

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF DAVID

Taught in Ambassador's Class of Peninsula Bible Church, Palo Alto, California

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Summary: Life of David, Lesson #34 - December 30, 1979

Today I want to talk about some of the principles we have seen in our studies these last weeks. God wrote these things before time, we are told, for our instruction that we might have the wisdom of God. By observing the lives and the actions of these people and the incidents that occurred in their lives and by seeing acted out these spiritual truths, we will see principles. Albeit these actions were 3,000 years ago, we can bring these spiritual principles into our daily lives and apply them here and now. So David may be 3,000 years old, but the truths of David are current. I would like to go through some with you.

What would you say is the biggest principle we have seen in the life of David? What is probably the key principle of all? God himself being described in describing David? God himself even gave the key in his description of David. He's a "man after God's own heart." With the track record he has, how can he possibly be a man after God's own heart? I and II Samuel primarily depict a life of failure, willfulness, disobedience and impulsiveness. What is there about David that makes him a man after God's own heart, that he is even called that in Scripture? He really loved the Lord. He really wanted to be God's man, didn't he?

What is the difference between David and Saul? They were both chosen of God, both chosen kings of Israel. Saul was even chosen to be king of Israel forever. God said, "You obey me, and your line will rule forever." He did not set Saul up for a one shot trip. He took Saul, changed his heart and filled him mightily with the Spirit of God. David was also filled mightily with the Spirit of God. But David's track record is littered with more sin and wickedness, at least recorded, than Saul's. Saul's essential wickedness was rebellion, but they were both willful kings. What is the difference? Why is Saul not a man after God's own heart when David is? What was there about David versus Saul that was the key?

Comment from Class: David would repent.

Bob's response: Yes, and what did he do when he repented? This is the most crucial thing to me in the whole of I & II Samuel. When God puts the finger on our lives and says, "That is wrong," what did Saul do?

Comment from Class: He defied him.

Bob's response: He didn't literally defy him openly and shake his fist at Yahweh. He wasn't that dumb. What did he do when God said, "This is sin

Comment from Class: He wouldn't admit it.

Bob's Response: Right! He wouldn't admit it. He rationalized. He would justify himself. He did it every single time. When you justify yourself, you cannot justify God. You declare God to be wrong. If you say, "God, you have no right in your righteousness to discipline me because it really isn't my fault. My mother was scared by a

fire engine," and God says, "Yes, it is," you are declaring God to be wrong. What did David do when God put the finger on him.

Comment from Class: He said, "You're right."

Bob's Response: When David did have the arm or the finger of God put on him, David always justified God. He always said, "You're right, I'm wrong." This to me is the mark of a "Man after God's own heart," not your track record, not whether you are Irish or Jahuvian or whatever. What do you do when God faces you up to your life? David fouled up all over the place, but God faced him up to it. When Nathan went to David after Bathsheba and Uriah, for example, and said, "You are the man," David said, "You're right, I am. I have sinned." No more argument. That was it. What was God's very next word? Now David had sinned in violation of the law against adultery which meant he should have been stoned. He committed premeditated murder which meant he should have been stoned. He practiced hypocrisy for a good year and a half which meant he should have been stoned, but what did God say the moment David said, "You're right. I have sinned."

Comment from Class: "You shall not die."

Bob's response: "You shall not die. Your sin is forgiven." And David didn't seek any excuse for his sin. He just ask for forgiveness.

