

“Wisdom in Administration”
1 Kings 4:1-19
(Preached at Trinity, September 20, 2020)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. On the surface, it might appear that **Chapter 4** is a mishmash of disconnected elements. It speaks of Solomon's officials and the size of Israel and Judah and their custom of eating and drinking with joy. It outlines Solomon's daily provision requirements among other things. It would be easy for us to miss the point the author is making. We need to understand it is not disconnected at all. In **Chapter 3** the author sets before us the theme of Solomon's great wisdom and it continues to the end of **Chapter 4** where we read:
1 Kings 4:34 NAU - "Men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom."
2. **Chapters 2-3** describe the process of Solomon consolidating his power. Adonijah is put to death, the just end of his treason. This is followed by the execution of Joab and then Shimei. Solomon marries Pharaoh's daughter in **Chapter 3** – a sinful act but politically astute.
3. **Chapter 4** begins by affirming that Solomon was now fully established as the king of Israel and was poised for a season of peace. In **Verse 20** we're told that the lives of the people were filled with joy. The focus of the chapter maintains the theme of Solomon's wisdom. **Verses 1-19** describe the organizational structure of Solomon's kingdom.
4. It is an extensive and detailed list.
 - Verses 1-6 record the names of the heads of state—the head of the army, the priests, deputies, secretaries, recorder, and head over the forced labor.
 - Verses 7-19 record the names of the local officers. They were twelve in number, each charged with providing for the king's household one month each year.
 - Two of these officers were Solomon's sons-in-law.
 - Later we'll see the enormous task it was to provide for the king's household.
5. Biblical wisdom takes many forms.
 - There is spiritual wisdom, the wisdom necessary to rightly know and comprehend God.
1 Corinthians 2:12-13 NAU - "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, ¹³ which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*."

- There is ethical and moral wisdom. Solomon would later write:
Proverbs 2:6-9 NAU - "For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth *come* knowledge and understanding. ⁷ He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; *He is* a shield to those who walk in integrity, ⁸ Guarding the paths of justice, And He preserves the way of His godly ones. ⁹ Then you will discern righteousness and justice And equity *and* every good course."
- There is also practical wisdom, the wisdom necessary to the proper ordering of your life. Solomon also possessed this kind of wisdom. He was concerned about order, of structure.
Verses 32-33 tells us Solomon not only gave proverbs, speaking of spiritual and moral wisdom, he also spoke of trees and animal life, suggesting practical wisdom.

6. In **Chapter 3** we are told of Solomon's great wisdom. Now we are seeing it displayed in his wise ordering of the details of his kingdom. He was a wise administrator.
7. These verses reveal to us the great wisdom it takes to wisely order the affairs of our life. We may not be kings or heads of state, but each of us are charged to wisely order our lives. I want us to consider this tonight.
8. God is a God of order. We can see this at the very beginning of creation.
 - A. God began by creating matter – the physical building blocks of everything that exists.
Genesis 1:1 - "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."
 B. At the beginning there was great disorder.
Genesis 1:2 NAU - "The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep"
 God uses an expression to describe the chaos (תְּהוֹם וָבֶהֱמוֹת) – formless and empty. It describes a great wasteland.
 - C. But immediately God began to bring the disorder into order. There is great order in the universe. We can know precisely the timing of an eclipse because there is order. The earth moves around the sun with precision.
9. God is a God of order and He expects us to bring our lives into order, to be wise administrators.
 There are three areas I want to stress tonight as we consider wisdom in administration.
 - I. Wisdom in the administration of the home
 - II. Wisdom in the administration of the church
 - III. Wisdom in the administration of life
 - I. Wisdom in the administration of the home
 - A. The family is the foundation of human society
 1. We find it codified in the Fifth Commandment
 2. It is affirmed in the New Testament
 Children, obey your parents
 Wives, submit to your husbands
 Husbands, love your wives
 3. Both the husband and the wife need to be good administrators
 - B. The husband is the executor. He is the head of the home.
 1. We can see this in God's order of creation. Adam was created first and then Eve was formed from Adam. God made His covenant with Adam and Adam became our covenant head.

2. His chief duty is that of provider and protector
 - a. This is seen in God's charge to Adam after the fall
Genesis 3:17 NAU - "Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life."
 - b. He is to be the chief bread winner
 He is to shield his wife from worrying about whether or not the family's needs will be met.
 3. He is responsible for the upkeep of the home – Mr. fixit
 These things can be hired from outside but it creates a drain upon the resources. Adam was placed in the garden to work it and keep it.
Genesis 2:15 NAU - "God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it."
 This means wise building and wise oversight over what is built.
 The word for "cultivate" refers to work.
 The word for "keep" carries the meaning "to preserve."
 4. The man is to be a wise administrator. He is charged with the leadership of the home. This demands wise discernment. He must be permeated with the Word of God.
- C. The wife is also an administrator of the home
1. She is under the authority of her husband, but the home is her domain
 She is to organize and maintain a well-run household.
 2. We can see this this principle in Paul's charge to Timothy regarding widows
1 Timothy 5:14 NAS - "Therefore, I want younger *widows* to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach;"
 οἰκοδεσποτέω – compound word: house and ruler
 οἶκος, δεσπότης
 3. Ideally, she will give her attention to working at home. This doesn't mean she cannot work outside the home. But it will often prove a distraction to her primary duty of caring for the home. She must not abdicate her duty to care for the home.
 4. Managing a household is a consuming vocation. The home is a major institution and it demands wise administration.
 The wife/mother is a nurse, educator, innovator, accountant, and purchaser. She is responsible for recreation, food prep, laundry, maintenance, non-ending custodial work – and all with grace.
 5. If the home does not function well it is her responsibility.
 6. We can see the excellent wife/mother described in **Proverbs 31**
 - a. Her children were well-fed, well-dressed, well-taught.
 - b. Long hours were spent in the care of her home

