

A Heart After God

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

“And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will” (Acts 13:22).

It is important for me to know that the knowledge I have of God becomes God's life in me. The patience that I develop through following God becomes contentment for my life. The truth that I understand turns into love, grace, and mercy through the indwelling Spirit. Then, we have fellowship with God because of an inward revival that makes us meek. Meekness that comes from a revival inwardly makes us gentle outwardly. With gentleness comes kindness that always produces a spirit of faith-rest. The Cross of Calvary always brings in a Christ-like attitude. A heart that is up-to-date with God is a heart that has a fresh response to God.

I want to show you from the Bible how one

man practiced a life of revival. In His foreknowledge, God saw this man and decided that he would be the man, thirty years before this man was born. In 1 Samuel 13, the prophet Samuel said to Saul, “But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee” (1 Samuel 13:14). He was referring to David.

God kept looking for a man. What was the qualification God was looking for? He was looking for a man who had a heart after Him.

He could have found Samuel who was a beautiful man of God. He could have chosen Jesse, the father of David, whose name indicates “living water of the Almighty God.” He could have chosen Saul also, and He did choose him to be king, but He did not choose Saul as the man after His own heart. He could have selected Abner, the commander-in-chief of the army, but He didn’t. God selected a teenager, a young man who remained committed to caring for his father’s sheep.

You know, many people have this idea that teenagers are not supposed to be spiritual, that

they don't know what they want to do with their life. But God chose a teenager. Why did He choose this teenager? You will find out in these pages. Read on and you will see that this teenager knew how to fellowship with God. He knew how to get to know God. He knew how to be trained by God, how to trust God—how to go after God.

Chapter One

A POINT OF REFERENCE AND A FRAME OF REFERENCE

What is a man who is after God's own heart? First of all, the word "heart" refers to a point of reference and a frame of reference. A man after God's heart is a man who is after God's point of reference, which is salvation through the Cross. This is God's frame of reference, which is governmental doctrine through grace.

David was a man after God with his point of reference and with his frame of reference. When something happened, he had both a point of reference and a frame of reference, and he got to know God's heart.

A man after God's own heart must learn to know what God's heart is—to know God's point of reference all the time and to understand God's frame of reference for every subject and for every detail of life. We've got to know God's heart if we're going to go after God's heart. So

David, at a very young age, got to know God's point of reference and God's frame of reference.

If a man is after God's own heart, he has to agree with God's heart. David agreed with God's heart. If a man is after God's own heart, he must have a heart like God, and he must fulfill all of God's will. According to the Bible, David was that man.

God Makes His Choice

Many years before David was born, God was searching for a man after His own heart. Why didn't He choose Abner, the commander-in-chief, or Samuel, the prophet? I do not know. But He was searching for a man after His own heart.

One day, the Philistines came against the army of Israel, boasting and bragging. The nine-foot giant Goliath was taunting the army of Israel, and he had the feeling that a victory was just around the corner. The name "Goliath" means "alienation from God; banishment; exile because of God's wrath." The Philistine would be alienated from God and banished from God's sight because of God's wrath over his rebellious indifference.

David's three brothers were with Saul at the

battle site, but David was still at home, caring for the sheep. He was a teenager in training for a great task ahead.

This is a beautiful picture. Often, teenagers do not realize that of all the men, women, preachers, and famous men around them, they can be chosen as people after God's heart. Here was a little boy back home, taking care of the sheep, but he was fellowshiping with God. He was getting to know God's heart. When God told him how to rescue the lamb from the mouth of the bear and from the mouth of the lion, he agreed with God on how to do it. When God told him to humble himself, he agreed with God. As a teenager and as a young man, he was learning how to agree with God.

David was not even the most desired one of his family. His three elder brothers did not particularly respect him because of his humility and his favor with God. This young man accepted his training in the field with the sheep.

The Boy Beats the Giant

One day, David was told by his father to take food to his brothers who were on the front lines where Goliath was. This young man, who was seemingly left behind, revealed the results

of the training program of honoring God's heart. All would see that David had developed into a man whose knowledge became filled with compassion; whose faith became courageous and bold; whose truth turned into love, mercy, and grace; whose point of reference and frame of reference, no matter what would happen in his life, was like Christ.

