

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

Lesson 8: David's Victories and Officials

1 Chronicles 18:1-20:8

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

Doctrinally, these chapters establish that God is the giver of victory and the One who exalts and sustains His people. The repeated refrain, 'the LORD gave victory to David wherever he went,' settles the question of credit: every triumph is a gift of God's providence, not the product of human strength. The teacher should connect this to the larger biblical theme that pride in success is a deadly snare and that all glory belongs to God. Alongside this runs a theology of righteous leadership, for David 'administered justice and equity to all his people.' God honors leaders who are just, fair, and faithful in the unglamorous work of governing, not merely those who win battles. And in the rejected kindness of the Ammonites the chapters teach that the people of God do good even when good is refused.

The lesson also aims squarely at the formation of the student. The believer is being shaped to handle success without pride, to treat resources and opportunities as a stewardship dedicated to God, to lead with integrity in whatever sphere God has given, and to keep doing good without bitterness when kindness is thrown back. Above all, the student learns humility, the settled conviction that we depend on God for every victory and owe Him every thanks. This is the character of Christ, who though He is Lord of all, served, gave, and trusted the Father, and through whom God now gives us the ultimate victory.

Question 1

Student Question:

What does the repeated statement that 'the LORD gave victory to David wherever he went' (18:6, 13) teach us about the true source of every triumph God's people enjoy?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Chapter 18 surveys David's wide-ranging victories: over the Philistines, Moab, Hadadezer of Zobah, the Syrians of Damascus, and Edom. The military details are real, but the Chronicler's interpretive key appears twice, in 18:6 and 18:13: 'And the LORD gave victory to David wherever he went.' The repetition is deliberate. The victories belong to David's record, but the credit belongs to God.

This refrain is the theological backbone of the whole section. Israel's strength was never finally in chariots or numbers but in the LORD. David's success was the outworking of God's providence and covenant faithfulness, not merely the fruit of his generalship.

The lesson is timeless and easily forgotten. Every triumph God's people enjoy, in any sphere, is ultimately a gift from His hand. To forget this is to slide toward the pride that says, as Moses warned, 'my power and the might of my hand have gotten me this' (Deuteronomy 8:17).

For the church, this reframes how we read our own 'victories,' answered prayers, growth, provision, perseverance. We acknowledge God as the source, and our successes become occasions for thanksgiving rather than self-congratulation.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Every triumph God's people enjoy is ultimately a gift from His hand.
- Israel's true strength was the LORD, not chariots or numbers.
- The refrain guards against the pride of crediting our own power.
- Victories become occasions for thanksgiving, not self-congratulation.

Discussion Prompts

- Why does the Chronicler repeat 'the LORD gave victory'?
- How does crediting God change the way we view our successes?
- What recent 'victory' should you be thanking God for rather than yourself?

Question 2

Student Question:

In what area of recent success have you quietly credited yourself, and how can you return the glory to God who gave the victory?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question turns the refrain inward. We are quick to thank God for help in hardship and slow to credit Him in success, where pride finds its easiest foothold. The honest believer examines where he has quietly taken credit that belongs to God.

The temptation is subtle because the effort was often genuinely ours. We did work hard; we did make wise choices. But the strength to work, the wisdom to choose, the opening of the opportunity, all of these were God's gifts. The victory was given even where the labor was real.

Application calls for a deliberate return of glory: naming a specific recent success and consciously thanking God as its source. This is not false modesty but accurate accounting.

Encourage the student that returning glory to God is freeing. The pressure to be the source of our own success is exhausting; resting in God as the giver lets us enjoy the gift without the burden of self-worship.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- We thank God in hardship but easily take credit in success.
- Real effort does not cancel the truth that the victory was given.
- Returning glory to God is accurate accounting, not false modesty.
- Resting in God as giver frees us from the burden of self-worship.

Discussion Prompts

- In what recent success have you quietly credited yourself?
- How can you deliberately return the glory to God this week?
- Why is acknowledging God as the giver freeing rather than diminishing?

