



# VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

## In God We Trust

Getting It Right – 1 Chronicles 29:1–22  
Tim Badal | February 11, 2018



We're spending a couple months looking at what it means to trust God with all we are and all we have—our time, relationships, talents, treasure, and everything that is important to us. We're learning that trusting God is hard, even in the smaller aspects of our lives. Every day brings new struggles, things that tempt us not to trust Him. We end up trying to protect that which we value on our own. Today we're going to see why it's really important to trust God with everything we are and have. My hope is that these principles and insights will cause us to modify our lifestyles, so when those moments come when we have to choose whether or not to trust God, we'll be ready for them.

Once again we're in that season when the world gathers for the Olympics. They're exciting to watch and it's interesting to learn the stories of the Olympic athletes. Some of them have been practicing day in and day out for years, even decades, living a life of discipline so that when the time comes, they will be able to perform at the highest level. That time has come when they might see the fruit of all their hard work.

We too live in a time when we have to "get it right." We plan and prepare so that when obstacles come into our lives, we'll be able to trust God. But how do we do this preparation? In 1 Chronicles 29 we will see three principles that answer this question. But first, let me provide you with a little background for this story.

It takes place at the end of King David's reign over Israel. He was the great champion of God's people, a victor over the giant Goliath, then anointed by God to be king. He took the nation from a place of great turmoil under the leadership of Saul to a time of great prosperity. Though he was a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22), he still had sinned greatly. His youthful lusts and ambitions brought serious consequences, but this served to make him wiser and more careful in his choices.

As we read the chronicles of his life, we discover that David had a dream for what would be the crowning achievement of his reign—he wanted to build a temple for God. This would allow God to leave the tent in which He resided and have a permanent dwelling place in the city of Jerusalem. God had communicated to David that He desired a place where the people could come to worship Him, as well as provide a daily reminder that God was with His people as Emmanuel, God with us. But as David was preparing the building effort, the prophet Nathan came to him with a difficult message. Basically Nathan told David, "You aren't going to be the one who will build the temple." Think about that. He had dreamed and planned and gathered the materials and craftsmen to make it a reality, only to hear God say, "No." This wasn't easy for David to hear. He was king, and kings weren't really used to hearing "no."

Some of us may also be dreaming and preparing for something, only at some point to hear God say no to all our dreams and preparations. In those moments, when God's will is different from ours, will we trust? Today we'll see that in his situation, David chose to trust God, even when God's plans were different from his. It's hard when we want to go one way, but God takes us in a different direction.

God's plan was that David's son Solomon would be the man who would build the temple. Solomon would be the one who would live to see the crowning achievement of his father's reign. As we read the story today, ask yourself why David was not angry or sad, or at least frustrated, because he was not permitted to live out his dream. In his disappointment, he was still able to peacefully

accept God's will. In fact, he continued to give generously and model generosity for the people in preparation for Solomon to complete the temple. How did David reach the point where he was able not only to accept the "no," but to embrace the role he was still allowed to have? I think the answer is found in his understanding of three very important concepts.

I'm not going to say a lot about these concepts, because these are ideas that either we get, or we don't. Either we choose to trust God and believe what He says about Himself and about us, or we choose not to believe. But if we get these three concepts right, we will live in fellowship with God. If we get them right, we'll have God's blessing in our lives. If we get them right, we'll know we are living lives about which God will one day say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

If we don't live out these three basic truths, we will be living a life of spiritual treason against God. I'll explain that in a moment. But first let's look at our text. We'll be examining 1 Chronicles 29:1–22, but for now I'll read verses 10–17:

*<sup>10</sup> Therefore David blessed the Lord in the presence of all the assembly. And David said: "Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. <sup>11</sup> Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. <sup>12</sup> Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. <sup>13</sup> And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name.*

*<sup>14</sup> "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you. <sup>15</sup> For we are strangers before you and sojourners, as all our fathers were. Our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no abiding. <sup>16</sup> O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name comes from your hand and is all your own. <sup>17</sup> I know, my God, that you test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. In the uprightness of my heart I have freely offered all these things, and now I have seen your people, who are present here, offering freely and joyously to you."*

