

## THE PURSUIT OF HOLINESS

### INTRODUCTION

- A. The setting
1. A time of conspiracy by David's son, Absalom, 2 Samuel 13-19
    - a. Absalom killed his stepbrother, Amnon, who raped his sister.
    - b. He developed a following by promising to listen to and care for the people.
    - c. He revolted against his father and even entered Jerusalem and publicly disgraced David before his death in battle.
- B. A brief overview of the life of David
1. He was an adulterer, 2 Samuel 11:2-4, *It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" So David sent messengers and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house.*
  2. He was a murderer, 2 Samuel 11:15, *In the letter he wrote, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, that he may be struck down, and die."*
  3. He was prideful, 2 Samuel 24:10, *But David's heart struck him after he had numbered the people. And David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly."*
  4. He was a man after God's own heart, Acts 13:22 . . . *he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.'*
- C. What prompted God to declare David a man after His own heart?
1. Psalm 25 reveals what is needed to be a man or woman after God's own heart.
  2. Those things are needed for us as much as they were by David.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LIFE OF DAVID, PSALM 25:1-7

- A. Place trust in our faithful God (1-3)
1. David sought God (1-2a), ***To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in You I trust***
    - David was making a confession of trust in God.
    - Isaiah 26:3, *You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.*
  2. David admitted his need (2b), ***let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me***
    - He knew personal failure would dishonor God and bring condemnation from others.
    - Psalm 69:6, *May those who wait for You not be ashamed through me, O Lord GOD of hosts; May those who seek You not be dishonored through me, O God of Israel.*
  3. David trusted God despite delay (3) ***Indeed none who waits for you shall be put to shame; they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.***
    - Lamentations 3:25, *The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him.*
    - Clement of Rome (35-99 AD), *The all-merciful and giving Father lovingly gives good things to those who come to Him with a trusting mind.*
    - Cyril of Jerusalem (313-386), *Those who think they can test God's grace deceive themselves.*
- B. Seek guidance from our caring God (4-5)
1. David sought God's instruction (4-5a) ***Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me to your truth and teach me.***
    - It is a matter of learning, then doing. The goal is not in how much one can recite but in how much one repeats.
    - Psalm 86:11, *Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth;*
    - Clement of Alexandria (150-215 AD), *Even the very best instruction isn't any good when the hearers lack a teachable spirit.*
  2. He was spiritually minded (5b) ***for you are the God of my salvation;***
    - He knew salvation was from God.
    - Cyprian (215-258 AD), *Let us be prepared for the will of God with a sound mind, a firm faith, and strong virtue.*

3. He waited on God (5c) ***for you I wait all the day long***

- Isaiah 40:31, *but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.*
- Charles Spurgeon, *We shall not grow weary of waiting upon God if we remember how long and how graciously He once waited for us.*

C. Repent of sin against our holy God (6-7)

1. God is true to His nature (6), ***Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.***

- He is merciful - He doesn't give us what we deserve.
- His is gracious - He gives us what we don't deserve.
- Exodus 34:6, *The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,*

2. God maintains His justice (7), ***Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!***

- He is righteous in His dealings with mankind through Jesus Christ.
- Titus 3:4-5, *But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,*

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S HEART, PSALM 25:8-22</b></p>
---

A. God is special (8-10)

1. He is good and upright (8), ***Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in the way.***

- He gives needed instruction to those who know they are sinners.
- Psalm 32:8, *I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.*
- Hudson Taylor (1832-1905), *There is a living God; he has spoken in the Bible. He means what he says and will do all he has promised.*

2. He guides the humble (9), ***He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way.***

- The humble are those who sense their need for help.
- Chrysostom (d. 408 AD), *God never turns His face away from sincere repentance.*

3. He is faithful to those who obey Him (10), ***All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.***

- His guidance comes through obedience.
- John 14:21, *Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.*
- James Montgomery Boice, *We must be committed to obedience before God unfolds his loving and faithful ways to us.*

