

# **A Man After God's Own Heart**

## **1 Samuel 11-12**



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This week, we will be looking only at two chapters of 2 Samuel. However, I think this is a very important study because we will try to see why David is called a man after God's own heart. That's a lofty description to be given to anyone, and David did in one instance show himself as a terrible person and leader.

Let us then find out from the verses that describe David thus.

- *And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done a foolish thing," Samuel said. "You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, He would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler over His people, because you have not kept the LORD's command" (1 Sam 13:13-14)*
- *"After removing Saul, He made David their king. God testified concerning him: 'I have found David, son of Jesse, a man after My own heart; he will do everything I want him to do' " (Acts 13:22)*

Okay, considerign the above verses, I can make a preliminary summary, which would read as follows:

- God rejected Saul because he was disobedient to God's commandments, "*because you have not kept the Lord's command,*" and "*if you had, He would have established your kingdom for all time.*"
- And God established David and called him a man after His own heart because "*he (David) will do everything I want him to do.*"

So the key issue is that of obedience, right? One act of disobedience from Saul caused him to be rejected.

Then we may have a problem. In **2 Samuel 11**, David sinned big time. In fact, if we compare that sin to Saul's in both in **1 Samuel 13** and **1 Samuel 15**, Saul's sin seemed so miniscule. If that is so, was not God's treatment toward Saul and toward David crude favouritism<sup>1</sup>?

## **David's Sin**

The writer of 2 Samuel narrated David's sin in the following manner:

- **Lethargy.** David had done very well in the initial period of his rule because he still had lots to do. But after his position had been well established, it seems that he folded his hands as a sluggard. Listen to how the writer described this event: "*At the time when kings go off to war... But David remianed in Jerusalem*" (**11:1**), and then "*one evening David got up from his bed and walked around the roof*" (**11:2**). The language seemed intentionally cynic. David did not go to war when he should have, but just sent his lackeys to do his job. And he stayed comfortably in his palace, perhaps having afternoon naps until evening had come. There was no other way to describe this: David got lazy!
- **Tempted.** The nature of temptation never changes. It corrupts our desires, taunts us to rebel against God's clearly spoken will, and tries to justify its own evil with apparent good. See how similar the temptation of David was to the temptation of Eve. In David's case, all that took him was sight, David sa that "*the woman was very beautiful*" (**11:2**). Now, if we look at Nathan's subsequent rebuke of David, he basically said that David had already helped himself to many beautiful women and taken them as his wives (**12:1-4; 7-8**). But he just wanted that which he he could not have. Notice how this was similar to the temptation of Eve. Eve was similarly tempted by sight, as she saw that the fruit was good for food, pleasing to the eye, and desirable for gaining wisdom (**Gen 3:6**). But God had allready given Adam and Eve every tree (or in fact, all kinds of tree) that are pleasing to the eye and good for food (**Gen 2:9**);

whilst desirability of wisdom was just a lame excuse for wanting autonomous knowledge. But don't you see? Most of the time sin does not come from lack; it comes from greed. Sin's inexcusability is because God had prepared every good and perfect thing for man, but man desires that which he could not have. When Robert T Kiyosaki played an insulting tone to the Bible's principle that "*the love of money is the root of evil*" (1 Tim 6:10) and openly stated that he was following a "father" whose motto was "the lack of money was the root of evil," Kiyosaki was openly pledging his allegiance to Mammon and rejecting God; not because he lacked money, but because he was greedy for more. Eve had abundance, but she desired what she could not have. David had plenty, but he just wanted that which belonged to another.

Here's a slight but important detour. I know that Proverbs 6 was not written to describe David's adultery, but the resemblance was so uncanny I just have to spell it out.

*"Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer and ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest-and poverty will come on you like a thief and scarcity like an armed man.*

*A troublemaker and a villain, who goes about with a corrupt mouth, who winks maliciously with his eye, signals with his feet and motions with his fingers, who plots evil with deceit in his heart-he always stirs up conflict. Therefore disaster will overtake him in an instant; he will suddenly be destroyed-without remedy. There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to Him; haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict in the community" (Prov 6:6-19)*

When David folded his hands to rest, he did the seven things the Lord hates. Haughty eyes which desired to claim what it liked to see; lying tongue as he repeatedly tried to worm his way out of accountability; hands that shed innocent blood and a heart that devised wicked schemes as he devised the murder of Uriah; feet that are quick to rush into evil as he did all of this without hesitation; a false witness who pours out lies as he initially tried to get Uriah to lie with his wife so he could cover up David's adultery with her; and a person who stirs up conflict in the community as he killed his own people and caused future civil war to erupt.

