

The Weekly Word
January 29-February 4, 2018

Welcome to February. May God bless you as you read His Word. Happy reading...
Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

Monday, January 29: 1Chronicles 25- Counselors and worshipers...

I was curious about who helped David designate the divisions of musicians in verse 1. *David, together with the commanders of the army, set apart some of the sons of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun for the ministry of prophesying, accompanied by harps, lyres and cymbals. Here is the list of the men who performed this service:* Why would the commanders of the army have a say in this matter?

So I did some digging. Most translations use the phrase *commanders of the army* or an equivalent. Of the major translations from the original languages only the ESV chooses a different wording *chiefs of the service*. I did a bit more digging. It seems that the most straightforward translation is commander or captain of the army. However, the words used could have a broader meaning like 'chief leader'. Thinking through David's life, he leaned heavily on Joab, the leader of his army, for advice and counsel well beyond military strategy. So it seems likely to me that David turned to Joab and other trusted men of his military as his inner circle of counsel.

The important sense for me is that David had trusted advisors. True, they were also trusted military men, but given David spent much of his early life running from Saul and then establishing his kingship through battle with Philistines and others, it is not a surprise that military minded people became his inner circle.

Stepping out of history into devotion, God whispers, "Who are your trusted advisors, Bill? Who do you lean upon when you have weighty decisions to make? Who has your ear?..."

Advisors and counselors are so important. Who we listen to matters...

Who are you listening to???

Are they people who will move you closer to the Lord, or separate you from the Lord?

The Lord probes my inner being...

As I was researching above I happened across this comment in my Tyndale Commentary on the verse:

The arrangements for the *musicians*, the first of the specialist groups of Levites, are now given. Music was of the highest importance in Israelite worship, as is clear from many parts of the Old Testament, notably the Psalms. The Levitical musicians' role in leading and directing worship was crucial, for it was they who encouraged the people to worship God with conviction, harmony, and vitality. David's organization prepared for the Levites' leading of worship in Solomon's temple, as illustrated by the temple dedication service when the great Levitical orchestra and choir made their declaration: 'He is good; his love endures for ever' ([2 Chr. 5:12-14](#); [7:1-6](#); cf. [1 Chr. 15-16](#)).

This sparked thoughts about music in worship. Music is so important to worship. Music is not the whole of worship... there is attending to God's Word, and prayer and quiet space for God to speak. But absolutely music and song is crucial.

Music for worship needs to transport us to the Lord. It is, after all, the Lord we worship. We do not worship ourselves or anything in creation. As the commentator above noted, the Levites drew the people together and they sang:

He [God] is good; his love endures forever...

The Lord God is the focus, our focus, in worship!

Having just participated in worship yesterday, I am so thankful for the church I attend and the worship leadership who constantly points us to the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

May God be forever praised by my lips. May the Lord's songs be ever on my heart and mind! And Lord, I pray that You help me surround myself with godly voices who counsel me and push me and draw me closer, ever closer to You. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Tuesday, January 30: 1Chronicles 26- I am responsible for my relationship with the Lord

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Temple life was critical for the people of Israel. It was their heart and soul. The temple was their connection to their God, the one who had called them to be a people and the one who nurtured them as a people.

Through the Chronicler's history, exiles about to be sent back home after punishment, were preparing to reestablish temple practices and having the correct people doing their assigned tasks was a primary concern. Chapters are spent defining the lineage of Levites, so appropriate Levites were reinstated into their roles and usurpers were kept out.

Today as a member of the New Covenant, I don't have to concern myself with temple regulations. And, more importantly, I don't have to have other people play an intermediary role between me and the Lord. God has granted every follower of Jesus direct access to Himself! What a joy and gift this is...

As my day begins, I am reveling in the joy I have in direct access to the Lord. I can sit here this morning and speak to Him, confess my sins and be absolved from my guilt without sacrifices or the work of modern day Levites or Priests.

God is so good and His new covenant is so wonderful!

Today I am basking in my wonderful Lord, and the relationship into which God invites me. However, I am also recognizing that I am responsible for my relationship with the Lord and to tend to that, I sit and read God's Word, meditate and pray. And throughout the day I will try to think on things that move me closer in my relationship with the Lord...

May this wonderful day begin.

Oh, Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder consider all Your hands have made...

Praise the name of Jesus, Praise the name of Jesus, He's my rock, He's my fortress, He's my deliver in Him will I trust...

Thanks You Father, Son and Spirit... for the life You give. I delight in You...

Amen and amen.

Wednesday, January 31: 1Chronicles 27- Beware of minimizing sin...

The writer of Chronicles certainly looks past David's greatest failures. There isn't even a hint of the Bathsheba incident. Today in this chapter the counting of the fighting force towards the end of David's life is mentioned in passing with little responsibility placed upon David. *David did not take the number of the men twenty years old or less, because the LORD had promised to make Israel as numerous as the stars in the sky. Joab son of Zeruiah began to count the men but*

did not finish. God's wrath came on Israel on account of this numbering, and the number was not entered in the book of the annals of King David (23-24).