- c. She was the praise of her family
Proverbs 31:1 NAU - "She looks well to the ways of her household, And does not eat the bread of idleness. ²⁸ Her children rise up and bless her; Her husband *also*, and he praises her, *saying*: ²⁹ "Many daughters have done nobly, But you excel them all."

II. Wisdom in the administration of the church

A. The Church must also be well-ordered

1 Corinthians 14:33 NAU - "God is not a *God* of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints."

1. Paul wrote his Pastoral Epistles with an eye upon the wise administration of the church

1 Timothy 3:14-15 NAU - "I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; ¹⁵ but in case I am delayed, *I write* so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth."

2. Practical oversight is one of the duties of deacons. But it is chiefly the duty of pastors. They have oversight of the church. They must be good administrators. The church must be led in an orderly fashion.

B. The chief area of wise administration is carefully handling the Word of God

1. There must be systematic study and a systematic ordering of Biblical teaching.
2. The Word must be carefully, and systematically preached. Our sermons must be well-ordered.

2 Timothy 2:15 NAU - "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth."

III. Wisdom in the administration of life

A. It is essential that our lives be well-ordered

1. This must be taught to our children.
 - a. We require them to keep their bedrooms straight because we are teaching them order.
 - b. Children thrive best in an orderly home. They need structure
 - They should immediately be put on a schedule – set times of feeding, sleeping, etc. This structure should continue.
 - Children feel secure when they know what to expect
2. One of the great plagues of our culture is aimless young adults without goals—without a plan. There is no structure, no order.
3. The reason marriage is often put off is young people do not have a plan. They live only for today and only for themselves.

- B. Solomon brought every aspect of his Kingdom under his wise administration
1. His chief leaders were able men – They were hand-picked and put over the important aspects of leading the Kingdom. It was well-ordered and skillfully managed. Good records were kept so that nothing would be forgotten. It was a kingdom of peace. This is the last mention of Benaiah. A powerful army was not a priority in the days of Solomon.
1 Kings 5:3-4 NAU - "You know that David my father was unable to build a house for the name of the LORD his God because of the wars which surrounded him, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet. ⁴ "But now the LORD my God has given me rest on every side; there is neither adversary nor misfortune."
 2. Solomon divided his large kingdom among 12 deputies, each with jurisdiction over his region. It is of note that Solomon made his division without regard to the territories of the 12 tribes. He focused rather on size and area.
 He was following the wise counsel Jethro gave to Moses in dividing the responsibility of governing among other able men. Each of these deputies also had the duty of providing for the king's household for one month each year. It was an enormous task.
1 Kings 4:22-23 NAU - "Solomon's provision for one day was thirty kors of fine flour and sixty kors of meal, ²³ ten fat oxen, twenty pasture-fed oxen, a hundred sheep besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and fattened fowl."
 (a kor was approx. 10 bushels – thus 30 kors was 300 bushels of flour)
 3. There is joy in order and good administration.
1 Kings 4:20 NAU - "*they* were eating and drinking and rejoicing."
- C. As God's people we must put our lives in order
1. We've all seen people whose lives are in disorder.
 I used to have a relative who gave disorder a new meaning. The backseat of his car was full of trash. He'd just toss garbage over his shoulder. I once visited a lady whose house was had a narrow trail that led from the front door to the kitchen with junk and trash piled to the ceiling on each side.
 2. Everything should be done with excellence.
 3. This doesn't mean perfectionism to the point of paralysis.
 - a. We shouldn't fear to try new things, to take risks.
 We shouldn't become so fixed that it becomes oppressive. This is the danger of bureaucracy in government.
 But we must not dismiss the importance of order and structure in our lives.
 - b. We need to guard against imposing our particular life structure upon others.

4. We should measure everything with an intentional purpose. The mundane takes on meaning.

Philip Ryken:

“Wherever things are in disarray, we may be sure that we are dealing in one way or another with the disorienting effects of sin in a fallen world. But wherever things are well ordered, we catch a glimpse of the goodness of God, because orderliness comes from his common grace.”¹

Conclusion:

1. We need the grace of order. The grace to structure our lives in a manner that reflects the order of God.
2. We need the grace of guarding against insisting that the structure that works in our life must be imposed upon others.

¹ Philip Graham Ryken, *1 Kings*, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Iain M. Duguid, and Philip Graham Ryken, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2011), 102.