## **Having right perspective involves understanding the concept of ownership.**

The first of the three principles I want you to understand is the principle of ownership. If we're going to get life right, we've got to come back to the heart of all things. As we look at all that is around us, we need to ask, "Who owns this?" David says over and over and over again that he isn't the owner—God is. One of the most elementary truths that should be taught, not only in our churches but in our nurseries, is that God owns everything. When we start from that premise, everything else finds its place. Our world is filled with the temptation to think the exact opposite—that we own all of this, that the world is our kingdom and that this is our opportunity to make our names great.

But David, who is the king of Israel, announces to his people, "God is the One Who owns it all." In verse 11 he says, "*Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory...for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all.*"

When we say God owns everything, some of us easily give tacit approval: "I've got it. God is the Owner of all things. Good. Now we can move on." It's important that we realize all that's involved when this principle is lived out.

### **As Owner, God determines the rules, then we follow.**

We must ask ourselves if we live in such a way that we acknowledge that God determines the rules. Do we follow those rules? If He truly is the Owner and Ruler over everything, then He alone determines how His universe should operate. Instead, we live in a world that believes, "My feelings, my desires, my wants trump everything else." That is from the pit and smells like smoke.

God created this world and from eternity past He had in mind how it should look and operate. He formed us out of the dust of the earth and breathed life into us—and He has determined where we live, our purposes and our destiny. Therefore we must approach God as the One Who determined all the rules and Who set everything in place. We must realize, "Who are we to argue with Him?"

Job started arguing with God—and who could blame him? His life had been plunged into sudden sorrow. But after Job questioned God, God had some questions for him: "Were you there when I created the world? Were you there when I put the waters and the mountains on their foundations? Were you there when I placed the birds in the air and the animals in their places of habitat?" Job had to admit he wasn't there, and then God responded in a very polite way: "Then shut your mouth, Job, because you are not the owner." We too are placed here by God and are owned by God. He allows us to live in His creation, but our response must be, "Okay, Creator and Owner, how should I live? What is my purpose in Your world? I won't move until I hear from You."

We see this at the beginning of verse one. Even the king of the mighty nation of Israel had to stop and wait for direction from God: "*And David the king said to all the assembly, 'Solomon my son, whom alone God has chosen, is young and inexperienced, and the work is great, for the palace will not be for man but for the Lord God.'*"

We can just imagine that this was hard for David to say, in that the temple had been his dream to see come to pass as the crowning achievement of his kingdom and the ultimate honor for God. But God had told him no. David didn't argue, nor did he disobey God. He trusted that God's ways were higher than his ways and God's thoughts were higher than his (Isaiah 55:8–9). Thus he was able to humble himself under God's rulership, following the instruction he had been given.

If the king of Israel can do this, surely we common people should also be able to submit to God's rule, but it's hard when our desires begin to erode our acceptance of God's ownership of everything. You see, we too have dreams and plans and desires, just as David did, often with the illusion that we deserve and have a right to some of these things. But this is where our trust in God is tested. Can we humble ourselves and place ourselves in His hands, realizing that He does what is best for us? Rather than competing against Him, can we trust Him?

David was at that place. He was willing to only play a part in a project with God rather than lead a project without Him. This is where we need to be as well. Only as we understand God's true ownership of our lives and circumstances will we be willing to "play second fiddle" to Him. If we don't, we'll be like the devil, who rebelled against God's order.

### **As Owner, God dispenses His riches to all.**

If we only thought of God's ownership as being the One Who makes the rules, we could easily see Him as a tyrant or dictator. We see dictatorships in our world and realize how oppressive that is to people in these countries, as is true in North Korea. Recently I watched the story of a journalist who went into North Korea and saw how the food was being rationed and how many of them lacked electricity overnight. Satellite pictures show that right after twilight, all of Asia is illuminated, but North Korea is pitch black. It demonstrates how their dictator determines the rules but extends no grace to his subject.

