

DANGEROUS NEGLECT

“Now it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom and had strengthened himself, that he forsook the law of the Lord and all Israel along with him.” 2 Chronicles 12:1

For three years after the kingdom was divided the people sought the Lord through the help of the Levites who had left the northern kingdom to seek the Lord in Jerusalem. The only clue we have as to what caused Rehoboam to turn away from God is found in verse 14: “And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord.”

How did Rehoboam strengthen himself? It was not a spiritual strengthening but a mere physical one. He reigned for 17 years not in the strength and power of the Lord, but by his own might. He failed to seek the Lord which eventually led to his downfall and poor legacy. He “strengthened himself” and was not strengthened by the Lord. However, there is a thing we must do to be strong in the Lord.

The word “prepare” means to direct, order, or make ready. Rehoboam did not required himself to seek the Lord. The word “seek” means to tread, frequent, or inquire. It carries with it the idea of regularity. So we could say that Rehoboam did not make his heart ready for the Lord through frequent inquiry of Him. Perhaps the problem was that Rehoboam was comfortable. He did not feel the need to seek the Lord because all had been going well. He had eighteen wives and sixty concubines who gave him twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters. The kingdom of Judah was well established and he was a wealthy man who had no need to seek the Lord, so he thought. Yet once mediocrity set in so did neglect. Rehoboam and Judah got fat and lazy and slowly began to forsake the Lord.

Don't be too quick to cast stones toward Rehoboam. Is it not also true of ourselves that when life is comfortable we begin to neglect the Lord? When that sense of urgency is gone so is the intensity of our need to seek Him. When the pot of water is taken off the coals it does not go from hot to cold in an instant. It is gradual and slow, but sure to happen. When we take ourselves away from seeking the Lord, from directing our hearts to search for Him on a regular basis, we too will grow cold and unresponsive to the Spirit. The deception is by the gradualness of the cooling. And in our coolness we will fail in obedience. One compromise will lead to another and still another until we find ourselves with cold and unresponsive hearts.

Have you fallen into neglect in your personal walk with the Lord? How are you seeking Him? What needs to change in your life to get the passion back?