

## 9 KNOW ALL OR GIVE ALL

*1 Chronicles 21:2 So David said to Joab and to the leaders of the people, "Go, number Israel from Beersheba to Dan, and bring the number of them to me that I may know it."*

*1 Chronicles 21:23 But Ornan said to David, "Take it to yourself, and let my lord the king do what is good in his eyes. Look, I also give you the oxen for burnt offerings, the threshing implements for wood, and the wheat for the grain offering; I give it all."*

David's numbering of Israel was the first of two great moral failures in his life, although it attracts less attention than his sin of adultery. Yet this is usually the first fault line that shows with an increase of power and prosperity. It is the subtle lure to rule and run your own life absolutely.

Whenever we begin to have some breathing space with room to roam on our own, when times are better and things get easier, there comes a desire to flex our wings and to do something on our own. We want to review what we have accomplished, to count how much we have accumulated, and to assess what more we can do next. There is an inordinate insistence to know, to take stock, and to consolidate. Doing these things is not wrong in themselves, but the spirit of wanting to control things, and be our own god again, is. One can tell when self is on the rise again by these symptoms. Beware of allowing self to surface under the guise of evaluation or organisation.

One is truly organised only when fully submitted to and dependent on God. The minute we try to get organised ourselves, we usurp and wrest that control from Him. Instead of being in control, we feel confounded. There are some things God never intends for us to do, like David's numbering of Israel. What harm can there be, we reason, but the reliance on self spells the ruin of the spiritual.

Contrast David's blind insistence with Ornan's reckless abandon. No doubt Ornan feared for his life and his family, but it made him utterly abandoned to God. He did not act with fearful resignation to let others take what was his, but willingly chose to give all. He could do without them, even though they must have been his most prized possession for his livelihood. What a difference between Ornan's give-all and David's grab-all attitudes!

Beware of the nagging temptation to know all. Counter it with the determination to give all into the hands of God. Remind yourself that there are things in the Lord's wisdom you need not, or are not ready, to know. The craving to know is often a cover for refusing to believe, and *"whatever is not from faith is sin"* (Romans 14:23).