

# **THE LIFE OF DAVID: DISCOVERING GOD'S BEAUTY – MIKE BICKLE**

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## ***Session 1 Introducing the Man After God's Own Heart***

### **INTRODUCTION**

This first session we're calling, "David: Introducing the Man after God's Own Heart." We'll take the description that God gave of David, the first and the last description He ever gave of David in the Scripture. It's the same one. In 1 Samuel 13:14, he's called "the man after God's own heart."

David lived in approximately 1,000 BC. In Acts 13:22, Paul the apostle spoke again and declared over David the same thing that God had declared over his life here in 1 Samuel 13. David was about fifteen years old when God declared that He was seeking for a man after His own heart and He had found him. He was a young, fifteen-year old shepherd boy in the back hills of Bethlehem. Bethlehem was a town of about 300 people. It was out at the edge of nowhere, but God had seen the cry and the impulse of his heart for the Lord, and it got the Lord's attention.

### **THE CHILD WHO GREW TO BE KING**

It's one thing for the Lord to describe David at the beginning of his life, when he's fifteen years old. That's a startling, an amazing reality already. That's a prophetic declaration that undoubtedly Samuel described to David in detail. I believe that when David was anointed by Samuel in Samuel 16, Samuel sat down at that meal at David's house, in the house of Jesse his father, and said, "David, let me tell you how all this began. Let me tell you about the night when the Spirit of the Lord first came upon me and told me that He was rejecting Saul as king of Israel and that He had chosen a man for Himself." He looks at David as a young lad and said, "You're the man that God sees in His prophetic insight and understanding of history. The Lord told me something about you, young man, that you have seeds in your heart that have been planted there by God. When God trains you and brings them to fullness there will be a mature deep love that will become a prototype for all God's people for history. Those seeds of love are already formed and fashioned in you right now."

### **DAVID, THE BELOVED OF GOD, THE MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART**

We'll look at a number of the psalms where David declares that God is the one who fashions and forms the human heart. That was a very real and tender reality to David—that he was a person whom God drew and wooed in this kind of way even in his youth. Anyway, that's one fascinating line of study, that God would declare this over a child of fifteen. And here's another one, a completely different line of thought, that a thousand years later, after all the mistakes had been made, after David's lies and compromise and after his murder of Uriah, after his adultery with Bathsheba, at the end of his life and then, yea, a thousand years after, God speaks again and says, "I tell you the truth, he was and is a man after My own heart." It's more profound in some ways that God would say it at the end of the journey than at the beginning. I love that declaration of God, over David because it describes God's editing process. I love God's editing process, that God looks at David and says, in Acts 13:22 and 36, "He is a man after My own heart and he fulfilled all the will of God in his life."

I read the life of David and I say, "He fulfilled all the will of God. Lord, surely You know the life of David..."

The Lord says, "Yes, through My editing process of grace and redemption, the way that I count a man's life at the end with a cry to be Mine all the way. Though he stumbled and fell, he did all the will of God." That's an astonishing fact at the end of his life.

It's the same kind of thing in Romans 4:20 when it says of Abraham that Abraham didn't waver in his faith. You read the life of Abraham and you find several substantial wavering. He was in fear before one of the heathen kings and he lied about his wife. The king said, "Boy, she is beautiful. Who is she?"

Abraham said, "She's my sister! Yes, she is my sister. Do you like her? You can have her."

Sarah looked at him with that kind of look a woman gives a man, like, "Your sister?" The king took her away. But at the end of it all, in Romans 4:20, the Lord said, "Abraham never wavered in his faith" (paraphrased). He lied and compromised on several occasions. That's the grid with which we'll look at the life of David.

### **AN OVERVIEW OF THE NEXT TWELVE SESSIONS**

There are several ways to study the life of David. I have had the joy of teaching the life of David for some twenty-plus years now, and I've taught it a number of ways straight through. My first time was in 1976 when I was just learning it myself, and I was absolutely thrilled by it as a young pastor, twenty years old, working my way through it verse by verse the way that it was taught to me, covering all the details. That's how I did it when we did it the last time at the Grace Training Center class.

This time it's a little different. We're going to look at three different elements, three lines of thought. One: I want to give some historical continuity so you can get a feel for the story. We're not going to go into the details of many things. We're going to stay on one plane, one main sphere of truth, the beauty of God's heart and how it was communicated to a person who was seeking the Lord with all his heart even in his weakness and immaturity. I'm going to tell a little of the continuity, the historical setting, so you can feel the story line through David's seventy years that are recorded in 1 and 2 Samuel and the book of Psalms. That's the first thing, just a little of that.

Secondly, each session or two we'll pick out one or two key episodes in David's life. We're not going to take all of them. That'll be difficult, because so many of them are so fascinating. Some of the little bunny trails in the story are absolutely fascinating, but that's why you have the book by A.W. Pink, *The Life of David*. He will take you on a lot of those bunny trails. You can go to any bookstore you want and buy books on the life of David; check them out at a seminary library or whatever. I really challenge you to do that, because we can only look at one level of his life. There are so many other truths and principles that we won't be able to cover. I hope that you have an infectious desire to become a fanatic, to read the life of David for the next twenty, thirty, forty years of your life. We'll look at one or two key episodes in each session.

