

# A Life Style Of Godly Living

by Ron R. Ritchie

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This week I was watching an afternoon TV show called Donahue. Donahue is a young man who goes around interviewing people, and he covers all kinds of subjects. One of the things he asked a group of women was, "What is the biggest problem you're having with your children?" Many women quickly replied, "We have no models. Fathers are not home long enough to teach their sons and daughters anything. We're starving for examples. We need fathers who will stay home with their children."

A professor who was interviewed said that in the old days a father would get up early in the morning and take his son or daughter with him to the barn to milk the cow. Then they'd have breakfast together. They'd go to the fields, have lunch together, work all afternoon and come home to milk the cows again. They'd eat dinner together in the evening and sit around and talk to each other late into the night.

Now we see our whole society forced into evaluating what we are doing with our children, and who we are looking to as models for our children. I was with a young man yesterday down by the ocean, and as he watched all the kids fishing with their fathers, he said, "My father never taught me how to fish. In fact, in all the time I lived at home he took me fishing only once."

I had no father, so I don't know how to be one. I have to watch friends I think are good fathers to see how they do it- and then go home and try it. I have to learn from others how to discipline children, because I've never had children before. When I have to discipline my sons they get a little upset with me. They don't think it's fair. I tell them I'm not sure, either, because they're the first children I've ever had, and I'm still learning!

So we are all struggling because of this lack of models. We want to know how to be husbands, how to be wives, how to raise children, how to be good workmen, how to give money. We have a real struggle when it comes to sharing our finances with the Lord. A friend of mine who lives across the street told me, "This is my house. I built it, and I'm going to keep it. No one is going to take it away from me." That's the philosophy we've all grown up with. We're all struggling with inflation and with our finances, so how does the Lord get involved in all this? What happens to our spirit if we don't give? We need models to teach us how to give and there are several people here this morning I look up to as models in giving. I watch their life style, and it's one where their right hand doesn't know what their left hand is doing. They're always caring and giving and from their example I learned how to give. One day one of them came to me and asked me to pass on some money to a mutual friend who was in trouble. He said he found the money under his couch. I knew he didn't find it there but that was his way of saying he didn't want anybody to know where it came from. So I went home and tried that. It's really fun to give that way. There's a freedom in it and we really need these examples to teach us about God and about giving.

## A little background

I think God in his grace and mercy has given us King David as one example on how to give. In chapter 22 of 1 Chronicles we read of David's desire to build a house for God in place of the tabernacle which had been with Israel since the days of Moses. So David began to gather men and materials to do this, but in the middle of the project he found out that God didn't want him to build the temple, so he told his son, Solomon, "You know, my son, I've always wanted to build a temple for the Lord. I once told Nathan the prophet I wanted to do this, and he said to go ahead and build the temple. But the Lord told Nathan, 'No, tell David he's a man of blood. He cannot build the temple. but I will choose one son out of his line to be at rest with his enemies and at rest within his spirit, and he will build my temple.' So, Solomon, God chose you."

David is now 70 years old, a man of love, compassion thankfulness and tenderness, without arrogance, without bitterness, without any feeling that God has cheated him. We find a man who loved God, and who

loved to obey God. We discover that at 70, David is free to be a man of God And the thing he had wanted to do with his whole heart to build a house to the name of the Lord, he passed on to his son Solomon. He passed on all the materials and the plans, too.

Now we come to chapter 29. It is a time of peace, and David assembles all the military and the religious and political leaders. Then this white-haired old lion-killer, this old giant-killer, this old man who had all kinds of passion, now mellowed and molded into a God-like man, addresses the entire assembly (verses 1-5):

### **David becomes a model for his people**

**And King David said to the entire assembly, "My son Solomon, whom God alone has chosen, lo still young and inexperienced, and the work is great; for the temple is not for man, but for the Lord God. Now with all my ability I have provided for the house of my God the gold for the things of gold, and the silver for the things of silver, and the bronze for the things of bronze, the iron for the things of iron, and wood for the things of wood, onyx stones and inlaid stones, stones of antimony, and stones of various colors, and all kinds of precious stones, and alabaster in abundance. And moreover, in my delight in the house of my God, the treasure I have of gold and silver, I give to the house of my God, over and above all that I have already provided for the holy temple, namely, 3,000 talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and 7,000 talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the buildings; of gold for the things of gold, and of silver for the things of silver, that is, for all the work done by the craftsmen. Who then is willing to consecrate himself this day to the Lord?"**

We see several things here. One thing is that as David began to gather these riches through the years, he gathered them from federal funds. Now he lays them all out in front of the people and says, "You see my son, and you see these materials, but now I want to reach into my own pocket. I want to give beyond anything that I have given up to this point. It is my delight, my desire, my pleasure, to do this. I can't think of anything I'd rather do than to give above and beyond what is laid out before you." As David did this, he turned to the people and asked, "Which of you will join me in this venture? Which of you will take out of your own pocket, and give toward the building of the temple that will house the living God?" Look at the result (verses 6-9):

