

## **Lessons from the life of David**

Acts 13:22

Readings: 1 Samuel 16: 1-13; 1 Chronicles 28: 1-8;20-21

[**READ** Acts 13:22]

This is one of the most amazing verses in the entire bible.

It states that the secret to David's greatness was his heart going after God.

But it is intriguing how David could possibly be "a man after God's own heart."

After all, we are not talking about an Abraham who was obedient to the voice of God. Nor are we referring to Isaiah or Jeremiah who separated themselves from the world and proclaimed the word of God without fear or favour.

We are talking about a man who rose from the obscurity of the sheepfold to great prominence in the history of God's dealing with man.

David's life and relationships were a complex mix of  
sin and grace  
vengeance and mercy  
faith and moral neglect

So what are some of those attitudes of David's life that demonstrate that he had a heart after God's own heart?

### **First, there is his CALL.**

The great prophet Samuel has visited the house of Jesse, he came to anoint one king of Israel, but none of the sons there were chosen.

So Samuel said to Jesse, are these all your children, and Jesse said, there's one more, but he keeps the sheep.

Samuel said, we will not sit down till he comes.

What an incredible moment when the aged hand of the prophet raised the horn of oil above the young shepherd's head and tilted it downward.

The oil began to flow onto the head of David, through his hair, over his eyes and cheeks, and dripped unto his chest and shoulders.

Even his own father had no hopes for David.

But God chose David to be the King over Israel even though his own family had rejected him.

The stone which the builders rejected had become the chief cornerstone.

We must not be discouraged when we are rejected by men because it is God who has chosen us and He will establish us in the calling He has given to us.

That time that David spent with the sheep was the time where he developed a heart after God.

Sheep keeping is a low status position, normally given to the one at the bottom of the family pecking order. So David is a graduate of the school of hard knocks, and real life situations.

David was committed to his responsibilities.  
He would risk his life to protect the sheep, if a lion or a bear would come.

It was as a shepherd he learned to care for the sheep, to be willing to lay down his life for the sheep.

He was faithful in the little things and God made him a ruler over much.

That love and commitment for the sheep is what he brought into his work as the king.

Loving people is the proving ground for loving God—I John 4:20—if you say you love God but hate your brother, you are a liar, how can you say you love God who you can't see, but hate your brother who you can see.

**The second step in David developing a heart after God was his COURAGE.**

He was jealous for God.  
He had the courage to face Goliath, to stand up for God.  
When David brings food to his brothers in the battle field he hears Goliath shouting out insults against God.

He cannot believe no one is willing to respond for God.

Even when all the soldiers backed away from Goliath in fear, David was willing to face the challenge.

He had great faith in God and a zeal for God.  
He wanted to bring glory to God by defeating the enemy who was mocking the God of Israel.

God honoured his courage and faith and delivered the enemy into his hand.

You develop a heart after God the more you stand up for God.

The more you make a profession of God,  
You can say you have a heart after God all day long,  
but from the overflow of your heart the mouth speaks.

David spoke out what was in his heart.

I am sure that David's brothers all loved God,  
but none of them were willing to put their heart into it.

The more you stand up for God, the more you speak out for God,  
the more your heart will be filled with God.

You and I must have faith in God when we face the enemy.  
The Lord will honour our courage and zeal and grant us the victory.

So we see David's CALL and COURAGE in his developing heart.  
**There is also his CONSCIENCE.**

David was chased by King Saul, who wanted to kill him.  
When he had an opportunity to kill Saul he refused to touch God's anointed.  
His conscience pricked him even for cutting a portion of Saul's robe.  
He let God judge between him and Saul.  
He did not want to lay his hand on the one whom God had anointed.

David also did turn against God when he went through this tough time.  
He continued to trust God...even in the face of trouble.  
See it in Psalm 23 when he writes about the Lord being with him in the valley of shadows.

**Along with David's call, courage, conscience...is celebration.**

David had a heart of worship.  
He celebrated the blessings of God, alongside of the pain.

David gave it all he had in worship; the Psalms are his songs to the Lord.  
You will never develop a heart after God without worship to God.

Worship should never be about us, it should be about Him.  
Sometimes people will say, that type or style of worship doesn't minister to me, but  
worship isn't really about us anyway.

Someone recently said the problem in many churches is they praise their praise and  
they worship their worship.

You should always ask yourself in any worship, is my heart going after God,  
am I closer to God because of my worship.

If all these things are about developing a heart after God:  
Call, courage, conscience and celebration.

**But the most important thing about David's heart was CONTRITION.**

Surely all that David went through before he became king would have developed his  
heart and kept him from sin?

But is he any different to you or I.  
We can develop our hearts with the things we have talked about and yet we still fall  
into sin.