Question 3

Student Question:

David dedicated the spoils of war to the LORD (18:7-11); what does it mean to treat success as a stewardship offered back to God rather than a trophy kept for self?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

David took the gold, silver, and bronze gained from his conquests and 'dedicated' them to the LORD (18:7-11), along with spoil from many nations. The spoils of victory became material for worship and, later, for the temple Solomon would build. Success was not hoarded; it was consecrated.

This models a vital principle: success is a stewardship, not a trophy. What God gives through our victories is given to be used for His purposes, not merely for our comfort or status. David's instinct was to turn winnings into worship.

The contrast with worldly ambition is sharp. The world treats success as a possession to display; the believer treats it as a trust to dedicate. The gold that could have decorated David's palace was set apart for the house of God.

For the church, this challenges how we handle the fruit of our successes, our money, gifts, influence, time. The question is not merely 'What did I achieve?' but 'How will I dedicate what I have gained to the Lord?'

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Success is a stewardship to be dedicated, not a trophy to be kept.
- What God gives through victory is meant for His purposes.
- The believer turns winnings into worship.
- The fruit of success (money, gifts, influence) is held in trust for God.

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean to treat success as a stewardship rather than a trophy?
- How did David turn his spoils into worship?
- What have you gained that you could dedicate to the Lord's service?

Question 4

Student Question:

What 'spoils' (resources, abilities, opportunities) has God given you through your victories, and how might you dedicate them to His service?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question applies David's dedication of spoils to the student's own resources. Every believer has gained things through God-given victories: skills honed, money earned, doors opened, influence acquired. The question is what we will do with them.

The principle of dedication is concrete. It asks us to identify specific 'spoils' and consciously offer them to God's service, the professional skill used to bless the church, the income shared with those in need, the influence leveraged for the gospel.

There is a subtle accountability here. Resources left undedicated tend to drift toward self. David's deliberate act of dedication is a model of intentional stewardship, setting things apart for God before they are absorbed by self-interest.

Encourage the student that this is joyful, not grim. Dedicating our spoils to God connects our ordinary gains to His eternal purposes and lets us see our work and successes as part of His kingdom.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Every believer has 'spoils' (skills, money, opportunities) to dedicate.
- Dedication is concrete and intentional, naming specific resources.
- Undedicated resources drift toward self-interest.
- Dedicating our gains connects ordinary success to God's eternal purposes.

Discussion Prompts

- What specific resources has God given you through your successes?
- How could you dedicate one of them to His service this week?
- What keeps resources from drifting toward self rather than God?

Question 5

Student Question:

Why does the Chronicler pause to note that David ‘administered justice and equity to all his people’ (18:14), and what does it reveal about the kind of leadership God honors?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Amid the conquests, the Chronicler pauses for a quiet but crucial verse: ‘So David reigned over all Israel, and he administered justice and equity to all his people’ (18:14). Then follows a list of officials. The point is that godly leadership is not only about winning battles but about governing rightly.

Justice and equity ‘to all his people’ is striking. Good government protects the weak as well as the strong, treats the poor as fairly as the powerful. David’s greatness is measured not only by his victories but by his fairness, the unglamorous, daily work of righteous administration.

The list of officials shows a kingdom ordered with integrity: a recorder, priests, a secretary, commanders, each in his place. Faithful leadership builds structures of accountability and justice, not a cult of personality around the leader.

For us, this teaches that God honors integrity in the ordinary exercise of responsibility. The leader God commends is just, fair, and faithful in the daily grind of governing, not merely impressive in moments of triumph.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Godly leadership governs rightly, not just wins battles.
- Justice ‘to all’ protects the weak as well as the powerful.
- Faithful leadership builds structures of accountability and integrity.
- God honors fairness in the daily, unglamorous work of governing.

Discussion Prompts

- Why does the Chronicler pause to note David’s justice and equity?
- What does ‘justice to all his people’ require of a godly leader?
- How is integrity in ordinary responsibility as important as visible success?

