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1 Chronicles 13

“Doing Things God’s Way”

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Much of what we read in 1 & 2 Chronicles are accounts that are also found in the books of 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings. This message by Pastor Gary centers on David’s desire to transport the Ark of the Covenant from its location in Kiriath Jearim to Jerusalem, the capital city of Israel, and how, tragically, the celebratory procession came to a screeching halt when Uzzah was struck dead by God.

In this study, we’ll learn about the four things the Lord wants to teach us that will help do things his way: pray, pursue holiness, live in accordance with the Word of God, and honor and display the Lord in all we do.

Historical Background

1. In order to understand what’s taking place in the account we’re studying today, we need the answers to a number of questions.
2. What is the Ark of the Covenant?
 - a. The Ark was made of acacia wood and it was overlaid with gold.
 - b. The dimensions were: 3¾ ft. long x 2¼ ft. wide x 2¼ ft. high.
 - c. The lid of the Ark was made of solid gold with gold cherubim (angelic order created by God) on top.¹
 - d. The articles inside the Ark were the 10 Commandments, Aaron’s budding staff, and a sample of manna.
 - e. The Ark represented the very presence of God, because the presence of God hovered over the Ark between the cherubim.

¹ The lid was also known as the Atonement Cover or Mercy Seat.

i. **1 Chronicles 13:6** - *“David and all the Israelites with him went to Baalah of Judah (Kiriath Jearim) to bring up from there the ark of God the Lord, who is enthroned between the cherubim - the ark that is called by the Name.”*

1. There are seven times the Bible tells us that God sits *“enthroned between the cherubim.”*

3. Why was it being transported?

a. The Ark was being transported to Jerusalem because David wanted God, as represented by the Ark, to be central to the nation.

4. Where had the Ark been?

a. The Ark had been kept at the private residence of a priest named Abinadab, in Kiriath Jearim, for nearly 70 years!

b. **1 Samuel 7:2** - *“It was a long time, twenty years in all, that the ark remained at Kiriath Jearim...”*

c. The Ark was in Kiriath Jearim 20 years before Saul became king, plus all 40 years of Saul’s reign, and the first 7½ years of David’s reign.

d. The Ark was there because the Philistines had captured it during a battle with the Israelites.

i. The Philistines put the Ark in the temple of their god, Dagon.

ii. God afflicted the Philistines with tumors, aka hemorrhoids, so they sent it back toward Israel on a cart drawn by cows.

iii. When the Ark came to the first town - Kiriath Jearim - it was taken to the home of Abinadab, and it had there it remained.

5. What did Uzzah do wrong and why did he die?

a. David assembled 30,000 men, according to bring the Ark back to Jerusalem, which was only a distance of about 13 miles.

i. **2 Samuel 6:1** - *“David again brought together out of Israel chosen men, thirty thousand in all.”*

b. **1 Chronicles 13:7** - *“They moved the ark of God from Abinadab’s house on a new cart, with Uzzah and Ahio guiding it.”*

c. When the oxen stumbled, Uzzah, who was out in front, put his hand out to steady the Ark, and God struck him dead for his irreverence.

d. Pastor Gary noted that this was a “fleshly” event if there ever was one, because they were doing things in ignorance and disobedience, and they should have known better.

i. They were transporting the Ark the wrong way.

1. The Ark was to be carried by priests on their shoulders, using poles that were inserted through rings on both sides.

2. They simply copied the way the Philistines chose to send the Ark back to Israel.
 3. We should never imitate the way the world does things, because we will be in serious trouble if we manage our money, raise our kids, relate to our spouse, conduct business, etc., the way the world operates!
 4. The goal of every Christian should be to live *in* the world, witness *to* the world, love the people *of* the world, but never be shaped *by* the world.
 5. There's no doubt that the Israelites were shaped by the world on this one.
- ii. There was a display of showmanship.
1. Uzzah and Ahio were out front leading the parade!
 - a. Uzzah's name means, strong one, and Ahio, means, brother.
 2. If the Ark had been transported the right way, with God being lifted up instead of being led along by Uzzah and Ahio, no one would have died.
 3. God's anger was not directed toward one man who tried to do what he thought was the right thing.
 4. God was sending a message to an entire nation, and subsequently to us, that we will pay a dear price if we try to do things our own way, in our own strength/flesh, when we are out front, and hoping God will just come along for the ride.
 5. This account is a tragic example of what happens when we take the lead and don't do things God's way.
 6. We are fortunate that God's grace is greater under the New Covenant, which evidenced by the fact that God doesn't typically outright kill people for their disobedience, but that doesn't mean that he can't or won't.
 - a. [Acts 5:1-11](#) gives the account of Ananias and Sapphira, a married couple, who lied about the amount of their offering in an effort to impress the Apostles.
 7. Pastor Gary noted that it was more common Old Testament times for people to get what they deserved when they were under the Law, but he chooses to extend mercy under the New Covenant, because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and not treat us as our sins deserve.
 8. [Psalm 103:9-12](#) - *"[The Lord] will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as*

the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."