And David somehow managed to trespass at least five of the Ten Commandments, all in one go: ① Do not murder ② Do not commit adultery ③ Do not steal ④ Do not give false testimony ⑤ Do not covet your neighbour's wife.

But as we read this, it is important that we not see David with judgmental eyes, but rather with the proper fear of God. If even such a person as David could sin so horribly, how much more vulnerable are we? Rather, it is important for us to learn that David's sin was triggered by *sluggardness*. When he stopped concerning himself with his responsibilities; when he folded his hands to rest; when he thought he could let his guard down for but a moment; he forgot that the devil consistently prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (1 Pet 5:8); which is why in that context Peter told us to be alert and to be of sober mind.

The Christian life must be one of consistent and continued reliance upon God's providence. This is why we are taught pray "*give us today our daily bread*" (Mat 6:11). Of course this does not mean we are encouraged not to save, for Prov 6:6-8 places savings and planning as prudence. Rather, what Jesus taught was a consistent awareness and consciousness that all that we have is completely and totally dependent upon God's daily providence. We are thus called to think of such providence as our daily bread, so that we are

spared from the error of crime when we lack, or of forgetting God when we have plenty (see **Prov 30:8-9**). In the whole chapter of **Deuteronomy 8**, the Israelites were warned against forgetting God when they had enough, for the simple logic that it was God who gave them the abilities to produce in the first place; and thus their sufficiency did not negate God's providence but rather affirmed it.

The Bible affirms in a rather humorous language that we will either be *busy*, or become *busybodies* (**2 Thess 3:11**, see also **1 Tim 5:13**). If we are not ourselves involved in productive work, we will inevitably start to gossip and concern ourselves with that which are needless. And when we start to gossip, some start to envy. And as they envied, they start to scheme, and thus create a cycle of evil with their idleness. As we have already covered in our first few sessions, "*Genesis (1): Creation – Understanding the Mess we're in by Understanding How it was Meant to be*" one of the implications of being made in the Image of God is that man is called to multiply, to productive stewardship. Later on Jesus Himself gave a parable that re-emphasize this productive stewardship in the Parables of the Bags of Gold as found in **Mat 25:14-30**, where Jesus would judge our faithfulness based on whether or not we multiplied the talent He had given to us.

This is neither the forum nor the time for this topic, but I thought of giving it a special mention because of the age we're living in. In the age of self-actualizations, of making our money work for us, of profitable investments; many of us have forgotten that we are called to productive stewardship. What mattered is not whether or not we have enough, but whether we are still faithfully serving God by being good stewards, or are simply being idlic fools whose minds and bodies are not productive. A sermon which preaches against idleness, I think, is now rare. And because of its rarity, it is much needed.

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## ***Sin's Entanglement***

The writer described with vivid detail how David got entangled in his own sin. David experienced first hand the binding nature of sin. The fact that Bathsheba had just purified herself from he rperiod (**11:4**) makes David the unmistakable cause of her pregnancy (**11:5**). David tried to get out of this, initially by manipulating Uriah into sleeping with his wife so he could mask himself as the culprit of her pregnancy. But when he failed twice, David quickly resorted to having Uriah killed, so that Batsheba was then released from her bond of marriage, and so that David could legally take her as wife, and her pregnancy would then be legit. And he needed to do all of this quickly enough so that the timing of the pregnancy tallies.

Yet, in all of this, what David might have hidden from the world he could not have hidden from God. Adn the writer closed the chaper with this "*But the thing David had done displeased the Lord*" (**11:27**).

## ***A Man After God's Own Heart?***

Now what remains is the question we began with. By any standard, David did a terrible crime; Some would argue that it was more than Saul ever did. So how was it that David was called a man after God's own heart? And how was it that he was forgiven when Saul was rejected? Let us compare the two scenes now, the failure of Saul in **1 Samuel 15**; and David's failure in **2 Samuel 12**. Notice how each (Saul and David, that is) was similarly rebuked by god, and how each of them responded to the rebuke.