Sometimes gross sin; public sin; sin with huge consequences.

Soon after ascending to the throne we find some startling behaviour from David.

Within a short time he has become a thief, an adulterer, a deceiver and even a murderer.

All of this with the well known event of David's desire for Bathsheba.

Yet, after all of these things, the Word of God declares him to be "a man after God's own heart."

How can this be? Has God compromised in order to preserve the anointing?

Did God turn a blind eye to the sins of David?

No, indeed, God punished David's sin in a strong way.

A prophet stands before the shepherd boy turned king, points a bony finger in his face and declares "You are the man!"

And if public confrontation were not enough, he goes on to declare that the child who was conceived would die.

David had a contrite and repentant heart.

When David realised his sin he acknowledged his transgression.

He did not give excuses or try to justify his sins.

He admitted that he had sinned against the Lord.

The prophet then assured him of God's forgiveness.

So David obtained the grace and mercy of God in his life.

The Lord did not reject the Psalms of David and included them in the Bible.

And the Psalms of David are still a blessing to millions around the world even today.

We must learn from David to admit our sins before God in order to obtain His grace and mercy in our lives.

David knew grace in his life.

Jerry Bridges writes:

Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God's grace. And your best days are never so good that you are beyond the need of God's grace.

Every day of our Christian experience should be a day of relating to God on the basis of His grace alone. We are not only saved by grace, we also live by grace every day.

In Deuteronomy the law promises blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. Some Christians live as if that principle applies to them today.

But Paul said that 'the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith (Gal 3:24).

Christ has already carried the curses for our disobedience and earned for us the blessings of obedience.

As a result we look to Christ alone...

Not Christ plus our performance...

For God's blessings in our lives.

When we pray to God for His blessing...

He does not examine our performance to see if we are worthy.

Rather he looks to see if we are trusting the merit of His Son as our only hope for securing His blessing.

This is what David understood.

This was how he lived his life.

He was not perfect, God says he has blood on his hands.

David was guilty of a gross misuse of his power...

And he acknowledged his sin.

Think about two very different days in your life.

The first is a spiritually good one for you.

You get up when the alarm goes off.

You have a refreshing, profitable quiet time as you read the Bible and pray.

Your plans for the day fall nicely into place

You somehow sense God's presence with you.

When you have the unexpected opportunity to share the gospel with someone who is truly searching.

The second day is the complete opposite.

When the alarm goes off you hit the snooze button...not just once...but two times

When you finally get up it's too late for your quiet time.

You rush through breakfast and into the day.

All day you feel guilty about oversleeping; missing your quiet time.

Things generally go wrong...nothing seems to fall into place.

You don't sense God's presence during the day.

Again, you have the opportunity to share your testimony.

How do you feel about the witnessing time in those two different days.

Would you be less confident on the bad day?

Do you feel God is obligated to bless you on the good day?

80% of people faced with this scenario indicate that they would be less confident of God's blessing on the bad day, than they would after a good one.

Is such thinking justified?

Does God work that way?

No, to both, because God's blessing does not depend on our performance.

If that was so the David would/could expect no blessing.

But David understood grace and forgiveness.

He understood goodness and mercy.

He knew that God was with him...all the days of his life.

He knew that God had prepared a place for him.

Do you know that grace and forgiveness?

Do you know the unlimited mercy of God...expressed in his Son.

Grace teaches us that God loves because of who God is...

Not because of who we are.

If it depended on who we are...then we would never be worthy of God's love, grace and forgiveness.

Not even on those 'good' days when we do the things we think God will be pleased with.

Phillip Yancey calls grace 'Christianity's best gift to the world.'

We should know that grace.

We need to live by grace.

### **Conclusion**

The Bible calls David "a man after God's own heart." In spite of the frequent lapses of his sinful heart, David understood God's justice and mercy. He understood (even though he needed to be reminded) of his complete dependence on God.

Yet, over all that we see in David's life, we see the power and grace of God. We see it in

David the worshipping shepherd

David the national hero, who defeated the arrogant giant, Goliath

David the loyal fugitive, fleeing for his life from jealous King Saul

David the ancestor of Jesus, our King and Savior

David the adulterer and murderer

David king and song writer

All the great heroes of faith in the Bible were failing, faltering sinners -- just like us.

The Bible tells their stories with embarrassing honesty.

The purpose is not so we can laugh at them, or scold them,

but so we can identify with them.

God loved David just as he was.

God often had to correct him, and bring him back from a terrible mistake.

But God never stopped loving him, and using him.

...just as God has never stopped loving you, forgiving you, and using you to bless others. The Savior-King who God promised to David, is a promise to you, too.

A promise fulfilled in Jesus Christ.