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## THE KOHLER CHRONICLES:

Advice & Anecdotes from a Third-Generation Land Broker

By Jon Kohler, JD

**JON KOHLER**  
& ASSOCIATES



# If Solomon was a deer hunter

by Jon Kohler

Most of the world's great temptations – the ones that can cause an otherwise steady man to stumble – run through the familiar trinity of sex, drugs and money. But, if I'm being candid about the world I actually live in, I'd have to put hunting right at the top of that list.

I've watched friendships strain over a deer track worse than an unmarked property line. I've seen neighbors feud, dogs disappear and grown men argue over things they had no business arguing

about. There's something about the pursuit – the sacrifice, the competition, the possibility of a big buck – that reaches down into the deepest, most primal parts of human nature. At least in the people I know.

I've often thought the Devil must run a customized "North Florida Cracker Plan." A trophy buck behind somebody else's fence. Roosting wood ducks past shooting hours. A gobbler strutting just off the road. He can keep his A-team of drugs and easy money largely on the



"I WAS IN MIKE'S MARINE IN PANACEA NOT LONG AGO and noticed some magnificent old whitetail mounts collecting dust in the corner," said Jon Kohler. "Same story at the Cypress Inn in Cross City, where I've been stopping since I was a kid – except there I point out those old 100-inch B&C deer to my boys and they grin. They've never known a time when a buck that small was worth mounting. I try to make them understand that back then, someone was very proud of those deer."

bench. Around here, he's got better material to tempt us with.

King Solomon said there's nothing new under the sun. Every fear, every desire, every temptation – same as it's always been. Just reaches us through a different set of facts. I tell my boys it's like reading a baseball pitch. There are only so many pitches and only so many right ways to handle them. Whoever learns to recognize the Devil's delivery early wins a stronger walk with God and a more purposeful life on this earth.

Maybe that's why I've wondered what Proverbs might look like if Solomon had been a deer hunter. The wisest and wealthiest man who ever lived had 700 wives and 300 concubines – and the Bible says his wives turned his heart away from God. That was his downfall. Perhaps if he'd had one good woman and a thousand genetically superior whitetails scoring over 200 B&C, history reads differently. Because, in my experience, no man has ever been wise enough or wealthy enough to manage that either.

The emotions the Devil exploits haven't changed since the Garden – envy, pride, jealousy – just wrapped in modern camo.

I think of Marty McFly. Good kid, level-headed, right up until Biff called him a chicken. Then he'd risk everything to prove a point that didn't need proving. The trap wasn't Biff. It was Marty giving Biff the power to spring it.

I had a broker call me not long ago in a panic. A widow was trying to sell her late husband's home – a man who'd hunted all over the world. The South Florida

house was filled with magnificent trophies. Buyers walked in and were aghast at animal heads on every wall. She had to have them removed just to sell it. Unless Bass Pro Shops was building a new store, there was no market. What a man had spent a fortune and a lifetime collecting was worth almost nothing.

I was in Mike's Marine in Panacea not long ago and noticed some magnificent old whitetail mounts collecting dust in the corner. Same story at the Cypress Inn in Cross City, where I've been stopping since I was a kid – except there I point out those old 100-inch B&C deer to my boys and they grin. They've never known a time when a buck that small was worth mounting. I try to make them understand that back then, someone was very proud of those deer.

But here's the truth those walls can't hide.

Whatever feels urgent and important today will fade. Every trophy, every record, every award – all of it temporary. The only thing that follows us past this life is our relationship with Jesus Christ.

Jesus didn't say, *Well done, good and successful hunter.*

He said, *Well done, good and faithful servant.*

That's the only scoreboard that matters.

Peter once asked Jesus about another disciple. Jesus replied simply: *What is that to you? You follow me.*

I'm a third-generation land broker who has spent most of his life chasing whitetails across the South. And, the longer I chase, the clearer that answer gets.

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