

As we open to II Samuel 5, we are continuing our journey through the Life of David.

David is one of the monumental personages in the Bible; only God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are discussed more than David in the Word of God.

David wrote many words. If you count both his own writing of Psalms, and all of the others writing about his life, David's mark is on 141 of the 1189 chapters; and on about 3,000 of the 31,103 verses in God's Word.

So among the myriads of words by and about David, one verse seems to capture his lifelong pursuit of God. Listen to Psalm 63:1:

¹ O God, You *are* my God;
Early will I seek You;
My soul thirsts for You;
My flesh longs for You
In a dry and thirsty land
Where there is no water.

David chose to be a God-chaser. There are storm –chasers, sale-chasers, ambulance-chasers and so on: but David for all his recorded life was a God-Chaser! David pursued the Lord.

David's Choice: Pursue God

Pursuing God should be our desire, for all of our days. It was for David. That heart that pursued God is what made David the man after God's heart, as he was called in Acts 13:22. We can see in each of the three eras of David's life his chosen pursuit of God. Think back with me over each of the eras of David's life captured in the Bible.

David was an amazing boy. He was an obedient son who worked in his job assigned by his dad. Tending sheep was hard, boring, and lonely. But David focused his heart and mind on the Lord and instead of wasting those days, weeks, months, and years of his life in just getting through the unpleasantness of work, he pursued God as a young man. We have Psalms 19 and 23 as a testimony of those days pursuing God.

Then we all remember the blur of those next few years. David went from defeating Goliath, to joining Saul's army, and soon working for the King; after moving up through the ranks and getting married to the King's daughter, he finds himself starting months and even years of fleeing for his life, living on the run, suffering through deprivation, fear, depression, and loneliness.

We have studied those chapters in I Samuel 17 to 31 and can conclude one thing firmly: David

pursued God even when at the depths of despair, in mortal fear, and living with no place to even sleep securely. From those months and years of struggles, we have a trail of songs that flowed from David's soul and out his lips in worship to the Lord in many Psalms such as 4,16, 34, 56, 63, and 142.

But now as II Samuel opens David is no longer on the run, Saul is dead, and the kingdom is being given to David. The real test of David's life is not what he does when he is afraid, insecure, and depressed, the real test comes as he is exalted, rewarded, and given the highest honor of any person in his day: David is crowned King of the people of God, King of Israel.

Will David still pursue God? As we open to II Samuel 5, follow along, see the crowning of David as King and then note the unbroken pursuit of the Lord in David's life.

As we read II Samuel 5, note how the Lord captures the fact that:

David Pursued God Even When Crowned King

2 Samuel 5:1-25 (NKJV) Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and spoke, saying, "Indeed we are your bone and your flesh. 2 Also, in time past, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and the LORD said to you, 'You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over Israel.'" 3 Therefore all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD. And they anointed David king over Israel. 4 David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. 5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.

6 And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, "You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you," thinking, "David cannot come in here." 7 Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David).

8 Now David said on that day, "Whoever climbs up by way of the water shaft and defeats the Jebusites (the lame and the blind, who are hated by David's soul), he shall be chief and captain." Therefore they say, "The blind and the lame shall not come into the house."

9 Then David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the City of David. And David built all around from the Millo and inward. 10 So David went on and became great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him.

11 Then Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters and masons. And they built David a house. 12 So David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted His kingdom for the sake of His people Israel.

13 And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he had come from Hebron. Also more sons and daughters were born to David. 14 Now these are the names

of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, 15 Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, 16 Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

17 Now when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. And David heard of it and went down to the stronghold. 18 The Philistines also went and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. 19 So David inquired of the LORD, saying, “Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand?” And the LORD said to David, “Go up, for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into your hand.”

20 So David went to Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there; and he said, “The LORD has broken through my enemies before me, like a breakthrough of water.” Therefore he called the name of that place Baal Perazim. 21 And they left their images there, and David and his men carried them away.

22 Then the Philistines went up once again and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. 23 Therefore David inquired of the LORD, and He said, “You shall not go up; circle around behind them, and come upon them in front of the mulberry trees. 24 And it shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall advance quickly. For then the LORD will go out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines.” 25 And David did so, as the LORD commanded him; and he drove back the Philistines from Geba as far as Gezer.

As we start in II Samuel today, we enter the third and final lap of David’s race of life recorded in God’s Word. And what we see is that:

David’s Last Lap Continues A Long Pursuit of God

From the start of this third and final period of David’s life, from being crowned King until his death, come some of the greatest Psalms of David’s life. These are what I like to call the foundational Psalms.

First, Psalm 101 captures what we can call David’s Vows for Personal Conduct and Consecration; and then in Psalm 132 we can see David’s Explanation of the Holy Habits he pursued for a Godly Walk.

But before we venture into those two Psalms, we need to explore what may be the key to what made David such a man after God’s own heart. That secret is often overlooked; and it is tucked away in Deuteronomy 17.

As we turn there from this chapter in II Samuel 5, remember David was just made King over all of Israel.

Now look at what God clearly asked to happen as soon as David became King.