Thirdly, we'll look much more extensively than we ever did in the other times we've gone through it at the Psalms: how the Psalms refer specifically to the circumstances that David was in and, though we're not going to look at the whole Psalms, we'll focus specifically on that aspect of the Psalms that reveals what God looks like to David. Then what David looks like to God. That's the angle that we're looking for: what God looks like to David, and it's profound in the book of Psalms. There are some profound one-liners. I love one of them in Psalms 60:5. David talks about himself being delivered. He says, "God, You will deliver Your beloved" (paraphrased). He calls himself "the beloved of the Lord."

When he talks about himself in prayer, instead of saying *me* he would sometimes say, "Your beloved needs help, Lord." He knew how to pluck that particular string on God's heart. The reason David could understand what he looked like to God is because David knew a little of what God looked like. That to me is one of the

profound glories of the book of Psalms. It reveals things about the beauty and the majesty of God that we find nowhere else in the Bible. It does it in a very, very poignant and powerful and direct way. We'll take time to look at the book of Psalms.

There are three different paradigms, three different points of views, three different lenses that I want you to be able to look through. Again, I want you to see a little of what God looked like to David. Hopefully when you leave this session you'll have a healthier paradigm, a healthier point of view of what God looks like through David's heart; secondly, what David looks like to God; and thirdly, what human circumstances and other people looked like to David through this lens. David looked at circumstances so much differently than we do. He understood a little about what God looked like and what he looked like to God. Therefore, people and circumstances looked different to David. It's those three things that I want to leave us with. What did God look like to David? What did David look like to God? What did people and circumstances look like to David in the light of these truths?

### **FROM ADAM TO ABRAHAM TO MOSES: SOME HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Let's take just a really brief historical overview of what's going on in the larger context. If you read the genealogies of Matthew 1 and Luke 3, you know that Adam lived in approximately 4,000 B.C. According to Genesis 12, Abraham lived in 2,000 B.C. So from Adam to Abraham, there were 2,000 years. Between Abraham and Jesus, right in the middle is King David, 1,000 years later, in 1,000 B.C. Abraham lived in 2,000 B.C. Well, 400 years after Abraham came Moses. The children of Israel were in Egypt. They were in slavery under the mighty power of the Egyptian empire. Moses, a shepherd for 40 years, like David in many ways, was used of the Lord to break the might of the Egyptian empire. It's a very powerful story. We know it because we go to children's church, not because we've read the book of Exodus. Honestly, the book of Exodus is one of the most astounding books in the Word of God, yet most adult Christians I know have never really read the book of Exodus. The reason I care about that book is because the prophetic judgments loosed by the servants of God under the anointing and the authority of the Lord will be loosed again at the end of the age. The book of Exodus is a very serious book. Anyway, that's a little bunny trail there.

### **FROM MOSES TO THE TIME OF THE JUDGES**

Moses lived in 1600 years B.C., and then after Moses was Joshua. Now we're in approximately 1500 B.C. Then for about 400 years after Joshua was the period of the judges. We have Abraham in 2,000 B.C., then 400 years later in 1600 BC came Moses. Then we have Joshua in the next generation, in around 1500 B.C., and for 400 years after that, the period of the judges. The nation of Israel was scattered as twelve tribes across the land. They were unified by faith, but because their faith was very, very weak and blatantly apostate, on a number of occasions their unity was broken. They were at war against one another all the time. Therefore, because the twelve tribes were constantly at war with one another, they never, ever provided a unified formative front against the enemy nations. Israel was saying, "We need a king to bring us together because we keep getting defeated by these neighboring nations. We're fighting each other, but if we're unified we can defeat them!" So they began to cry out for a king. Samson was a judge; Jephthah was a judge; Deborah was a judge. One of the judges that you're familiar with is Eli. He was the one who raised the young boy that was offered to the Lord, Samuel, when his mother prayed in intercession in her barrenness. Hannah cried out for a son and God gave this intercessory woman a prophetic child. His name was Samuel. Eli was the judge, and then Samuel became judge after him.

## **THE DEFENSELESSNESS OF ISRAEL BEFORE HER ENEMIES ALL ROUND**

Why did all this happen? Because the nation of Israel wasn't powerful and unified. If they had had a vibrant faith, their faith would have unified them and they would have been a powerful military force, but it really never worked for any length of time. And after 400 years of the judges, the nation of Israel was really tired of it, so they began to cry out to God because God promised them a king through Moses back four or five hundred years earlier, but they got in a hurry. God had already determined that David would be the king, but they got ahead of God and said, "We want a king now." That's in 1 Samuel 8. We're jumping right into the story. They said, "We don't want judges; we want a king." Samuel took it personal actually. The Lord felt it necessary to explain to Samuel, "Samuel, they're not rejecting you; they're rejecting Me." Samuel was wounded by the rejection of the nation against him, because he had so blamelessly served the Lord and led them in such powerful ways.

"We don't want judges," they said; "we want to be a military force. We want to defeat the other nations like they defeat us."

But the Lord said, "The Lord is your military power, not a king. If you get a king out of the will of God, it will cause tremendous problems for you." Yet they cried out in 1 Samuel 8 for a king, and then 1 Samuel 9, 10 and 11 shows how Saul was chosen and put into office. It's a fascinating story. It's tempting for me to want to develop the principles. It's a fantastic story about how God chooses, how God trains, how people respond to the sovereign working of God and the whole issue of leadership and government. It's a very, very powerful story.