The account differs significantly from 2 Samuel 24. Historians routinely record what is important from their perspective and I don't want to discuss the perspective differences between the book of Samuel and Chronicles. However, considering these 2 retellings did spark devotional thoughts about minimizing sin.

When it comes to my walk with the Lord, mentally minimizing the severity and extent of my sin creates a barrier between the Lord and me. I can't speak for others, but as far back as I can remember, I have a bent for minimizing my wrongs. Coupled with this I have a strong tendency to blame others for my errors. I have never figured out where this comes from, but knowing its origins within me is far less important than recognizing it when it surfaces in my life. It is not relationally or spiritually healthy for me to blame others and minimize my role in my sin!

Through my reading this morning, the Lord is reminding me a well-ingrained sin patter that I need to be vigilant in guarding my heart against...

How has the Lord spoken to you in this morning's reading???

Lord, give me eyes to see myself clearly. Allow me to have spiritual corrective lens to compensate for my human failings. Help me to see myself for who I truly am which, Lord, will help me to appreciate Your grace and love and mercy more deeply. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thursday, February 1: 1Chronicles 28- The Handoff...

The best leaders understand that someday their leadership must be handed off to someone else. Every generation needs to recognize that at some point they must hand off leadership to the ensuing generation. The legacy of George Washington could have been scuttled by John Adams.

Even Jesus understood that He needed to hand the reigns of His movement to His disciples. Leadership handoffs are critical if movements are to continue.

Today we read David's leadership handoff.

The people are established. There is order and organization. And for David's deep desire and calling to build a temple—a place rest for the Ark of the Covenant (2)—David has provided plans and materials.

David not only provides for the ongoing work of the people of God, today he calls all the leaders and particularly his son Solomon—the next king—to continuing devotion to the Lord. David knows a people devoted only to the Lord will be blessed by the Lord.

My first thought... am I providing what the following generations need in order that they, too, might serve the Lord and complete His call of extending His name and fame to the ends of the earth?

Second, am I remaining faithful to the Lord and am I calling the following generations to faithfulness? Faithfulness is essential in building the work of God, which is the primary calling of the church today.

Am I steadfastly faithful? Are you?

Am I helping those younger than me grow in faithfulness? Are you?

Am I giving them the tools they will need to build God's kingdom? Are you?

These are the questions that are burrowing into me as I sit with this chapter this morning.

As I paused to pray I found myself praying the words of a song 'Holiness' (take my life) by Scott Underwood ...

O Lord,

Faithfulness, Faithfulness is what I long for

*Faithfulness is what I need
Faithfulness, Faithfulness is what You
want from me
So, take my heart and form it
Take my mind and transform it
Take my will and conform it
To Yours, to Yours, oh, Lord*

I have printed only stanza 2. And you can listen to the entire song free on Youtube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHeEytocJVY>.

Friday, February 2: 1Chronicles 29- A man after God's heart...

What joy reading this chapter. First there was David. His joy as he presents all he has done to provide for the temple. Not only did he do a masterful job providing the necessary materials, but then he gave liberally from his own resources. His example coupled with his call to other leaders to step up brought in a great offering for the Lord and His temple.

Leading from the front, leading by example, David excelled in this.

Then there was his prayer, totally God focused and God exalting. As I read and prayed along with David, I felt my heart begin to soar, with joy and praise to the Lord. So many prayers I hear these days, seem so earthly, me focused. David's is looking to the heavens and to the Lord. This prayer reveals much about his heart. David truly was a man after God's heart. His love for the Lord and devotion to the Lord is inspiring for me.

Oh, to be a man after God's own heart like David... Lord, show me how I can grow to be more like David. Lead me, Lord God, into a deeper devotion with You. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Saturday, February 3: 2Chronicles 1- What would you wish for?...

What would I ask for if God appeared to me and invited me to ask for anything? If I take that question seriously, I don't know what I would ask for.

Obviously after reading a chapter like this one, I would like to think I would be noble and selfless and, like Solomon, ask for wisdom or peace throughout the world or food for everyone or... but...had this question come suddenly out of the blue would I be this selfless? Ugh, I just don't know!!

When I was a youngster, I remember the hearing the story of Aladdin and I would daydream about being given three wishes by a genie in a bottle. Those wishes were far more self-focused. I would think about what wishes gave me the best benefit. Often my third imaginary wish was for 3 more wishes.

This mental exercise shows me how much of myself remains to be crucified to Christ.

On this eve of worship, Lord, prepare my heart to worship You with Your family tomorrow morning. Soften my heart to be attentive to You, listening for Your voice and following Your lead. I pray for a heart to follow after You. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Sunday, February 4, 2018, Sunday Worship

If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.

If you are reading along with me from the PCOG website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at office@pcogonline.org.

Click here for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.