As he arrived on the scene, the Philistine was screaming and hollering. Saul was afraid. The soldiers were afraid. Then David said, "One day I rescued a lamb from a bear and from a lion as well, and I did smite the beard of the raging animal. Just as God delivered that lion and that bear into my hand, so He will deliver this Philistine."

He had courage, he was bold, and he was faithful to the Word of God. David did not fear as Saul feared. His trust was solely in God. He was not occupied with his enemies. His elder brothers mocked him. They told him that he was arrogant and proud and that he should go home and take care of the sheep. But the situation was desperate. No one else was there to do the job. The three brothers did not want him to do it, but they couldn't do it. They didn't have the courage.

There is always someone who is willing to take on the enemies of this world. Somewhere there is a man after God's heart. Reading this very booklet, there are special men and special women who are willing to take on the Philistines of the world. They are willing to let God train them, and they are willing to be occupied with Christ.

David tried on Saul's armor, but he said, "I have not proved it. The armor I want to use is armor I have already proven."

When the Word of God is the means of our obedience, then our testing ground is with the Word. David's testing ground was the Word. He was tested by the Word, and he proved the Word.

The Philistine was mocking him and confronting him with all kinds of statements, but David simply said, "God will deliver you into our hands, for the battle is the Lord's."

God says the battle is His, and David agreed with Him. God was David's point of reference for victory, and the doctrine of victory was his frame of reference. He said, "The Lord will deliver you into our hands."

How could David, a teenager, be so victorious? Just one way. He had a heart after God.

Chapter Two

A STONE MADE SMOOTH BY LIVING WATERS

God knew David's life before He chose him. He knew everything about David before the foundation of the world. He chose David, and He didn't make a mistake. Nothing David ever did was a surprise to God. He chose him because He knew He had a man after His heart.

David took a little stone. The streams of the living water had shaped that stone and fashioned it over the years, making it smooth. He had five stones in all, but he took this smooth little stone, put it in his slingshot, and said to the giant, "I come against you in the name of God."

He was a teenager going up against the world in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He went against all the mocking voices and all the temptations that came into their path. Here was a teenager representing God's heart and representing the army and the nation of Israel. Here

was a teenager who talked with his God in the wilderness, who had been with his God.

The battle was going on in the valley of Elah, and it was a valley. It was a valley where Saul didn't have any strength. But you know what "Elah" means? It means "a place of derived strength."

Saul didn't have any strength. David's three elder brothers didn't have any strength. The army of Israel didn't have any strength. Judah had been invaded. Israel was being terribly threatened and was often humiliated by the Philistine army. In this valley, threatened by Goliath, they didn't have any strength.

Here was an enemy upon whom was the wrath of God because Goliath was alienated from God. He was a man who would be banished from God's sight. If anyone had God's heart, then this enemy would be placed in exile, banished, and destroyed because God said he was His enemy. But in this valley of Elah, Saul and his soldiers didn't have any strength.

The Valleys

A problem for many people today is that they lack strength in the valleys. They fear the valleys. There is no job, no proper apartment,

and no security in sight. Business is going poorly. They get discouraged after two months when God might want to train them for forty years. You'd think that for their whole life they were in poverty, as some have been. They don't have a happy day when they are in a trial. It is a training period, but they are not happy. It is the trial of their faith.

We face the job that we have to do with multitudes of enemies in our midst: carnality, fear, insecurity, rebellion, pride, self-righteousness, and temporal security. We live in the midst of these enemies, but greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4).

First John 5:4 says that this is the victory that overcomes all the world system, even our faith in our God. David said, "I'm not afraid. This valley is a valley of strength. I'm not afraid. My God is a God of the valleys."

The Assyrians found that out in 1 Kings 20:27-28. They mocked Israel and said: "God is the God of the hills, but He is not the God of the valleys." God said, "I'll show them that I am the God of the valleys."

Some of you don't treat the people you live with like God would. You don't have God's heart. You're not after God's heart. You don't

love your neighbor as yourself. You're not a good neighbor, living in your home. You're not a neighbor as a husband. You're not a neighbor as a wife. You're not a neighbor as a friend. You are indifferent. You ought to be ashamed, and in humility you ought to repent. You don't understand the valleys.