## **SAUL'S FIRST GREAT SIN AGAINST THE LORD, THE SIN AT GILGAL**

So Saul's reign begins. Then in 1 Samuel 13, Samuel commits his first grievous sin before the Lord. There are two grievous sins that King Saul commits, for which the Lord then rejects him from being king. There are two grievous sins. By the way, Saul becomes king when he's thirty, and he reigns for forty years, until he's seventy years old. The reason I mention that time line is because it's really amazing how long God allowed Saul to go on after the Lord rebuked him, forty years in his reign. Part of that reign of Saul was a judgment on the nation of Israel because they wanted something they wouldn't let go of that was out of the will of God. The Lord actually gave it to them to break them and discipline them and teach them that there was nothing good outside of the will of God. Saul became a torment to their nation at the end of the day. He was a demonized king that led the nation into all kinds of disastrous decisions. Often the Lord will raise up leaders who discipline the nation, because He gives the nation the very thing they cry out for. He says, "OK, I'll give it to you."

But it seems like an innocent thing when you read it. What happens is that the prophet Samuel tells Saul in 1 Samuel 10:8, "I'm going to meet you at Gilgal; I want you to wait there for seven days" (paraphrased). It's significant that it's Gilgal because that was a place where some of the historic events and covenants were established in Israel's history. Samuel said, "You wait there for seven days" Then I'll come and offer a sacrifice as a prophet and priest. After I've worshipped the Lord in the offering of the sacrifice, then you can go to battle with the Lord's favor upon us."

## **SAUL VIOLATES THE SYMBOLISM OF THE LORD IN OFFERING SACRIFICE**

What happens is that in 1 Samuel 13:2 there are 3,000 men of Israel, but in 1 Samuel 13:5, there are 30,000 Philistines. It's a 10-to-1 ratio, 3,000 to 30,000. Saul had only been king a short amount of time and he began to get worried. In 1 Samuel 13:8 the people began to scatter from Saul because of the 10-to-1 odds. They said,

“Hey Saul we know you’re our new king. We know we’re supposed to win these battles, but sorry; you’re on your own. They began to scatter as more and more of the Philistines were gathering.

King Saul said, “Well, I waited seven days like the prophet/priest told me to do,” because Samuel was a prophet, a priest and a judge. He was the last judge of Israel. Saul was the first king of Israel. David was obviously the second king of Israel and Solomon the third. What happened is that Saul offered the sacrifice. You say, “Well, so what?” But it doesn’t operate that way because the laws of Moses were very, very strict. No king shall ever offer the sacrifice of a priest. David was one of the exceptions because David was a picture of Jesus, but the reason they couldn’t do this was because to do this was to cross the boundary lines in God’s economy that were very important to the Lord, because the Lord was establishing types and shadows. These kings couldn’t just break them; they were types and shadows of the Messiah who was to come. They couldn’t break them at their own convenience. That’s why Moses got in trouble when he hit the rock in the wilderness. He violated one of the key types and shadows of the Messiah. It was very serious to the Lord. He told the kings, “You can’t cross the line and operate like a priest, and priest, you can’t operate like a king.” Uzziah, the great king of Israel, got proud because of his victories. In 2 Chronicles he walked in and offered the incense before the Lord, and the Lord struck this mighty king with leprosy. He said, “You can’t cross the line that I’ve put before you.” It seems like an innocent thing that he offered a sacrifice but that was a very, very serious sin for him to commit.

### **WHEN THE ENEMY GATHERS AND THE PEOPLE SCATTER, LEADERSHIP IS REVEALED**

Why did Saul do it? Because the people were scattering (1 Sam. 13:8). When the enemy gathers and the people scatter, leadership is revealed before the Lord. Again, that’s a very important principle we can’t develop. When the enemy begins to gather and the people begin to scatter, that’s when the measure of a man or a woman’s leadership is revealed before the Lord. Saul said, “They’re gathering against me and they’re scattering the good ones and I violated the Word of God. I’m sorry.”

Samuel said, “That’s not OK. That’s not OK.” Again, it’s a little more serious than you might grasp if you’re just reading this casually for the first time. Samuel said to Saul, “You have acted presumptuously” (1 Sam. 13:13). He had acted foolishly in the sense that God had honored him by making him king, and he so casually crossed the lines for his own ends. He said, “That’s not OK. You haven’t kept the commandment of the Lord which He commanded you.”

Now listen to this: “The Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever” (1 Sam. 13:13). You need to study the “would haves” of scripture. They’re powerful. There are a number of them. One comes to mind when David had sinned against the Lord in adultery with Bathsheba and murdering Uriah (2 Sam. 11-12). The prophet Nathan appears to him and says, “David, the Lord would have given you even more than you already have if you had asked, but instead you’ve taken this woman and you’ve killed this man” (2 Sam. 12:8, paraphrased). I love that Nathan the prophet said, “The Lord would have given you, more David, all of these days if it hadn’t been enough.” I say to you, David had a “would have,” not just Saul.

All of us here, we want to purpose in the Lord that we get all of the “would haves” that God would give us. You look at the life of David and say, “What exactly, to what measure and extreme would have You gone in blessing David?”