By contrast, God is a loving King Who dispenses His riches to all. As Christians, we should be more aware than anyone that He is a giving God. We have experienced what Paul calls the most indescribable gift of all—God's gift of His Son to ransom us from sin and from the devil, restoring us to Himself. As a result, we are children of the great King and heirs of the riches of His kingdom.

Before you think only the inner circle gets His riches, we must remember that God gives many gifts to believers and unbelievers alike. God gives us the sun, the rains—or in our case, the snow. Even the man who hates and curses and rebels against God is still given life. He still has 70-some years to live and love. We read in Lamentations 3:22–23 that God's mercies are new every morning. Today we woke up with brain waves, with oxygen in our lungs—and it's not just the followers of God who receive these things. God is generously dispensing riches on all humanity.

David says in verses 12–14:

*Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name. "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you."*

God is the Owner Who makes the rules, but in His gracious love He has determined that it will be Christmas Day every day. We give St. Nicholas a lot of credit, but he only brings gifts one day a year. Each and every day, God is overwhelmingly generous with us. We were rebellious sinners, at war with God, yet He chose to give His enemies generosity and love, pouring out on us more and more gifts. If in your rebellion you can't see this, you are a fool. God is a gracious and kind God Who has been faithful to all generations (Psalm 100:5, 119:90).

### **As Owner, God demands a return on His investment.**

As Owner, God determines the rules, He dispenses His riches and He demands a return on His investment. It angers God that we would live in His house, eat His food, drink His water, work with His strength, move with bodies that belong to Him and think with brains that belong to Him, but then we take the glory all to ourselves instead of returning it to Him.

We saw a demonstration of humility this past week after the Super Bowl. Humble people quickly deflect the glory they're receiving to someone else. Nick Foles did a long interview after the game with ESPN that was then played the next morning. The first five or six minutes of that interview had nothing to do with him. Here is a back-up quarterback who's just beaten the best team in the NFL, making him one of the greatest underdogs in football history. But what he chose to talk about first was his parents, family, team and coaches. Then what does he talk about? He says, "And then there's Jesus. As great as all these other people are, there's Jesus. I would be lost without Him."

God isn't demanding your money or your possessions. What He demands is your allegiance. Once He gets that, everything else will follow. But if He doesn't have your allegiance, there's a problem. The Bible says God's wrath is being stored up against those who say, "This is my world. This is my kingdom. This is my stuff." When you say that, God rightfully will respond, "No, it's not. It's Mine."

We must believe and demonstrate to the world that we are not kings or queens of our little kingdoms. Rather, no matter what accolades people give us, we must recognize and proclaim, "We are subjects, commoners in the great Kingdom of the King of kings and Lord of lords. He has been the Lord of times past and will be into all eternity, so we live to please the God of the universe, Jehovah. Do you know Him?"

If we don't believe and live boldly in this reality, we are committing spiritual treason against God. Ownership is God's role and we must continually bless Him for His faithful and generous rule over us. Even though there are times when we don't understand His ways or why He allows certain things in our lives, we can say in humility and hope, "God, You are able to do all things well. So even when I don't get it, I trust You."

## **Having right perspective involves understanding the concept of stewardship.**

Where then does this leave us? What's our role? This is the second principle: the principle of stewardship. Once we understand that God owns and controls all of reality—that He is, as David says in 29:11, the One with *"the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty"*—then we can focus on our part, which is stewardship.

To be a steward means to be a manager of someone else's possessions. David wanted to build something for God—a great tribute and a place that represented God's greatness to the world. Solomon's temple became that place, taking people's breath away. As we read in 1 Chronicles 29:2–9, it was filled with precious stones and other valuable materials. Yet at no point did David or the people think they were giving their treasures to God. They weren't taking something from their little kingdoms and transferring these things to His big Kingdom. David says in verse 14, *"But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you."*

So in essence what David realizes is that stewardship is taking from God's left hand and putting it into His right hand. God gives us things, which we then offer back to God. "You gave me life—what do You want done with it?" We should seek to give all that we are back to Him. We didn't create it and we have no right to grasp onto it tightly. We must say, "My hands are open, because all these things are Yours."

