

# **The Books of 1 and 2 Chronicles, Teacher's Guide**

## **Lesson 5: David's Mighty Men and Growing Kingdom**

### **1 Chronicles 12:1-14:17**

#### **Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)**

Doctrinally, these chapters establish two truths the church must hold together. First, God Himself gathers and builds; the kingdom rises because the LORD is keeping His promise, not because David is clever or strong. The Chronicler wants exiles (and us) to trust the God who assembles His own people around His chosen King, a pattern that reaches its climax in Christ gathering the church. Second, the death of Uzzah teaches that this same gracious God is holy and must be approached as He directs. Zeal does not sanctify disobedience. God had spoken clearly about how the ark was to be carried, and the lesson lands squarely on every generation tempted to worship and serve God by its own preferences instead of His revealed will.

But the aim is not merely to inform; it is to form. The student should leave examining the divisions in his own loyalty against the picture of an Israel 'of one mind,' and should feel the holy reverence that Uzzah's story is meant to produce. David's habit of inquiring of the LORD, again and again, is a model for a disciple's daily dependence. The goal is a believer who trusts God to build, who loves God enough to obey Him precisely, and who seeks Him freshly rather than presuming on the past. That is a heart being shaped into the likeness of the Servant King.

#### **Question 1**

##### **Student Question:**

*What does the steady gathering of warriors to the hunted David (12:1-22) reveal about how God establishes His king and assembles His people around the one He has chosen?*

#### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

Chapter 12 catalogs the warriors who came to David in two settings: at Ziklag while he was still 'banished from the presence of Saul' (12:1) and later at Hebron when 'all these men of war' came to make him king (12:38). The Chronicler arranges this to show a movement, a gathering that began in obscurity and ended in national acclamation. The detail that men came while David was still a fugitive is theologically loaded: God was building the kingdom before the world recognized the king.

The men are described with vivid, concrete language: Benjamites who could use both hands (12:2), Gadites with faces like lions who were swift as gazelles (12:8), men of Issachar 'who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do' (12:32). The Chronicler is not merely impressed by military prowess; he is celebrating the wide and willing response of the tribes to God's anointed.

Verse 22 names the source of it all: 'For from day to day men came to David to help him, until there was a great army, like an army of God.' The growth is steady and divine. This is providence in action, the unseen hand of God moving hearts toward His chosen king. For the post-exilic reader, this was assurance that the same God who once gathered Israel could gather them again.

Notice that loyalty here is costly and early. These men attached themselves to David when there was nothing to gain and much to lose. That is the kind of allegiance the King still seeks: not fair-weather followers drawn to a winning cause, but those who commit themselves to Him before the crown is visible.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- God establishes His king and gathers His people by providence, not by human scheming.
- True loyalty attaches itself to God's anointed before there is any earthly reward.
- The diversity of the tribes (different gifts, different strengths) united under one king pictures the body of Christ.
- Understanding 'the times' and knowing what God's people ought to do is a gift worth coveting.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- What made these men leave everything to join a hunted man, and what does that say about how we follow Christ?
- How does it encourage you that God was building the kingdom before anyone could see it?
- Which tribe's description (lion-faced Gadites, time-discerning Issachar) most challenges the way you want to serve God?

### **Question 2**

#### **Student Question:**

*The men of Zebulun came 'with singleness of purpose' and all Israel was 'of one mind to make David king' (12:33, 38); where is your own heart divided, and what would single-minded loyalty to Christ the King look like this week?*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

The phrase 'singleness of purpose' or 'not of a double heart' (12:33) and the summary that all Israel was 'of one mind to make David king' (12:38) form the spiritual high point of the chapter. After all the names and numbers, the Chronicler tells us the inner reality: a united, undivided devotion to the LORD's chosen king.

A double heart is the perennial enemy of discipleship. James 1:8 warns that a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. Jesus said no one can serve two masters. The men of David's day model the alternative: a heart set on one allegiance, pulling in one direction.

This question presses the truth into the student's own divided loyalties. We rarely reject Christ outright; we simply hold something back, hedge our commitment, keep a competing love alive. Single-minded loyalty to King Jesus means letting Him have the part of us we have been protecting.

