

Reaching Forward

Study Guide #4 The Vision of Reaching Forward

“ONE THING IS SURE: without some painful challenge to change direction and its subsequent new vision, life for most of us is mundane. The finest visions that can possess us come directly from God through Christ. — *Calvin Miller.*

Carved into the face of Mount Rushmore is the indelible reminder of men who set the example of influence and sacrifice toward something bigger than themselves. President Teddy Roosevelt became a famous when all others were reluctant to take San Juan Hill, he stepped up and took charge. With an inflexible will, Roosevelt charged up the hill in front of his men. From that moment on, he marched onto the forefront of American leadership. He states:

“It is not the critic who counts: not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error or shortcoming, but who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself for a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows, in the end, the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who knew neither victory nor defeat.”

Casting an even greater indelible mark and a pivotal person in human history is King David. He reminds us across 3000 years of the value behind influence and sacrifice for a vision bigger than himself. At a crucial time in the history of God’s people, David stepped forward as a leader to set an example by offering a sacrificial gift that led many others around him to do the same. He, too, was one who stumbled, fell, rose up, dreamed, sacrificed and triumphed.

This study is about the leadership and influence that a vision bigger than one man had on a nation of people.

You are invited to begin your time with God this week with prayer:

*Almighty God, whose ways are higher than my ways,
whose thoughts are higher than my thoughts,
teach me the value of giving my all to something bigger
than myself, because your plans for our my life
and this church are perfect. Amen*

Focus Scripture

1 Corinthians 29:1-9

Thoughts From The Text

- ✚ This chapter is making reference to the building of the first temple. To whom does this temple benefit the most? (vs 1)
- ✚ What types of offerings were freely given by David and the people? (vss 2,3,7,8)
- ✚ What question does David present after setting such an example? (vs 5)
- ✚ Who were the four categories of people who responded so freely to David's examples? (vs 6)
- ✚ What was the result of that this response to all the other people who saw this? Why? (vs 9)



- ❖ What was David's primary focus in the final years of his life? How did he envision the "house of God"? What kind of place would it be?
- ❖ Follow up the previous thought with our reaching forward campaign. How do you envision this "house of God"? What kind of place will it be?
- ❖ Will the place you imagine be worth an all out investment of your resources?
- ❖ How did David lead the way in preparing for its construction? How did the people respond? Why?
- ❖ What I like most about money is _____. What I like least about money is _____. God is helping me deal with my love of money by _____.
- ❖ How naturally does generosity come to you? When is it most challenging for you to share generously? When is it easiest?
- ❖ Why is generous giving such a spiritual battle and such a spiritual victory? How can we maintain an attitude of openness with the money God entrusts us with?

THE VISION OF REACHING FORWARD

1. VISION SHOULD MOTIVATE OUR SACRIFICE AND EFFORTS


📖 Take a moment and read 29:1 very closely.

David had a dream and passion, one might even call it a vision for his life to build God a temple in which to set up a permanent place of worship. This came about after he had conquered his enemies, secured his borders, and provided prosperity for his people from these campaigns. In fact, the Hebrew word for David suggests someone who boils with passion. His passion for God boiled over into a momentous vision to provide for the temple of God. The motivation behind this vision was simple. It was not for himself, it was solely for God.

When the call is made to sacrifice, our driving motive should be pure and in focus with God. Had this temple merely been for David's own enjoyment, which was not uncommon for a king of that day, the motive would have been a blasphemous pride. The cost of this temple would have been too extravagant to justify. Thus, what was to be sacrificed belonged to God and for his glory.

We give to fulfill a vision that has set us on a journey where God will be glorified, His Word will be taught, and the Body of Christ will expand with new souls. A vision we believe motivates our greatest sacrifices.

2. LEADERS SET THE EXAMPLE FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW

 Read 2 Samuel 24:22-24; 1 Chronicles 29:2,3,5b-6,9

David wanted this vision to become a reality, so he made regular gifts to the vision. But he realized that there comes a time when one must reach down deep and decide whether something is worth taking a risk on. In this case, he set the example by going above and beyond what he had regularly given. Again, his giving above and beyond was motivated by his devotion to God.

John Wesley was an Anglican priest in the 18th Century. His passion to bring renewal in the Anglican, what we know today as Methodism, saw enormous amounts of money pass through his hands. However, Wesley adopted a lifestyle of sacrifice. As his income increased, he maintained his expenses at the same level. Across his life, he moved from giving 10% to the work of God and living on 90% to giving 90% to the work of God and living on 10%. This has become an example of a leader for others to follow, one that is to be motivated simply by one's devotion to God.

3. SACRIFICE SHOULD LEAD TO CELEBRATION

 Read 1 Chronicles 29:10-11

The results of David's challenge and invitation to sacrifice for this vision, others caught the vision with an overwhelming sense of gratitude to God for all He had done. They praise God for his eternal nature, his sovereignty, his ownership of everything, and his kingship over all. What sparked this praise assembly? A heart with conviction to give.

True celebration and praise is not cheap. We proclaim it more loudly and share it with more conviction and it makes others recognize the sheer joy of the moment when it rings with the reality of sacrificial giving.

What if we were to say for the three-year period of challenge that is before us that we will take the highroad of personal sacrifice; we will give to the extent that it will actually change our lifestyles. In a country where one family built an \$8,000 dog house with a kidney shaped swimming pool, this type sacrifice would proclaim a witness to others. In a

country that throws away more material goods than most third world countries consume, it would be a benchmark.

This type of giving might cause someone to ask: "Who does the pastor or church think they are asking me for such a sacrifice?" In the spirit of David, the question was actually reversed (vs14): "Who am I that I should be able to give as generously as this?"

Personal Reflection

📖 Read 1 Chronicles 29:14-16 & Psalm 24:1

🔗 David gives God the credit for his ability to give. What principle does he clearly understand?

🔗 How does this principle free you up to give?

📖 Refer back or re-read 1 Chronicles 29:1-9

🔗 In this passage, David clearly sets an example of sacrificial giving for the purpose of constructing a temple for God. Compare this example to our process of giving in support of Greystone's **reaching forward** campaign. What are some of the potential parallels?

📖 Read 1 Chronicles 29:5b

David's question to the leaders and other people is now being asked of us. Do I believe in this vision enough to be willing to make changes in the way I relate to money as I listen to God's voice in my life? What are you sensing as your response to this question?

Thinking Ahead

God told David that his son, Solomon, would build the temple of the Lord. In response to God's promise, David made every preparation possible, giving from his personal wealth and encouraging others to give. Although he never physically worked on the temple and knew that he would never see the full potential of the Temple, David laid its foundation by believing God's promise. Whether or not we have immense wealth or not is not the issue. Each of us can offer an equal sacrifice to prepare a foundation for our spiritual heirs. We can reach forward with the passion of fulfilling a vision of reaching the generations that will follow us. What legacy will you leave to God's people?