### **Stewards recognize who they are.**

Good stewards recognize that they are stewards. David says, *"Who am I, and what is my people?"* In other words, "We're small. We're finite. We're broken. We're sinful." When God is big in our lives, we inevitably realize how small we are. But when we are big in our own lives, God becomes small. David is acknowledging, "God, You are big." In Psalm 8:4 he puts it this way: *"What is man, that you are mindful of him?"* In other words, "How can You be so great and awesome and still concern Yourself with a bald man who lives in a house in Hinckley? How can You be concerned about a group of people in a place called Sugar Grove? How can You love and care for and protect them? Surely You have bigger fish to fry in this world."

A steward recognizes that God loves the little things He's created, including men and women. He loves us so much that He has made us the crowning jewel of His creation. While He spared His Son when the angels fell, still when puny men and women—who are lesser than the angels according to the writer of Hebrews—fell into sin in the Garden, God promised that His Son would come and wash our sins clean.

Why would He do that? Because He's a good and gracious God. And when we see the goodness and the graciousness of God, we realize how small we are in this world. That is what humbles us. No matter the titles or glory we might receive, they are nothing in the grand scheme of things. Little people giving other little people big titles doesn't mean much. What really matters is what the God of the universe says about you and me.

We watch the award shows, where little people give other little people awards, and we hear how amazed they are to receive them. But it's sort of like one rat telling another rat, "You're doing a great job." As stewards, it should never matter what other people say about us. It only matters what God is saying about us, because He's our Owner and Ruler; we are simply managers of what He owns and does.

## Stewards respond with action.

We cannot just believe in our heads that God is the Owner and Ruler of the universe and then leave it at that. If we truly believe these things, it will move us to action. David says:

*But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you. For we are strangers before you and sojourners, as all our fathers were. Our days on the earth are like a shadow.*

In other words, he says, “Our lives are but a shadow and all we have came from You. So what are we to do with what we have?” David understood that we live out the truth that God is the Owner and we are His stewards by doing things for Him. It’s not that what we do is done to position ourselves more favorably with God. Rather, our actions confirm our understanding that we and all we have belong to Him.

The other day I told my youngest son, “I need you to go upstairs and get me a pair of pants.” But he had other things that were more important to him, so he responded, “Come on, Dad. I’m busy.” But then, with a stomp of his foot, he said, “I’ll do it.” I heard every step going up the stairs. Then as I looked up the stairs, my pants came flying down on me. That’s understandable in a young child’s heart. But I then said to my son, “Do I stomp out of here when I go to work to earn money for this roof over your head and food for your belly? Do I stomp to work because I don’t get to play with my friends and do the things old dads want to do? Knowing that I get to share with you, am I doing these things lovingly? You’re angry because I’ve interrupted your plans.”

Some of us get angry and stomp our feet against God. “God, I’ll give You this, but I could have a bigger TV, a nicer house, a better car. I could have more money in my retirement fund. But I guess I’ll give those things up.” No, David speaks of offering their gifts willingly. Our hearts should give freely—not out of duty, but out of delight, thinking, “God, it’s a privilege to demonstrate my gratitude and love for You because of all You’ve given me.”

## Stewards realize what is important.

We recognize who we are and we respond with action, because we realize what is important. Stewardship is a test. Look at verse 17: *“I know, my God, that you test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. In the uprightness of my heart I have freely offered all these things, and now I have seen your people, who are present here, offering freely and joyously to you.”*

When David realized he would not be the one to build the temple, he didn’t pout or get depressed. He said, “I accept that it’s not me but my son who will build the temple. He’s inexperienced and he’ll need some help.” So David willingly played the part God allowed him to have. He gathered the materials needed for the temple to be built, as described in verses two through nine.

