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WINFIELD BIBLE CAMP - 2003

OUR FAITH: CHALLENGES AND CONSOLATIONS

LAST WORDS AT THE END OF AN AGE

Speaker: Bro. Andrew Hill

Study #3: David - Know and Serve God

Reading: 1 Chronicles 28:1-10

Thank you brother Larry and my dearly beloved brethren and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ and our dear young people.

We've just come from the teenage session, the teenage rehearsal! If you've ever been involved in rehearsals, you know we've had a very interesting morning. We have this play tonight, literally a few hours away and so we've really had a very enjoyable morning: some real highlights, some anxiety, a little bit of mirth, which we hope won't come through in the actual production; but they're a great bunch of young people. We've really been impressed with the way that they've cooperated, we've thoroughly enjoyed our time with the young people, it's really quite a credit to you as parents that these young people show an excellent spirit.

Well, we've come to David. We've considered in our classes, Moses and Joshua, now we come to David the beloved of Yahweh. He's old, he's now full of days; the prime of life had now passed and with it, many of his physical faculties. Yet his mind and his heart is set on a mighty project, preparing for the building of the temple and preparing his son, Solomon, to be the next king over Israel.

We'll first come to 1 Chronicles 22 and verse 5, ' David said, Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house that is to be builded for the LORD must be exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will therefore now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death'. We know, b&s, that Nathan the prophet told David that he was not to build the temple, yet if his son Solomon was to be the builder, then David took it upon himself to make the necessary preparations. With the plans and specifications, he would gather a vast quantity of building materials. So God gave David a vision of the temple, twice the size of the tabernacle, and the record says specifically that he received **the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit**; so, I'm sure, b&s, we can picture this aged warrior king, visualizing the temple, doing his sums, working out the quantities and estimating the amount of labour required. He was a project manager, could we say an architect? (can't really because, of course, God gave him the plans and the specs for that particular project)

but he certainly was in charge of this project. So with care and precision and quality, we find that David puts his heart and his mind to this magnificent project. The construction and the finishing treatments have never been seen since this side of the house of prayer for all nations. That, of course, will be absolutely spectacular for us to see, and for us to be involved in, because before our eyes will take shape a magnificent structure for all the world to admire.

We find in chapter 22 and verse 14, it says, 'Now, behold, in my trouble, I have prepared for the house of the LORD'. In my **trouble** (6040), and I'd rather prefer not the marginal rendition of that word; I personally prefer the idea of this word meaning 'affliction', and that I take to mean the afflictions of battle, because the resources came from Israel's conquest of Syria, of Zobah, of Hamath, Edom, Moab, Ammon, Amalek and the Philistines. We find that from chapter 18 verse 1. So out of the afflictions of all of those campaigns, we find this vast supply of materials, enormous quantities of various metals for the building. Exceeding magnificent of fame and of glory throughout all countries in chapter 22 verse 5. It uses that word 'magnifical' (1431), by that we don't mean 'magnificent' because literally the Hebrew has the sense of '**causing to magnify**', that is, to magnify Yahweh. All the buildings and the ceremonies were designed to magnify and celebrate the God of Israel. So the size doesn't matter, I mean, compared to the pyramids of Egypt or the hanging gardens of Babylon, it was quite small scale; this building had one function, and every detail to lift the hearts and minds of Israel in the Hallel praise of Yahweh. But, of course, plans and specifications are one thing, David saw the need to encourage his young son, in words that by now we should almost expect to come forward in our theme; words very reminiscent of the words of Moses and of Joshua. So we read in verse 11, 'Now, my son, the LORD be with thee; and prosper thou, and build the house of the LORD thy God, as He hath said of thee. Only the LORD give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel, that thou mayest keep the law of the LORD thy God. Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfil the statutes and judgments which the LORD charged Moses with concerning Israel: (and again, those same words, the same theme) be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed'. So he's calling upon Israel to get behind the young leader, we find that from verses 17 to 19, commanding all the princes of Israel to help Solomon his son.