B. God demands reverence (11-15)

1. He guards His reputation (11), ***For your name's sake, O LORD, pardon my guilt, for it is great.***

- He keeps His promise to forgive sins of those who confess.
- Psalm 23:3, *He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*
- Michael Wilcock, *The little extra prayer for me to slot into the middle of my creed (v. 11) reminds me that what I need is not information but forgiveness.*

2. He gives guidance (12), ***Who is the man who fears the LORD? Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose.***
  - James Montgomery Boice, *Some of us are brash in approaching God, regarding him more or less as some celestial buddy, rather than as the great, holy, awesome God he truly is.*
  - Proverbs 1:7, *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.*
  - Thomas Constable, *Fearing the LORD will result in listening to His Word.*
  
3. He gives blessing (13-14)
  - a. It is spiritual life (13a), ***His soul shall abide in well-being,***
    - Proverbs 19:23, *The fear of the LORD leads to life, and whoever has it rests satisfied; he will not be visited by harm.*
    - Michael Wilcock, *What he confides in me is not the details of the plan, but his covenant, the fact that he has bound himself to me by steadfast love.*
  
  - b. It is family blessing (13b), ***and his offspring shall inherit the land.***
    - Psalm 112:2, *His offspring will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed.*
    - The one who fears God will prosper as will his or her descendants.
  
  - c. It fellowship with God (14), ***The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them His covenant.***
    - I may not know all God has for me but I can trust Him because He loves me unconditionally.
    - Ecclesiastes 12:13, *The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.*
  
4. He is faithful (15), ***My eyes are ever toward the LORD, for he will pluck my feet out of the net.***
  - James Montgomery Boice, *He is telling us that if we want to be taught and led by God, we must get into the habit of looking to him regularly.*
  - Psalm 31:4, *you take me out of the net they have hidden for me, for you are my refuge.*
  - Psalm 62:8, *Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.*
  
- C. God hears cries of distress from those who take refuge in Him (16-22)
  1. David pleaded for physical and spiritual deliverance (16-19), ***Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses. Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins. Consider how many are my foes, and with what violent hatred they hate me.***
    - Psalm 119:132, *Turn to me and be gracious to me, as is your way with those who love your name.*
    - 2 Corinthians 5:21, *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*
    - Michael Wilcock, *There are enemies who see this precious intimacy between the believer and his Lord as their key target. The maintaining of it must therefore be my chief aim.*
  
  2. He waited on God to deliver Him (20), ***Oh, guard my soul, and deliver me! Let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you. May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you.***
    - Lamentations 3:25, *The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him.*
    - 2 Timothy 4:18, *The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.*
    - Derek Kidner, *To wait is to accept his time and therefore his wisdom; it marked the difference between David's and Saul's attitudes to God (1 Sam. 26:10f.; 13:8-14), and between Isaiah's and Israel's (Isa. 30:15-18).*
    - Seek to live according to God's will and trust Him to do what's right.

3. He sought the well-being of other who take refuge in God (21), *Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.*
  - In the midst of David’s cry to God for deliverance, he remembered the needs of others.
  - 1 Timothy 2:1, ...*I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people...*
  - Michael Wilcock, . . . *what I have been asking for myself is wrapped up in your promise to rescue not just individuals but your whole people.*
  - Psalm 34:22, *The LORD redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.*
  - James Montgomery Boice, *It is a serious invitation to us to put our own name into the final couplet.*

**COMMENTS**

- Jim George, *By his actions, David didn’t deserve God’s blessings. But in his heart he had the right desire - a longing to follow and please God . . . A man after God’s own heart is a man who yearns to please God, a man who nurtures a heart that obeys.*
- Allen Ross, *The psalm strongly links the prayer for deliverance and guidance to confession of sin. The way of the Lord requires this.*
- James Montgomery Boice, *If we will come to God Almighty as David came to him, then we can say expectantly, “Redeem me, O God, from all my troubles!” and we can know that he will answer us.*