The Lord's answer has to be something like, "At least more than he had received up to that time; I would have given him more." He told Saul, "The Lord would have given you this thing for all your days with the blessing of the Lord, but now your kingdom shall continue no longer." Right now Saul was about fifty-five years old. The interesting thing is that his kingdom went on for fifteen more years. We're going to fill in the time lines on some of these prophecies. It's truly amazing. Not until fifteen years later was Saul finally killed in the battle at Mount Gilboa in 1 Samuel 31. The Lord was looking and giving Saul a chance to change his heart. Nevertheless, the kingdom wouldn't pass on to Jonathan. That was part of what this meant; it didn't mean so much, "You'll die tomorrow," but, "Your son won't be the heir to the throne. It will leave your family line now." The blessing of the Lord lifted off of Saul from that day forward, or really close to then, actually; 1 Samuel 15 is when it becomes very, very clear.

### **TRAINED IN THE SCHOOL OF ADVERSITY BY A DEMONIZED KING**

The Lord said, "Your kingdom shall not continue." Isn't it amazing that it took fifteen years? I'm getting ahead of myself, and I'll continue to do that throughout this story, because this story is so exciting. I'm just going to make little bunny trails and you can make it all fit in. When the prophet Samuel came to David, he was a seventeen-year old man; Samuel told him, "You'll be the king of Israel." Did you know he wasn't king of Israel until he was thirty-seven? He was king over Judah and king over Hebron a little at age thirty, but he wasn't king over all Israel for twenty more years. When the prophet of God stands before you and it's real and he says, "This and that will happen," remember that in the life of David it took twenty years before it came to pass. Saul's judgment didn't ripen to fullness until his death fifteen years later. I'm convinced that he died a premature death. It says in 1 Chronicles 11 that God killed Saul. God killed him and not the Philistines at Mount Gilboa. God killed him. The Lord said, "It is time." The amazing thing is that God wanted this demonized king to be the seminary for this young king, David. God killed Saul fifteen years later, only after David was sufficiently trained by a demonized leader. That's an interesting seminary course, isn't it, that God puts you under leadership secularly, relationally? Maybe it's in a family relational dynamic. Maybe it's in an employment dynamic. Maybe it's governmentally and politically in a nation. God trained David very purposely through a demonized king. That's how He brought forth the gold of that young man's heart, in that kind of adversity.

He says here, "The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart." Then it says, "The Lord has commanded"—or the NKJV says *appointed*—"him to be leader"—or commander—"over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you." That's a very powerful, very interesting phrase. "The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart and the Lord appointed him that he would be the leader." Again, the Lord's mailing list is up to date. You can be out in the hills of a little village with a population of 300, out at the edge of nowhere, and God feels the impulse of your heart reaching towards Him in love and adoration. He was a boy, fifteen years old, not famous, not trying to make sure he got on the right platform. The Lord orchestrated the events into which He led David. David didn't have to use "hint faith." He didn't have to send out the word and get everyone lined up with the right information so that their faith would work towards who he was. There was no "hint faith" in David's life. He said, "If the Lord has called me, I leave it in the hands of God. It's God's call. It's not my problem. It's the Lord's problem now." This is the introductory word for the life of David. He's a fifteen-year old young man in the back hills of Bethlehem, tending sheep. He has no comprehension what's going to happen. It'll be another year or two before events even fully transpire to where Samuel visits him when he's about seventeen.

It's a very perilous word for a prophet to proclaim this judgment over someone with so much political power. Saul could have had Samuel executed. Samuel was actually afraid of that in 1 Samuel 16:1; when he went to anoint David he said, "What if the king finds out? He will be very angry. I know his tendencies. He's jealous; he's an angry man; he's a ruthless man." Saul was a murderous man. It was dangerous business, what the prophet Samuel was speaking to the king here. Many prophets have lost their head for much less than this. Yet this is the introduction into redemptive history of the man who has more scripture written about him than any other man in the whole Word of God besides Jesus.

**DAVID, THE PROTOTYPE OF A WEAK PERSON WHO SINCERELY WANTS GOD**

There's a reason there's more scripture on this man than any other man in Scripture. He's the prototype of a weak person who sincerely wants God. That's what the human race is made up of. He's the prototype of the weak man or woman who really cares and really wants God. David goes through a diversity of experiences. The transitions are so intense in David's life. The hot and the cold are so extreme. He's in the palace. Then he's in a cave. Then he's in the palace! Then he's in the gutter! Then he's in the palace again! He has everyone praising him or everyone trying to murder him. It's like he has no neutral zone. He has every range of emotion, from intense fear and compromise to absolute adoration and supernatural faith quickened in his heart. I don't know that he would have every emotion exactly, but seemingly every single emotion of a sincere yet weak believer and every conceivable diversity of circumstance. That's why the Lord has chosen him, but it's very significant that this is the way that God introduces him. In Acts 13:22 this is how God finally describes David at the end of his life with the revelation He gave to Paul the apostle.

It must have been a very unusual introduction for King Saul to hear from Samuel: "A man after God's own heart? I'm not?"

And Samuel says, "No, you're not, but God has raised up another man in your place." Again, it takes fifteen years before this happens.