9. It's important to remember, that while it may be true that we won't be killed for our disobedience when we don't do things God's way and resort to doing things our own fleshly way, it might result in:
 - a. The death of a marriage.
 - b. The death of a career.
 - c. The death of a business.
 - d. The death of a friendship or relationship.
 - e. The death of a church.

6. What did David do to rectify the situation?
 - a. David put the Ark in the home of Obed-Edom for three months while he sought the Lord.
 - b. After three months, he basically said, "Alright, lets do things God's way this time!"

Doing Things God's Way - Pray

7. **1 Chronicles 15:13** - *"It was because you, the Levites, did not bring it up the first time that the Lord our God broke out in anger against us. We did not inquire of him about how to do it in the prescribed way."*
8. We are prone to operate in the flesh most, when we pray least.

NOTE: Pastor Gary encouraged married couples considering divorce to commit to pray for 90 days to see what God wanted to do in their marriage and their lives. He urged couples to pray for three things: God's wisdom; for God to do a miracle; and for God to change them as individuals.

Doing Things God's Way - Pursue Holiness

9. **1 Chronicles 15:14** - *"So the priests and Levites consecrated themselves in order to bring up the ark of the Lord, the God of Israel."*
 - a. The KJV uses the word, sanctified, which, in Hebrew, means, to make morally and physically pure.

10. **2 Corinthians 7:1** - *“Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.”*
11. God calls each of us to live a life of moral purity.
12. A life of moral purity that isn't born out of “rules and regulations,” but a life that is born out of a relationship with the Lord that is motivated by his grace to do what is right.
13. **Titus 2:11-14** - *“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope - the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.”*

Doing Things God's Way - Live According To The Word Of God

14. **1 Chronicles 15:15** - *“And the Levites carried the ark of God with the poles on their shoulders, as Moses had commanded in accordance with the word of the Lord.”*
15. They started doing what God said and the way he said to do it.
16. In the same way, we must “get into the Bible” and read it.
 - a. **James 1:22** - *“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”*
17. Put Scripture into practice and you experience change in your life!

Doing Things God's Way - Honor And Display The Lord In All You Do

18. **1 Chronicles 15:15** - *“And the Levites carried the ark of God with the poles on their shoulders, as Moses had commanded in accordance with the word of the Lord.”*
19. The Bible tells the account of the great celebration that took place with the Ark of the Covenant was brought to Jerusalem, including the loud rejoicing, dancing, singing, and the playing of many instruments.

20. The way the Levites carried the Ark on their shoulders said something about the honor and esteem given to the Lord.
21. They lifted the Lord up, in a manner of speaking, because in their joy, they wanted to show honor, respect, and appreciation to the Lord, in addition to their desire to publicly put the Lord on display and parade him around for all to see and cheer.
22. In the same way, we need to remember that God is not to be led along or pushed along or pulled along; he is to be lifted up!
23. Some people will despise you because you want to be serious about the Lord.
 - a. [1 Chronicles 15:29](#) - *“As the ark of the covenant of the Lord was entering the City of David, Michal the daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David dancing and celebrating, she despised him in her heart.”*
 - b. [Matthew 5:11-12](#) - *“[Jesus said,] ‘Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven...’ ”*

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [1 Chronicles 13:1-14](#) to provide the foundation for this study.
3. Provide an overview of Pastor Gary's outline. (See Historical Background #3 - #5)
4. What are some of the ways doing things the way the world operates has brought trouble into your life?
5. How have you been “out front leading God” or hoping “God would come along for the ride”?
6. Have you experienced the “death” of a marriage, career, friendship/relationship, etc., because you were disobedient to God?
7. Read and discuss [Psalm 103:9-12](#).

8. Read and discuss [Acts 5:1-11](#), and focus on the blessing of God's grace and mercy in our day.
9. How have you been intentional about: prayer, pursuing holiness, living according to God's Word, and honoring and displaying the Lord in all you do?
10. What are some specific examples of times the Lord has answered prayer in your life?
11. Read and discuss [2 Corinthians 7:1](#).
12. What does it look like for a person to pursue holiness?
13. Read and discuss [James 1:22](#).
14. Read and discuss [Matthew 5:11-12](#).
15. Have you experienced negative feedback from family members, friends, etc., because you were serious about living according to the Word of God?
16. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences of times when they "honored and displayed" the Lord.
17. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's quote: "The goal of every Christian should be to live *in* the world, witness *to* the world, love the people *of* the world, but never be shaped *by* the world."
18. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).