

Read Through the Bible

Week 21, May 24th – May 29th

Readings: I Chronicles 5 – 25; John 8:21 – John 11:17

Reflections and Questions for Thought

By Rick Reidhead

In week 20 Ken Keller provided an introduction or overview of 1 & 2 Chronicles written by Eugene Peterson. You may want to review that overview in that it may help to reinforce the theme of Chronicles.

After reading this week's assignment I want to focus on Chapters 13-21. In reading these chapters I felt that they tell us exactly how we as Christians should humble ourselves before God. I Chronicles does this by profiling King David's life both as an individual and as a king. When David inquired of the Lord concerning key decisions the Lord was with him but when he went it alone he would sin against the Lord and would suffer the consequences. For example, Chapter 13 tells how David conferred with his officers but not the Lord about moving the Ark of the Lord to Jerusalem. As a result he did it the wrong way and Uzzah was struck down.

This seems like a very harsh thing to do to someone who seemed innocent, but the Lord had made it clear in Numbers 4:5-15 how the Ark was to be handled. Had the Lord not made an example of Uzzah the people of Israel might think they could use their own judgment or cut corners in carrying out God's laws and instructions. We learned from Chapter 15 that King David got it right the next time he moved the Ark. Also in Chapter 14: 10 & 14 David inquired of the Lord before he went against the Philistines and the Lord was with him. These are just a couple of examples of what David did right and what he did wrong. But what we can take from this is that although David's heart was with God he was human and sometimes made big mistakes. When he did he confessed and asked for forgiveness and took full responsibility for his sin. The sin still had severe consequences as with the census of fighting men, but the Lord forgave him and even blunted some of the consequences.

To save time and space I will summarize how David glorified God and how we should do the same. First, he was humble before the Lord by acknowledging that He was in control. Second, he thanked God for all that he was allowed to accomplish giving credit to God. Third, he gave willingly and generously to the Lord. God gave him his victories and in turn David dedicated to the Lord the gold and silver from those nations. Fourth, when David sinned he not only confessed his sin and asked for forgiveness, but he took full responsibility for it.

Do we give ourselves credit for our accomplishments or do we credit the Lord for empowering us and giving us certain gifts? Do we thank the Lord for all things? Does our giving of time and money come just from our excess or do we make a true sacrifice? Does Satan use our pride to tempt us to sin?

In the Gospel of John I want to focus on Chapter 8:42-48 & 58. These verses really got my attention even though I've read them and studied them before, which is what I've heard other people say about other Bible verses. Here Jesus tells who he is in clear unmistakable language. He even asks the Pharisees why his language was not clear to them. This really hit home with me because it seems that Jesus often answers questions in ambiguous ways as with parables or answers a question with a question or even a criticism. Remember when Jesus asked Peter "Who do you say that I am?" and Peter said he was the Christ. Jesus said you have learned this from my Father. In other words up to this point Jesus wasn't openly telling who He was. Jesus went on to say he had seen Abraham and in fact existed before Abraham.

We all know how the Pharisees reacted, but without 20-20 hindsight how do you think you might have reacted?