Note too that this unity produced joy: 'there was joy in Israel' (12:40). Wholehearted devotion to the King is not grim; it overflows in gladness and feasting. Divided hearts are anxious; united hearts rejoice.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- A double heart is the great rival to wholehearted devotion.
- Unity among God's people flows from shared loyalty to the one King.
- Single-minded commitment to Christ produces joy, not joylessness.
- We tend to hold back a part of ourselves while professing full surrender.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- What is the one area where your heart is most divided right now?
- How have you seen genuine devotion to Christ produce joy rather than drudgery?
- What practical step would move you toward 'singleness of purpose' this week?

### **Question 3**

#### **Student Question:**

*Why was bringing the ark such a fitting first act for the new king (13:1-4), and what does it tell us that David wanted the worship of God at the very center of the kingdom?*

#### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

David's first official act as king is to consult about bringing the ark of God to Jerusalem (13:1-3). This is striking. He does not begin with fortifications, taxes, or a palace; he begins with the presence of God. The ark represented the throne of the LORD among His people, the place where heaven met earth under the Old Covenant.

David says plainly why the ark matters: 'for we did not seek it in the days of Saul' (13:3). The previous reign had neglected God's presence, and David means to reverse that. A kingdom is only as healthy as its worship. By centering the kingdom on the worship of God, David sets the right priority for the nation.

He also consults widely, with the commanders and 'the whole assembly of Israel' (13:1-4). This is a king who leads God's people into worship together rather than imposing a private religion. The decision to bring the ark is the right decision, born of right zeal, and the assembly gladly agrees.

The post-exilic readers, busy rebuilding walls and houses, needed this reminder that the worship of God belongs at the center, not the margin. So do we. A life, a home, or a church is shaped by what it puts at the center.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Worship of God belongs at the very center of life and leadership.
- Neglect of God's presence (as under Saul) impoverishes a people.
- Godly leaders lead the whole community into worship, not a private faith.
- Right priorities flow from a heart that seeks God first.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- What does it say about David that his first act was to seek God's presence?
- What is at the 'center' of your daily life, and how do you know?
- How can a family or congregation keep worship central rather than peripheral?

### **Question 4**

#### **Student Question:**

*David consulted with the whole assembly before acting (13:1-4); how do you involve God's people in your decisions, and where have you tried to go it alone?*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

David did not act alone; he 'conferred with the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, with every leader' and then with 'the whole assembly' (13:1-4). Good leadership in God's kingdom is shared, accountable, and communal.

This communal pattern matters because we are prone to isolation in our decisions, especially the spiritual ones. Proverbs repeatedly commends an abundance of counselors (Proverbs 11:14; 15:22). David's instinct to involve God's people guards against the pride and blind spots of going it alone.

The application turns the spotlight on the student. Where do we make significant choices in spiritual isolation, cutting ourselves off from the wisdom of fellow believers, elders, and family? The New Testament church is a body, and members were never meant to function as detached individuals.

Note that David's consultation did not, by itself, guarantee a flawless plan; the very next scene exposes a serious oversight. Even good processes need to be measured against God's revealed word, which is the lesson of the verses to come.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Wise decisions are made in community, with godly counsel.
- Spiritual isolation breeds pride and blind spots.
- The body of Christ is designed for mutual dependence.
- Consultation is good but must still be tested against God's word.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Where in your life do you tend to decide alone when you should seek counsel?
- Who are the 'commanders and elders' God has placed around you for wisdom?
- How can you invite trusted believers into a decision you are facing now?

### **Question 5**

#### **Student Question:**

*Uzzah reached out to steady the ark and God struck him dead (13:9-10); what does this sober scene teach about approaching a holy God on His terms rather than on our own good intentions?*

#### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

The ark was carried on a 'new cart' (13:7), the way the Philistines had once moved it (1 Samuel 6), not the way God had commanded. The Law was explicit: the ark was to be carried on poles upon the shoulders of the Levites and never touched, on pain of death (Numbers 4:15; 7:9). When the oxen stumbled and Uzzah put out his hand, he touched the holy thing, and God struck him dead (13:9-10).

This scene unsettles us, and it is meant to. Our instinct is to defend Uzzah; he was only trying to help. But the deeper issue is that the whole undertaking had departed from God's clear instruction. The presence of a holy God is not casual, and the means He prescribes are not optional decorations. God had made the manner of approach a matter of life and death.

Chapter 15 will make the diagnosis explicit: 'because we did not carry it the first time, the LORD our God broke out against us, because we did not seek him according to the rule' (15:13). The problem was not insufficient enthusiasm; the problem was that good zeal was poured into an unauthorized method.