The valley is to reveal that God is the God of the valleys—that Jesus Christ gives victory, life, and power in any valley situation. He converts the knowledge into life. He takes the truth and turns it into love, mercy, and grace. He takes patience and turns it into contentment. He takes kindness and turns it into meekness.

David took the stone. It speaks of the Chief Cornerstone of 1 Peter 2:6 and Isaiah 28:16. The five stones speak of grace, and here was God's grace with the Chief Cornerstone being hurled at the enemy. The enemy fell to the ground, and David ran over with his sword and cut off his head. The head that was mocking David was now dissembled. The Philistines were running, and the Israelites went after them. They were a foe defeated. The enemy's head was cut off.

The Enemy is Defeated

Jesus Christ was crucified, buried, and res-

urrected. He ascended through the atmosphere of demons and is now in heaven seated at God's right hand as the God-Man, the glorified Man, the One who defeated the enemy.

Some of you act as if life is so difficult. Don't you know we have a defeated foe? Don't you know the devil's head has been cut off? Don't you know that everything he says is a lie? He has convinced you that you have to be sick the rest of your life, and that becomes an escape mechanism so you won't have to be responsible, as other people. "Remember, I've been sick for twenty-five years. I can't go out today. I can't be responsible because my stomach aches." The point is that sickness can be manufactured as a way of escape so you don't have to work.

The Christian who has God's frame of reference and point of reference—Calvary and resurrection and ascension—is chasing a defeated foe. The devil is defeated.

Chapter Three

HONOR GOD'S WORD

David arose in the darkness and then he went and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe. Afterward, David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt.

"And he said to his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD" (1 Samuel 24:6).

David revealed what happens when a man has a heart after God. Saul was very fearful. No longer was he fearful of the Philistines, but he was jealous of David. David had showed courage that he didn't have. David had showed him faith in God and God's favor. Saul didn't have it. David showed him how he was used to be a deliverer, and Saul didn't have it. So, Saul sought to kill him.

Now, David had an opportunity to get rid of

Saul, but he would not make a move that was not according to God's heart. First of all, he knew that Samuel had anointed Saul to be king.

David's life was a life of revival because he agreed with what God's Word said. He failed momentarily, but he adjusted to what God's Word said. Sin, as we will discover, is not the issue with God. David's life ended with the Holy Spirit writing that God didn't make any mistakes in choosing David.

David checked his men with the words in 1 Samuel 24:6 and did not let them rise against Saul. So, Saul rose up and left the cave and went out of the way, and then David went out of the cave and called to him saying, "Saul, my lord, the king." When Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the earth, and he humbled himself.

In verse 12, David said, "The LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee; but mine hand shall not be upon thee."

This was a man after God's heart. First, he recognized that Saul was God's anointed. Second, he understood that God does the judging, so he couldn't touch Saul who was trying to kill him. Third, he humbled himself before Saul and submitted to him when Saul was trying to take

his life. He bowed to the earth in absolute humility.

A Heart of Humility

Why was David so humble? Why did David treat a murderer who had murder in his heart like that? There isn't one in a million on this planet today who even knows this kind of humility, not one in a million. I don't think there is one in twenty million who would practice this today.

David said, "The Lord judge between me and thee. I will not stretch forth mine hand to touch thee. You are the Lord's."

In 1 Samuel 26, the same thing happened again, and they found Saul and his guards sleeping. David's men wanted to strike Saul dead right there, and again David stopped them. David took the spear and the bottle of water that sat beside Saul's head, and they got away.

In verse 19, David called to the king. "Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the Lord have stirred you up against me, let him accept an offering: but if they be the children of men, cursed be they before the LORD; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of

the LORD... .”

Saul said, “I have sinned. I have sinned. I will do thee no more harm, because my life was precious in your eyes today. I played the fool and have erred exceedingly.”

Then David offered back his spear and said, “I would not stretch forth my hand against the LORD’s anointed.”

David’s humility and heartbeat humbled Saul and changed Saul emotionally. Saul was touched by God’s heart through David—temporarily, to be sure, but he was touched. For the second time, Saul was chasing him and trying to take his life. Once again, David humbled himself and would not touch Saul in any way, shape, or manner. Why? His point of reference, in principle, was Calvary. His frame of reference was God’s mercy, God’s love, and God’s grace. God is the Judge. God is the One who makes the final decision. God is the One who implements the plan, and David would not go against the heart of God.