If nothing else comes out of this series, I'd like to get across that God is in the forgiveness business. He came to die to forgive sin. There is no way a Holy God can ever excuse sin. Freedom in the Scriptures is not doing what I choose. It is being what I was designed to be, and the primary attribute of God in the Word of God, revealed by the Word of God, is Holiness. It is not Love, not Grace, not Mercy. It is Holiness. And God is constrained by his inherent character of Holiness. He cannot do whatever he wants, and I use those terms reverently. God must do everything he does within the confines and restrictions and perimeters of his nature which is Holiness. He cannot be unholy. Therefore, he cannot excuse unholiness. His Holiness demands payment for the penalty of unholiness. He cannot, therefore, excuse sin. God cannot. It isn't that he won't. He CAN'T. So when you demand to be excused, "God, excuse my sin," you automatically cut yourself off from the blood of Jesus Christ because that blood was shed because sin CANNOT be excused. That blood was shed for willful, deliberate, wicked sin. And if we once catch on to this, we will stop fooling around. God wants to forgive. God came to forgive. God does everything in the world necessary for forgiveness. There is nothing left over to be done by God or by man to obtain God's forgiveness than to simply reach out empty-handed and say, "I have sinned." God's forgiveness is bestowed just like that, "You shall not die. Your sin is forgiven." This to the king of Israel regarding willful, deliberate, rebellious sin against the written law of God. Consequences, sure, but the sin never. Saul all the way through asked God, "Excuse my sin. It really wasn't my fault. I really didn't mean it." and God can't. And God did everything he could for Saul.

Another principle I see from the life of Saul is the long-suffering of God. How much did God really love Saul? What all did he do trying to get Saul to repent? What did he do when Saul deliberately rebelled and took matters into his own hand, using the excuse, "Well, you didn't show up, Samuel, like you said you would. Therefore, I had to go out and sacrifice." That was forbidden to the king. Only priests could do that. This first rebellion cost him his dynasty. Whereas God had said, "I will establish your dynasty forever." Now the word is, "Your kingdom shall not endure." His second rebellion, when he spared Agag the king of Amalek and the best of the sheep and oxen, actually cost him his kingdom. God said, "I have torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and have given it to your neighbor, who is better than you." What happened to Saul then? What happened to the Spirit of God that had come mightily upon Saul, the changed heart God have given him in order that he might be the king God wanted him to be. What did he get instead? The spirit of evil from the Lord himself. Not from Satan, although it came from Satan, but by the permission of God. God deliberately allowed an evil spirit to drive Saul crazy. Why? What is God really after in the life of Saul? Yeah! He wants to make him so miserable in disobedience that he will turn. Why does God allow the consequences of sin to wreak havoc in our lives, because he wants to get even?

No, he got even in Christ. All of my punishment fell on Jesus Christ. My Heavenly Father got totally even with me on Jesus Christ. I will never be punished by God, ever. Never, ever *underscored*. I want to make that point as strongly as possible. I will never be punished. Yes, there will be consequences, but what purpose do the consequences serve? Why does God allow the Holy Spirit of God to be taken from Saul and his life driven by a demon? Why does he allow us to reap the consequences of our sin? Well, think about it. When do you think about God the most, when you have the mortgage paid and your kids are doing great in school, when you have a steady job that brings home the old paycheck and your wife is going easy on the credit cards? Seldom! When do you really get serious about God? I'll tell you; when the mortgage is due and you haven't got the money, when the termites are carrying your house down the street, when you wife is having a ball with the credit cards or your husband is drinking up the paycheck. That is when you get serious about turning to the Lord. So God is not punishing us by allowing the consequences to work out in our lives. They are designed to bring us to a state of repentance and dependence so we will begin to trust the Lord more and more. So the key difference between David and Saul is David justified God whenever God put the finger on him, "You are right and I am wrong." He never asked God, "Excuse me," in order to justify himself and not God.

With all his track record of failure and impulsiveness and vindictiveness, God never took the Spirit of God away from David as he did with Saul. This is not loss of salvation now. We are talking about empowerment to rule, to be God's man. In Psalm 51, after David and Bathsheba, after living in hypocrisy long enough for their baby to be born, to grow up enough to capture David's heart, and then be taken home by God, what is David's prayer? "Take not Thy Spirit from me." He still has God's Spirit, and he knows it is there. He doesn't want God to take it away. Also God knows David will justify God, whereas Saul won't.

So when you sin, my friend, and when I sin, my friend, justify God. Say, "You are right, and I am wrong." It is called confession. "Say with God" is what the word means, and if you will say with God, he is "Faithful and Righteous." He is not loving, kind, generous, merciful or gracious. He is faithful. He will always do it. And he is righteous. He has to do it. Again God cannot go against his character. Since he has already gotten the punishment for sin that his Holiness requires from Jesus Christ, his Son, he cannot punish me. He cannot, not will not. He cannot punish me because of his Holiness. Therefore, he is faithful to do it every time, and he is righteous, he must do it every time. He will "Forgive my sin and cleanse me from all unrighteousness." Those are satisfying terms. If you are a Christian and you believe those terms, you ought to sleep well at night. When the time comes for you to go across the line, you walk across hand-in-hand with the Lord. A little scared, yes, because you don't know what is going to happen since you've never been through the experience before. But your hot, sweaty little hand has a tight grip on someone you know has been there before. So you have what I call a scared confidence or a confident fright.