So, b&s, every sign was there for them to believe, as Moses pointed out and as Joshua pointed out, that Yahweh was with them; like the campaigns of Joshua, God's hand was evident in their successful battles, and again we note the exhortation for us to believe. 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' For any project that we undertake, we do it not for the praise of the workers, but for the honour and the glory that might ascend to Yahweh. For us to undertake any good work, b&s, we must take it up with the same spirit, a good positive, wholehearted spirit of dedication. Also, when we do that, of positive encouragement to all the workers; that, with a willing heart, we all give of our best to our God, and that includes, of course, encouraging our young people.

Now we come to 1 Chronicles 23. Now in this chapter we find that this is the record of

David's plans for the worship of the nation and the duties of the priests and the Levites. We note that he organized the lowering of the age of the Levites from that of 30 to 20 in verse 27, and commissioned them as assistants to the priests in their 24 courses. So these priests and the sons of Aaron and the Levites shared on rotation, a weekly service in the temple, coming from their cities in different parts of the Land. I'm sure as sisters we can imagine how complicated that would be! we can well imagine that the careful planning of these orders, their specific duties in the temple, and in educating and in judging the nation. This is a huge change from tent worship to the temple worship, it's bringing about a new era of solemn praise in surroundings that would evoke heartfelt praise to Yahweh's name. So particular men of usable talent were raised up to lead the nation in worship, that they might not just sing but that they might sing with understanding. Chapter 25 verses 1, 2 and 7 indicate that these people, not only sang but they sang with understanding; notice the words of prophecy, prophesied and with instruction in those particular verses 1, 2, and 7. So these specially prepared singers were organized into their 24 courses. You know, there's a very lovely feature about this organization. What David did consciously was to go about this organization to emphasize the **family grouping of fathers and sons**. We won't read all the verses but you'll notice that from verses 2, 3, 4, and 6; so they were under the hands of their fathers. Now I think, b&s, there's something very beautiful about that blending of leadership and useful voice, fathers and sons singing in harmony, with understanding, singing fervently the psalms and the songs of Zion. So as they rehearsed their songs of praise each day of their lives, they would have been taught the finer points of detail, of exhortation, of exposition. So with voice and melody as family groups, they could lift their hearts and minds, in single-minded worship; so as the sun rose, the morning prayers and sacrifices were offered and many voices sang in beautiful harmony, in tune with the melody from many of the instruments.

All that, b&s, bore the mark of the hand of David. In its composition and in its arrangement. I want us, b&s, to see if we can project our hearts and our minds into the kingdom age? On a so much greater scale, will be the heartfelt songs of praise and thanksgiving from **immortal** voices, in their 24 orders surrounding their slain Lamb as their Redeemer, in the courts of that greater temple, on Zion's holy hill. Can you imagine the perfection of that praise? surely it will be one of the most thrilling gifts of the LORD to grant us the full expression of musical talent. Now we saw the talent of our brother Michael as he walked across to the piano over there and I was very impressed to hear him play that music, I sat back in awe and thought, 'there's a man of talent'. Many here have a similar talent. I don't I see those little tadpoles in a line and I know the voice must go up and the voice must go down, but that's about it; I think I can hold the line or hold the air, and beyond that I'm not any too sure; I enjoy singing but to me personally, I would absolutely love to have this little talent enlarged with immortal voice and understanding and ability, which I presently don't have! So I think I have a few sympathizers out there. I remember there was a brother in my youth in our meeting who was a wild-eyed Yorkshire man, and when he sang, flatttt, we sort of cringed a bit if we sat near him, because he sang with so much gusto, but droned on like that! I mean, he wasn't the only brother I've ever come across like that, but I'm sure we all fervently pray