**THE AMALEKITES, THE PERPETUAL ENEMIES OF ISRAEL AND GOD**

Turn to Samuel 15. By the way, we'll come back to this phrase, "a man after God's own heart." 1 Samuel 15:28 King Saul has now committed his second major sin. Samuel ordered him utterly to exterminate the Amalekites, there are a number of reasons why. It's not just a casual thing that's going on. The Amalekites were constantly energized in opposition against God and His people through every generation.

The Amalekites were the ones who came out to Moses, who had 3 million slaves in the desert dying of thirst. Moses said, "Could we get some water and pass this way?"

The Amalekites said, "No, die in the wilderness, people of God."

The Lord said He swore an oath in His heart that the Amalekites would not continue throughout every generation; that there would be a time, and it was going to happen at this hour right here, that the prophecies would be fulfilled, some 600 years later, when the end of the Amalekites would come. Samuel undoubtedly knew the prophecies. My guess is that King Saul would have understood it as well because of Samuel. Samuel gave him very clear orders: "When you go in, this is the big hour. This is a prophetic hour of destiny for the nation. This is the pay back that the Lord has promised, in which the enmity, the cup of iniquity that has

matured for 600 years, has now become full in the justice of God against this nation.” When the cup of iniquity becomes full, then the Lord acts and terrible things happen in national identities.

Saul decided to disobey that prophetic word. He wanted to keep the best of the land. God said, “Without any exception, all the animals are to be all slaughtered.”

Samuel the prophet came and the rich, the good-looking, and the best of the land, the best of the people and the animals were kept. The prophet said, “What have you done, King Saul?”

Saul said, “Well I mean, look man, there’s some good stuff. This is worth a lot of money.”

Samuel said, “You foolish man! You’re rebellious against God! You never, ever quit doing this, do you?”

### **THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DAVID AND SAUL**

The difference between Saul and David was this: David sinned more grievously in outward ways or equally as grievously. But David was wounded that he offended God. Saul was only repentant because he got caught. David’s heart was smote within him, the Scripture says. He was wounded because he offended the heart of God. He crossed over the line. David didn’t have to get caught. When David crossed the line, his heart wounded him, but when Saul crossed the line, if no one caught him, it was business as usual. He was only sorry when he got caught. David was sorry because he had touched the heart of God in a wrong way. Saul was called rebellious, and David was immature but righteous. There’s a certain kind of man who’s only sorrowful when he gets caught. There’s a kind of man or woman that’s sorrowful because they’ve crossed the line and they’ve touched the heart of God in a wrong way. That’s why David in some ways did more grievous or certainly equally as grievous things as Saul did, but David’s heart was so different. David wept on his own; he didn’t need someone to tell him he did badly, because he already knew what was happening. When Nathan came to him and unfolded the plot about Uriah and Bathsheba, David broke down. The reason Nathan did that wasn’t to get David to repent; David had already repented. He did it to announce judgment on David’s line and upon the nation. It was a prophetic declaration of judgment coming on David’s family line because of it. God said, “I will forgive you, but there will be consequences. I’m going to root this thing out of Israel’s experience, these negative things you’ve done in the position of king.”

Here the prophet comes in 1 Samuel 15:28. “Samuel said to him, ‘The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is a better man than you’” (1 Sam. 15:28, paraphrased).

Saul the jealous king said, “He has given it to a neighbor of mine who is better than me?”

“Yes, the Lord has already ordained that it belongs to another man.”

### **DAVID, A PICTURE AND SYMBOL OF THE KING WHO WOULD COME FROM HIS LINE**

Again, David was maybe sixteen now. Maybe at this point it was a year later. These are the two introductory references: “a man after God’s own heart,” and, “a neighbor who is better than you.” The reason I emphasize this, God calling him better, is that he was better because of his heart, not because of his maturity. David was immature but sincere. Saul was rebellious. God said the kingdom was taken from Saul and given to a better man than he. It’s a little profile of the life of David.

Number one. David is a picture of Jesus. He's the most prolific picture of Jesus as a type in the Bible. The other one would be Moses. That would be a very prominent picture of Jesus as well, but David is unquestionably the greatest picture in types and shadows of the Messiah who was to come. David is the one man who operated as prophet, priest and king. All the three divine offices merged into David's one calling and ministry. It's a one time deal: prophet, priest and king. Jesus, the son of David, is the only One who is the Prophet, the Priest, and the King before God forever. David was a priest. He could offer the incense. He was a prophet.

### A THREEFOLD PICTURE OF THE REDEEMED

In Acts 2, on the day of Pentecost, Peter talks about the patriarch and prophet, David. Obviously, he was a king. He's a picture of Jesus. He's also a picture of the redeemed, a picture of the Church. Just as he's a threefold picture of Jesus, he's a threefold picture of the redeemed as well. Number one, not in any necessary order, he's the worshiping warrior. He's the servant of the Lord who does the tasks of the kingdom, who makes war against the King's enemies. He's the warring king, the worshiping warrior. He is the servant of the Lord who stands against the Lord's enemies as the servant of the Lord, the warrior, soldier.

