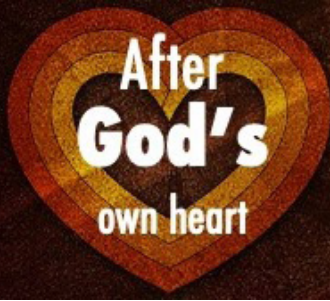


after
God's
own heart

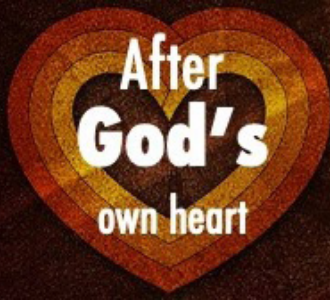
a study of David

Written by Joshua Creel



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What It Means To Be “After God’s Own Heart”

When Samuel announced to Saul, the first king of Israel, that his kingdom would not endure, he had this to say about Saul’s successor: “The Lord has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.” (1Samuel 13.14). Approximately 1000 years later, the apostle Paul referenced this event in one of his sermons: “He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who will do all My will.’” (Acts 13.22).

David, a man after God’s own heart, one who kept the Lord’s will. He is the topic of this class, a guide for us as we seek to have the same kind of heart. But before proceeding, we must first consider what it means for a person to be after God’s own heart.

Opening Exercise: what do you know about David?

List Some Good Qualities	List Some Bad Qualities

A person after God’s own heart hasn’t achieved perfection, but they are mold-able by God.

Whenever we think of David’s life, numerous highlights come to our mind. His faith and courage when facing Goliath (1Samuel 17), sparing Saul because he was the Lord’s anointed (1Samuel 24, 26), his love for the Lord’s house (2Samuel

7), etc. These events probably fit our preconceived notions of what it means to be after God's own heart. But we are also aware of David's numerous failures: adultery and murder (2Samuel 11), injustice (2Samuel 13-14) and pride (2Samuel 24). So, how could it be said of David that he was after God's own heart, that he fully did the will of God?

The answer lies in how David responded to his failures. While many of God's people were described as having hearts of stone (Ezekiel 36.26), hard hearts (Mark 3.5) and uncircumcised hearts (Jeremiah 9.26), David possessed a heart that was mold-able by the will of God. His heart truly mourned over his failures and longed to be restored (cf. Psalm 51.10). Thus, in spite of his failings, David remained a man after God's own heart.

A person after God's own heart will have a positive affect on others.

Remember that when Samuel confronted Saul in 1Samuel 13.14, it was because Saul had transgressed the will of God (see vss. 8-13). Saul's actions affected not only himself and his descendants, but the whole of Israel; their king had led them into apostasy and would continue to do so (see 1Samuel 15).

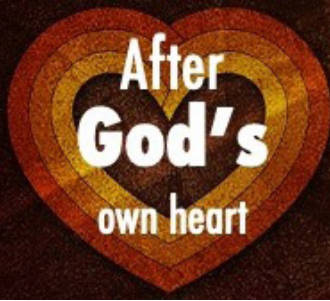
Israel would have numerous kings who would lead them astray, ultimately resulting in their removal from the promised land. Significantly, God promised that in the future He would give them "shepherds after My own heart, who will feed you on knowledge and understanding." (Jeremiah 3.15). David had been such a shepherd. In contrast with Saul who led the people astray, David led the people toward God.

A person after God's own heart has the assurance of God being with him.

Returning to Paul's words in Acts 13.22, the apostle not only quoted 1Samuel 13.14 but also Psalm 89.20: "I have found David My servant; With My holy oil I have anointed him." Continue reading the Psalm and you see how the Lord would strengthen David (vss. 21-23), exalt him (vss. 24-27) and confirm His covenant (vss. 28-29). The Lord had chosen David and would bless him.

While the phrase "after God's own heart" is not found in Psalm 89, this passage helps us understand the blessing implied in the phrase. To be after God's own heart is a relational concept; if I'm following the Lord and allowing Him to shape my heart, then I have the assurance of a relationship with Him!

David, a man after God's own heart; a man whose relationship with the Lord was secure. As we study how to have a heart like David's, we are also studying how to have a relationship with our God!



The Heart of a Shepherd King

Deuteronomy 17 / Psalm 23

The description of David as a man after God's own heart (1Samuel 13.14) is in the setting of kingship. Because of his unfaithfulness, the kingship of Saul and his heirs would not endure. But the Lord would make sure that the next king was of a different spirit than Saul, one who would meet the Lord's expectations. So, before we begin examining the life of David it would be helpful to consider the expectations God had for Israel's king, expectations He laid out in Deuteronomy 17.14-20.

Opening Exercise: list 4 qualities you think a ruler / leader should have

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

The king would be one of them (vss. 14-15)

God envisioned the day when Israel would demand a king. This was not commanded by the Lord, but He would permit it. Jehovah, the true Sovereign of Israel, would choose her king! And the first requirement of Israel's king was that he would be one of the people. Foreigners were likely excluded for two reasons:

1. They would not be faithful to Jehovah, the God of Israel.
2. They would not be able to identify with the people, and thus would care little for their needs.

The king should rely only on the Lord (vss. 16-17)

These verses warn of 3 ways a king might place his trust in something other than the Lord:

1. He must not rely on military might (multiplying horses). As one commentator put it, the horse "was roughly equivalent to the modern tank as a symbol of

military power in the second millennium b.c.e.” However, Israel had already experienced the Lord delivering them from an army of horse-drawn chariots (Exodus 15.1,4). Furthermore, trusting in horses would only hasten the destruction of God’s people. The Lord had promised that they would “never again return that way,” but if they put their trust in military might rather than in the Lord, they would return again to captivity (see Hosea 8.13; 11.5).

2. The king must not rely on political alliances (multiplying wives). While on the surface we might conclude that this is another passage emphasizing the bond of marriage, it is likely that the Lord’s words were aimed at marriages made out of political expediency (cf. 1Kings 3.1; 16.31). But such wives would turn the king’s heart from the Lord!
3. Finally, the king must not rely on economic strength (increase silver and gold). Such would give an illusion of self-sufficiency and lead them to forget that all blessings came from the Lord (see Deuteronomy 8.11-17).

The king should be guided by the Lord (vss. 18-20)

The king would not be a law unto himself, rather he would be bound by the same law as the people: the Lord’s Law! Thus, as soon as the king came to the throne he was to make his own copy of the Law. The process of writing the Law and then reading it (literally reciting audibly) would make him thoroughly acquainted with the Lord’s will. This would have four positive results:

- The king would _____ the Lord.
- The king would be careful to _____ all that the Lord commanded.
- The king would not view himself as better than his _____.
- The king’s _____ would endure.

If a king met these expectations, he would truly be a man after God’s own heart. Likewise, if we desire to be after God’s heart we must 1) identify with our brethren, 2) trust only in the Lord and 3) be guided by His word.

Men would not have chosen David to be king.

When Samuel proclaimed Saul as king of Israel he said, “Do you see him whom the Lord has chosen? Surely there is no one like him among all the people.” (1Samuel 10.24). Saul looked the part of king (note vs. 23), and Samuel knew it. In spite of Saul’s shortcomings, it seems that Samuel held out hope that Saul’s kingdom would endure. So, when the Lord said that Saul’s kingdom would end, Samuel “was distressed and cried out to the Lord all night.” (1Samuel 15.11).

Apparently, Samuel believed that the next king of Israel would have an impressive appearance, just like Saul. So, when Samuel went to Jesse’s house to

anoint the next king of Israel, he was impressed with the physical appearance and stature of Eliab, Jesse's oldest son (1Samuel 16.6). However, the Lord had other

Read Psalm 23. What's so great about a shepherd?

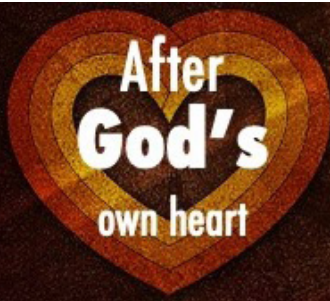
criteria in mind: "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (1Samuel 16.7) David had a pleasing appearance (1Samuel 16.12), but he did not look like a king (not yet anyway). Man would not have chosen David as king.

God selected a shepherd.

It is significant that when Samuel went to Jesse's home to anoint the king, David was not present; he was tending the sheep (1Samuel 16.11). If there would ever be a man after God's own heart, it would surely be a shepherd. In Psalm 23 David praised God as a shepherd, and this helps us to understand why the Lord chose a shepherd as king.