**A FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF REPENTANCE**

**INTRODUCTION**

- A. Context
  - Entitled: *TO THE CHOIRMASTER. A PSALM OF DAVID, WHEN NATHAN THE PROPHET WENT TO HIM, AFTER HE HAD GONE IN TO BATHSHEBA.*
  - The title is referencing 2 Samuel 11 and 12.
- B. Comments
  - Thomas Constable, *David confessed the sins that he committed against Bathsheba and Uriah. It is a model of confession that has become popular with God’s people. Since we all sin so often, and need to confess frequently, this psalm is a help and comfort to us all.*
  - Allen Ross, *The message of this psalm is that the vilest offender among God’s people can appeal to God for forgiveness, for moral restoration, and for the resumption of a joyful life of fellowship and service, if he comes with a broken spirit and bases his appeal on God’s compassion and grace.*

**PSALM 51**

- A. Seek forgiveness (1), *Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.*
  1. God’s forgiveness is based on His nature.
    - a. By His mercy
      - Mercy is not getting what we deserve.
      - Matthew Henry, *David does not balance his evil deeds with his good deeds, nor can he think that his services will atone for his offences; but he flies to God’s infinite mercy, and depends upon that only for pardon and peace ...*
    - b. By His grace
      - Grace is getting what we don’t deserve.
      - David came to God without pride but with trust in the faithfulness of God because His forgiveness was through God’s grace alone.

2. Cleanse us from our sins (2), ***Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.***

- Alister McGrath, *...the closer we draw to Christ, the more conscious we become of our sin.*
- Charles Spurgeon, *When we deal seriously with our sin God will deal gently with us. When we hate what the Lord hates, He will soon make an end of it, to our joy and peace.*

B. Make confession (3-6)

1. Acknowledge sinful actions that can't be forgotten (3), ***For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.***

- Keith Brooks, *Confession brings sin out of its hiding place and enables the sinner to take sides with God against it.*
- 1 John 1:9, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

2. Sin is ultimately an offense against God (4), ***Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment.***

- Eugene Merrill, *Once we understand that no sin is against a fellow human being alone and that all sin is transgression against God, we will no longer treat it so lightly.*
- Allen Ross, *... his confession came about a year after he had sinned (the young child died a week after the confession; cf. 2 Sam. 12:13-18). Perhaps David had so rationalized his actions that he did not sense his guilt until Nathan approached him.*

3. Man is born a sinner (5), ***Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.***

- Man is not a sinner because he sins. He sins because he is a sinner. Mankind fell when Adam sinned.
- Thomas Constable, *The sinful condition that he had inherited from his parents was the root, and his personal sin was the fruit.*

4. God delights in truth and is willing to give wisdom to the repentant sinner (6), ***Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.***

- Job 38:36, *Who has put wisdom in the inward parts or given understanding to the mind?*
- Thomas Constable, *David also realized that God wanted him to be completely honest, not just to offer a sacrifice. He needed to get his heart right with God. His confession had to be genuine rather than the superficial repetition of some words.*

C. Receive restoration (7-12)

1. A contrite sinner doesn't blame God but rejoices in forgiveness (7-8), ***Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.***

- A blood covered hyssop branch was used to cover doorposts of Jews in Egypt.
- Allen Ross, *David spoke of God's cleansing him with hyssop, he was alluding to the use of hyssop at the religious ceremonies to sprinkle sacrificial blood on the altar. This represented the removal of sin through the shedding of blood (cf. Heb. 9:22).*
- Our blood offering is Jesus, Hebrews 10:14, *For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.*

2. God not only forgives sins but creates new hearts (9-10), ***Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.***

- David's forgiveness is granted in 2 Samuel 12:13, *David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan said to David, "Now the LORD has put away your sin; you shall not die.*
- Charles Spurgeon, *... he does not say, 'Make my old heart clean'; he is too experienced in the hopelessness of the old nature. He would have the old man buried as a dead thing, and a new creation brought in to fill its place. None but God can create either a new heart or a new earth.*
- Ezekiel 36:26, *And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.*