for the kingdom to come for that brother to be given that enhanced talent and ability! But his heart was right so we appreciated his heart within him. So I just want us to try to lift our hearts and our minds to enter into the sheer joy, the matchless joy and wonder, be known to enter into those songs of praise and thanksgiving, to our God and to the Lord. Because it will be a blending, perfect blending into one voice, those mass choirs to blend the strains of beautiful music into a celebration of Yahweh's goodness and His mercy and to express that praise and that remembrance of His mercy with crystal clear clarity of mind, forever free from the weakness of our mind or of our limitation of our nature. So we'll be there together, b&s, of **one voice** and I'm sure brother Michael has been emphasizing that, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; that oneness that we enjoy now but, think of it, in perfection in the kingdom age. So that will be a transformation, and for some of us, it's going to be a much bigger transformation than for others; it will be a transformation for us that will be for us a sheer delight! a wonderful answer, a wonderful answer to all of our prayers and our longing; because b&s, as brother Roberts expresses in that little article, The Final Consolation - 'the sheer wonder of meeting David, of meeting these choral groups and getting swept up in the power of that encounter, where the Spirit lifts our hearts and our minds to express our praise to our God'. Can you imagine standing and mingling with such an illustrious throng? and too, as one, to break forth into songs of such praise as we've only ever dreamt of; and David the great shepherd king will be there, perhaps he'll be playing a very large part in the orchestration of the new songs of the redeemed. What a privilege it will be, b&s, to see and to follow the guidance of a David, of a Hezekiah, of an Asaph, as being our composers or mentors in those great choirs; and for those who've been suffering the rehearsals, even the rehearsals will be a sheer delight!

Well, chapters 23 to 29 take us through the great flurry of activity. Now I'm not going to go through those chapters, but you can appreciate in the last few months of David's life, there's a lot of activity, because he's appointing porters and treasurers, and officers and judges. Let's come to the last 2 chapters, let's come to chapter 28. David senses that he's about to go the way of all the earth and he is old, he is worn out, he's frail but here he rallies to give one of his finest speeches. He calls a special meeting of his leading men and officers, as indicated in verse 1; you know, he could have presided over them, he could have been sitting there on his throne handing down his final judgments. All of his officers and all his valiant men couldn't help but be impressed, to see their beloved king struggle to his feet and gather his limited strength, to pour out earnestly with so much fervour, his last words to his people and to his son Solomon. This is a venerable and highly regarded monarch who doesn't stand on ceremony, he doesn't pontificate. In verse 2, 'my brethren and my people', isn't that beautiful? he's acting and speaking as an **elder brother and as a shepherd**. He's unconscious of status or of grandeur!

Picking up the last exhortation of Moses, David in verse 8 exhorts his people, verse 8, 'to keep and seek for all the commandments of the LORD your God, that you might possess this good land and leave it for an exhortation for your children after you for ever'. Now this is a solemn charge and it's made to **all Israel**, it's given in the hearing of

their God, he's calling upon them to be careful to follow all of Yahweh's commandments, showing as Moses and Joshua did, this is the **key to long life in the Land**, for them and their children and their children's children. So here is another Moses, here is another servant of Yahweh solemnly charging all of his people before he dies, **to seek and to keep all the commandments**, not just in a religious observance of commandments, but to **seek** after them. Now b&s, you don't seek after something unless you desire it, so this is a **hungering and a thirsting** after righteousness. This is not an academic interest, it's because you love it, you desire it, you want to read it, you have a taste for it, you desire to read and read and meditate and then pray, in response to what you've read. So we enjoy reading and searching through this precious Word. So we are, b&s, to guard it and we are to be excited about what we read. So for our senior members amongst us - isn't that the greatest example that you can give to your children and your grand children? That you personally, are excited and in love with the word of God. You know, that was said about brother Thomas, that he was in love with the word of the LORD, so, b&s, that's a wonderful example and it's a wonderful legacy that we can give to our families and to our little ones, that they might walk with us and we might break small the Word, but that we also may translate that work to our little ones so that the food, the spiritual food, that we give them, that they can appreciate what we're saying, they can digest it, they can simulate it and understand it. That is a particular skill to take the lofty principles of the Word of our God and to translate them meaningfully into the ears of our children, relative to their age, and to their level of comprehension.