1. Shepherds provide their sheep with what they need (Psalm 23.1-2) Shepherds spend the majority of their time leading their sheep to pasture and water. God, the shepherd of His people, always provides (see Deuteronomy 2.7).
2. Shepherds care about the welfare of their sheep (Psalm 23.3-4). God always has the best interest of His people at heart. And His concern isn't merely for their physical well being, but for their spiritual well being.
3. Shepherds protect their sheep, even at their own peril (Psalm 23.4). With God as shepherd, His people can be assured of safety even in the face of great danger. David had experience protecting sheep, and he had proven himself willing to sacrifice his own safety for the well being of the flock (1Samuel 17.34-35).

David was a shepherd; he was accustomed to looking after the needs of others. This one trait helps us to see why David could be described as a man after God's own heart. This one trait explains why David would be such a great king. Tragically, Israel would be led by many bad shepherds in her history and would consequently be destroyed (see Ezekiel 34.1-6). But God promised that in the future He would shepherd His people. Significantly, God promised that the coming Messiah would be a shepherd just like David: "Then I will set over them one shepherd, My servant David, and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their shepherd." (Ezekiel 34.23)



A Courageous Heart

1 Samuel 17

The story of David vs. Goliath is one that most of us have heard ever since we were very small. However, this isn't just a kids story, rather it teaches us an essential lesson about God and how we can have the courage to face any spiritual challenge.

Fear: Israel's response to the Philistine champion

The Philistines were a sea people, probably from the island of Crete, who invaded the coastland of Canaan around 1200 B.C. They solidified control of the coastal region, part of Israel's promised land, and would extend their control over much of Palestine during the time of the Judges (see Judges 13.1; 15.9-12; 1 Samuel 4.1-11, 21-22). Israel was victorious over the Philistines in the time of Samuel, but once Saul became king the Philistines exerted their power again. God gave Saul victory over them (1 Samuel 14.47-48), but once the Lord rejected Saul as king, the Philistines returned (1 Samuel 17.1)



Valley of Elah from Azekah

The Philistine and Israelite armies arrayed themselves on either side of the valley of Elah, but rather than meet each other in open combat, a Philistine champion issued a challenge to any champion of Israel. Goliath, depending on the correct reading, was either 6'9" or 9'9" (either would have been considered a giant in ancient times). His strength was immense as related by the fact that his armor weighed between 125 and 150 pounds! For 40 days, both morning and evening (vs. 16), the Philistine giant issued the same challenge: "Choose a man

for yourselves and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will become your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall become our servants and serve us... I defy the ranks of Israel this day; give me a man that we may fight together” (vss. 8-10). How did the soldiers of Israel respond? (vss. 11,24) _____

Doubt: how Israel felt about David

We know David as the hero of this story, but none of Israel had any expectation that David would be able to face Goliath, much less defeat him. Read the following passages and describe how each person felt about David. Did they believe he could defeat Goliath?

1. David’s father (vss. 17-19): _____

2. David’s brother (vss. 20-28): _____

3. King Saul (vss. 31-33): _____

4. Goliath (vs. 43): _____

Courage: the result of David’s confidence in the Lord

The text reads that when David went out to face Goliath, “he took his stick in his hand and chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in the shepherd’s bag which he had, even in his pouch, and his sling was in his hand; and he approached the Philistine” (vs. 40). However, David went out with much more than a sling and five stones; he went with courage in his heart, knowing that the Lord would be with him. David understood that Israel was the



Brook at Elah. Courtesy of Ferrell Jenkins

army of the living God (vs. 26, contrast with Goliath's description of Israel as the "servants of Saul" in vs. 8). And when David faced Goliath he boldly stated, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. This day the Lord will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hands." (1 Samuel 17:45-47) Why did David have such confidence? (vss. 34-37) _____

Our need for courage

1. What are some difficult challenges we face?

• 1Timothy 4.12; 1Peter 1.15-16 _____

• Luke 14.25-27 _____

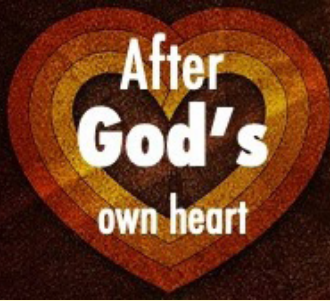
• Philippians 2.3-4 _____

• Matthew 28.18-20 _____

• Other: _____

2. What happens if we are afraid of what others think or that we might fail? ____

David understood that the Lord was fighting for him, and we can have the same assurance! So, be "strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might (Ephesians 6.10)! Remember that no matter what the world may think of us, or do to us, "we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us" (Romans 8.37).



A Heart That Loves The Godly

1 Samuel 19-20

Imagine you are the best at something; maybe you're the best soccer player on your team or the most talented musician in the band. Or perhaps you're the top student in your class. You're not arrogant about your talents, you just try your best and everyone can see that you excel. But then someone comes along who's better! This new person is nice, but he/she can score goals with flourish, hits notes you could only dream of or makes advanced calculus seem elementary. And now no one pays attention to your exploits; they don't even remember the great things you've done before.

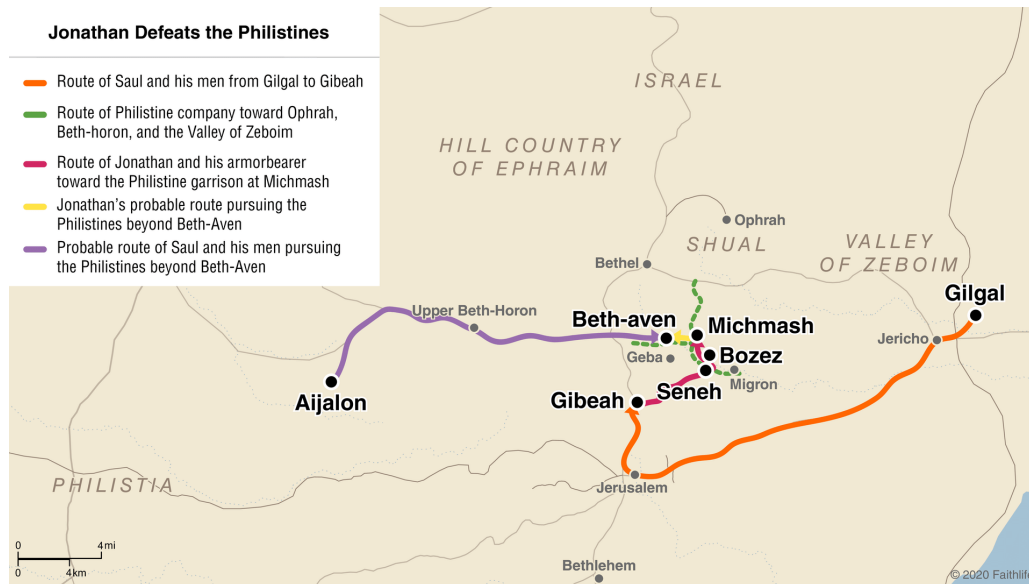
- » How do you feel toward this new arrival? _____
- » Would you want to make him/her your best friend? _____

If you've ever heard a lesson on friendship, you probably studied about David and Jonathan. After all, the Bible states that "the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself." (1 Samuel 18.1). However, while we know that Jonathan and David were great friends, their friendship was not a likely one. First, they came from very different backgrounds. One was the oldest son of the king, the other was the youngest son of a shepherd. But an even greater obstacle to their friendship was the fact that Jonathan could have easily seen David as a rival.

- Jonathan was a valiant warrior in his own right (see 1 Samuel 13.2-3), so he could have been jealous of David's exploits, just as his father was jealous (1 Samuel 18.6-11).
- Jonathan could have envied David's victory over Goliath. After all, Jonathan was likely one of those paralyzed by fear at the giant's challenge (1 Samuel 17.11, 23-24).
- Jonathan could have seen David as a political threat. It had twice been prophesied that Saul's kingdom would come to an end (1 Samuel 13.13-14; 15.26-29). Saul would try to kill his political rival on numerous occasions, and wondered why his son didn't also want him dead (see 1 Samuel 20.31).

Their friendship was formed by mutual faith

We've already noted the courageous faith David possessed, trusting that the Lord would grant him victory over Goliath (see 1Samuel 17.26, 34-37, 45-47). Jonathan possessed the same kind of faith, as seen in his own victory over the Philistines (1Samuel 13-14). The story begins when Jonathan slew a Philistine garrison (13.2-3), but the Philistines responded by sending a massive force deep into Israel (13.5).



