

Toward an Enterprising Faith An Article for the Chalcedon Website

Ronald Kirk
Created March 12, 2002
Modified January 6, 2003

1 Chronicles 28 illustrates God's work in action in real peoples' real lives. Faith is far more than salvation. Faith submits to God in action. Faith sees territory for godly Enterprise. In the end, every endeavor in life redounds to the growth of Christ's Kingdom when Christians follow the Biblical pattern for an active and enterprising faith.

Now David assembled at Jerusalem all the leaders of Israel: the officers of the tribes and the captains of the divisions who served the king, the captains over thousands and captains over hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance and possessions of the king and of his sons, with the officials, the valiant men, and all the mighty men of valor (vs.1, NKJ throughout).

Notice the crowd King David has assembled. He has surrounded himself with men of strength and accomplishment. The term "mighty man of valor" identifies a man of both physical and mental strength—the strength of character required of a soldier who hazards his life as a matter of course. These are the movers and shakers, the enterprisers of the kingdom.

Then King David rose to his feet and said, "Hear me, my brethren and my people: I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made preparations to build it. But God said to me, 'You shall not build a house for My name, because you have been a man of war and have shed blood' (vss. 2-3).

Notice that God and David were at cross-purposes. David greatly desired to build a house for the Lord's holy things and a footstool for His feet, a place close to His people. What a lofty and admirable ambition! However, God's purpose is higher than David's purpose.

However the LORD God of Israel chose me above all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever, for He has chosen Judah to be the ruler; and of the house of Judah, the house of my father, and among the sons of my father, He was pleased with me to make me king over all Israel (vs. 4).

God does not cross David's purpose because He is against David. Rather, God exalts David to the highest prominence in the land. When we experience adversity, we ought not to assume God is against us. Rather, we ought to assume according to the promises of God, He desires to forward and exalt us as in 1 Peter 1:

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith; the salvation of your souls (1 Peter 1:6-9).

However, we must know that our sinful disposition or at least our limited understanding will often incline toward purposes which are not truly the best for ourselves, let alone the good of others. Faith

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requires we prepare for adversity in the things God desires us to do. Faith must also anticipate God's deflecting us to a different purpose than our first intent. We exist at His good pleasure, and not our own. At any rate, we ought to assume God intends good toward us, and not evil.

And of all my sons (for the LORD has given me many sons) He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. Now He said to me, 'It is your son Solomon who shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him to be My son, and I will be his Father. 'Moreover I will establish his kingdom forever, if he is steadfast to observe My commandments and My judgments, as it is this day.' (1 Chronicles 28:5-7)

God's purpose and blessing on David, is clearly far beyond his own. God speaks here to the fact that He will place Christ upon the eternal throne, where He now sits ruling and reigning at the right hand of the Father. Remember, God does not need a house in which to dwell. Nonetheless, Faith rightly assumes God's good will toward us as we undertake any enterprise for Him. If we are not idle, God will direct us where we are to go.

Now therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the congregation of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God, be careful to seek out all the commandments of the LORD your God, that you may possess this good land, and leave it as an inheritance for your children after you forever. As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. (vss. 8-9)

Faith requires trusting God not only in a generic way, but to make a life of seeking His ways. Life, in this sense is a continuous *education*. Let us admit we really do not enjoy humbling ourselves to learn. Learning means that we confess we lack something we need, or require correction in something which we are wrong. Who enjoys correction? Nevertheless, it is right not only to submit to correction, but also to seek out what God requires so that we may correct ourselves. Here is another element of enterprising faith. The promise is full of blessing. The consequence for neglect is dire.

David then in vs. 10 says, "Consider now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be strong, and do it." After having studied to find out God's requirements, He expects us to seek and undertake His work to walk in. Throughout the Scriptures, God has ordained His people to undertake this or that Enterprise. God's Enterprises are great and demanding. Man's part is to take strength and to push ahead. God's part brings the increase.

In vss. 11-18, David gives the architectural and furnishing plans for the Temple to Solomon, the plans God had sent by His Spirit. Then David provides the Gold, Silver and other fine raw materials for the work. Just so, according to the nature of His economic provision in this life, God provides raw materials to our enterprises of faith. God is great to provide every necessary and more.