So David speaks to his son, Solomon, in front of all the people in verse 9, 'And thou, Solomon (I find this quite fascinating, I think of David standing there on his feet, talking to all Israel, presumably Solomon is standing right near him, and he turns and talks directly to Solomon and all Israel is listening, imagine that! all Israel is listening as he gives this solemn charge to his son) 'Thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve Him with a perfect heart, with a willing mind (and just imagine the significance of what he then says, knowing the life of David and even his downfall) he says, 'For the LORD **searcheth all hearts and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts**: if thou seek Him, He will be found of thee; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off for ever. Take heed now; for the LORD hath chosen thee to build a house for the sanctuary: **be strong and do it**'. We can imagine the old frail man with a quivering voice, with such earnestness encouraging his beloved son, to take up that great work. You know, these are final words, they're very direct, they're very personal, probably normally given in private, private counsel and private advice. But with all Israel listening, this is an honest summing up of the issues of life! **To know Yahweh and to know Him intimately**, not academically but intimately; to serve Him with a single minded focus of heart and mind, and David says that God **searches every heart** and understands every motive behind the thoughts. He had learnt this lesson in a hard way, and for a young king and for our young people, our hearts are wide open to the scrutiny of an all seeing God. He searchest , b&s, (and let's not make it exclusive to our young people) all of us know, all of us know that, 'LORD, thou has searched and seen us through'. B&s, we sing that hymn (I think it's 101) we sing those words, but do we really believe those words? do we pause and consider the truth of those words that the Lord

has searched and seen us through? So all our hearts, b&s, are wide open to the scrutiny of an all-seeing God. So always known!

So the choice is clear cut! Very simple, **seek God and you will find Him; forsake Him and you'll perish!** Simple, but that is so profound. There is a profound simplicity here, if we, b&s, seek God, He will safely and surely guide us through the slippery paths of youth and, dare I say it, the slippery paths of family life, bringing up children, bringing up teenagers, it's not an easy path. It certainly isn't! many here would testify to that and I'm one of them. So, b&s, whatever our situation is, whatever our personal or our family situation is, the truth of the matter is, that if we seek God **we will find Him**, He will respond to our every need, not our every want, but our every need. He will respond to our plaintive cry! but you know, it has been said, that people who are happy and contented with this life, are people of prayer, so perhaps we may need to look at the real issues of life and realize how desperately we need the 'fervent prayer of a righteous man or a righteous woman, that will avail much'. But, of course, we'll cry in vain, **if we have neglected or rejected the Word of our God**. So with the godly reverence and fear, Solomon was told to take "**heed because he had been chosen to build the temple.**

Verse 20, 'Be strong and of good courage, fear not nor be dismayed for the LORD God even My God will be with thee; He will not fail thee nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD'. You know, it's almost like David saying to Solomon in front of them all, 'Solomon, all the willing craftsmen are ready, all the princes and people are at your beck and call; all the priests and the Levites are prepared for their service; all is ready, Solomon, be strong and do it!' AND HE DID! this young king bore the yoke of service extremely well, with extreme humility he sought Yahweh's wisdom and guidance. Yet, b&s, with all of that preparation, with all of that wise counsel and encouragement, he still had to do it! and he did it well. Certainly, much of the credit must go to David for his untiring zeal and his preparation. But Solomon stepped forward and faithfully performed a great task, and that b&s, is a real encouragement to our young brethren in our midst. For them to step up and to take on the work of the ecclesia in whatever capacity, to take on the mantle of service, like Elisha, to faithfully continue the good work, to build on good strong foundations that have already been laid. But, b&s, how sad it is, to see signs of apathy, to see signs of self interest and laziness when opportunities are knocked back. You see, hard work spotlights the character of people; some turn up their sleeves, some turn up their noses, and some don't turn up at all!

So, 1 Chronicles 29. Here we have the aged warrior king, he now rallies his failing strength to make an impassioned plea to his people, to get behind this great building project, using as an incentive, his own personal generosity. Firstly, he tells them to get behind Solomon in his youth, who would need their loyalty and their support, that's mentioned in verse 1. Verses 2 to 5, well, let's just notice these expressions: 'I have prepared with all my might'; 'I have set my affection to the house of my God', verse 3. So this marvellous spirit of putting all of his heart into a house, a palace, for his God, is

truly amazing given the huge sums of wealth that he personally donated from his personal fortune. You know, someone once told me, it's something like 110 tons of gold, 260 tons of silver! that's generosity with a capital 'G'. That's absolutely a marvellous spirit, that's truly emptying self of self, that's giving his ALL! to the honour and to the glory of God. That's rarely ever seen! It's only ever seen, of course, to any greater extent, in the Lord Himself of whom it was written, 'the zeal of thine house hath eaten Me up'. So the evidence is there! David, b&s, was leading by **personal example**, such great liberality inspired the people.