For the church, the principle is enormous. We do not get to worship and serve God however we please and assume He is pleased because we meant well. God has spoken about how He is to be approached, and reverence means submitting our preferences to His revealed will. This is not legalism; it is love that takes the Beloved's words seriously.

At the same time, the Chronicler is not portraying a capricious God. He is portraying a holy God whose holiness is mercy to a people, for a god who could be approached carelessly could not save anyone. The fear that fell on David (13:12) was the beginning of wisdom.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- God must be approached on His terms, not ours, however sincere we are.
- Sincerity and zeal do not sanctify disobedience to God's revealed will.
- Reverence means submitting our preferences to God's instructions for worship.
- The holiness of God is not arbitrary harshness; it is the holiness that makes salvation possible.
- We are not authorized to add to or alter what God has commanded.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Why is it so tempting to assume good intentions are enough with God?
- How does Uzzah's death deepen your sense of God's holiness?
- Where might we be 'using a new cart,' worshiping sincerely but not as God directed?

### **Question 6**

#### **Student Question:**

*When have you assumed that sincerity would cover for disobedience, and how does Uzzah's death press you to take God's revealed will seriously?*

#### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

This question turns Uzzah's story inward. All of us have, at times, leaned on sincerity as a substitute for obedience: 'God knows my heart,' we say, while quietly setting aside what He has plainly said. The scene by the threshing floor exposes that move as the dangerous thing it is.

The temptation is subtle because the zeal is often real. Uzzah was not a rebel; he was a participant in a joyful procession. The danger is not always open defiance but well-meaning improvisation, doing the right thing in the wrong way.

Application here is concrete. Where have we decided that our preference, our convenience, or our tradition outweighs a clear instruction of God? In worship, in the home, in moral choices, the question is the same: do we take God's revealed will as seriously as He does?

The remedy is not to fear God less but to know Him better, to let reverence drive us back to His word so that our zeal runs in the channel He has dug. Genuine love searches out what pleases the Beloved.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- We are prone to use sincerity as cover for disobedience.
- Well-meaning improvisation can still violate God's clear word.
- Reverence drives us back to Scripture to learn how to please God.
- Personal accountability: 'God knows my heart' is not a license to ignore His commands.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- When have you caught yourself saying 'God knows my heart' to excuse disobedience?
- What is one area where you need to align your practice with God's clear instruction?
- How can holy reverence become a daily, joyful habit rather than mere fear?

### **Question 7**

#### **Student Question:**

*What do David's two inquiries before battle (14:10, 14) teach us about not presuming on past victories or yesterday's guidance?*

#### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

When the Philistines came up against him, David 'inquired of God' (14:10), and God gave him victory at Baal-perazim. When they came a second time, David did not simply repeat the last battle plan; he inquired again (14:14), and this time God gave different instructions, to circle around and wait for the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees.

This is one of the most quietly instructive moments in David's life. Yesterday's victory did not entitle him to today's presumption. He sought the LORD freshly, and the LORD answered with a fresh strategy. Dependence on God is not a one-time transaction but a continual relationship.

Set this against the failure with the ark and the contrast is sharp. With the ark, David acted on assumption and zeal; with the Philistines, he acted on inquiry and obedience, and the difference shows in the outcome. The man is learning.

For the believer, the principle is that we must seek God's guidance for each new battle through His word and prayer, never coasting on a past answer or a stale routine. The God who led us yesterday is to be sought again today.

#### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- We must seek God freshly rather than presuming on past guidance.
- Dependence on God is a continual relationship, not a one-time event.
- God may direct differently in similar situations; we listen rather than assume.
- Inquiring of God preceded David's victories.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Why did David ask again instead of repeating the first battle plan?
- How do we 'inquire of the LORD' today, and what does that look like practically?
- What is one current 'battle' you have been fighting on autopilot rather than in dependence?

## Question 8

### Student Question:

*Where are you currently 'fighting' on the strength of an old answer from God instead of seeking Him freshly for today's battle?*

### Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question presses the truth of fresh inquiry into the student's experience. We all have areas where we run on spiritual autopilot, relying on an old conviction, a past experience, or a tired routine instead of seeking God now.

The Christian life is not lived on stored guidance any more than a body lives on last week's meals. Jesus taught us to ask for daily bread. The manna in the wilderness could not be hoarded; it had to be gathered fresh each morning.

