

# A Man after God's Own Heart

Samuel said to Saul, "You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, for now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not endure. 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 13:13-14)

Looking at the scriptures, it doesn't take long to see that some men have been highly favored and honored by God. Because of such favor with God Abraham was called "the friend of God" (**James 2:23; 2Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8**). David was called a man after God's own heart (**Acts 13:22; 1Samuel 13:14**). What made them so favored? Who is a man after God's own heart?

We might think that only a flawless man truly could be one after God's own heart. However, if this were the case, no man—other than Jesus the Christ—could qualify, for all have sinned. Solomon, the son of David, made the statement, "*for there is no man who does not sin*" (**1Kings 8:46**). In **Ecclesiastes 7:20** Solomon expanded the statement somewhat: "*Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.*" David also recognized man's guilt of sin. "*The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God. They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one*" (**Psalms 14:2,3**). As Scripture continues into the new covenant, it sets forth the same fact. In the Roman letter Paul said, "*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (**Romans 3:23**). John also says, "*If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us*" (**1John 1:8**).

Though David is described as a man after God's own heart, he was not a flawless man. After he became king, he committed sin with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite (**2Samuel 11**). This sin was accompanied by several more—lying, coveting, and murder. Later he displeased God by numbering Israel when he had no authority from God to do so (**2Samuel 24**).

As we look to David we see—not a flawless man, but one guilty of sin at times in his life, and yet referred to as a man after God's own heart. So, what is the heart that is after God's own?

## The heart governed by great principles of right

God's reference to David as a man after his own heart was made long before David's sin with Bathsheba. This statement was made when David was still a young man, and before he became king (**1Samuel 13:14**). His life as a youth was so pleasing to God that God chose him to be the second king of Israel. Though David was not flawless, long after his death God referred to him as an example of right-doing (**1Kings 3:14; 2Chronicles 28:1**).

We may notice some of the great principles by which David governed his life. As a youth David had great *faith* in God. When he approached Goliath, which no one else in Israel would do, he said, "*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" (1Samuel 17:46-47). Also, his burning desire to **worship** God is seen in his bringing the ark of testimony to Jerusalem, and in his preparation for building the temple (1Chronicles 15:1-8; 2Samuel 7:1-17). As king, David dealt fairly and justly with the people. "So David reigned over all Israel; and David administered justice and righteousness for all his people" (2Samuel 8:15). But as he was just, he was also **compassionate**. There were several times when he had opportunity to kill Saul, who was trying to destroy him, but each time he refused, even though some of his men urged him to rid himself of his enemy. David refused to harm Saul because he recognized him as anointed of the Lord (see 1Samuel 24 and 1Samuel 26).

### **The heart that, if it sins, sins through weakness and not willfully**

David prayed that he might be kept from the presumptuous sin: "Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins; Let them not rule over me; Then I will be blameless, And I shall be acquitted of great transgression" (Psalm 19:13). David had great opportunity to grow proud as he advanced in power and authority. We see him first as a shepherd boy, and next as a national hero, then a court musician, and next the king's son-in-law, then a fugitive in the wilderness and a leader of outlaws, a mercenary soldier, and then a king. It seems that God's people have never been able to stand prosperity. Whenever Israel grew prosperous, they often turned away from God. David must have recognized the danger, for indeed he prayed that God would keep him from presumption.

Any sin is a fearful thing, because it condemns: "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). But, when one turns from sin, God has made provision through the blood of Christ for man's redemption. The willful sin is worse because there is no forgiveness for it. "For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES" (Hebrews 10:26-27). When one defies God by sinning willfully, he has reached a state where either he cannot, or he will not, repent, and where there is no repentance, there can be no forgiveness (Luke 13:3,5).

### **The heart that, if it sins, repents and confesses his sin**

David sinned, but when the gravity of his wrong finally got through to him, his heart was broken. This was the primary difference between Saul, who did not have the heart for repentance, and David. Listen to David after Nathan came to him regarding his sin: "Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me" (Psalm 51:1-3). In that same psalm he says, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise" (Psalm 51:17).

Scripture also shows that relatively few have been willing forthrightly to admit and confess their sins. Since we are not flawless and will sin against God, if we are to be people after God's own heart, we must repent and come to Him with the broken and contrite heart, with a willingness to meet His conditions of pardon. Luke tells of the Pharisee who prayed that he was thankful that he

was better than others. However, the publican cried out. "*God, be merciful to me, a sinner.*" Jesus said that the publican went down to his house justified rather than the Pharisee (**Luke 18:9-14**).

Having David as an example, we see that the man after God's own heart is one, who though not flawless, works to live by God's great principles of conduct, and who if he sins through weakness brings before God the broken and contrite heart.