Another thing we see in David's life. Each time he blew it there was something conspicuous by its absence. And he did blow it, and blow it, and blow it. Oh, he had moments of grandeur, but the weight of his track record in on the side of botching it. What was conspicuous by its absence in each case? He failed to consult the Lord. What provision had God made for David to find the will of God? He had it before he became king, once he was God's anointed, and after he became king. He had it when he was the great general of Israel under Saul and when he was being pursued and hounded by Saul. According to Deuteronomy 17, what was God's rule #5 for his kings? "He shall write for himself a copy of this law...in the presence of the Levitical priest...and he shall read it all the days of his life." He was to be a man of the Word and God gave him the Spirit of God to interpret it for him.

There was another means provided David to know the will of the Lord, an unbelievably gracious act on the part of God. Remember when David, through treachery and deceit, escaped from Saul and fled to Ahimelech at Nob, the priest who had inquired of the Lord many times for him in the past. When asked why he was all alone, David lied to Ahimelech and was given the consecrated bread along with the sword of Goliath. Saul found out about it and butchered not only Ahimelech but also the whole family of priests in the city of Nob. Only one High Priest with one ephod escaped. The ephod apparently had the Urim and the Thumin, "lights and perfections" by which some how the priest determined the will of God. We don't know exactly how. Where did Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, the lone escapee, go? To David. So all during his wilderness wanderings, he had the High Priest of God together with the ephod available to him. God never left him without the ability to inquire of the Lord. And

think, by lying to Ahimelech, David caused the slaughter of Ahimelech along with all those priests in Nob, except for the one God saved to be his man in the wilderness with David. How much did God really want David to know His mind? What a gracious God we serve.

Another principle. What generally preceded David's greatest failures? Victory. There are about three major failures in David's life that are very bad, and every one of them is preceded by tremendous victory. The first one, of course, was when he was a victorious general under Saul. He defeated Goliath, and he defeated the Philistines. There springs up a popular folk song, "Saul has slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands." Saul gets the message and gets jealous. David has been anointed king of Israel. He knows he is going to be king of Israel. God did not anoint him to be slaughtered. He anointed him to be king of Israel. So he knows he is going to be king. When Saul pursues him with the intent to kill him, he escapes from his home through the lies of his wife and flees over to Ramah to Samuel. Saul sends wave after wave after wave, three waves of soldiers, and finally goes himself to take David. What happens to the waves of soldiers and even to Saul himself? God causes them all to turn into prophets. And when Saul goes after David personally, he becomes the greatest prophet of them all, prophesying for a day and a night. They can't lay a finger on David. What is David's response to this "victory?" He goes running to Jonathan and says, "I am one step ahead of death, but I've got a scheme. "You know the current feast that I should attend. Well, you tell daddy I have to go home for the feast of my parents, and that you, as the crown prince, gave me permission to go.. I'll hide out here in the field. If it works and Saul is happy about it and wants me back, let me know, and I'll come back. If he doesn't want me back, let me know and I'll flee." So Jonathan, a Benjaminite, the great archers of Israel, joins the deceit and says, "Look, I'll shoot some arrows. As the little boy I bring gathers my arrows, if I shoot beyond him, you are to flee. If I shoot short, you are to stay." So they work out their deceit, and it is very well done. The only problem is what? Saul sees through it just like that. The result is he tries to kill Jonathan, his beloved first born, the heir to his throne, the throne he is trying to protect for Jonathan by killing David. What's more he hardens his heart against David. All their scheming goes for naught.