First, he took items from the national treasury. He said, “We’ve got money in the Israel bank account. I’ll withdraw a certain amount from there.” All the gold, silver, bronze, iron and wood were listed as what he withdrew. Then he said, “That’s not enough. This place will be a palace for my God—not just my country’s God. Because He has loved me and given me so much, I’m going to go to my personal bank account and withdraw more items.” These are listed in verse four: gold, silver, bronze, wood, and colored stones.

So he released money from the national treasury and from his personal bank. Then he said to the people, “Who will join me? Who loves God so much that they will willingly and freely give to the building of this great temple?” Stewardship is not a spectator sport; it is lived out in action. Notice that these actions aren’t small. These things were important to them. But the people knew these things came from God and belonged to Him, so they gave freely.

## Stewards rely on God’s grace.

They realized what is important and they responded with actions. But most importantly, they relied on God’s grace. How are we going to do this? We can tell the world that we realize we’re not in charge, that God is. We understand ownership and stewardship. But even our minds, strength, ability to work and earn wealth, all these also come from God’s hand.

God has even allowed some of us to accrue large amounts of wealth. This wealth is given both to believers and unbelievers. Nowhere in Scripture do we see God being angry with rich people. David was very wealthy. He gave more personally than all the other people combined. He was the richest man in the kingdom, but God never shamed him for being rich. Rather, God commands the rich to be generous with their riches, and David modeled this.

We in America are among the richest people in the world. You might not feel it, but even if you’re poor in America, you’re rich everywhere else. So we need to lead in generosity, not only toward God but toward others. This is not our home. This is our Father’s world and we need to live as though we understand that, relying on His grace.

Consider the blessing David prays over his son in verse 19: *“Grant to Solomon my son a whole heart that he may keep your commandments, your testimonies, and your statutes, performing all, and that he may build the palace for which I have made provision.”* David was saying, “Lord, this is a big task. It will be a tribute to You, so we need to be prayed up.”

We too need to pray for one another, that we will rely on God’s grace and that He will enable us to obey all He has commanded us. Every day, as soon as we wake up, the devil and the world tempt us to believe we are the rulers in our lives and God isn’t. We need His reminders that He is in charge as the Owner of our lives and our possessions. We rely on His grace to keep us out of trouble.

### **Stewards relish the opportunity.**

If we’re giving everything back to God—if we offer Him everything in our lives, our marriages, our families, and our jobs—we might think that will be hard and frightening. But the people in David’s day were not afraid. They relished the opportunity to give what they possessed back to God. You would think the sacrifice would have made them despondent, but it did not. Verse nine states, *“Then the people rejoiced because they had given willingly, for with a whole heart they had offered freely to the Lord. David the king also rejoiced greatly.”* In verse 22 we read, *“And they ate and drank before the Lord on that day with great gladness.”* These people weren’t sorrowful or regretful. They were enjoying the opportunity to live as stewards in God’s Kingdom. Some of us are trying to build our own kingdom, not understanding how great it is to live in God’s house.

I’m watching a show on Netflix called “Royal Pains.” It’s about a doctor who works in Hampton, where the rich and famous live. Some of the houses look more like castles. In fact, the main character lives in a castle with a billionaire. He has to be reminded from time to time that he’s living in someone else’s house, as great as it is. The writers of the show decided he would drive an old Saab convertible. Every time he gets in that car, he remembers that he doesn’t own anything except an old, run-down car.

Sometimes God gives us worn-out things to remind us that this isn’t our home. We didn’t buy it. We are stewards of His things. He has graciously allowed us to live freely. All He asks is that we acknowledge His ownership and kingship. If we ever start to assume these things are ours, the result will be devastating.

