

## **1 and 2 Chronicles: Live the Life God Intended**

Discover how to live life to the full

By Matt Woodley

Sometimes when we read about the people in the Bible, their lives feel incredibly distant. What could they have to teach us?

But that's not the case when we read 1 and 2 Chronicles. Though they lived 400 years before Jesus, their worries, doubts, and struggles are all too similar to ours. After returning from a 70-year exile, they felt small, insignificant, and forgotten. And they wondered if they'd messed things up permanently with God. More than anything, they wondered what their new lives should look like going forward: If we are God's people, what should our lives look like?

That's a question we still ask today. This 6-session study explores 1 and 2 Chronicles for clues on how God's people are supposed to live. What we discover is that God intends a rich, abundant life for us—one filled with love, community, grace, compassion, mission, and closeness to God. And the good news is that it's not as far off as we might think.

### **Session One - Remember Who You Are**

We must remember who we are and that we belong to a diverse family of faith.

1 Chronicles 1-9

Four hundred years before Jesus was born, a group of Jewish people who had returned from a 70-year exile was trying to resettle and rediscover their spiritual identity. They were a minority under the shadow of the world-shaping Persian Empire. They felt small, insignificant, and forgotten. They also felt a nagging sense that God was still punishing them for their past sins. They felt cut off from their history and uncertain of their future. They were experiencing a communal identity crisis that forced them to ask questions like: Who are we? Should we just blend into the surrounding culture? Can we really make a difference? Can—should—our children live different lives than our neighbors? Does our faith even matter at all? In nine chapters, the author of 1 Chronicles took the raw statistics and the lists of names and reminded a struggling people that they mattered because there was royalty in their blood. And it's a truth that speaks to our spiritual identity. In Christ, we, too, "are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession" (1 Pet. 2:9).

### **Session Two - We Are to Fight for What's Right**

Fight for the right things, in the right way, and with the right motive.

1 Chronicles 11:10-25

In 1 Chronicles 11:10-25, we meet a group of courageous people who knew how to fight for what was right. This concept of fighting well can and should make us nervous. We've seen enough terrorist attacks and school shootings—not to mention destructive gossip and character assassinations—that we cry out, "When will the violence end? We don't need any more fighting!" While we must be sympathetic to that plea, we would do well to consider these words from author John Eldredge: "Eventually a man [or a woman] must come to realize that there are certain things in life worth fighting for. Take anything good, true, or beautiful upon this earth and ask yourself, 'Can this be protected without a fight?'" Our passage challenges us to fight well for the right things, in the right way, with the right purpose and motive.

### **Session Three - Starting Well Isn't Enough**

It doesn't matter how you start if you give up in the end.

2 Chronicles 24:1-25

In 2 Chronicles 24:1-25, we are told a sad story about losing passion for the most important relationship in the universe: a relationship with God. It describes a man who had everything—wealth, power, influence, a rich spiritual upbringing, meaningful work to do, and a good track record with the Lord—but he threw it all away. It's a sobering story and a call not only to start off right, but also to finish well.

### **Session Four - Your Whole Life Matters to God**

All of life is an act of worship and an opportunity to serve and please God.

2 Chronicles 26:1-21

Many of us assume there is a chasm between two realities: the sacred and the secular. We go to church a few hours a week to perform our sacred duties. The rest of our week we're out there living in the real world. Of course, there are those who "go into ministry"—pastor a church, serve on a church staff, live on the mission field, work for a Christian organization. Most of their lives appear to revolve around the sacred. The rest of us, though, seem to simply slog away at our secular jobs. Unfortunately, this so-called split between the sacred and secular severs a huge chunk of our lives from God's good plan for us. In 2 Chronicles 26, we discover a better and more biblical way live.

### **Session Five - Loving God Means Loving Others**

True worship leads to acts of justice, compassion, and mercy.

2 Chronicles 28:1-15

In true, biblically grounded spirituality, there is an inseparable link between how we love God and how we love people. We have divorced spirituality from loving our neighbors if we fail to bring justice to the oppressed, if we don't share our resources

with a world in need, if we hate or refuse to forgive, if we practice prejudice for any reason. Showing love for others no matter what sounds so true, so right. Yet the history of the world, the state of current affairs, and our own track record suggests that we keep forgetting this simple biblical truth. That's why we need to study a passage like 2 Chronicles 28:1-15 that calls us back to a holistic spiritual life that begins with worshiping God and flows into a broad and deep love for others.

### **Session Six** - Finding God in Our Desperate Places

We experience God's strength in our weakness.

2 Chronicles 32:1-22

Desperate places are places of weakness, brokenness, and vulnerability. They are those times in our lives where we're at wits' end, and if God doesn't show up with power and redemption, we're lost. Second Chronicles 32:1-22 describes a desperate place. It also tells a story about finding God's strength in the midst of weakness, brokenness, and vulnerability.