You see, it's also been said, 'that our life is not measured by what we have but by what we give', and isn't that true? You know, even a widow giving her 2 mites, the Lord acknowledged her generosity, she gave her all! So our life is not measured by what we have, but by what we give! So, verses 6 to 9, we find the response of the people, the leaders of the people inspired by their beloved king, stepped forward and they gave generously to the building fund. There was a wonderful spirit of oneness of mind, of casting off the restraint, and how deadly is that restraint of covetousness? You know, when that spirit of covetousness works its way through us and maybe through the ecclesia, how deadening is that! So here they are, casting off this restraint of covetousness and giving back to God so much of what He had firstly given. B&s, we have received **much**, so let's put back into our fellowship so much that we personally have received and even that, in terms of dollars and cents. So it's, comparatively speaking, it's a rare show of national support for such a worthy cause; you see, we normally are a covetous, selfish spirit which holds back, but here is a marvellous spirit of opening their hearts and their possessions. All of that spirit rose to God as a sweet-smelling savour and brought the nation to one of its highest moments. Can you imagine how thrilled David was, to see these people streaming forward and the treasury was filled with their gifts, can you imagine to see how this contagious enthusiasm swept over the people?; a national fervour for the things of God, a cheerful willing spirit, not counting the cost. You know, David's heart, and I'm sure we can imagine David's heart was full to overflowing with thanksgiving and praise, that a nation could be so moved to devote heart and mind and purse to the service of God.

You know one of the most beautiful prayers in all of scripture, David probably gives his prayer of thanksgiving; a prayer which has so many common themes to our Lord's prayer, and unfortunately we don't have time to go through that prayer but it's from verse 10 onwards. It's a very beautiful prayer and its counterpart in the Lord's prayer itself.

So perhaps we can come down to verse 14, 'Who am I and what is my people that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of Thee, and of thine own have we given Thee. For we are strangers before Thee and sojourners as were all our fathers. Our days on the earth are as a shadow and there is none abiding'. What a beautiful lowliness of mind! What a great lesson in God being the source of all of our material prosperity whatever it happens to be, all is His in the first place; **it's not ours**, all that we have is His! So surely then, b&s, we can cheerfully give

back to Him. Maybe it is our two mites but let it be of our substance. You know, the gifts of heaven were meant to be used liberally not churlishly, yet how often do we pay homage to that idol, that dreadful idol of **covetousness?** and in our tight fistedness we wouldn't part with a penny! Can you imagine how God feels about that? When we do give, b&s, when we give materially or let's say it, or with our life's energies, we give **of Thine own!** Perhaps, b&s, we need to put into practice these verses (maybe you can look at them later, the sentiments of hymn 163. So David with all his wealth and power can still acknowledge his lowly temporal state; he acknowledges that our days on the earth are 'as a shadow and there is none abiding'.

He really is a true son of Abraham and Sarah, with all the trappings of power and wealth, settled and prosperous, the anxious days of exile long gone behind him, his mind is detached from all of the evidence of material prosperity and those things that count so much in the eyes of this present world. He sees himself as but a stranger and a sojourner seeking a more permanent abiding place; he's looking forward to the kingdom of his greater Son, and looking back over the rich tapestry of his life, when all of the experiences, when all of the blessings and all of the trials were all summed up, his many and varied days were, in the aggregate, **as a shadow!** none abiding, no continuance. At the end of a long active life, David knows as is expressed in Psalm 39 and Psalm 90, 'how frail at best is dying man; his hands as an hand breadth, every man as his best state is altogether vanity. He heapeth up riches and knoweth not who shall gather them'. You know, b&s, that awareness of the brevity of life surely is the greatest antidote, it surely has to be the greatest antidote to striving after material gain. You see, if life is seen as a precious gift from God, if you really do appreciate that life is a gift from God, **then every day is a bonus**, and if God's hand is bountiful towards us, it's only bountiful towards us for today; it is His. So we should see His daily food and His daily benefits as blessings to be used in His service, and for the aid of fellow sojourners. So these are the realities of life, and all else is vanity and vexation of spirit.