### **Having right perspective involves understanding the concept of worship.**

How do we get to a place of stewardship, of recognizing that God is the Owner of all things? Worship puts us as stewards in our proper place. It gives us a reason to allow our Owner to reign supreme in our lives. We see this in verses 20–22:

*Then David said to all the assembly, “Bless the Lord your God.” And all the assembly blessed the Lord, the God of their fathers, and bowed their heads and paid homage to the Lord and to the king. And they offered sacrifices to the Lord, and on the next day 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. And they ate and drank before the Lord on that day with great gladness.*

### **Stewardship is directly connected to our awe.**

Our proper stewardship starts with a heart of worship. Notice that they knelt and paid homage to God. Worship begins with awe—with our recognition of how great and awesome God is. Do we believe that? If our heart is not filled with awe, we will not worship. And if we do not worship, we will not come to realize God’s ownership, thus we won’t grasp the concept of stewardship.

Our hearts must worship. “God, You are great. I am small. Therefore I am in awe of all that You are, all that You’ve done, all that You do, all that You will do in the future. When I see You, my breath is taken away.” The awe-inspiring image Isaiah saw is what we should see: God, high and lifted up. The myriads of angels crying out, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty. His earth is filled with His glory” (Isaiah 6:3). How much awe do you feel when you think about God?

Four times in our text today David blesses the Lord. We know what blessing is. When someone sneezes, we say, “God bless you.” Even in the triteness of a response to a sneeze, we’re saying that God, in all His goodness, is the source of all blessing and goodness and grace. Usually when we speak of blessing, we consider God to be the initiator of those blessings and us to be the recipient. But David turns this around by speaking a blessing to God. How in the world can a puny man bless the invincible, invisible, all-knowing, all-powerful, ever-present God? How can we do that?

### **Stewardship is directly connected to our affection.**

First, we do this through our affection. “God, You are the great King of kings and Lord of lords. As I stand in awe of You, I love You. O God, how great You are. You not only know me by name—You even know the hairs on my head and the intimate details of my

life. You've told me that I can cast all my anxieties and care on You, because You care for me. And I respond with love for You and want to grow in that love toward You."

Basically we're saying we can't imagine living life apart from God, and our affection is expressed through our deep desire to know and understand God in relationship with Him. It says in Scripture that God doesn't want the blood of animals or other sacrifices. What He desires is a broken and contrite heart (Psalm 51:17), a heart that is ready to love Him as He has loved us.

### **Stewardship is directly connected to acknowledgement.**

Not only does stewardship involve affection, it also requires acknowledgement. When David says, "Bless You, Lord," he's reflecting something he says in verse 13: *"And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name."* Worship is awe. "Wow, God, You are awesome. I can't believe You do the things You do. How do You do that? It takes my breath away." Worship is affection—us singing our praises to Him and saying, "God, we love You and want a deeper relationship with You." Worship also acknowledges what God has done through gratitude. "Thank You for what You are doing—the mercies and grace You're giving us." It acknowledges, "God, You are the greatest of all."

I always wonder what unbelievers think when they visit a church. We're looking at screens. We're singing songs to an invisible God. How do they understand that? My prayer is that they'll learn from what they see and hear that God is incredibly great and that we're in love with this God. I hope they come to understand that we are thankful and desire to deflect back to Him all the glory and renown, as we sing, "Great are You Lord, and most worthy of our praise."

You and I will never be good stewards until we first become worshipers. Until we stand in awe, with affection for our King and our acknowledgement of all He's done, we will not open up our wallets, we will not open up our calendars, we will not open our hopes and dreams and plans. But when we become worshipers, we become people who see who we really are. We see God for Who He really is, then we open our lives and hearts and possessions to Him, saying, "God, I trust You, because You are the Owner. You've entrusted these things to me, so I give them back to You. My desire is to bring a return on your investment through more and more good things I can give back to You."

When we understand the concept of ownership, stewardship and worship, we will get it right. Some of us have some work to do, because we're not quite there. Just as those Olympic athletes were preparing for just this moment, we also have an opportunity today to get it right, just as David did. He allowed his earthly legacy to go way beyond what life would allow. When we do that, God will say to us one day as He did to David, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

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