1. How did Israel respond? (13.6-7) _____

2. What did Jonathan believe God could and would do? (14.1-10) _____

3. How did Jonathan act on his faith? (14.11-14) _____

This helps us understand why Jonathan loved David so much (18.1); they possessed the same kind of faith! Significantly, they entered a covenant together (18.3). This wasn't a mere agreement to be friends, rather they bound themselves to each other and to the Lord (see 1Samuel 20.8). So, while David and Jonathan may have come from very different backgrounds, they were united by their faith in Jehovah.

This bond of friendship between these two was so strong that it led Jonathan to side with David rather than his own father. Read 1Samuel 19-20 and answer these questions:

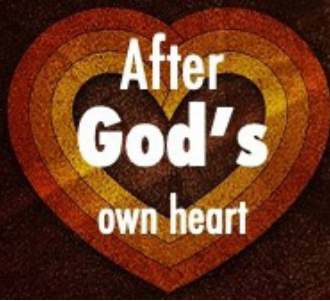
1. Why would Jonathan side with David over his own father? _____

2. What did Jonathan risk to help his friend? _____

3. What promise did David make to Jonathan? _____

Lessons to learn from their friendship

- » **Friendships are typically based on things we share in common** (location, school, sports team, work, etc.) This is what makes the warning in 2Corinthians 6:14-18 so powerful. There is danger in any relationship that is not based on a common relationship with God.
- » **Godly friendships foster honesty.** Can you imagine how tough it must have been for David to go to Jonathan and tell him that Saul was eking his life (20:1-3)? But true friends can always be honest with the other. They can be honest about personal struggles and failings (James 5:16). They can be honest about the failings in the other (Proverbs 27:6).
- » **Godly friendships prompt sacrifice.** Jonathan sacrificed his kingdom and risked his life for David (20:24-34). David would honor their covenant (20:13-14, 42) by providing for Jonathan's crippled son (2Samuel 9). A true friend is ready to stand with you in the most difficult of times (Proverbs 17:17). A true friend is ready to sacrifice (John 15:12-14).



A Heart That Trusts God the Psalms

David was a young man when Samuel anointed him as the next king of Israel (1Samuel 16.12-13). He remained in his father's house, not knowing when he would come to the throne, but assured that it would happen because the Lord had proclaimed it. The Lord's promise seemed confirmed following David's victory over Goliath (1Samuel 18.6-7), but as we know the people's adoration provoked the jealousy of king Saul (1Samuel 18.8-9). The enmity of Saul led to some of the darkest days of David's life. But no matter how great the trial, he retained his trust in his God as evident in the Psalms he penned during this period. In this lesson we will focus on some of the particular events as David fled from Saul and the corresponding Psalms which show how he continued to trust his God.

When Saul sought to kill David in his home (1Samuel 19.11-17; Psalm 59)

By the time we come to this episode Saul had twice tried to kill David with a spear (18.10-11; 19.9-10) and set a trap by demanding the foreskins of 100 Philistines in exchange for the hand of his daughter (18.20-29). Saul then sought to kill David in his own home, but he escaped thanks to warning of his wife, Michal, the daughter of Saul (19.11-17). Where could David find safety if not in his own home? (Psalm 59)

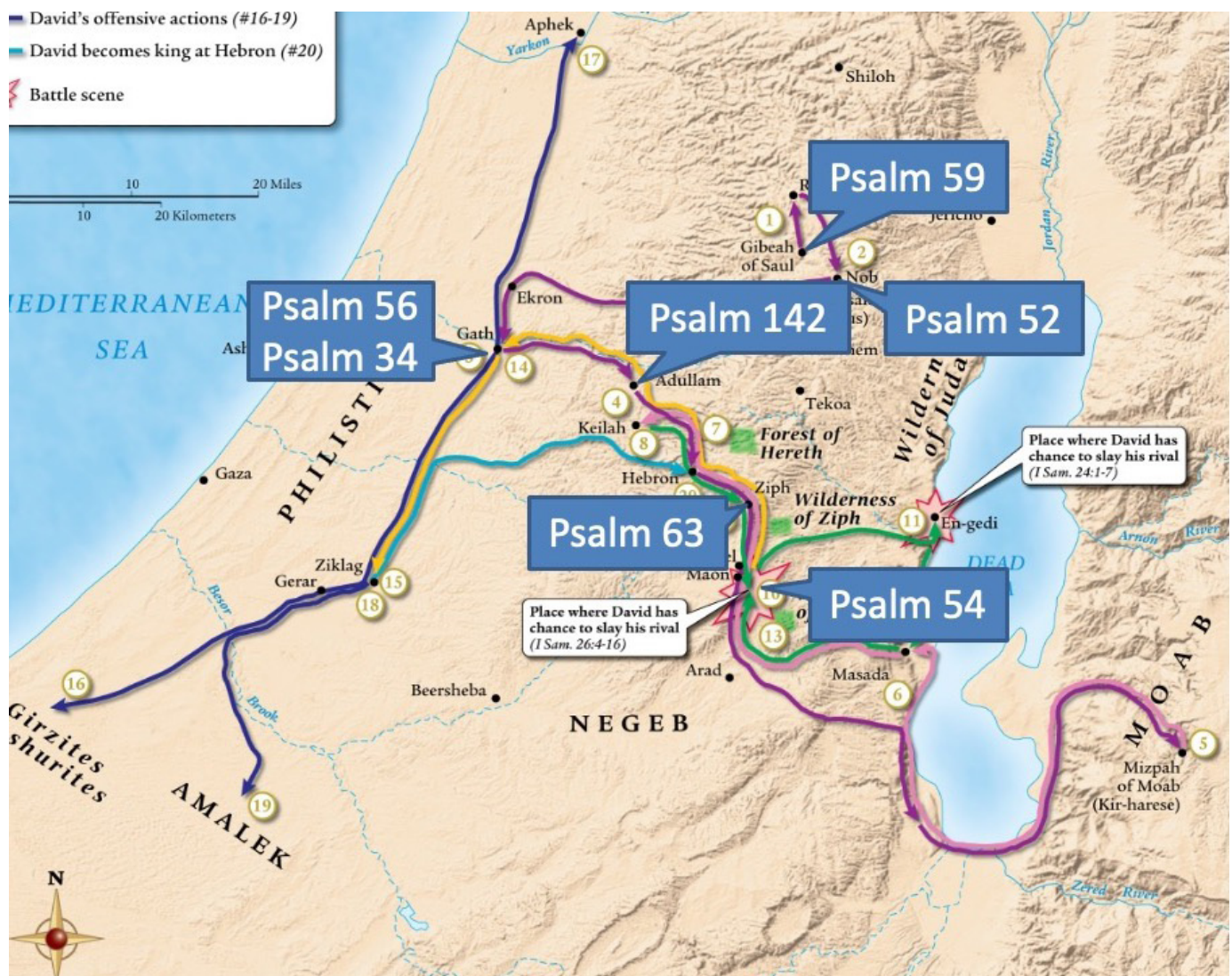
When Doeg informed Saul of David's whereabouts (1Samuel 21.7; 22.6-19; Psalm 52)

Once Jonathan confirmed to David that Saul was seeking his life (1Samuel 20), David fled to Ahimelech the priest at Nob. The priest gave David the only provisions he had: consecrated bread and the sword of Goliath (1Samuel 21.1-6,8-9). However, one of Saul's shepherds, Doeg the Edomite, witnessed this and reported it to Saul (21.7; 22.9-10). Saul confronted Ahimelech the priest and ordered Doeg to slay him and his household. Doeg slew 85 priests! (22.14-19). Only one son of Ahimelech escaped to tell David (22.20-23). Who could punish the wickedness of Doeg and other evildoers like him? (Psalm 52)

When David fled to Achish, king of Gath, and had to feign madness (1Samuel 21.10-15; Psalm 56; 34).

After leaving Ahimelech at Nob, David fled to the Philistine king of Gath (21.10). Gath was the home city of Goliath (17.4) and we can only assume that David believed the Philistines would receive him because they shared a common enemy in Saul. David was mistaken and only escaped the Philistines by feigning madness (21.11-15). What could explain David's narrow escape? (Psalm 56) _____

David also penned Psalm 34 at this time. This Psalm is a call to praise the Lord (vss.1-3) because He gives salvation (vss. 4-18). The righteous may suffer many afflictions, but they have assurance that the Lord will deliver them and redeem them (vss. 19-22). Vs. 20 has added significance because of its use in John 19.33,36. The fact that Jesus' bones were not broken was confirmation that while God's Righteous One was greatly afflicted, His deliverance was assured!



