeroboam. Both were told that if they follow God, then he would give them a royal dynasty. In spite of that promise, they both blew it. Their stories are told in 1 Kings so that the Jews can avoid repeating their mistake. Though their spirit is alive and well among Christians today.

**I. Solomon did not trust that God was his source of blessing:** In Deuteronomy 17, God gave instructions for the future king of Israel. He was ordered not to pursue wealth, power, or women. Instead, he was to be dedicated to God and his primary job was to lead people following God's laws. It could be said that God was to be his treasure and source of fulfillment. Solomon is described as loving God. But instead of trusting that God is enough, he seeks fulfillment in many different places.

- **Pursued fulfillment through wealth:** In 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 10:14-15, 23,25, we read about Solomon's immense wealth. In Ecclesiastes 2:8 he talks about the gold and silver that he amassed.
- **Pursued fulfillment through power:** 1 Kings 10:26 tells of his chariots and horses. This was all about military power and Solomon sought to be the greatest military power on earth.
- **Pursued fulfillment through sex:** 1 Kings 11:1-3 tells us that he built a harem of 700 wives and 300 concubines. This was an over the top collection of sex on demand.
- Solomon lived with the belief that fulfillment would happen through God plus these other things. He pursues everything in extravagance and in the process loses God. As an old man, he reflects on it all as being meaningless. What more, the most of the kingdom is taken away from his family as judgment for his sin.

**II. Jeroboam did not trust that God's plan:** Jeroboam controlled ten of the tribes of Israel, but not Jerusalem. That was controlled by Solomon's son, Rehoboam. God had promised to establish him as king, but Jeroboam saw a real threat to his authority

- **Disregards God's design as unpractical:** God's design was for these two kingdoms to live side by side but united by worship at the temple in Jerusalem. But in 12:26, he fears that by allowing them to worship in Jerusalem, they may overthrow him and return to Rehoboam. To trust God's design just seemed downright unpractical.

- **Protects authority by designing new religious system.** He decides to reject God's commands for worship and develops a rival religious system. He makes golden calves and ordains places of worship as alternatives to Jerusalem (12:28-30). He creates his own religious festivals and his own order of priests (12:32).
- The result is that God ordains judgment on his family. His beloved son dies and following his death the rest of his family is massacred.

**Conclusion**

The spirit of Solomon and Jeroboam is alive and well in the church today. Jesus has called us to follow him and to treasure him above all else. Yet we often live as if we need wealth, power, or relationships to truly find happiness. As we pursue those things, we readily make compromises to make it happen. As for Jeroboam, we can easily view the teachings of Jesus as unpractical and resort to worldly methods to achieve what we want.