Application: identify the specific 'battle,' the relationship, the temptation, the decision, where you have stopped asking God and started assuming. Bring it back under prayer and the searching of His word.

The encouragement is that God welcomes the asking. David's repeated inquiry was not annoyance to God; it was the relationship working as designed. The Father is not weary of His children seeking Him.

### Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- We often coast on past guidance instead of seeking God now.
- Daily dependence, like daily bread, cannot be stockpiled.
- God welcomes our continual asking; it is the relationship working rightly.
- Self-examination locates the 'battles' we have stopped praying over.

### Discussion Prompts

- In what part of your life have you stopped seeking God and started assuming?
- What would it look like to bring that area back under prayer this week?
- How does it free you to know God is never wearied by your asking?

## Question 9

### Student Question:

*Chapter 14 says God 'established him as king over Israel, for his kingdom was highly exalted for the sake of his people Israel' (14:2); how does this teach us that God builds His kingdom not for the glory of a man but for the good of His people and the praise of His own name, and how does this anticipate the way God exalts Christ as King for the sake of His church?*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

Chapter 14:2 supplies the theological key to the whole section: 'And David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, and that his kingdom was highly exalted for the sake of his people Israel.' The kingdom is not built for David's ego; it is built for the good of God's people and, ultimately, for the glory of God's name.

This corrects a temptation as old as power itself, the assumption that a kingdom exists for the king. In God's economy the opposite is true: the king is given for the people. David's exaltation is a stewardship, not a trophy. The Chronicler wants exiles tempted to despair to know that God exalts His king precisely in order to bless His people.

Here the line runs forward to Christ without forcing it. The pattern of a king exalted for the sake of his people reaches its fullness in Jesus, whom God has highly exalted and given the name above every name (Philippians 2:9), not for His own enrichment but for the salvation of His church. The risen Christ reigns now at God's right hand (Acts 2:29–36), and He reigns for the good of the people He purchased with His blood.

Notice the order in the text: God establishes, God exalts, and the purpose is the welfare of His people and the praise of His name. Every honor God gives His servants is meant to flow outward in blessing, never to terminate on the servant. That is the shape of God's kingdom and the shape Christ perfected.

For the church, this guards against two errors at once: thinking too much of any human leader, and thinking too little of God's purpose to bless His people through the leader He has given, supremely through King Jesus.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- God builds His kingdom for the good of His people and the glory of His own name, not for the glory of a man.
- Authority and exaltation in God's economy are a stewardship for others' good.
- The pattern of a king exalted for his people's sake is fulfilled in the exaltation of Christ.
- The risen Christ reigns now for the welfare of His church, not for self-enrichment.
- Honor God gives is meant to flow outward in blessing, never to terminate on the one honored.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- How does 14:2 reframe the purpose of any position God gives us?

- In what ways does Christ's exaltation 'for the sake of His people' shape how we view His reign now?
- Where are you tempted to treat God's gifts and honors as trophies rather than stewardships?

## **Question 10**

### **Student Question:**

*Looking back across these three chapters, name one specific way Jesus is forming you to seek Him on His terms and to find your loyalty to Him becoming more single-minded.*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

This capstone gathers the threads: a kingdom God gathered, a king who stumbled with the ark and learned, and a habit of seeking God freshly before every battle. The student is asked to name one specific way Jesus is forming him through this passage.

Possible fruit to name: a more single-minded loyalty to Christ; a deeper reverence that takes God's word seriously in worship and life; a renewed habit of inquiring of God rather than presuming; a trust that God Himself builds His kingdom for His people's good.

The aim is specificity. Not 'I want to love God more' but 'I will stop using a new cart in this particular area' or 'I will bring this particular battle back under prayer.' Transformation lives in the concrete.

Close the lesson by pointing to the King Himself. The same God who gathered a people to David has gathered us to Christ, and the same patience that taught David is shaping us. We are not left to grow alone.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Spiritual formation is named in specifics, not generalities.
- Reverence, loyalty, and fresh dependence are the fruit this passage aims to produce.
- Christ is the King to whom God has gathered His people now.
- Growth happens within the community God has gathered, not in isolation.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- What single, concrete change is this passage calling you toward?
- How will you take a first step in that change this week?
- Who in the body of Christ can walk with you as you pursue it?