Secondly, he's a picture of the royal Bride, the kingly Bride. He's the picture of the devout, extravagant lover. He's the picture of the one that gazes on beauty, who is lost in desire, who wants all to partake of it in tenderness. He's the clearest picture in the entire Bible of the Bride of Christ as a person. There are a number of people who are pictures of the Bride. But there's no clearer picture than David as that kingly Bride, that warring Bride. He is the one who gazes on beauty, who's lost in desire, the one consumed with tenderness, the one who understands Psalm 36:8: "The river of Your pleasures, O God"—talking about the heart and the emotion of God's heart—"The river of pleasure courses through my being and delights me with great joy," when you put several psalms together. We'll look at each one of those.

Then the third identity is the secure child. David is pictured as lost in the Father's embrace. He's the picture of the one who is completely intent in the embrace of God's tenderness. He's just so happy and content in the embrace of the tenderness of God the Father. So those are the three main identities of the redeemed: the servant, the Bride and the sons of God. Women are sons of God. Men are the Bride of Christ. We're all sons of God. We're all in the Father's embrace. We're all the Bride of Christ. We're all servants. Those are the three primary identities in the Old and New Testament of the redeemed. There are several identities. Those are the prominent ones. Those are the ones that show up in the book of Revelation in the eternal city. We're sons; we're the Bride. We're servants as well.

### THE DISCIPLE WHO LEANED ON THE HEART OF GOD

There's a reason for those three distinct identities. David is the clearest picture. David is the Old Testament counterpart to John the apostle in the New Testament. John the apostle is that thunderous man, the son of thunder, the man who wanted to call fire down on cities. He was that fisherman who worked through the cold winter nights out on the sea, all the way till morning. He was a strong man, a son of thunder, a fiery man, a very man's man in the generic sense, and yet he was the man who called himself "the man who leaned on the heart of God, the man whom God loved" (Jn. 21:20, paraphrased). David and John are counterparts. There's no question whatsoever about that. John, the son of thunder, this fiery, tough man, said, "Oh, I'm the one God likes." David called himself in Psalm 60:5, "The beloved of the Lord."

John says, "Hey, so am I. I'm the one God likes! I'm the one who leans on His breast."

David says, “I gaze at His beauty all day long.”

John says, “I’m the one to whom He tells His secrets.” David said in many, many psalms that the secret of the Lord was given to him, too. Now I’m presenting it like it was competitive; I’m sure there’s nothing like that, but my point is that the two are counterparts of one another. In John 21:20 John describes himself as the one who’s loved of God, the one who leans on God and the one to whom God tells His secrets. That’s the same profile that David had before God.

### **THE DISTINCTIVE SKILLS OF DAVID: WARRIOR, KING, DIPLOMAT**

Let me give you a list here. I’ll try to give it slowly. I don’t know that you’ll get it but we’ll cover each one of these throughout the life of David, throughout the course. I have a list of David’s unique skills and then a list of his heart qualities. Then we’re going to just look for another moment at this phrase: “a man after God’s own heart.”

These are the skills that distinguish him; not that others didn’t have these isolated skills. It was the combination of all these skills with all these heart qualities that makes David so different. This isn’t comprehensive; I spent today thumbing through the Bible and writing them down. It’s not a comprehensive list, and undoubtedly I’ll add to it as we go, but I’m thinking of his distinctive skills. He was a fearless warrior. He was a soldier. He was fearless, but he was more than fearless. He was a skilled soldier, a military man number one.

Number two: He was a victorious king. It’s not that he was just a soldier; he was a president. He was the leader of a nation, a Prime Minister. He was the greatest military leader in Israel’s history. I don’t mean just as an individual soldier, as a military strategist and a commander of a nation. He was the greatest leader in Israel’s history. It’s one thing for a man to be the head of a nation; it’s another thing to be a great soldier. David was both. Those are very different skills.

### **AS WISE AS A SERPENT AND AS GUILELESS AS A DOVE**

One thing you may not know just by a casual reading of his life is that he was an exceptionally wise diplomat. That was mentioned a number of times. He was a statesman *par excellence* in the Word of God. Jesus said, “Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.” Most people who are innocent aren’t wise as serpents because they think that being innocent and pure-hearted means they never pay attention to wisdom. They never understand the cunning nature of other’s hearts. David was wise as a serpent. He was a cunning and skillful diplomat, and yet he had purity of heart at the same time. He put wisdom and purity, diplomacy and pure motives together into one heart. Again, most people who are good diplomats have dubious hearts. People with pure hearts typically write off diplomacy as something that political people do. Jesus said, “You need to be wise and pure.” David was an exceptionally skillful diplomat and statesmen. He brought unity within his own nation for one of the few times in its history, and he brought unity between the other nations and Israel. He was one of the only leaders in Israel’s history who actually unified their nation. As a matter of fact, I can’t think of another one. Solomon just sort of lived in the afterglow of David’s reign. After that there was a civil war, and it was never healed. Before that, the tribes were always warring against each other in the times of the judges. In the days of Moses they were a wreck. There’s no doubt that in the life and reign of David his diplomacy unified his nation and the nations around him, for many of them came to peace with him. His diplomacy is a very key part of David’s skill, his uniqueness of skill.

## **DAVID, ONE OF THE GREATEST WRITERS IN ALL HUMAN HISTORY**

He was a skillful writer and composer. I don't mean he just journaled and wrote a little poetry every now and then. He was one of the most skillful writers in all of human history. He was everything that Shakespeare was. I'm talking about a natural gifting in composition as a poet, as a philosopher. He was a very, very skilled writer. We're kind of accustomed to the book of Psalms because the psalms are in the Bible and we read them every now and then. But if you look at them from a literary point of view, they're outstanding. They're stunning in the meaning, the depths, and the layers of meaning of the things David says.