Mercy Makes A Difference

The problem with the Church today is that it knows nothing about revival in mercy. Twenty-six times in Psalm 136, David wrote, “His mercy

endures forever.” David gave Saul mercy. He gave Saul unconditional love. He gave Saul godly patience. He was longsuffering. He let God be the Judge. He would not take anything into his own hands. He returned good for evil because he had a heart after God. That’s revival.

As the story continues, David fell into deep sin. You say, “Does he have a heart after God now?” He fell into deep sin, and he did not have fellowship with God for a year. He had Uriah killed and he took Bathsheba to be his wife. He was silent. He was subdued. He covered up his guilt.

It would seem that his life for God was over. He was a murderer and an adulterer. It would seem that God would just let him go to the synagogue but not serve anymore.

Not so.

David understood something magnificent. God gave him a tremendous revelation (Psalm 32:1-2) that Paul reiterated in Romans 4:6-8, “Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.”

David knew and understood God's heart about sin. He understood that forgiveness forgets. He understood that grace followed him to the grave. He understood that mercy endures forever, and it followed him until he went home to be with God. He understood God's point of reference and God's frame of reference. He understood that God would use him, though he had done the one sin that was so serious—killing Uriah—because it took away Uriah's right to choose before his God in divine institution number one, free volition.

Was David's life over? No. He had a heart after God. He agreed with God about forgiveness. So, he repents in Psalm 51, the great psalm of repentance. In Psalm 51:4, he said, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned."

That is what David understood about Saul. He gave Saul mercy. He let Saul answer to God. Now David was going to answer to God. That was his frame of reference. He was not bothered by people. He was not bothered with having rapport with others. He was not bothered by what the church thought. He said, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." He had a heart after God. He had God's doctrine on grace, God's doctrine on forgiveness, and God's doc-

trine on mercy. In the midst of that terrible sin, God looked down and said, "David still has My heart. He is after Me."

Oh yes, he failed. Yes, he was chastised. Yes, he failed God miserably. Yes, he did wrong, and yes, he was penalized, but he had a heart that had God's frame of reference for his sin and God's point of reference for his recovery. David's pattern of repentance for his sin was to name it, forsake it, come back, and continue to be king.

Agree with God and Get Right

David understood God's heart. He didn't listen to men. He didn't listen to theologians. He didn't listen to this one and that one. He knew that God couldn't remember his sin. He knew that God had paid for his sin, and he knew that God had judged his sin. All God wanted him to do was admit it, confess it, get it behind him, and go on in the plan of fulfilling His will.

David had a heart after God. He was out to do one thing: fulfill God's will. Whatever would come up in his life, he would agree with doctrine. He would agree with the Word of God. He would agree with Calvary as the point of reference. Whatever happened, he would be patient,

longsuffering, and gracious. If he failed, as he did, his point of reference would be Calvary and restoration. The same ministry he gave others, he would then receive from God.

CONCLUSION

I want you to go all the way with Christ. Go after God with all your heart. Get to know Jesus Christ. Pray to Him and get to understand what is on God's heart. You've got to know what it is. Don't be caught up with people; be caught up with God. Don't be caught up with your feelings; instead be caught up with the Word. Don't be caught up with knowledge unless it's transferred into life. If you need to get patience, let it be transformed into meekness and contentment. God guides us with His heartbeat, with His thoughts, and with His plan.

David never turned aside. David fulfilled all of God's will. David was a man after God's heart, before he was born and all during his life.

That's why, throughout my many years of ministry, I have had a problem communicating with "modern" Christians. They do not have Calvary as their point of reference, nor do they have Finished Work mercy as their frame of ref-

erence. Somehow, they get in between with “this, that, but, and, if, all.” They take things in their own hands, and they don’t set God before their face in revival!

Let me ask you this question. Do you think I’ve added to the Bible? Do you think I’ve taken away from the Bible? Do you think I’ve privately interpreted the Scriptures? Well, I have not. I could go on with a lot more if I wanted to. I gave you a New Testament commentary.

Have a heart after God. Have heart like David’s.