However, raw material is not enough to become successful. It is not faith to go off half-cocked and ill-prepared thinking one will conquer the world alone. Taking on too much, more than God has granted is

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presumption, not faith. Apart from God, man can do nothing good. God provides what He is prepared to grant as a foundation for any work. Much of faith is finding the middle ground between complacency and ungoverned zeal. Complacency is laziness, and clearly bad. The unfaithful servant of Matthew 25 was cast out into uttermost darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. On the other hand, ungoverned zeal unnecessarily damages relationships, as we step on the toes (or worse) of others who serve God and are seeking to be obedient to Him.

In 1 Corinthians 3:3, Paul the Apostle says, “For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?” Envy is the Greek word *zelos*, which denotes just what it sounds like: **zeal**. In the Scriptures, this zeal may be used in a positive or, as here, in a negative sense. When people so presume upon their neighbor, evil results. When a zeal for God and His ways, produces constrained exercise of liberty, building something and not tearing down, blessing results.

Rather than practice unbridled zeal, it is our job to prepare ourselves for God’s great work. This work is that which God has prepared beforehand for us to walk in. The Word prescribes we do not despise the day of small things. All godly growth is exponential, as in compound interest. The growth curve remains flat for the longest time. Then, in due season, the curve turns and shoots upward. The key is to practice the investment principle. Invest by faith, with patience, not expecting immediate results. Be willing to have patience, breaking the great project down into small steps—each one readily doable in itself, but contributing to the whole.

Besides investing in our own work, it is our job to prepare our children to the fullest extent possible with the character for faith and the skills, and the material resources which they will need to build upon the work of the previous generations! Like David, parents, too, ought to make provision to help their children begin their Enterprise of life—in general and, where possible, very specifically. This certainly includes an education in character and faith to support the risk of enterprise. It should also include the necessary strategic skills which school and other activities provide.

God expects moral and material results. While the moral results are eternal in their immediate consequence, the material accomplishment fuels the eternal moral work. They both are important. This is Christian dominion. Work in this life is always at once material and spiritual. Nothing is secular except the manner in which we handle the holy things of God. Therefore, we ought to be providing a material base for our children. (However, just handing over great material resources to an unprepared character will prove to be quite wasteful and destructive.) This, too, requires faith.

Skipping ahead for a moment to verse 21, we note that God has a community of fellow workers to support the work, “And David said to his son Solomon, ‘Be strong and of good courage, and do it; do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD God; my God; will be with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you, until you have finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD.’” Thus, Christians ought to support their fellow-worker without expecting to control what they do. Such humble assistance requires even greater faith of all us would be supervisors! According to God’s economic principle, He distributes gifts individually as He wills, to create a spiritual and economic community which works both individually and together to grow in grace and produce the work of the Gospel in all things we do.

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Here is our confidence. God expects us to take on great works for Him. Yet He always is our Source and Strength. It takes faith to tackle something difficult, particularly when we are not sure whether He desires the work or not. How can we know? Try something which seems appropriate. Persevere and practice faith. Yet be willing to let the Lord correct and re-direct. This takes great faith, for what may seem failure to us, is merely God's grace correcting and guiding to the direction He desires. (Remember David's witness at the top of the passage.)

Wrapping up with verse 21, consider the need for leadership ability:

Here are the divisions of the priests and the Levites for all the service of the house of God; and every willing craftsman will be with you for all manner of workmanship, for every kind of service; also the leaders and all the people will be completely at your command.

An aspect of a contributing and building faith is leadership. Leadership also requires education. To be a leader, a servant with authority before the Lord, one must learn to submit to rightful authority. One cannot expect to learn from a teacher one resists. Here is an important reason to choose your teachers carefully, as submitting to them is in the nature of things. Jesus said, "It is enough to become like your teacher" (Matthew 10:25 and Luke 6:40). Furthermore, to become a leader, one must learn to stand alone. Leaders often find no one following at first. The world loves conformity, and is just as likely to do everything possible to force the leader back in among the crowd. Confidence in God and the willingness to walk with Him alone helps to create the character for leadership.

1 Chronicles 28 is a marvelous example of faith-demanding enterprise. The endeavor demands faith at every level of consideration. Faith for attempting a new thing. Faith to invest for the skills and material resources required. Faith to train our children and to serve others in their endeavors. In any such self-conscious effort for the Lord, influence for the Gospel and an eternal character ought to result.