3. God welcomes repentant sinners and restores their hope (11-12), ***Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.***
  - David probably thought of Saul who suffered God's rejection.
  - In the Old Testament, the presence of the Holy Spirit was not permanent as it is in the indwelling Spirit in the lives of every person who has placed faith in Jesus Christ alone.
  - David desired renewed fellowship with God despite the fact that His relationship was secure.
  - Allen Ross, *David was also aware that in order to experience the joy he once had in his salvation, he needed God's inner spiritual renewal.*

D. Serve others (13-17)

1. A privilege of forgiveness (13), ***Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.***
  - A repentant sinner should share good news of repentance with other sinners - His ways of reconciliation.
  - Matthew Henry (1662-1714 AD), *Penitents should be preachers.*
  - Luke 22:32, *but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.*
  - Michael Wilcock, *Who better to pass on the message of forgiveness than a real sinner who has himself been really forgiven,*
2. Forgiveness should result in praise (14-15), ***Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.***
  - A forgiven sinner has a joyful heart full of praise.
  - Anonymous, *The greater enjoyment we have in the ways of God, the more faithfully and earnestly we shall make them known to others . . . The more faithfully and earnestly we make them known to others the more they will be influenced by them.*
  - Derek Kidner, *Nowhere in this psalm is he [David] concerned to escape the material consequences of his sins: it is the guilt of them that burdens him . . . He longs to worship freely, gratefully again; and he believes that by the grace of God he will.*
  - Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892), *A great sinner pardoned makes a great singer.*
3. The requirement for forgiveness (16-17), ***For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.***
  - God does not want payment for His goodness but hearts trusting in Him alone.
  - Charles Swindoll, *What does God want as a sacrifice? He doesn't want a long list of things that you promise never to do again. He doesn't want you to do penance. He wants you to come to Him with a broken spirit and a repentant heart. That is what He wants and accepts and delights in.*
  - The prophet Nathan conveyed to David that God pardoned his guilt. Today, we have God's Word, 1 John 1:9, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
  - Derek Kidner, . . . *God is looking for the heart that knows how little it deserves, how much it owes.*

E. Be a blessing (18-19)

1. David expressed concern for the nation (18), ***Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; build up the walls of Jerusalem;***
  - Thomas Constable, *God had promised to protect David from death. He now asked Him to protect His people as well.*
  - James Boice Montgomery, . . . *David, having confessed his sin, now contemplates the bad effect it may have had upon the nation and prays about it . . . Let us remember that everything we do affects other people, whether for good or evil. It is not true that we can sin "as long as it does not hurt anyone," because sin always hurts someone.*
  - Michael Wilcock, *He was king; he was not a private person; the kingdom could stand or fall with him. His restoration would mean the strengthening of his city and his people.*

2. Right hearts produce right sacrifices (19), *then will you delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar.*
  - God fellowships with those who turn to Him in utter dependence.
  - Acceptable sacrifices are acts of thanksgiving not bribes for forgiveness.

<b>CONCLUSION</b>
-------------------

- A. The journey of a person after God's own heart
  1. It begins with grace - placing trust in the finished work of Jesus alone.
  2. It continues with the pursuit of obedience from a heart of thanksgiving.
  3. It requires repentance when one stumbles on the walk of faith .
  4. It develops a growing care for others and not just for oneself.
- B. Do you desire to be a person after God's own heart?
  1. Do you trust God through faith in Jesus Christ alone?
  2. Do you have a teachable spirit?
  3. Are you willing to repent when you sin?
  4. Is your heart enlarged to include concern for others?
- C. For consideration
  - Henry Blackaby, *Enter into a love relationship with Me. Adjust your life to Me. Let Me love you and reveal Myself to you as I work through you.*
  - A.W. Tozer, *Every man is as close to God as he wants to be.*