So David is so thrilled to witness the positive and willing spirit of the people who have rallied to his appeal, verse 16, 'O LORD our God, all the store that we have prepared to build Thee an house for Thy holy name, cometh of Thine hand and is all Thine own; I know also my God that Thou triest the heart and has pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of my heart, I have willingly offered all these things, and now have I seen with joy thy people, who are present here, to offer willingly unto Thee'. You know, there's something transparently honest about this man, and God does try the heart and He does have pleasure in those who are the single-hearted. Those who are upright, those who are genuine, those who are untainted by the evil of greed and avarice and envy.

In verse 18, David prays, in effect, that this day may linger on; is it possible that this day, might just not ever end? 'O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, **keep this forever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto Thee**'. He wishes fervently that the spirit of this day may linger on, from day after day, that that joy may not fade away; that the resolve

in their hearts to sanctify and to praise their God and their giving willingly of their possessions may not weaken with the cares and concerns of following days. You know, in effect, they were on the mountain peaks, they were right there at the spiritual heights of the kingdom of God of the past! He didn't want to leave the mountain top! He closes his prayer with a plea for his son, Solomon, 'Give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace for the which I have made provision'. He prays that his son Solomon might have the same spirit of zeal for the house of God, with a true and honest and willing heart. Then David turns to the people and at his word, **all the congregation blesses Yahweh God of their fathers!** Can you imagine the whole nation as **one?** yielding their hearts to God in the pure joy of worship? Can you imagine with those thoughts in their minds, then there's a still, holy air of quiet that descends over the people; an air of peace descends over this vast congregation, as each humble and contrite heart bows the head in humble contrite prayer. In that quiet hush of prayer, can you picture that? they've expressed their joy and thanksgiving, and then there's this beautiful hush all over this camp of Israel; can you imagine that as being a great united aggregate incense that wafts its way up to the throne of grace? Can you imagine the incense of prayer rising up to Yahweh as a sweet savour and Yahweh is dwelling among His people? He's enthroned in the praises of Israel. It's a day, rarely if ever seen since. **It was the very essence of the kingdom on earth!**

So after a night of reflection and thanksgiving, all the people on the morrow, offered their personal sacrifices. Verse 21, 'they sacrificed sacrifices unto the LORD and offered burnt offerings unto the LORD on the morrow, after that day. Even a 1000 bullocks, a 1000 rams and a 1000 lambs, with their drink offerings and sacrifices in abundance for **all Israel**. What a great day of dedication to Yahweh their God, it was a great day of activity and joy of heart. Here was communal fellowship with God and with each other; portions of the offerings were burnt on the altar; portions eaten by the priest and portions by the people. So here was pure, holy, and joyful fellowship celebrating the goodness of their God, and they're all inspired by the example of an aged and respected king. So this king inspired his nation to extraordinary dedication! this is a very special moment in the history of the kingdom of God; a time of worship and gladness of heart that will only be surpassed by the kingdom of God re-established upon this earth.

So, b&s, what we need to do, is to respond to the final words of David; not just the final words but this wonderful example of a wholehearted generosity to the cause of Yahweh; let's respond in the words of 1 Kings 2; come back with me to 1 Kings 2. Let's personally respond to these final words, in like manner, b&s, as Solomon received these words, let us, you and I, here at Winfield bible school, let's respond to these words from the life and example of our beloved father. 'Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, I go the way of all the earth, be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man; And **keep the charge of Yahweh thy God to walk in His ways**, to keep His statutes and His commandments, and His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, **that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself**'.

B&S, we have every inducement to heed those words and apply those words; we have a wonderful example in this aged warrior king, to heed not just his words, but his example of a wholehearted sincere dedication of his whole life and his possessions to the glory of his God!