

Want to Buy a Horse?

The problem with compromise is that it doesn't seem like a big deal.

Leaders face opportunities to compromise every day. Lines may seem to blur. Ethical behavior oozes toward situational applications. Gray becomes tolerable. After all, there are acceptable levels of radiation.

Some godly principles seem to be negotiable. King Solomon compromised the Lord's warning against doing business with Egypt. The king made a "minor" deviation and bought horses from Egypt. It was a slope that slipped all the way to the worship of pagan gods.

"For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods, and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God as the heart of David his father had been" (1 Kings 11:4).

Compromise begins with a subtle slip in decision making. The choice is deceptively powerful as it affects leadership and impacts an organization. It's not a leap to conclude that Israel was shredded and became a "heap of ruins" because of one horse trade.

Outcomes are affected by seemingly small decisions.

Decision making in today's tech-driven marketplace seems to demand speed. Decisions are made by email and text. The need for speed has never been more in demand.

So it's not difficult to understand why we sometimes make decisions that we later question.

"What was I thinking?" "That's not how I do things." "I know better than that."

Often when I am asked to coach a compromised leader, I ask about the leader's prayer life. "Brother, did you pray about that horse deal?" The answer I hear almost always is, "I didn't have time. I had to decide on the spot."

Leaders who move with speed will be more likely to compromise a key principle. Sometimes I feel more pressure to be decisive than I do to be principled. But the Holy Spirit tugs at me to be discerning and slow down.

The need to instantly obey the Holy Spirit is much greater than the need for a speedy decision. A compromised decision will surely diminish the integrity of a leader.

Maybe it's time to stop horsing around.

"And this house will become a heap of ruins; everyone who passes by will be astonished and hiss and say, 'Why has the Lord done thus to this land and to this house?' And they will say, 'Because they forsook the Lord their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and adopted other gods and worshiped them and served them, therefore the Lord has brought all this adversity on them'" (1 Kings 9:8-9, NASB).