When David fled to the cave of Adullam (1Samuel 22.1-5; Psalm 142)

After David escaped from the Philistines he fled to the cave of Adullam. There, all who were in distress rallied to David's side. David's plight was emphasized by the fact that he asked the king of Moab to give refuge to his parents. However, while the cave at Adullam was a stronghold, it could only provide temporary sanctuary. What was David's true stronghold? (Psalm 142) _____



When David fled to the wilderness (1Samuel 23.14; Psalm 63)

After Saul slew the house of Ahimelech the priest, David heard that the Philistines were fighting against the inhabitants of Keilah (23.1). At the Lord's direction, David delivered Keilah from the Philistines (23.2-5). However, Saul heard of David's exploits and sent his servants to capture David. Once again David inquired of the Lord, and the Lord told him to flee because the men of Keilah would deliver him to Saul (23.9-13). David then fled into the Judean wilderness (23.14). In this dry and desolate place, what did David thirst for? (Psalm 63) _____

When David was betrayed by the Ziphites (1Samuel 23.19-29; Psalm 54)

While in the wilderness David's closest friend, Jonathan, came and comforted him (23.15-18). However, there were others who remained loyal to Saul. The Ziphites sent word to the king that David was hiding in the wilderness (23.19-23) and Saul pursued him. Saul would have overtaken David had his attention not been diverted by the Philistines (23.24-28). Who did David credit with his deliverance? (Psalm 54) _____

After
God's
own heart

A Heart That Yields To God's Will

1 Samuel 24 & 26

David spares Saul's life at Engedi (1 Samuel 24)

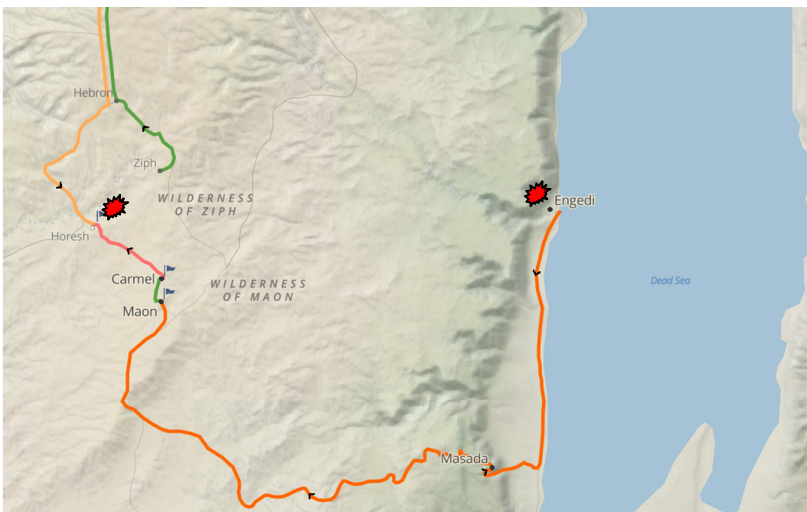
Read 1 Samuel 24 and answer these questions:

1. Why did David's men believe it was ok to kill Saul (vs. 4)? _____

2. How did David feel after he cut off the edge of Saul's garment (vs. 5)? _____

3. Why was David's conscience bothered (vs. 6)? _____

4. Who did David trust to avenge him (vs. 12)? _____



Caves at Engedi

David spares Saul's life at Jeshimon (1 Samuel 26)

Read 1 Samuel 26 and answer these questions:

1. What was Abishai convinced of (vs. 8)? _____

2. What two reasons did David give for not striking Saul (vss. 9-10)?

(1) _____

(2) _____

David's desire to do the will of God

On both occasions David's men wanted to take advantage of the opportunity; they wanted to take the life of king Saul (24.4; 26.8). They believed the Lord had given them this opportunity! (Note: there is no record of the Lord saying to David, "I am about to give your enemy into your hand" as his men relayed in 24.4. It may be that they equated God's promise to deliver the Philistines into David's hands in 23.4 with God promising to deliver any enemy into David's hand.) David's men had been on the run with him. No doubt they were weary and ready to go home. Surely these opportunities to defeat their enemy had come from God!

But David would not strike; he would not kill the king. Even cutting off the edge of Saul's robe pained David (see 24.5. Such an act would have been seen as an act of disloyalty or even rebellion in the ancient near east) David was convinced that to kill Saul would have been against the will of God, because Saul was the Lord's _____ (24.6,10; 26.9, 11, 23-24). The Lord had promised that He would choose Israel's king (Deuteronomy 17.14) and He had specifically chosen Saul (see 1Samuel 10.20-24). Who was David to go against the choice of God? "Far be it from me because of the Lord that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, since he is the Lord's anointed." (1Samuel 24.6)

Yielding to God doesn't make life easier

Chances are if David had killed Saul, much of Israel would have accepted David as their new king. They had witnessed the triumphs of David (see 18.7) and seen Saul descend into madness. In choosing to follow the Lord's will, David chose a more difficult path. On both occasions, even though Saul gave him assurances, David continued to flee from the king. After sparing Saul the first time, David "went up to the stronghold" (24.22), i.e. one of the caves of Engedi. The second time, David fled to the _____ because he was convinced that he would "perish one day by the hand of Saul" (27.1).

Yielding to God can make a powerful impression on others

We cannot know how profound of an effect David's actions had on his men, but we do read that "David persuaded his men... and did not allow them to rise up against Saul" (24.7). Significantly, David's actions did have an effect on his enemy. On the first occasion Saul declared that David was more _____ than he (24.17), on the second occasion Saul confessed that he had _____ by pursuing David (26.21). Tragically, Saul would not allow David's mercy to have a lasting

effect on him, but in these lucid moments the actions of David deeply moved the king.

We yield to God because we trust Him

How could David spare the life of his enemy? How could he show mercy to a man who had shown him none? Simply put, he trusted in God! He believed that the Lord would _____ him (24.12; 26.10), that the Lord would deliver him from Saul (24.15), that the Lord would repay him for his _____ (26.23) and that the Lord would hold his life in high value (26.24). David would not strike the Lord's anointed, but he was assured that God would set right all wrongs.

Yielding to God secures His blessing

Even Saul recognized that David would be blessed by God. Saul knew that David would be _____ (24.19-20) and that he would _____ (26.25). Yielding to God's will may be difficult, but ultimately it secures God's blessing! "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter." (Matthew 7:21, NASB95)

Make it personal...

- What's a part of God's will you may not want to always follow? (example: sometimes you may not want to obey your parents, or control your tongue) _____

- How could yielding to God's will possibly make your life harder? _____

- What lesson do we learn from David about why we should do God's will, even when we don't want to? _____

- How could you impress others by following God's will? _____

- **Remember: following God's will always yields His blessing!**

After
God's
own heart

A Heart That Accepts Instruction

1 Samuel 25

We saw in our study of 1 Samuel 24 that David respected the will of God so much that he would not strike down Saul, the man who was relentlessly pursuing him. David would not strike him because he was God's anointed choice as king. However, when we come to 1 Samuel 25 we see David ready to strike down a man and his family for offenses far less than those committed by Saul. We will see that what saved David from violating the will of God in this case was that he was willing to accept instruction from an unlikely source.



Maon

David's rage (vss. 1-13, 21-22)

The chapter begins with the death of Samuel and David's moving from the stronghold in En Gedi to the wilderness of Paran, the southern portion of Judah's territory. This chapter helps us understand that during David's flight from Saul he continued protecting the people of Israel from bandits and raiding parties (cf. 1 Samuel 30.14).

1. What had David and his men done for a wealthy man named Nabal (vss. 2,7,21)? _____
2. How did Nabal respond when David requested provisions so that he and his men could celebrate a festive day (vs. 10)? _____
3. How did David respond to the insult? How was his attitude to Nabal different

from his attitude toward Saul (vss. 13, 22, 34)? _____

Abigail's wisdom (vss. 14-20, 23-31)

Abigail, the wife of Nabal, knew that her husband had acted foolishly. First, she sent abundant provisions to David and his men (vs. 18) and then tried to temper David's anger by taking responsibility for not having received David's messengers herself (vss. 24-25), but then she did something much more important: she redirected David's attention to the Lord (vss. 26-31).