So David flees to the wilderness. For maybe up to ten years, we can't tell exactly, he is protected from Saul by God. Twice Saul is given into his hands, and his men encourage him to do away with Saul. David is God's anointed king. Saul is out of the will of God, and fighting Jehovah, but David won't touch him because he is still God's anointed. He is willing to let God be God and make David king when God wants David on the throne. Tremendous spiritual battles. Tremendous spiritual victory. If you had your enemy who for ten years has been tracking you all over the wilderness of Judea with the intention of killing you, if you had him in your hands twice and also had a long sharp knife and 600 men encouraging you to kill him, what would you do? You bunch of liars, you'd do just what I would do. I would stick it to him but good. David didn't. Saul was God's anointed. David even fought his men on one occasion to stop them from killing Saul. Tremendous spiritual victory. Then after this tremendous victory when God says, "Get back into Judah. That is where I want you." What does he do? He goes through this long, sad pity party in Chapter 27. "I know I am never going to make it here. I'm going over to the Philistines and get out of this place." The self pity just oozes. So he goes over to Achish, who is rather a nice chap for a Philistine. He has more honor than David. He accepts David at face value. Of course, it doesn't hurt to have 600 solidly well-trained guerrilla warriors since he will be fighting the Israelites. He makes David one of his chief princes under a feudal arrangement. He grants David Ziklag and gives him the freedom to reign and roam down there. David and his men attack various tribes of the Amalekites [non-Jews] and slaughters man, woman, and child, leaving nothing alive to implicate him in his life of deceit. He returns with all the booty, gives his share to his feudal master Achish, and lies to him saying he has been fighting Judah and Caleb [Jews]. He becomes nothing less than a butcher, a robber baron, God's anointed king.

And third. After reigning for approximately twenty years, doing a great job as king, given tremendous success, and it says, "For the Lord God of hosts was with him," what happens? What is his greatest sin in the Bible? David and Bathsheba. He violates Bathsheba and murders Uriah. Whenever you have a spiritual triumph, be on your guard.

I have a friend who just had a big promotion. He is a Christian, and has a tremendous sphere of influence. He influences young wives who are training under him. We met yesterday at a Bible study and I said, "We have to

get very serious about Bible study because you are going to be a number one target of Satan now. You are in a key position, and you can mold lives that will mold lives that will mold lives. It will have a domino effect for years." When you have spiritual victories, keep your eyes open.

Another principle I find in David that is kind of interesting, something I tend to do. When David is successful as a king or getting away from Saul or being a robber baron, he tends to see these successes as God's blessing on all areas of his life. It's the old rewards and punishment syndrome we've talked about before. Did you ever notice when God is blessing you with a tremendous ministry, a new job or whatever it happens to be, that you can interpret that as God's blessing on all areas of your life. We tend to interpret these so called successes as the fact that all areas of our lives are according to the will of God, and we seem to lack discernment.

David does this. when David is in Ziklag acting as a robber baron, deceiving his feudal lord Achish, with whom he has made a covenant, he thinks he is getting away with it. God expects covenants to be honored even with foreigners. Joshua made a covenant with Gibeon, remember, and God made him honor it. When Saul dishonored that covenant by killing Gibeonites, God brought famine on Israel for three years even though the Gibeonites were pagan Baal worshipers. When David goes with the Philistines to fight against the northern tribes of Israel, God even delivers him out of that, and he doesn't have to fight. When he goes back to Ziklag, the Amalekites have raided and taken all the families, including David's. He inquires of God and God says, "Pursue them. I'll give them to you." He pursues them and gets everyone back safely. God is just taking care of everything. Isn't it wonderful! But what happens when he becomes king of Judah? Do the ten northern tribes come flocking down in mobs to make David king of all Israel? They do not. They go to war with him, even though they know David is God's anointed king and Saul himself has declared it so. But David had aligned himself with their bitterest enemies. While he was having his great success down south, he was hardening the ten northern tribes against him. My friends, that hardening never healed, not in David's time, not ever really. It broke apart in Rehoboam's time, Solomon's son. They never really trusted David after that.

