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**Dear heavenly Father, we worship You this morning with our tithe and offerings. We pray for the courage to put You first in our lives. In the name of Jesus, amen.**

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**MAY 15, 2021**

## **When Solomon refused to put God first**

Putting God first can be difficult. What can we learn from Solomon, who refused to put God first?

Everything started well for Solomon. The weight of the crown led him to ask for wisdom—the one thing he needed most. His request was fulfilled. And God also blessed Solomon’s reign with wealth, health and prosperity.

In time, however, Solomon’s wisdom turned into rationalisation. He used his intelligence and intellect to provide rational excuses as to why he broke many of God’s established laws.

Solomon used forced labour to build the house of the Lord as that must have seemed more efficient. Solomon married princesses from many other nations, so he could forge peace treaties with his enemies.

Solomon built altars to his wives’ gods as a way of welcoming them into his kingdom.

Solomon built his palace to be three times larger than the temple so he could accommodate his large household.

All of these rationalisations seemed to make sense and, at first, brought much wealth to the kingdom. However, they led to high taxes and injustices that were not sustainable. God has given the laws that lead to long-term prosperity and peace, but Solo-

mon used his intellect to bend them according to his pleasure. Solomon did not put God first and Israel was divided into two kingdoms within months of his death.

Today it is still common to find highly intelligent and knowledgeable people rationalising the breaking of God’s law. Putting God first means taking His word seriously and following it. The simplicity of a child following the instructions of a loving parent is perhaps the best antidote to our own demise.

God stands ready to open the doors to health, wealth and prosperity to many of us, according to His plans for our lives. Sometimes God keeps a door shut because our faith and future would be compromised if we were to walk through it.

God’s faithfulness evokes our own response. If we are faithful with the small things, God will put us in charge of greater things. We are stewards, glad to serve the Master in taking care of His resources.

Solomon refused to put God first. The consequences were terrible for him and the people around him. God’s love compels us to put His Kingdom first, while Solomon’s example is a warning for us today. As the deacons collect the tithe and offerings, we are challenged to put God first.