1. What did Abigail say the Lord would do for David? _____

2. What warning did Abigail give to David (compare Leviticus 19:17–18)? _____

David's willingness to accept instruction (vss. 32-35)

To David's credit, he listened to and heeded the counsel of Abigail. David, commander of 600 men (vs. 13) and the future king of Israel, was willing to accept instruction from a woman. He knew that she gave the Lord's instruction, thus he was willing to listen to it regardless of their respective stations in life. Significantly, the chapter began by noting the death of Samuel, but it wasn't just the prophets who could give godly advice! Abigail also gave godly instruction, and David heeded it! "“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me, and blessed be your discernment, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodshed and from avenging myself by my own hand.” (1 Samuel 25:32–33)

The New Testament records a similar example of accepting instruction from an unlikely source. In Acts 18:24-28 we read how Apollos, a man described as both “eloquent” and “mighty in the Scriptures”, accepted correction from Priscilla and Aquila. Significantly, Priscilla (the wife) is mentioned first, possibly indicating her lead in this encounter. Regardless, they were tent-makers, not trained speakers like Apollos. Yet, he was willing to accept their instruction.

The point for us is simple: we need to be humble enough to accept instruction from anyone. Whether that instruction comes from an elder or from a widow, from a preacher or a teenager. If they are pointing us to the will of God, we would be fool-

ish to not listen! “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (Proverbs 1:7)

The benefit of heeding instruction (vss. 36-38)

David was ready to slay Nabal, but in doing so he would have violated the Lord’s command (Lev. 19.18). By heeding the instruction of Abigail, David relented and turned the matter over to his Lord. Did the Lord avenge David (1 Samuel 25:38)? _____

A lesson in consistency...

As we noted in our last lesson, David would not lift his hand against Saul because he was the Lord’s anointed (24.6). In fact, David’s conscience bothered him for even cutting off the edge Saul’s robe (24.5). This in spite of the fact that Saul was ceaselessly trying to kill David! Yet, David was prepared to not only kill Nabal, but all the males in his house because of an offense (25.21-22). David, who had shown such mercy to Saul was not consistent. As, as we will shortly note, was not consistent in following the will of God.

Truth is, all of us struggle with consistency at times. Maybe it’s extending grace to mercy to those who struggle with some kind of sins, but not others. (Jesus came to seek and save all the lost, Luke 19.10). Maybe it’s caring very much about some portions of God’s will, but not others. Caring about loving our neighbor, but not as much about holiness. (It all matters to Jesus, Matthew 28.20). Maybe it’s being very concerned that we do things the right way, but not being merciful to the weak/immature (Jesus wants us to follow all of God’s will, Matthew 23.23). What are some other areas where we struggle with consistency?

- _____
- _____
- _____

After
God's
own heart

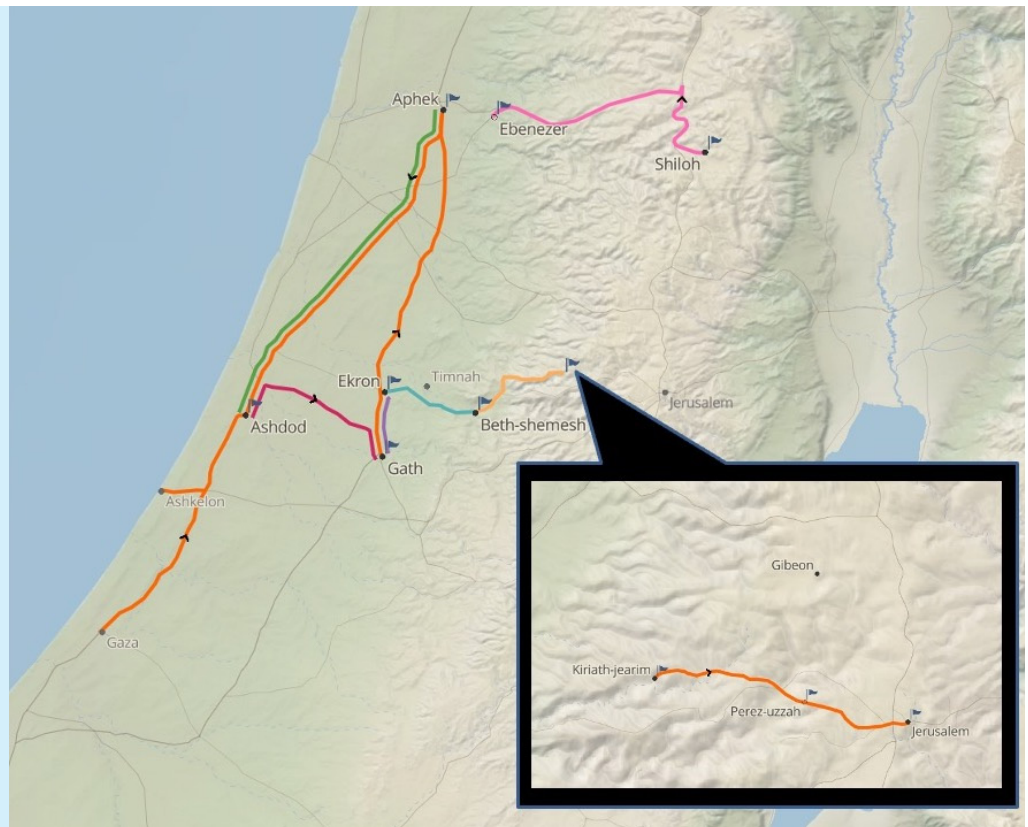
A Heart That Learns To Properly Respect God

2Samuel 6

Many years before David's reign, the ark of the covenant was taken by the Philistines after they defeated Israel in battle (see 1Samuel 4.1-11). However, the Philistines found the ark a burden as their idols fell before it (1Samuel 5.1-5) and the inhabitants of their great cities were struck with tumors when the ark was present (1Samuel 5.6-12). The Philistines sent the ark back to Israel (1Samuel 6.1-12), where it first came to the Levitical city of Beth-shemesh. However, the people there did not properly honor the ark, taking it upon themselves to look in it, and they were struck by the Lord (1Samuel 6.13-20). The ark was then taken to Kiriath-jearim, where it would remain throughout the life of Samuel, the reign of Saul and the first 7 years of David's reign (1Samuel 6.21-7.2; 2Samuel 6.2; 1Chronicles 13.5-6).

We read in 2Samuel 5 how David conquered Jerusalem, the Jebusite city which had remained unconquered since the conquest. David made the stronghold his capital and we read that "David realized that the Lord had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted his kingdom for the sake of His people Israel" (vs. 12). For this reason, David desired to bring the ark from Kiriath-jearim (referred to as Baale-judah) to Jerusalem (2Samuel 6.1-2).

Movement of the ark
from when it was
captured by the
Philistines until David
transported it to
Jerusalem



The ark dishonored (2Samuel 6.1-10)

1. What instructions did the Lord provide for how to move the ark (Exodus 25.14-15; 37.4-5)? _____

2. How did the Philistines transport the ark (1Samuel 6.7-8)? _____

3. Did David follow the Lord's instructions or mimic the Philistines (vs. 3)? _____

4. Who paid the price for David's decision (vss. 6-7)? _____

David's first response was anger (vs. 8). Clearly he thought his actions were justified, but he had failed to properly respect the Lord. His next response was fear (vss. 9-10). Rather than take the ark on to Jerusalem, David left the ark in the house of Obed-edom. It is likely that David feared Jerusalem would have suffered the same fate as the Philistines and the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh (see 1Samuel 5-6).

The ark honored (2Samuel 6.11-23)

But the house of Obed-edom was not cursed by the ark's presence, rather the Lord blessed him and his household (vs. 11). This convinced David that it would be OK to bring the ark to Jerusalem.

1. How did David transport the ark this time (1Chronicles 15.2,11-15)? _____

2. What did David do as the ark was on its way to Jerusalem (2Samuel 6.13-14)? Why do you think David acted this way? _____

3. Once the ark was brought into Jerusalem, David penned a beautiful psalm (1Chronicles 16.8-33). In your own words, what is the main point of the psalm? _____

Lessons for us...