The same thing is true when he was king of all Israel. It was a tragic thing. Chapter 5 of II Samuel "David became greater and greater for the Lord God of hosts was with him." He became an outstanding king of Israel, an extremely popular success, puts down all the enemies around him, and it says David became greater and greater because the Lord God of hosts was with him. That is II Samuel 5:10. II Samuel 5:13, just three verses down the road, says, "David took more wives and concubines." Now in those days the size of his harem was how you determined the greatness of a king.. But what was rule #4 in Deuteronomy 17, "You shall not multiply wives to yourself." David goes right ahead and multiplies wives because God is blessing him and, therefore, he is a great king. So seeing what other great kings do, he takes on more and more wives and concubines in direct violation to what he knows to be the Word of God. He seems to think he has been given blanket approval of all his actions

While this is all going on what is happening to David's sons? While the Lord of Hosts is making David greater and greater because the Lord of Hosts is with him, what kind of a father is David? He is a lousy father, isn't he? Why did Adonijah try to steal the throne from Solomon even though he knew Solomon was God's anointed? Because David never, ever denied him anything. And why did David never deny him anything, remember? Because David had been the runt of the litter. He had had a terrible childhood. He wasn't even considered a son. When Samuel was there to look over the sons of Jesse in order to anoint one as king, David wasn't even brought in until Samuel asked if Jesse had any more sons. Again when he brought supplies to his brothers who were fighting for Saul, Eliah, the eldest, put him down, "What are you up here for, you punk kid. Did you come to see the battle? Why aren't you back doing what you should be doing." His whole life has been one big put down. He has had to fight for everything his whole life and it shows in his vindictiveness all along the line. You don't cross David anywhere through I and II Samuel without getting hurt. So, "My boys are not going to have what I had. I am not going to put them through what I went through." So he indulges them. All the while God is blessing him he fails to discipline his kids. Amnon, #1 son, wants Tamar, Absalom's sister. So he takes her. Why? What was Amnon's model? David. What did David do. Took Bathsheba. Absalom, #3 son, comes along and is mad at Amnon. David doesn't punish Amnon and make him marry Tamar. The law of the violated virgin says that Amnon must marry Tamar. He should be slain, actually. He is not allowed incest with a half-sister, but if David couldn't bring himself to kill him, he should have at least made him marry her because the law says so. You had

to marry a violated virgin for life. You could never divorce her. He doesn't punish him nor make him marry her. Absalom would never have killed his brother-in-law who was also his brother. So Absalom hates him, plots his revenge for two years and then kills him. What was his model? What did David do when Uriah got in his way. He killed him. How about Absalom wanting the throne? He is half Syrian. He feels a little like he's not exactly family. He is not a true Jew, but he is good looking, has a pleasing personality, looks regal is now #1 son, and he wants the throne.

Later on when Solomon is to be made king, Adonijah wants the throne. What do they do? They try to take it. They just take what they want. Where did they learn that? What did David do when he wanted something? He took it. He moves down to Ziklag and takes anything he wants. When Nabal crosses him and insults his messengers, he goes up to kill Nabal and every single male in his whole family. Why? Because he insulted David. That is all. So his sons grow up like this. Their model is daddy. Where did Solomon get the idea that he could have 700 wives and 300 concubines and make political marriages? David. David had wives and concubines and when he got to be a great king, he added more wives and more concubines, and #3 wife we know was the daughter of Talmi, the king of Geshur, a Syrian, a worshipper of Baal, a political marriage. All during this time David is modeling for his sons. What does this do for David's ability to discipline his children when they are doing the same thing he did? It disqualifies him, doesn't it.

Our authority to discipline our children is based upon our obedience to the Lordship of Christ. We have no authority apart from that. It is not like the Navy. I discovered that in a hurry. I got put on report the first day I was in the Navy. I reported a day early and got a nice civilian haircut from a civilian barber. "They are not going to butcher my head" Comes the first day of inspection. We all take our hats off and look like a bunch of monkeys. Here comes the Captain, four stripes. Now he is retired but brought back during the war. He has this gorgeous silver mane that goes way down his back, and he loves that hair. It is beautiful. He comes by, takes one look at me and says, "That man is on report. He needs a haircut." The steam shot out of my ears and nose, my eyes flashed, but I kept my mouth shut. Afterwards I went to my battalion officer and said, "Did you see that? You know I got a haircut yesterday." He said, "Son, one thing you've got to learn about this navy, you do as the captain says not as the captain does. You are on report, now go get a haircut." So I went to the Navy barber, he went whoosh, whoosh and that did it for my hair. That doesn't work as a father or as a husband or as a man or as a pastor or as a Christian. Your life speaks so loudly no one can hear what you say. If you obey the Lordship of Christ, you have authority. If you don't, you have none, absolutely none. The obedience of Christ to his Father was so evident that a Roman Centurion who lived under absolute obedience to his Tribune, a man who had the power to kill him very slowly and very painfully, could see a man that had authority. Why? Because Christ was in absolute obedience. This Centurion with absolute authority over his men because he was in absolute obedience to his Tribune, could see Christ's authority was not based upon his miracles. It was based upon his obedience to his Father.