	Saul's Failure 1 Samuel 15	David's Failure 2 Samuel 12 <sup>ii</sup>
<b>God's rebuke</b>	I made you who you are now, and anointed you king over Israel (15:17) Why do evil in the eyes of the Lord? (15:19)	I made you who you are now, and anointed you king over Israel (12:7-8) Why despise the Lord by doing what is evil in His eyes? (12:9)
<b>The Response</b>	"But I made sacrifices to the Lord" (15:20-23) Which was in turn rejected by Samuel, "does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices?"	(See David's reasoning in Psalm 51) "You do not delight in sacrifices or else I would bring it. But the sacrifice I bring is a broken and contrite spirit." (Ps 51:17)  "Then, after offering my broken and contrite spirit, and only then, You will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous" (Ps 51:19)
<b>The Confession</b>	"I have sinned, but accompany me back so my honor is not tarnished. Please honor me before the elders of my people and before Israel" (15:24, 30)	"I have sinned against the Lord" (12:13)  "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight; so you are right in Your verdict and justified when You judge" (Ps 51:3-4)
<b>The Result</b>	Saul got what he wanted: "So Samuel went back with Saul, and Saul worshipped the Lord" (15:31)  "Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul" (16:14)	David got what he wanted: "Do not cast me from your presence or take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of your salvation" (Ps 51:11-12)  Ps 32 as David's meditation on his sin and forgiveness. "Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart" (Ps 32:11)

Upon the pronouncement of sin, both David and Saul admitted that they had sinned. Saul, however, cooked up a lot of excuses and even tried to justify his own error by appealing to the fact that he had made a sacrifice to God. David on the other hand firmly acknowledged his sin against the Lord and made no further defense. In his own meditation as found in **Psalm 51**, we could see that David accepted with full responsibility the verdict that God had given him. Not only that, David knew that the blood

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of bulls and goats could never take away sin (**Heb 10:4**) and therefore offered first and foremost his brokenness and repentance. But here's another important part. People either emphasize on one thing and neglect the other. They teach ritual obedience OR sincerity of heart. And most would have stopped here in saying that David did not fulfill his liturgical duties but was forgiven because of his heart. It is then important to note that David did fulfill his liturgical duties, offering what was then a sacrifice of the righteous after his

repentance had been received by God (**Ps 51:19**). David acknowledged that the means of grace did not compel God's sovereign grace; but rather it was the other way around: that God's grace precedes His providence of such means of grace.

Saul's confession was more self-serving: he wanted Samuel to go back with him so that the people would not think that there was something wrong or that Saul had lost his legitimacy to the throne. His subsequent actions (as we have explored before) showed that he cared more for the throne than God's approval of him. But David was the exact opposite. He accepted God's verdict and was ready to receive any punishment God would roll out. What made him desperate, and what made David panic was not the thought of losing the throne, but at the thought of God's presence leaving him, and him losing the joy of God's salvation. He longed for God above all else; and that made him different from Saul.

And so, both Saul and David received what they wanted. Samuel did go back with Saul and avoided a major loss of face; but the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul. David's sin got exposed, and his son died as one of the punishments of that sin. But David remained a man after God's own heart as he proved that he was willing to forego power, fame, and literally everything to retain God's presence in his life. And as a result, we can see how David reflected back on his days of concealing this sin and what a relief it was when he confessed his sin and attained forgiveness from God in Psalm 32. See, when God sent Nathan to rebuke David, the illegitimate son had already been born. So it would at least be 9 months following the murder of Uriah; and David had been living with this secret sin that had been eating away at his joy and peace. *"When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer"* (**Ps 32:3-4**). David was suffering as his sin began to eat away at him. But when he confessed his sin, songs of joy started to flow out once again (**Ps. 32:5**) and he ended up receiving back the joy of God's salvation (**Ps. 32:11**)

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<sup>i</sup> And this cannot be, since the Bible clearly says that God does not show favouritism (eg. **Rom 2:11, Acts 10:34, Eph 6:9**) and His Laws were designed in such a way that it condemns favouritism as injustice (eg. **Ex 23:3, Lev 19:15**)

<sup>ii</sup> See David's meditations on these events on Psalm 51 and Psalm 32