- **Good intentions are not enough.** No doubt David's intentions were good. He desired the Lord's presence and went about trying to make that happen as quickly as possible. But God was not honored, and Uzzah paid for the dishonor with his life. We can make the same mistake. For instance, many of us love all kinds of music and so we may assume that God wants us to worship with all the different instruments that we enjoy. But God has specified how He wants us to praise Him (Ephesians 5.19; Colossians 3.16). Our intentions may be good, but it's more important to do what we know God desires.
- **God has revealed how to honor Him.** The knowledge of how to transport the ark was available to David (Exodus 25.14-15; Numbers 7.9; etc.). He failed to follow those instructions the first time, but the second time David made sure to follow God's revealed will (1Chronicles 15.11-15). The only way we can know our actions honor our God is if they conform to his revealed will
- **We should learn from our mistakes.** To his credit, David learned from his mistake. In spite of his good intentions, by violating the Lord's command he had not given the Lord His proper respect. But ultimately we see that David would respect the Lord and give Him the honor He is due. If we have a heart like David, we will learn from our mistakes and resolve to honor the Lord in all our actions.

After
God's
own heart

A Heart That Conquers Doubt

Psalm 60

"I have been with you wherever you have gone..."

In 2Samuel 7.12-16 the Lord made a promise to David, one of the most significant promises in the entire Old Testament. Summarize the promise in your own words: _____

But what assurance did David have that the Lord would keep His promise? Note what the Lord said before making His promise: "I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you..." (vs. 9). Turning our attention to

2Samuel 8, we can see that the Lord had done exactly what He said! List the nations David defeated:



_____ (vs. 1)

_____ (vs. 2)

_____ (vss. 3-8)

_____ (via treaty, vss. 9-10)

_____ (vss. 13-14)

However, David's conquests were not as easy as chapter 8 would indicate. Psalm 60 was written when David "struggled with Aram-naharaim and with Aram-zobah, and Joab returned, and smote twelve thousand of Edom in the Valley of Salt." We don't know exactly how this happened, but it would seem that while David was battling Aram to the far north (2Samuel 8.3-8), Edom took the opportunity to revolt in the south (2Samuel 8.13-14). Now David was at war on two fronts and as Psalm 60 shows, the battle did not seem to be going well for David!

Psalm 60 (NASB95)

1 O God, You have rejected us. You have broken us; You have been angry; O, restore us.

2 You have made the land quake, You have split it open; Heal its breaches, for it totters.

3 You have made Your people experience hardship; You have given us wine to drink that makes us stagger.

4 You have given a banner to those who fear You, That it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah.

5 That Your beloved may be delivered, Save with Your right hand, and answer us!

6 God has spoken in His holiness: “I will exult, I will portion out Shechem and measure out the valley of Succoth.

7 “Gilead is Mine, and Manasseh is Mine; Ephraim also is the helmet of My head; Judah is My scepter.

8 “Moab is My washbowl; Over Edom I shall throw My shoe; Shout loud, O Philistia, because of Me!”

9 Who will bring me into the besieged city? Who will lead me to Edom?

10 Have not You Yourself, O God, rejected us? And will You not go forth with our armies, O God?

11 O give us help against the adversary, For deliverance by man is in vain.

12 Through God we shall do valiantly, And it is He who will tread down our adversaries.

1. Who did David say was responsible for Israel’s defeat (vss. 1-3)? _____

2. Who did David trust would save Israel (vs. 5)? _____
3. Contrast what would happen to Israel if their victory depended on man or on God (vss. 11-12). _____

While we do not know the details, these verses make it clear that Israel had suffered a massive defeat. But David knew that the defeat wasn’t due to superior forces; Israel’s defeat came from God! Notice the 7 times in these vss. 1-3 where David said of God that “You” brought various forms of calamity on His people. God had rejected them; God was angry with them! We do not know why God was upset with His people. Perhaps they violated His covenant in some way, or perhaps their military successes led to a misplaced confidence in themselves. Whatever the reason for His displeasure, Israel was doomed without God on their side!

But all was not lost. David and Israel still had hope in God. He had “set up a banner for those who fear you, that they may flee to it from the bow” (vs. 4, ESV). God would deliver His “beloved” (vs. 5) and He still ruled over Israel (vss. 6-7, these locations represent the totality of Israel) as well as the nations (vs. 8). In the midst of defeat, David had confidence that his God would be faithful to His covenant. He had hope in the Lord.

Vss. 9-12 begin with uncertainty as David wondered who would give him victory over the Edomites (vs. 9). Would God, who had rejected His people, go forth with their armies (vs. 10)? The answer was one of hope: “O give us help against the adversary, for deliverance by man is in vain” (vs. 11) and resolve to press on knowing that “through God we shall do valiantly, and it is He who will tread down our adversaries.” (vs. 12)

The Lesson For Us

- Name another “faithful” person in the Bible who struggled with doubt (hint: there are lots of them) _____
- Why do you consider that person to be faithful when he/she had periods of doubt? _____

- What’s the lesson for us? Should we despair when we have moments of doubt? What do we learn from David and other godly men and women about how we can conquer our doubts? _____

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;” (Hebrews 10:23, NASB95)

After
God's
own heart

A Heart That Receives Correction (Part 1)

2Samuel 11-12

Upon rejecting Saul as king, the Lord revealed through Samuel that the next king of Israel would be “a man after His own heart” (1Samuel 13.14). So far in our study of David, we have seen him to be just that: a man devoted to the ways of God and a man who put his complete trust in his Lord. But when we come to 1Samuel 11 we see a man who fails. Rather than being an example of how we should act when faced with temptation, David commits many of the same errors that we so often commit. But as we noted at the beginning of our study, a person after God’s own heart is not always perfect. What matters is how they respond to their sins and how they receive the Lord’s correction. But before we see how David received the Lord’s correction, we must first note how he found himself at such a low point to begin with; we must see how he made some of the very same mistakes we make.

David set himself up to fall (2Samuel 11.1)

Springtime was the time when most kings in the ancient near east would go to war. The winter rains were over and it would be several months before the harvest was ready. Spring was the time when a king could send all of his able bodied men off to war, and such was the case in 2Samuel 11.1 as David resumed his conquest of Ammon. Yet, while David sent all of his men off to war, where was he? _____



The fact is, David should have gone to war with his men. You may remember that this was one of the very reasons Israel demanded a king anyway (1Samuel 8.20). Furthermore, we read in 2Samuel 10 that the war with Ammon was not an easy affair. After many battles David was on the cusp of victory, but he was without excuse for not going himself once the next year’s campaign began. So, we find David at home just “killing time” until his men should return from battle. Furthermore, he was surrounded by all of the wives and daughters of them men who had gone off to fight. He had set himself up to fall.

David allowed his lust to conceive (2Samuel 11.2-4)

David was not destined to sin. In fact, he could have taken several steps that

would have prevented him from transgressing the Lord's will. Read 2Samuel 11.2-4 and list some things David could have done differently:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

David's problem wasn't that he looked at Bathsheba as she was bathing on the rooftop, but that he looked again. Rather than remove himself from the situation, David cultivated his lust. He had so many opportunities to turn back, to not proceed into sin. How long did it take to inquire about her? Couldn't he have spent that time reflecting on God's will? And when he heard that this was the daughter of one of his mighty men (for Eliam see 2Samuel 23.34) and the wife of another (for Uriah see 2Samuel 23.39), couldn't he have reflected on how his actions could affect two of his most faithful followers? And when he sent messengers to take Bathsheba, could he not have paused and prayed before leaping into sin? In the words of James, "when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death." (James 1.15)

David's sin became more precious to him than anything else (2Samuel 11.5-27)

We normally think of these verses as David trying to cover-up his sinful actions, and while that is certainly what happens these verses also show how David's sin was so precious to him that he would put it before everything else:

1. David chose his sin over the feelings and well-being of others. Who else was affected by David's actions? _____

2. David chose his sin over his reputation. What do you think Joab thought of David when he commanded him to place Uriah (one of his best men) in a position where he would die in battle? _____

3. David chose his sin over the good of his people. For Joab to fulfill David's command he had to position the army near the walls of Rabbah. Was Uriah the only person who died (vs. 17)? _____

4. David chose his sin over the will of his God. "But the thing that David had done was _____ in the _____ of the Lord." (vs. 27)

David retained a sense of justice, but he was blind to his own flaws (2Samuel 12.1-6)

1 Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him and said, “There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor.

2 “The rich man had a great many flocks and herds.

3 “But the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb Which he bought and nourished; And it grew up together with him and his children. It would eat of his bread and drink of his cup and lie in his bosom, And was like a daughter to him.

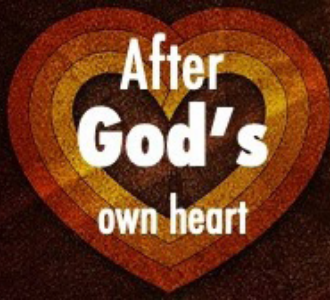
4 “Now a traveler came to the rich man, And he was unwilling to take from his own flock or his own herd, To prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him; Rather he took the poor man’s ewe lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.”