Another thing I see, and which I love about David's life, is the amazing illustration it is of the grace of God. Before studying David, I really didn't have an understanding of how gracious God really is. David does some horrible things as we have seen over these last 9 months. I feel almost lily white at times compared to David. It is a wonderful comparison. If you ever feel down on yourself with your self-worth at a low ebb, turn to I and II Samuel and read about David. It really helps you. But any time David does these horrible things and truly repents, God forgives, just like that. There is absolutely no bottom to the barrel of God's mercy and grace. You will never, ever, ever, use it up. Now, he may have to discipline you, and if you keep on rebelling, he may even take you home, but he takes you home. What is home? Well, everything that is normal and wonderful and comfortable and lovely and natural. I will never forget C. S. Lewis' statement that when he goes to heaven, he is not going to be overwhelmed by the glory up there. When he walks into heaven, he is going to be HOME. He'll say, "Of course." It is home and will be just as natural and normal and obvious as what it should be considering his new state. It will be just as natural as his home is right now for his present state while he is not with the Lord. Even if God takes you home because of your extreme disobedience, he takes you home where you walk in and say, "Of course." Oh, yes, you will face the Judgment Seat of Christ, and that will not be fun, but you do go home.

Secondly in the lineage of David, I love it, Matthew 1:6. David had many wives and many concubines and so the Lord had a great number of choices for children to put in his lineage. But I read in verse 6, in chapter 1 of Matthew

"to Jesse was born David the king and to David was born Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah." He deliberately chooses David's greatest sin, David at his worst, and puts that in his lineage. Do you know what that says to me? That Jesus Christ is not a fair weather Lord. He does not just identify with me in my "successes" or when I am obeying him, but Jesus Christ identifies with me totally, even at my worst, no matter where I am spiritually. There is never any time when Jesus Christ does not identify with me. Now that does not mean he sinned. It does mean he had all the temptations I have had. The Bible says so, but he was victorious. I can never, ever get to the point where I cannot turn around, run and leap into his lap with dirt all over me and say, "You are right, I am wrong." and not have open acceptance, immediately crawl into his arms and squeeze tight. He doesn't care how dirty I am. I am to run to him. The kings of the earth, the great men of the earth, in Revelation, flee from the wrath of the Lamb. I am told to flee TO the Lamb. In the midst of his wrath upon me, the consequences of my sin that I am feeling so bad about, that hurt so much, I am to run to him. That holy God, the one who cannot sin, who cannot go against his own holiness, says I am to run to him, leap into his lap, and he will hold me close. I don't have to get cleaned up first, no showers before I walk into the presence of Jesus Christ. He identifies with me totally, my peaks and my pits. That is some God. That is the thing that really struck me. A lot of us love our God with all our hearts, but do you know what I am saying here? I like my God. I really like him. He is really something.

Father, we just thank you so much that you are that kind of a God. We frankly cannot understand it, but boy, do we like it. Father, we like it that you are the kind of God that we can both love and like, that you are just like us in the sense that you identified yourself with us. You know what we go through. You have been there yourself but you have been victorious. You have never sinned. You know how to handle temptation. You know how to be victorious every time, and yet you also know the pull upon us and the weaknesses we have and our desire to rationalize and our foolishness and the stupidity of our hearts and you accept us anyway. You identify with us whether we are walking in obedience and having mountain top experiences and you identify with us when we are having our Bathsheba trips. You are some God. Thank you, Father, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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