



Stewardship Starts With God

Take time to quiet your thoughts and concerns. Break open the Holy Scriptures and read **1 Chronicles Chapter 29: 1-18** – Offerings for the Temple. Online Catholic Bible link: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/books-of-the-bible/index.cfm>.

David was at last seeing the fulfillment of a lifelong dream – to see the building of the Temple finally getting started. While David’s son Solomon was assigned the task of building the temple, David’s joy was not diminished for he had the thrill of raising the money before he died. He supported it well from the governmental treasures (29:2), and then gave over a billion dollars out of his own pocket (29:3). When he organized the rest of the country to give, they did so very generously (29:5b-9).

David’s Prayer of Thanksgiving (29:10-19) came from the overflowing heart of one who had just given his fortunes to see the dream of a lifetime fulfilled. Truly, this was King David’s finest hour. David clearly embraced the principles of stewardship: the greatness and worthiness of God, God’s ownership of all things, God’s supply from His eternal resources and our looking after them as “tenant farmers,” and how God tests the integrity of the heart.

David enjoyed his giving because these principles became his own. It is when we refuse to accept them, and sometimes even challenge them, that giving becomes an irritation to us. To talk of giving from our own supply will only raise our defenses and lower our sights. But those who embrace these principles for themselves will surely enjoy their giving, for it comes from a pure heart of love. Good news! God loves a cheerful giver!

God Is Head Over All

1 Chronicles 29:10-13; Then David blessed the Lord in the presence of the whole assembly, praying in these words: “Blessed may you be, O Lord, God of Israel our father, from eternity to eternity. Yours, O Lord, are grandeur and power, majesty, splendor, and glory. For all in heaven and on earth is yours; yours, O Lord, is the sovereignty; you are exalted as head over all. Riches and honor are from you, and you have dominion over all. In your hand are power and might; it is yours to give grandeur and strength to all. Therefore, our God, we give you thanks and we praise the majesty of your name. But who am I, and who are my people, that we

should have the means to contribute so freely? For everything is from you, and we only give you what we have received from you.”

So whatever there is of beauty in this world belongs first to God, because He created it. He has allowed us to enjoy it, but it still belongs to Him. The same is true with our portion of this world’s material goods. God still retains ownership, but he has entrusted them into our care for our enjoyment and use. And He frequently calls on us to distribute them according to His purposes and plans, He does this regularly, for example, in bringing our tithes and offering to Him. And periodically, there are special projects and concerns He want us to support. Since He still owns these material goods, He can recall them or give them to someone else at any time He chooses, even without our permission. We simply have them on a temporary loan basis, perhaps best expressed as a “tenant farmer.”

David clearly recognized that all he had, including his position, his successes, finances, lands, and material possessions – all had come from the hand of God. Sure, he had worked for it. Yes, he had fought the giant Goliath, and many other battles during his forty years as king. Indeed, he was successful, having solidified the Israelite control over the lands they possessed, and extended their boundaries to its greatest extent in Israel’s history. He could have said: “I got all of this by myself, by my own work, battles, and struggles. I risked my life for this, and now it’s mine, all mine!”

While it may be common for that attitude to prevail with some Christians, David could never have said it. Not as long as he maintained the concept that God owns everything – **everything**. And from His eternal resources, God had supplied everything that David had and was. And David knew it. David realized that he had not received a thing in this life that God had not provided. David knew that he did not earn anything totally on his own – even his skills, talents, and abilities came from God.

1 Chronicles 29:17-18, “I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things have I given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you. O Lord, God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep this desire n the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you.”

Once again, take time to quiet your thoughts and concerns. Read again **1 Chronicles Chapter 29: 1-18** – Offerings for the Temple, and then ask God to search your heart. Settle the issue of God’s ownership in your own heart, along with your willingness to be the steward God asks and expects of you. Especially in your giving.