You say, "Well, the Spirit of the Lord gave it to him." Yes, the Spirit of the Lord gave him all these things. My point is to show the favor that was on him, the unique mix of gifts that he had.

## **A MUSICIAN, A SINGER, A SHEPHERD, A VISIONARY**

Not only was he a skillful poet, philosopher, and writer, he was a very, very skillful musician and singer, which is different from being a writer. But it's wonderful, because through that gift he could bring the beauty of the Lord into an experiential, emotional encounter with the people like no other.

Another significant quality he possessed is that he was a magnetic, visionary leader. He was the kind of man who had the ability to inspire hope in the hopeless nation. The nation was hopeless. He put hope into the mighty men of David in the cave who were despondent, discouraged, and indebted. He put hope in hopeless men. He gave vision. He made people believe the best about God. He made them believe the best about themselves and the best about the nation. He could bring them into an elevated understanding of the good things that were true about life.

Next, he was a tender shepherd. He was actually a shepherd. He knew how to tend the flocks out in the fields. Moreover, his relational skills, his ability to inspire loyalty, courage, and friendship in his inner circle was quite astounding. If you mapped out all his personality traits, that's a very rare individual. He was smart, he was pure, he wrote and sang. He tended sheep and made war; he liked people and God. It's an amazing combination of gift mixes. Most people are one or the other.

Let's look at his heart qualities. Obviously the thing we love most about David is that he was the passionate worshiper, the extravagant lover. That's the thing that touches your heart. That's not the greatest thing about him; in my opinion that's the second greatest thing about him, but that's the thing we all like. That's the thing that grabs us. It really, really gets hold of our heart, this part of David's life. It was his desire to be God's. He wanted to be God's totally. That's what you love. That's why you're taking this course. David was the kind of man who would die for love and never think a second thing about it. He put his life on the line to serve God and to serve his nation in God. He would die for love without a second thought. You read his life and you say, "Oh, I want to be that way," because of his relentless refusal to live a common life. By that I don't mean he was committed to being famous and making history; David didn't care about that. It's very, very clear that he didn't care about that. A number of times his men wanted him to take the kingdom, and he said, "You can have the kingdom; all I want is God." He had a relentless refusal to live a common life, meaning he refused to live a passive life with God. He stumbled; he fell; he sinned. He lied; he compromised; he sinned. He stumbled again; he fell. He got up and said, "I'm Yours. I'm Yours. I love You, I love You. I refuse relentlessly to settle in for a common life, regardless of how much I get from my own weakness." That's the thing we love about him isn't it? He was a passionate lover of God.

## **THE SPIRIT OF LONGING FOR CONTINUAL COMMUNION AND MEDITATION**

The second thing, which was really in my opinion the most important thing, because it's what fueled the thing that most of us like about him, is that he was a contemplative. He meditated night and day. That's obviously a little exaggerated because of all his other tasks, but he had the spirit of longing for continual communion with and meditation on the Lord. Though given the nature of his life he couldn't do that night and day in a practical sense, he had a spirit that longed for meditation, to gaze on, and delight in, and get lost in the beauty of the Lord, every waking moment. Look at Psalm 145. I mean, there are a number of them where David is absolutely lost. In Psalm 63 he says, "Oh, how I long for You. I'm lost in desire to connect with You in a deeper way, not just to love You, to feel You, to delight in who You are, to gaze on You." He had a spirit which longed at every waking moment in which it was practical to gaze on the beauty of the Lord. Again, he had many responsibilities.

## **DAVID'S NUMBER ONE ATTRIBUTE: HIS RELENTLESS CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S MERCY**

Now we come to the characteristic that probably sets him apart even more than those two, in my opinion, the characteristic that shines the brightest in his life. I've said it for twenty years, and I keep this in first place, though I have it third on the list here because it's not the thing that attracts the majority. The thing that attracts us is his love, but the thing that empowered his love was his revelation was his relentless confidence in the mercy of God when he failed. David would sin, and he would get back up and say, "You like me, God. I know You like me. I know what You're like, and I know You like people who want You." Where other men would stumble and run from God, David would stumble and run right into the heart of God. He would be, in a holy way, belligerent about it. He would say, "You like me. You like me." "I am the apple of Your eye," he says in Psalm 17 (Ps. 17:8). "I am the apple of Your eye." Psalm 60 says, "I am the beloved of the Lord" (Ps. 60:5, paraphrased). Psalm 18: "I am the one You delight in" (Ps. 18:19, paraphrased). "You love me. You long for me. I'm lovely before You."

You think, "David, what's the deal? Did you not read your journal recently? You've sinned more than three of us put together."

He says, "Yes, but I love Him and He loves me." He was recklessly in confident love with the mercy of God.