Question 6

Student Question:

Where do you carry responsibility over others (at home, work, or in the church), and how can you pursue justice and fairness more faithfully there?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question applies David’s righteous administration to the student. Almost everyone holds some authority: parents over children, employers over workers, elders and teachers in the

church, anyone with influence over others. The call is to exercise that authority with justice and fairness.

The text presses us to think about how we treat those under our care, especially the vulnerable. Are we fair to those who cannot repay or retaliate? Do we use authority to serve, or to serve ourselves? David's 'equity to all' is the standard.

Application is specific to the student's spheres. In the home, fairness and patience with children; at work, honest dealing with subordinates; in the church, faithful, impartial service. Integrity in these ordinary arenas is the proving ground of character.

Encourage the student that faithfulness in small authority is how Christ shapes us for larger trust, and that just, servant-hearted leadership reflects the character of God Himself, who 'loves justice' and cares for the lowly.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Nearly everyone holds some authority requiring justice and fairness.
- How we treat the vulnerable reveals the integrity of our leadership.
- Authority is for serving others, not serving ourselves.
- Faithfulness in small authority prepares us for larger trust.

Discussion Prompts

- Where do you carry responsibility over others?
- How can you pursue greater justice and fairness in that sphere?
- How does servant-hearted leadership reflect the character of God?

Question 7

Student Question:

When David's kindness to the Ammonites was rejected and answered with insult (19:1-6), what does this teach about doing right even when our good will is misread or refused?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

David sought to show kindness to Hanun of the Ammonites out of respect for his late father (19:1-2). But Hanun's advisors poisoned his mind, accusing David's envoys of being spies, and the king humiliated them, shaving them and cutting off their garments (19:3-4). Good will was met with insult, and a needless war followed.

The episode is a sober portrait of a fallen world. Kindness is sometimes misread, suspected, or thrown back in the giver's face. David's good intention was genuine, yet it was refused and answered with hostility. Doing right does not guarantee a grateful response.

The lesson is not that we should stop doing good, but that we should do good without depending on the response. David's kindness was right regardless of how Hanun received it. The rightness of an act does not hinge on its reception.

The New Testament makes this explicit: 'Repay no one evil for evil... so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all' (Romans 12:17-18). We are responsible for our own faithfulness, not for the other's response. Kindness rejected is still kindness rightly offered.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Kindness is sometimes misread, suspected, or refused.
- Doing right does not guarantee a grateful response.
- We do good without depending on how it is received.
- The rightness of an act does not hinge on the other's response.

Discussion Prompts

- Why did David's kindness to the Ammonites end in war?
- How do we keep doing good when good is refused?
- What does Romans 12 add to how we handle rejected kindness?

Question 8

Student Question:

When has your kindness been misunderstood or thrown back at you, and how do you keep doing good without growing bitter?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question applies the rejected kindness to the student's experience. Most of us have known the sting of good will misunderstood, a gesture suspected, generosity taken for granted, help thrown back at us. The danger in such moments is bitterness.

Bitterness grows when we make our kindness conditional on a return. We help expecting gratitude, and when it does not come, resentment takes root. The remedy is to offer kindness to God, doing good as unto the Lord, who sees and rewards, rather than as a transaction with people.

Application invites honest reflection on a specific wound and a specific temptation to bitterness, and then a deliberate choice to keep doing good without keeping score. Forgiveness and continued kindness break the cycle.

Encourage the student that this is the path Christ walked, doing good to those who rejected Him, and that the Father's reward is sure even when human gratitude fails. We keep our hearts soft by remembering whose servants we are.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Rejected kindness tempts us toward bitterness.
- Bitterness grows when kindness is made conditional on a return.
- Doing good 'as unto the Lord' frees us from keeping score.
- Christ modeled continued good to those who rejected Him.

Discussion Prompts

- When has your kindness been misunderstood or thrown back at you?
- How do you keep from growing bitter when good is refused?
- How does doing good 'as unto the Lord' guard your heart?