1. How did David react to Nathan’s story (vss. 5-6)? _____

2. What did the Law say should happen in this case (see Exodus 22.1)? _____

3. What did the Law say was the punishment for David’s (see Leviticus 20.10)? _____

We know David to be a just and righteous king, and his sin did not remove his sense of justice. He was ready to dispense justice in the fictional case brought to him by Nathan the prophet; in fact he was ready to dispense far more than justice. Justice called for the man to restore 4 times what he’d taken, but David believed that the man was even worthy of death. He believed in justice, but he had turned a blind eye to his own sin. He was willing to condemn a man who was not worthy of death, when he in fact stood condemned and worthy of death. Our Lord could say of David, and of us, “why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?” (Matthew 7.3)



A Heart That Receives Correction (Part 2)

2Samuel 12; Psalm 32; Psalm 51

Because of his sin, David fell “short of the glory of God” (Romans 3.23) just as we all do. He certainly did not act as a man after God’s own heart as he transgressed the Lord’s will, but his heart was willing to receive the Lord’s correction and to repent. His heart was moldable, which is why David continues to serve as an example for us as we seek to be people after God’s own heart. As we read the account in 2Samuel 12 and two of the Psalms penned by David at this time (Psalm 32 and Psalm 51), we see how we should receive correction.

David understood that every sin is against God (2Samuel 12.7-15)

1. Who was affected by David’s sinful actions in 2Samuel 11? (Hint: a quick review of the last lesson will answer this question) _____

2. Yet, who did David say his sin was against (2Samuel 12.13; Psalm 51.4)? _____

3. Why do you think David reached this conclusion? _____

Even though his actions had major ramifications for Bathsheba, Uriah and his entire army, David’s sin was against God. After all, it was God who made David king (vs. 7) and it was God who exalted him over His people (vs. 8). But David had wilfully violated God’s covenant with Israel by committing both adultery and murder (vs. 9; cf. Exodus 20.13,14). In doing so David “despised the word of the Lord” much as Saul had done before him (1Samuel 15.23,26). But where Saul was slow in taking responsibility for his actions (1Samuel 15.13-23), David immediately confessed that he had sinned against his Lord (2Samuel 12.13).

David accepted the consequences of his sin, even though he was forgiven (2Samuel 12.10-14)

The Lord was merciful to David. Once he acknowledged his sin, the Lord assured David that his sins were taken away and that he would not die, even though the just penalty for those sins was death (see Leviticus 20.10; 24.17). However, there

would be consequences for David's actions. Read vss. 10-14; what were the consequences of David's sin? _____

While David would pray that the Lord would be merciful and allow the child to live, he also accepted the consequences of his sins. We never read of him lamenting his plight or wondering why he must suffer for his actions even though he was forgiven.

David believed in God's mercy (2Samuel 12.15-23; Psalm 32.1-7)

The Lord told David that his child would die and seven days later the Lord's words came to pass (2Samuel 12.14,18). David spent those days fasting and weeping because as he related to his servants, "Who knows, the Lord may be gracious to me, that the child may live." (vs. 22). David believed in God's mercy and grace because he had experienced it himself. As we've already seen, the Lord took David's sin away (vs. 13), but the full magnitude of God's mercy is expressed by David in Psalm 32.1-7.

1. Did David believe that the Lord had forgiven him (vss. 1-2)? _____
2. How did David describe his experience before he repented (vss. 3-4)? _____
3. How did David describe his experience after he repented (vss. 5-7)? _____

David committed himself to real change (Psalm 32.8-11; Psalm 51)

Psalm 32 concludes with God's promise to "instruct and teach" David "in the way which you should go." The Lord did not want David (or anyone) to reject His counsel and experience the many sorrows of the wicked. The Lord's desire is that His people "be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous ones; And shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart." These instructions in the Psalm indicate that David had committed himself to do just that.

Of even greater significance are David's words in Psalm 51. Read the Psalm and then tell what lessons you learn from David about repentance.

Psalm 51 (NASB95)

1 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity
And cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me.

4 Against You, You only, I have sinned And
done what is evil in Your sight, So that You
are justified when You speak And blameless
when You judge.

5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
And in sin my mother conceived me.

6 Behold, You desire truth in the inner-
most being, And in the hidden part You will
make me know wisdom.

7 Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be
clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than
snow.

8 Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let
the bones which You have broken rejoice.

9 Hide Your face from my sins And blot out
all my iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And
renew a steadfast spirit within me.

11 Do not cast me away from Your presence
And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation
And sustain me with a willing spirit.

13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners will be converted to You.

14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God,
the God of my salvation; Then my tongue
will joyfully sing of Your righteousness.

15 O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth
may declare Your praise.

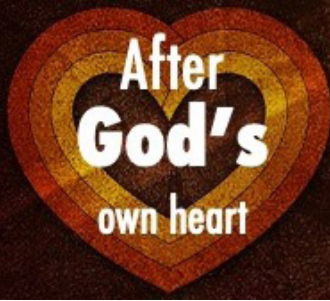
16 For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You
will not despise.

18 By Your favor do good to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices, In burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then young bulls will be offered on Your altar.

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A Heart That Loves Sinners

2Samuel 13-18

As we noted in our last two lessons, David was a man after God's own heart, but he was also like us: he transgressed the will of God. Remember, a consequence of his sin was that there would be strife in his house (2Samuel 12.11-12). But this would provide David an opportunity to demonstrate again that he was a man after God's own heart; it would give David the opportunity to love a sinner.

Absalom rebels (2Samuel 13-17)

David had several wives and that led to problems in his family. While all of his children had the same father, they had different mothers and thus many of his children were half-brothers and half-sisters to each other. Our story begins when one of David's sons, Amnon, harmed and shamed his half-sister Tamar. But Tamar had a brother, named Absalom.

1. How did Absalom avenge his sister (13.28-29)? _____
2. How did David feel about his son, Absalom (13.37-39)? _____

Absalom would stay in exile for 3 years, yet David never sent for him. Ultimately, it was Joab, commander of the army, who persuaded David to bring Absalom home. Even then, David would not allow his son to see him (14.24). This went on for 2 years. How did Absalom feel after not seeing his father for 2 years (14.28-32)? _____