### **The people respond in kind**

**Then the rulers of the fathers' households, and the princes of the tribes of Israel, and the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, with the overseers over the king's work, offered willingly; and for the service for the house of God they gave 5,000 talents and 10,000 darics of gold, and 10,000 talents of silver, 18,000 talents of brass and 100,000 talents of iron. And whoever possessed precious stones gave them to the treasury of the house of the Lord, in the care of Jehiel the Gershonite . Then the people rejoiced because they had offered so willingly, for they made their offering to the Lord with a whole heart, and King David rejoiced greatly.**

So here is King David setting an example on how to give to the Lord. He is not asking his people to do something that he cannot do or is unwilling to do. David set such an example that when the people saw their king reach into his own pocket to contribute to the temple, the only thing they could do was to respond in kind Verse 9 tells why they were excited:

**Then the people rejoiced because they had offered so willingly, for they made their offering to the Lord with a whole heart.**

They didn't offer to the temple, they didn't offer to David, they offered to God. They didn't get caught up with the project, they got caught up with the living God whom they loved.

Several years ago a friend of mine who had four sons asked me to come with him to look at a car. He showed me a 1966 Mustang and asked, "How do you like it?" I said, "It's beautiful. Which son are you going to give it to?" He said, "Oh, I didn't buy it for my sons, I bought it for you." What can you do at a time like that? You just stand there, flabbergasted. He said, "Let's take a drive." I started to drive around, and all of a sudden I

realized that he was giving it to ME. So I stopped driving and said, "I cannot accept this car, unless you're willing to give it to the Lord, and let me take care of it." He said, "Ah, I see what you mean." Here was a man who loved the Lord. He sat there and bowed his head and said, "Lord, I give this to you." You see, when he gave it to the Lord, there were no strings on me. I was one of his counsellors, and since there were problems from time to time in his family, I could come to his home without worrying about, "Oh, yes, this is the man who gave me the car." I could go freely in the car that he gave to God, and we'd never have to talk about it again. I had a friend who sent me a check this week. He said in a note, "This is going to Careers Alive, but I've given it to the Lord." He understood the principle of giving. How are we to give to the Lord? Willingly, rejoicing in God David now sets up for us the reason we're to give so willingly and with a full heart. In front of all the assembly, with his son beside him, he starts to bless God (verses 10- 13 ):

### **David blesses the God of Israel**

**So David blessed the Lord in the sight of all the assembly; and David said, "Blessed art thou, O Lord God of Israel our father, forever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed, everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Thine is the dominion, O Lord, and Thou dost exalt Thyself as head over all. Both riches and honor come from Thee, and Thou dost rule over all, and in Thy hand is power and might; and it lies in Thy hand to make great, and to strengthen everyone. Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name."**

What a prayer! First David blesses God because he knows and understands who God is. And that is the secret of life: when we understand who God is, then we understand who we are. That's the way we get our identity. David had his identity fastened in the very roots of God. "I know who you are, God. And I know where all this money came from. It came from you. Because you're the God of greatness. You're the God who has worked with Israel since the days of Abraham. You're the God who has led us through the wilderness. You're the God who took us into Canaan, and you're the God who defeated the 31 kings through Joshua. You're the God of the time of the Judges, and you're the God who lived with Saul and disciplined him. I know who you are: you're the great God."

We need to keep reviewing who God is. We're his children, and he's our father, and he's molding us into maturity. Shortly before this, David had disobeyed God. After everything was peaceful in the Land, David asked Joab to go and number the men, so that in future wars, he'd know what kind of army he could muster. That was direct violation of the Levitical law. Joab knew it and said no, he wasn't going to do it. David got angry and said yes, he was. So Joab went throughout the land, but he refused to count the Levitical priests, and he was angry the whole time. Because of this disobedience, God showed himself to David on a threshing floor (which is where the Mosque of Omar is today in Jerusalem.) God said to David, "You have three choices: you choose which discipline you want." David told God, "I am in great distress. Please let me fall into the hands of the Lord for his mercies are very great. But don't let me fall into the hand of man." So the Lord sent a pestilence on Israel and 70,00 men died (1 Chronicles 21:12-14). David cried out to God and learned his lesson. He wanted God to discipline him and spare the people, but God wanted him to understand more of what it takes to be a mature man in the Lord. So David understood the power of this God. He called him the God of victory, the God who led all of Israel into victory. (David was the first king who was able to defeat for all time the Philistines who lived in the land) He knew the God of victory.

All the gold and silver and bronze and wood and precious stones came from the land. God created them. David had the wisdom to understand that. He also understood that he was but a shepherd boy. God appeared to him one day and said, "David I chose you when you were following your sheep, to make you king over Israel." David knew that. He was always a shepherd. So he said, "Riches and honor I know are from you, and so I bless your name."

