

Lessons From the Book of 1st Chronicles

Why All These Names?

1 # Short Commentary & Lesson from 1 Chronicles 1.1-54

A "family tree" was important to the Israelites. This was the only way a person could prove that he or she belonged to the family of Abraham. Besides that, only members of Levi's family were allowed to be priests or other temple workers. Only members of David's family were allowed to be kings.

As we read through the many names in these sections, it is good to remember that God knows each of us by name. We are not merely statistics or numbers on a computer printout. God knows the smallest details of our lives, and he is intimately interested in us. We are his children; we belong to his family.

Singing and Serving

2 # Short Commentary & Lesson from 1 Chronicles 6.31-53

The descendants of Levi took care of all the details concerning the temple, but not all Levites had the same responsibilities. King David appointed many Levites as musicians to lead in praise and worship. These "staff musicians" were constantly on call at the temple. A song could always be heard in the house of the Lord.

Many Levites did less public chores. They cleaned the temple area, took care of the building and grounds, washed the priest's clothes, and helped any other way they could. Other Levites were priests who appointed to offer the daily sacrifices to the Lord.

Regardless of whether we are in a highly visible or a less visible role, each of us has a part to play in doing God's work. God has given us many different kinds of gifts, talents, and abilities. Let's use what we have for God's glory!

Big Things in Small Packages

3 # Short Commentary & Lesson from 1 Chronicles 8.1-40

The tribe of Benjamin, the youngest son of Jacob, had nearly been wiped out at one time. It was the smallest of the tribes, but it bounced back and became very important in the history of God's people. From the tribe of Benjamin came Israel's first king, Saul.

We see here that even though the tribe of Benjamin was small, it had a special place in God's plan. Today we tend to live by the rule, "Bigger is better." But even if you come from an unknown family or a small part of the country, you still have an important role in God's eyes. The Lord is not looking for people of great status; he wants people who are great in their trust and obedience to him.

High Priced Water

4 # Short Commentary & Lesson from 1 Chronicles 11.15-19

Why would David pour out the water that three of his bravest warriors had risked their lives to get for him? Because David was overwhelmed by their devotion to him. The men thought so much of David that when they heard his desire, they wanted to please him. They were willing to risk anything to make him happy.

Who in your life would you be willing to do anything for, just to serve them and make them happy? God? Your spouse? Your parents or children? a fellow believer? Consider ways you can be more sensitive to that person's needs, desires, and dreams and help fulfill them.

Fighting for the Right Cause

5 # Short Commentary & Lesson from 1 Chronicles 12.22-40

People were attracted to David, not simply because of his personality and bravery, but because they knew his cause was just. Even some members of the tribe of Benjamin, King Saul's family members, joined with David because they knew that God was on his side.

We do not have to be exciting personalities or the people with the most money, nicest facilities, or most comfortable conditions. If what we are attempting to do has God's approval, good people will want to become involved.

Excitement, Joy, and Praise

6 # Short Commentary & Lesson from 1 Chronicles 15.25-29

David was not ashamed to express his feelings about the return of the sacred chest to Jerusalem. he was so excited and filled with joy, he jumped and danced in God's honor. The people of Israel celebrated right along with their king. Some of the people played musical instruments, some sang songs of praise, and some simply shouted for joy.

We can praise God in many different ways - sometimes loudly, sometimes softly; sometimes with musical instruments, and sometimes simply with our voices. No matter how we choose to praise God, we should never be ashamed to do it.

A Special Promise

7 # Short Commentary & Lesson from 1 Chronicles 17.7-14

God made a special promise to David, part of which was to be fulfilled in the near future, part after David died, and part in the distant future. First, God promised that he would protect David from his enemies and help him bring peace to the land.

Second, the Lord said that the temple would be built, but it would be built by one of David's sons, not David. As long as David's descendants obeyed God, the Lord would keep one of them as king.

Third, God promised that one of David's descendants would rule Israel forever. This part of the promise looked far ahead, to the day when Jesus (the Messiah) would rule forever. this promise to David and his descendants is still intact today.

The Victory Is the Lord's

8 # Short Commentary & Lesson from 1 Chronicles 18.1-13

The Lord helped David win his battles in wars. Yes, David's troops had to do the physical fighting, but it was God who gave the victory.

When we are successful in our work, or even in our spiritual efforts for the Lord, we should be careful to give credit to whom credit is due - to God! He uses our skills and the material, mental, and physical resources he has given us.

Fighting Unnecessary Battles

9 # Short Commentary & Lesson from 1 Chronicles 19.1-19

This battle was brought on because of the fear, insecurity, and mistrust of Hanun and his advisors. They couldn't believe that David was merely doing an act of kindness toward them. They insulted King David by treating his officials badly, and as a result, had to prepare for war.

Many of our battles are similar. We misjudge the motives of other people and then have to pay a high price for jumping to conclusions. When we make a mistake, or unwisely say or do something that offends our neighbor, we should admit our error and seek to make things right. The words, "I'm sorry; I was wrong. Would you please forgive me?" may be hard to say, but they can help us avoid many unnecessary battles.

No Free Gifts Will Do

10 # Short Commentary & Lesson from 1 Chronicles 21.16-30

Araunah's threshing place was used to separate the wheat or corn from its husks, it was located in Moriah, the same place where Abraham had taken Isaac to be offered as a sacrifice to the Lord many years before. When David explained why he wanted Araunah's threshing place, Araunah quite willingly offered to give the property to David. But David would not hear of it. He knew he could not take something that had no value to him and turn around and offer it to God.

When we present something to God, we should be careful that we are not giving him the "leftovers" of our lives, or those things that hold no value or meaning to us. If what we offer God is meaningful to us, it will be to God as well.

Promises For Us

Most families contain at least one member who loves to trace the family tree. These people keep precise genealogical records and take delight in poking around obscure libraries, dusty courthouse records, and old cemeteries. Other family members may not appreciate all this work until that person finds something really interesting. Then all the family members get excited. They're proud of the ancestor who came over on the Mayflower. They want to meet the long-lost cousin who's a multi-millionaire.

First Chronicles was written to the Israelites who survived the Babylonian captivity. It reads like a family history prepared by the genealogy enthusiast. This record emphasizes how people are connected and who the old-times heroes were. Israelites raised in Babylon could read this book and come away with restored national pride.

In a sense, everyone stands on the shoulders of generations of ancestors who worked to create better lives for their descendants. Who are you most proud of in your family tree? What should you learn from them? how can you celebrate their memories?