## **DAVID'S CONFIDENCE IN THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AS THE SOURCE OF HIS STRENGTH**

The next characteristic about him was his confidence in God's sovereignty. God was his source, and not Saul. He didn't have to make Saul happy to make sure the will of God happened in his life. He didn't see Saul in the early days as his source. He didn't see the man of power as his source. He said, "God is my source, not Saul, not the bad folks, not the good folks; God alone is the one who will promote me." He saw God as his source, his protector, his provider. His confidence in the sovereignty of God, his calm in danger—not every time, he had failures. These are the rules of his life. He had exceptions to every one of these. His childlike wonder at God, his humility, his teachable spirit before God and before people: He was so easy to correct. Even in the presence of his enemies, he was teachable. His generosity with people, especially his enemies, was amazing. He was modest in prosperity. When the blessing of God, the prosperity of God came, he held tremendous modesty. He wasn't extravagant about his own life in prosperity; he was self-restrained in victory. In promotion and fame he was very self-restrained. When he had a lot of money, he was modest. When he had a lot of power, he was self-restrained.

We love that about him, don't we? We look at him and we say, "Oh, we love people like that; but there are so few of them in the earth."

The Lord says, "Well, be one."

"Well, I'll never be famous."

"Well, in the degree that I give you prosperity and favor, be modest and self-restrained." One of the things that strikes me is that he was content in loss. He would endure tremendous losses and he had a sense of finding God. I don't mean he was content instantaneously, but he could find his way back to the center, to his connection with reality before the Lord. His boldness: I mean, he was fearless and zealous against the enemies of the Lord for God's cause. He was tender and kind. His tenderness and kindness was a mark of David all through his life (Ps. 78:70-72).

### **GOD SEEKS FOR A MAN IN ALL HISTORY WITH A PASSION FOR HIS HEART**

Let's end here on this one introductory verse. We're still introducing the man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14). That's the great introductory statement. That's the one you want to know for sure. God has sought for a man for Himself, a man after His own heart. It is incredible that God has sought for a man after His own heart. Again, this is God's introduction of David. David was about fifteen years old. This isn't referring to a day or a seventy-year lifetime; no, in all the history of the human race God has been searching for a certain response from the human race. It's interesting that God introduces David with the cry for which He's searching in the human heart. When Jesus began His earthly ministry, He began with the same Davidic cry; he said, "My Father seeks for worshipers that are His" (Jn. 4:24). Jesus introduced His ministry nearly at the beginning in the same way David's ministry was introduced, with the declaration that the transcendent God of eternity, the uncreated God, was longing for a response from human beings on planet earth. It's an amazing declaration. God is looking for lovers that understand love. God is looking for people who would desire and be lost in His beauty; for those who would want to be a part of the discovery of it. God is declaring Himself as the seeking God. The fierce power, the full boil blazing love in God's heart says, "I want people who understand love. I want people who know My beauty, who love it, who gaze at it, who delight in it." He declared this when He introduced David.

### **THE ETERNAL, ROMANTIC LOVER OF THE AGES SEEKS THE HEARTS OF MEN**

Have you ever been in love? Some of you looked down. Lovers always want a response. Is that true? Lovers want a response. They care more about a response. God presents Himself as the lover who seeks for a response of extravagance from human beings on planet earth. It begins with David's description as the one with whom God has finally connected. The intense longing of the eternal romantic Lover of the ages, God Himself wanting something from humans, and David answered with a lifelong passion, which is the verse of this whole course. He gazed at the discoveries of the beauty of the Lord (Ps. 27:4). Psalm 36:8 would be the companion verse. It talks about the "river of pleasure," speaking about David's discovery of the emotional makeup of the heart of God. David describes the beauty and the heart of God's desire, the river of pleasure, the river that flows in the heart of God: pain and pleasure, pang and desire, the paradox of love, pain and pleasure, the pang yet the desire that merged together that caused that longing to go out. This is what God feels; He searches. God so delights in planning for our goodness. God delights in communicating His desire to us. He delights in it when we discover His desire. The God after God's own heart is number one.

## **DAVID HAD INSIGHT INTO THE VERY WORKINGS OF THE HEART OF GOD**

David had insights into what God's heart is like. This is very, very important. Number one: David understood what God's heart is like. In that sense, he was a man after God's own heart. He wasn't just a man who followed God. He understood what God's heart was like when he was after God's heart. He was longing, panting, desiring to understand and enjoy what God's heart was like, as summarized by Psalm 27:4: "This one thing have I searched for all my days, the beauty of the Lord" (Ps. 27:4, paraphrased). David had such desire, such a grasp, such delight, such a gaze into the beauty of the Lord, unparalleled in history until John the apostle came on the scene. (Again, you have to put Moses in there!). It wasn't just that David grasped what God's heart and emotions were like; no, David had more than that. David had a desire to obey God's heart, not just to grasp God's heart. He didn't just want to gaze at God's heart in His beauty, he wanted to obey God's heart. That's what most of us usually think of when we imagine David as a man after God's own heart. We think he's a man who wanted to obey God's heart, but beloved, that's second. He gazed at God's heart. He grasped it. He understood it. He was lost in the beginning of understanding, of course, because He is the transcendent God.

Do you want to be a man or a woman after God's own heart? You need to meditate on what God is like and what God looks like. Then, when you know what God looks like and what you look like to God, you'll have a fierce desire to obey the commands of God's heart. A lot of people start with wanting to be a man after God's own heart; I'm going to obey the commands of God's heart. You'll never have a full desire to obey until you've been lost in the gaze of the beauty of what His heart is like.

Amen. Let's stand.