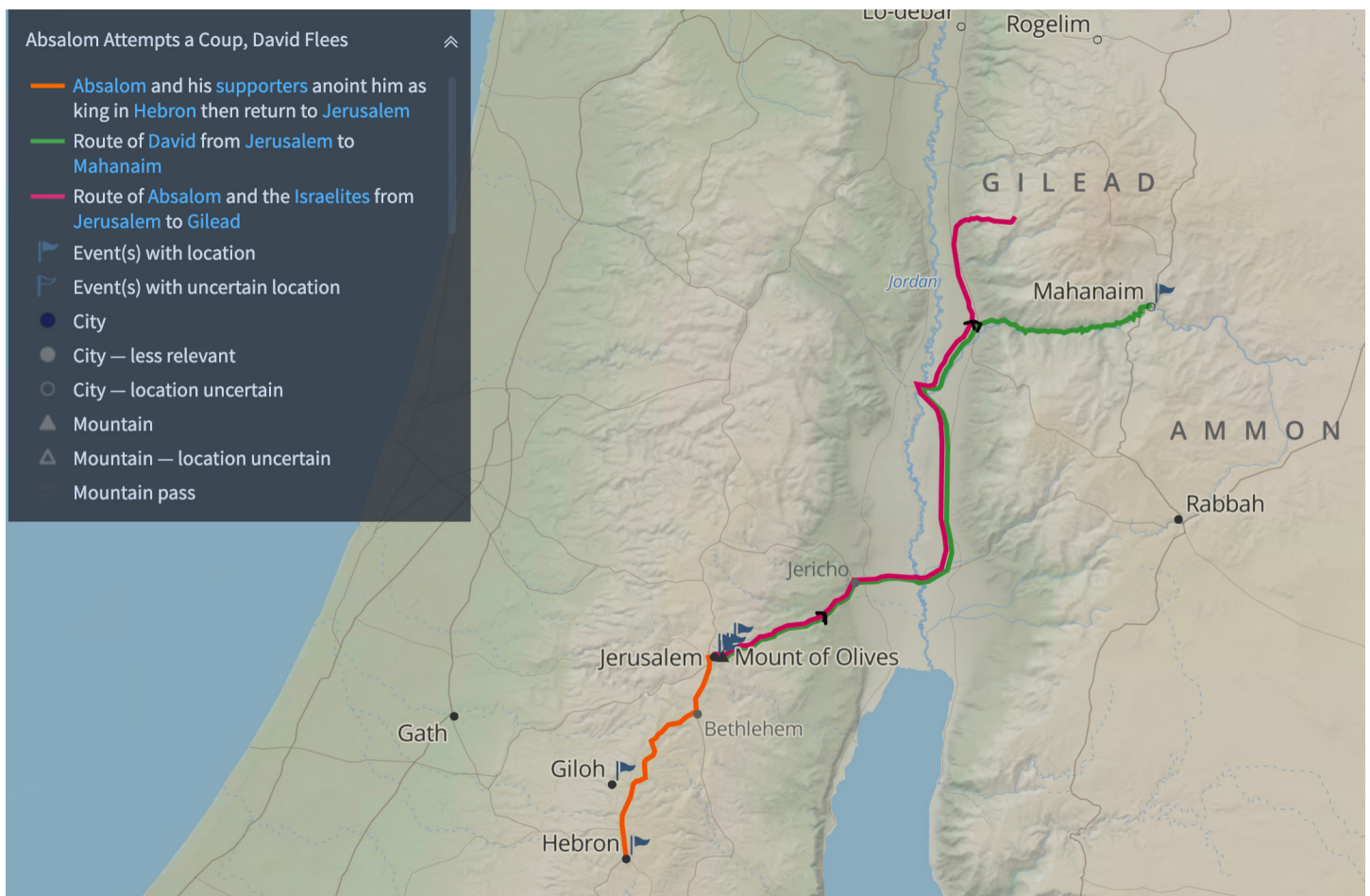


“So when Joab came to the king and told him, he called for Absalom. Thus he came to the king and prostrated himself on his face to the ground before the king, and the king kissed Absalom.” (2 Samuel 14:33, NASB95) This verse would make it seem that David and his son were reconciled, but they were not.. far from it!

1. How did Absalom occupy his time? Why? (15.1-6) _____

2. What did Absalom’s actions force David to do (15.13-14)? _____

We can’t underestimate the desperate situation David was in. God’s anointed king wasn’t only forced to evacuate his capital city, but to flee out of the Promised Land all together! Not only had his own son rebelled against him, but even some of his most trusted counselors, like Ahithopel. But there were some who remained loyal to David, like Hushai; he feigned loyalty to Absalom, but was actually serving as a spy for the true king. In fact, his counsel to Absalom is what allowed David to cross the Jordan River in safety (see 17.1-14).



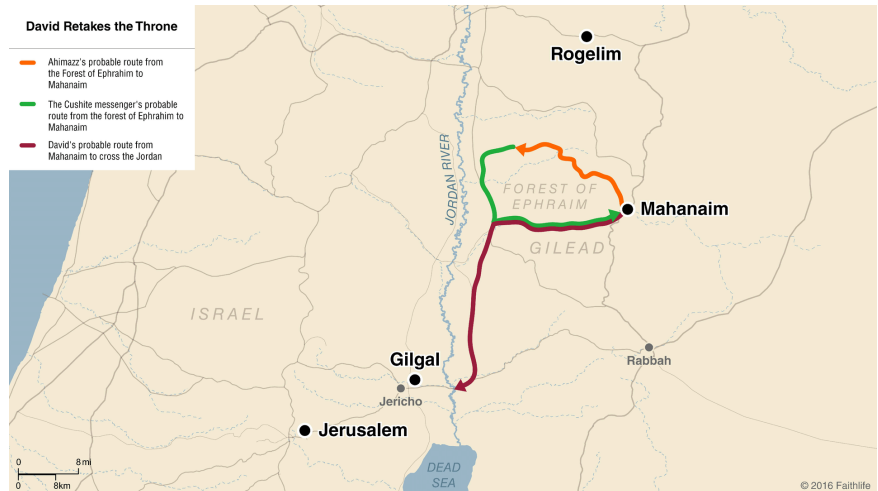
David's love for Absalom (2Samuel 18)

David, and much of his army, had escaped, but Absalom had many men loyal to him and the two armies were bound to clash.

1. What command did David give regarding Absalom (18.5)? _____

2. What happened to Absalom (18.9-14)?

3. How did David respond to the news of his son's death (18.33)? _____



David: a picture of God's love for us

Absalom brought much grief to his father. First, he killed his brother, another son of David. Then he undermined his father's authority and led many others to rebel against the king! David would have been just in punishing Absalom, but his love for his son outweighed all else. He longed for his son (13.39); he desired to deal gently with him (18.5); he wished he could die in his place (18.33).

Perhaps this is the greatest example of how David was a man after God's own heart. We, like Absalom, have brought much grief to our heavenly Father. He would be just in punishing us, but His love for us outweighs all else. In fact, His love is so great that He has done something David could not: He died in our place!

“For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:6–8, NASB95)



A Heart That Accepts Responsibility

1 Chronicles 21

We have already noted David's sins of adultery and murder in 2Samuel 11, yet we also saw how he took responsibility for those actions (see 2Samuel 12.13). However, those were not David's only sins. As we conclude our study of David, let's look at another of his failures and see how he accepted responsibility for his actions.

David's sin (1Chronicles 21.1-6)

Our passage begins with the statement, "Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel."

1. Why do you think David would want to do this? _____

2. Why would Satan want David to do this; what was wrong with it? _____

The events described in this chapter would have occurred after the rebellions of Absalom and Sheba (2Samuel 15-20), so it would seem that Satan was preying on David's fears. What if there was another rebellion? How many men could David call to his defense? Thus Satan moved David to number Israel. It is standard procedure for kings to number their troops, to know exactly how many men they could send into battle. But this was not suppose to be the way Israel's king behaved: "Moreover, he shall not multiply horses for himself..." (Deuteronomy 17:16) Israel's king was not to place his trust in military might, whether that might was quantified by horses or by men.



Joab understood that David was erring, and he pleaded with the king that he would not “be a cause of _____ to Israel” (vs. 3). David insisted, but Joab did not number two of the tribes (Levi and Benjamin) because “the king’s command was _____” to him (vs. 6).

The Lord’s punishment (1Chronicles 21.7-15)

1. How did the Lord feel about David’s actions (vs. 7)? _____

2. What three choices did the Lord give to David (vss. 9-12)? _____

3. Which did David choose? Why? (vs. 13) _____

Pestilence came and 70,000 of Israel fell. However, the Lord halted the pestilence as His angel came to Jerusalem: “David lifted up his eyes and saw the angel of the Lord standing between earth and heaven, with his drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem.” (vs. 16)

Why did so many die when it was David who sinned? First, if David placed his trust in numbers then it would be fitting that God’s punishment diminished those numbers. Second, we read in 2Samuel 24.1 that “the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and it incited David against them to say, ‘Go, number Israel and Judah.’” Perhaps the Lord was angry with Israel because they rebelled against David, but regardless there was some national sin which displeased their God.

David accepts responsibility (1Chronicles 21.16-27)

As opposed to when David sinned with Bathsheba, no one had to confront the king with his sin. David readily acknowledged his sin and mourned over his actions (vss. 8,16-17). Furthermore, he readily submitted to the Lord’s command to build an altar on the threshing floor of Ornan (vss. 18-21).

1. What request did David make of Ornan (vs. 22)? _____

2. What did Ornan offer (vs. 23)? _____

3. Why did David refuse Ornan's generosity (vs. 24)? _____

This is the picture of a man whose heart was moved to accept full responsibility!

Postscript (1Chronicles 21.28-22.1)

David offered his sacrifice on the threshing floor of Ornan in Jerusalem. And it was from this spot that David declared, "This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel." (1Chronicles 22.1) Thus, David chose this spot as the place to build the house of the Lord.

Are you willing to pay full price?

David provides a powerful example for those of us who've experienced the Lord's mercy: we should be willing to pay the full price in response to His mercy and grace. Yet, we often try to offer the Lord bargain level service instead of paying the full price.

- Whenever we complain about worshipping our God, we are offering less than He deserves. What does it mean to pay full price (Hebrews 10.19-25)? _____

- Whenever we offer the Lord anything less than our best, we are offering less than He deserves. What does it mean to pay full price (Romans 12.1-2)? _____

- Whenever we make the standard of morality anything below the nature of God Himself, we are offering less than He deserves. What does it mean to pay full price (Matthew 5.48; 1Peter 1.15-16)? _____