Question 9

Student Question:

Across these chapters God gives victory, the giants fall, and the credit goes to the LORD (18:6; 20:4-8); how does this guard us against pride in success and teach us that humility, not self-congratulation, is the right response to every win, and how does it point us to depend on God who alone gives the victory?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

These chapters press home a single, weighty truth: God gives the victory, and therefore humility, not self-congratulation, is the only fitting response to success. The refrain 'the LORD gave victory to David wherever he went' (18:6, 13) governs everything, and even the dramatic fall of the giants in chapter 20 (20:4-8), the towering descendants of Rapha cut down, is recorded not to glorify the warriors but to display the God who hands His people every win.

Pride in success is one of the deadliest snares in Scripture. 'Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall' (Proverbs 16:18). The reason is plain: pride steals from God the credit that is His, and a God who shares His glory with no one (Isaiah 42:8) will not bless a heart that robs Him. Success, more than failure, is where saints stumble, because winning whispers that we are the source of our own strength.

Scripture's antidote is the deliberate remembering of dependence. Moses warned Israel not to say 'my power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth,' but to 'remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power' (Deuteronomy 8:17-18). David himself confessed it: 'Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God' (Psalm 20:7). The humble heart does not deny its efforts; it simply refuses to forget the Giver behind every gift.

This dependence is not weakness; it is reality. We did not give ourselves life, breath, ability, or opportunity. Every victory we taste, in work, in family, in ministry, in the spiritual life, comes

from the hand of God. To live in humble dependence is simply to live in the truth, and it is the soil in which thanksgiving and joy grow. The proud man is anxious, guarding a glory he cannot sustain; the humble man rests, knowing the victory was never his to manufacture.

Ultimately this points us to the greatest victory of all, which we did not win and could not win. 'Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Corinthians 15:57). The triumph over sin and death is wholly God's gift in Christ. If even our salvation is a victory given and not achieved, how much more should every lesser success drive us to humble, dependent gratitude rather than pride. The right response to every win, from the battlefield to the everyday, is to bow low and thank the God who gave it.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God gives the victory; humble dependence, not self-congratulation, is the right response.
- Pride in success is a deadly snare (Proverbs 16:18); success is where saints often stumble.
- God will not share His glory; pride robs Him of credit that is His alone (Isaiah 42:8).
- The antidote is deliberate remembering of dependence (Deuteronomy 8:17–18; Psalm 20:7).
- Humble dependence is reality, not weakness; it is the soil of thanksgiving and joy.
- The greatest victory, over sin and death, is wholly God's gift in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Discussion Prompts

- Why is success often more spiritually dangerous than failure?
- How does remembering our dependence on God guard us from pride?
- How does the victory God gives us in Christ reshape our response to every lesser win?

Question 10

Student Question:

Looking back across these chapters, name one specific way Jesus is forming you to lead with integrity, to do good without bitterness, and to stay humble in success.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This capstone gathers the threads of the section: leading with integrity, doing good without bitterness, and staying humble in success. The student names one specific way Jesus is forming him through these chapters.

Possible fruit to name: a greater fairness and faithfulness in the authority one holds; a resolve to keep doing good even when it is refused; a humility that credits God for every victory; a habit of dedicating one's 'spoils' to the Lord; a freedom from the anxiety of self-made success.

The aim is specificity that draws all three emphases together. Christ is forming a leader who is just, a servant who is kind without keeping score, and a winner who stays low before God. These are not separate virtues but facets of His own character.

Close by lifting the eyes to Jesus, the Son of David, who led with perfect justice, did good to those who rejected Him, and though Lord of all, humbled Himself, and through whom God gives us the final victory. We are being conformed to His image in the very arenas these chapters describe.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Integrity in leadership, kindness without bitterness, and humility in success belong together.
- These virtues are facets of the character of Christ.
- Spiritual formation is named in specifics.
- Christ, the Son of David, models just leadership, persistent good, and humility, and gives us the final victory.

Discussion Prompts

- How is Jesus forming you to lead with integrity in your sphere?
- What single, concrete change will help you do good without bitterness or stay humble in success?
- How does the example of Christ shape the way you handle authority, kindness, and victory?