Then as he stands before the Lord, David turns and looks at himself (verse 14 -16):

### **David knows who he is**

**"But who am I, and who are my people that we should be able to offer as generous as**

**this? For all things come from Thee, and from Thy hand we have given thee. For we are sojourners before Thee, and tenants, as all our fathers were; our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no hope. O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided to build Thee a house for Thy holy name, it is from Thy hand, and all is Thine."**

David understands that as far as men were concerned, he was king of the land, and a victorious king at that. His 70 years had brought him much knowledge and wisdom. But now, when he stands before God, he says, "I know who I am. I'm but a tenant on the land. I'm a Sojourner, one who comes and goes like a shadow. In life there is no hope." That is, there is nothing in this life that will continue; we come, and we go. That's important for us to understand. When we try to find our identity on a horizontal level, we'll never know who we are. There is always someone who can do things better than us, has more money than us, has a better car than us, and we are forever caught in this treadmill of trying to be somebody. But when we walk in a vertical relationship with the living God, we always know who we are. We know we are a child of God, we know that we are loved, we know that we have eternity before us. We know that this life is only a "Sesame Street" to prepare us for eternity, and that life is a time God uses to bring us to maturity. And so when David looks at God, he knows exactly who he is. It is so important to keep looking at God to find out who we are. When we see who God is, then our identity crisis is over. When we love God, we love ourselves and when we love ourselves, we can love our neighbor. Verse 17:

### **David allows God to examine his heart**

**"Since I know, O my God, that Thou triest the heart and delightest in uprightness, I, in the integrity of my heart, have willingly offered all these things; so now with joy I have seen Thy people, who are present here, make their offerings willingly to Thee."**

The first thing David said was that God knew his heart. "You've searched my heart You see why I gave what I did. You understand my motive." Two years ago I was taken to Stanford to have a heart scan. The doctors were so proud of a brand new machine that scanned hearts. They put some chemicals in me, and I could actually see my heart pumping away on a TV screen. They said, "We've got great news, Ron, there's nothing physically wrong with your heart!" But when God scans our hearts he sees our motives. He's always checking our motives for our actions.

David told Solomon earlier, in 1 Chronicles 28:9:

**"As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, he will let you find Him; for if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever."**

So David understood that God checked the hearts, and wanted pure motives (verse 18):

### **David prays for his people**

**"O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, preserve this forever in the intentions of the heart of Thy people, and direct their heart to Thee."**

David asked for two things. He said, "Lord, did you see what happened today? Did you see how willingly the people gave to you? Did you see their happiness and their joy? Lord, I have two requests: Make this a life style. May they give as generously for whatever needs to be done in the land of Israel so that your work will be furthered. And Lord, may their hearts always be directed towards you." They were forever going the other way. The Canaanite idols fascinated them and they checked every new idol they encountered to see if they wanted to serve that idol or stay with Jehovah. They were a very fickle people. So David, who lived with them 70 years and who served 40 years as king over them, understood their hearts. So he said, "Lord, don't let them lose their heart, don't let them get confused, stay with them."

### **David prays for the new king**

verse 19:

**"And give to my son Solomon a perfect heart to keep Thy commandments, Thy testimonies, and Thy statutes, and to do them all, and to build the temple, for which I have made provision."**

Apparently Solomon was very young, inexperienced and timid. David asked the Lord to give him the courage the energy and the knowledge to finish the project they had started for God. "And may he have a perfect heart, and may he take all your commandments and do them."

### **David asks his people to bless the Lord**

**Then David said to all the assembly, "Now bless the Lord your God" And all the assembly blessed the Lord, the God of their fathers, and bowed low, and did homage to the Lord and to the king. And on the next day they made sacrifices to the Lord and offered burnt offerings to the Lord, 1,000 bulls, 1,000 rams, and 1,000 lambs, with their drink offerings and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel. So they ate and drank that day before the Lord with great gladness.**

When we understand that all we have is from God, then we have freedom to give freely. And once we give, our hearts are filled with gladness, because we are back to the source of all things: God himself. I called down to Santa Barbara this week as several of my friends lost their homes in that fire. How did they feel about losing their homes? There was a very interesting mixture of attitudes. Here and there were godly men and women who understood that everything was from God. They accepted the fire as from God, and knew that God would provide for them. Their hearts were glad in the midst of tragedy.

This morning we're going to take an offering. And because David has set up a model for us, I would like you to give like David, with a willing heart, a whole heart, a heart that is pleased to give to the Lord. Don't give to PBC. PBC is a vehicle that God uses, but the money is to be given to the Lord. That is what we are called to do. So give willingly, with a joyful heart. Have God check your heart out to see if it's pure.

### **Prayer:**

Our heavenly Father, we have so much to learn. We need so much to know who you are, and to understand your ways. We need so much to see that everything comes from you- our life, our joy, our strength, our honors, our material things, all our finances, all comes from you. Father, I pray that you would give us a willing heart to give these things back to you because we love you. Not because we have to, but because we love you. You are One who is so important to us. You are One who teaches us all these things. Thank you for your model, David Thank you for the encouragement of his heart to us, for his honesty as he walked before you. Thank you for his son Solomon, who did finish that temple. Thank you for your love for us now. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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