Deuteronomy 17:14-17 “When you come to the land which the LORD your God is giving

you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,' 15 you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. 16 But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.' 17 Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself 18 "Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. 19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, 20 that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.

So David has become King: first in Judah, then seven years later over all of Israel. This was an incredibly great time of David's life: rising from obscurity in the sheep fields to one of the greatest named human of all time. Wow. But in that rise we find the secret of:

The Road to Lifelong Usefulness

Becoming King meant so much: a palace to build, an army to raise and manage, a city to fortify, a nation to rule and defend, a family to protect and supply and a personal life to maintain.

In the middle of all that God placed this incredible task: make a personal copy the 192 pages of the Pentateuch by hand and carry it around with you. For just a moment, why not take your Bible and feel the pages that make up Genesis 1 through Deuteronomy 34. Feel that thickness.

Now think 3,000 years ago. How would you make a personal copy of that much material? No copy machines, office stores, or printers. Just oil lamps to see by; and to capture words it meant either chisels into rock, or crude ink onto animal skins. Think of how hard it was to get your recording skin materials, gather the tools to make and apply ink with, and find a flat spot to write on an animal skin.

A skilled scribe who was at his peak could copy the words of a page in 2-3 hours if everything was set for him (ink, paper, pen, reader, etc.). So this copy of God's Word would represent at least a minimum of 600 hours of work, or two hours a day for a whole year (less the Sabbath days).

So, that was a HUGE request from God, and meant that His Word was VERY important for David as he started to rule. What do these verses show as what God sees as critical for any leader? There are truths here that go way beyond just a King of Israel. There are some eternal truths that can help shape a life that counts for eternity in these words that come directly from God. Note these truths with me.

First, God warned those who wanted to be useful, that there were pitfalls, temptations, and distractions that lessen usefulness and erase rewards.

Beware of Deadly Pitfalls

As we look back at the first half of Deuteronomy 17 we can see there three warnings from God, through Moses to every King that would sit on the Throne of Israel; and by application: to each believer in the same God Almighty, who wants their life to count.

Deuteronomy 17:14-17 “When you come to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, ‘I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,’ 15 you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother.

1. ***God is Always Concerned about the Constant Draw of Worldliness:*** v.16 But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD has said to you, ‘You shall not return that way again.’
2. ***God is Always Concerned about the Danger of Distraction:*** v. 17 Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away;
3. ***God is Always Concerned about the Lure of Materialism:*** v. 17b nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.

Just like in Satan’s trio of temptations to Christ in the Wilderness (Matthew 4), and in the Apostle John’s warnings at the close of the New Testament in I John 2:15-17, there are always three avenues that Satan, the world, and our flesh will seek to make us useless to God.

Making Your Life Count

If you want your life to count these warnings are for you. To lessen the good for nothing pile at Christ's judgment seat (II Corinthians 5:10), heed these words. Although the interpretation of this passage points these warnings first of all to literal kings, that God knew would someday sit on the Throne of Israel, by application, the same areas that God said would trip them up, also can rob us of His well done.

First: Make personal choices to flee the lure of worldliness. Note what God says about that in James 4:4-5

Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵ Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously”?

Second: Decide now to resist distractions that keep you from God, that your heart will be fixed above as Colossians 3:1-2 declares.

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Distraction means a divided heart, as James said that makes us double-minded. Double mindedness makes us unstable, powerless, fruitless, and useless to God as James 1:7-8 says:

For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Third: Remember that materialism is idolatry. God hates any idol that you desire so much that it nudges God out of first place. Matthew 6:33 simplifies life: Seek ye FIRST God's rule over your time, your attention, your schedule, and your heart's desires.

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Any habit, hobby, or pursuit that takes away public worship, private devotion, and personal habits of holiness is an idol.

Keep yourself from any idol whether your career, dating life, fashion life, sports life, money earning, media watching, or game-playing.

Ask yourself: what keeps me from reading God's Word, praying, memorizing Scripture, and meditating upon God? Whatever has edge God out IS an IDOL! Now, look back at Deuteronomy 17:18. Before us is the pathway God designed for kings. A king is an ultimate leader. So, we could say these verses are the qualities God said would lead to the character set it takes to become an incredible leader in His sight.

The Pathway to Pursuing God

Next, in Deuteronomy 17, we see a road God marked for future leaders. The kings of Israel were to follow this pathway to lifelong usefulness. This was the way to please God as they lived their lives filled with responsibilities and challenges.

For us who also want to be useful, and pleasing to God, these truths are priceless. God tells us what a life that pursues Him looks like. We are not left to wonder, speculate, or think up our own way to try to please God. He tells us just what He expects.

If you have never closely studied these verses, today is a challenge to do so. Let me just survey these truths that lead to lifelong usefulness to God.

Look down at Deuteronomy 17:18, and note these ten elements that were specific instructions for those kings, and clear applications for all the rest of us:

“Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom,

1. ***God MUST become YOUR personal pursuit:*** v. 18b that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book,

David (or any other King) could have just dropped into a service at the Tabernacle

2. ***Pursuing God will be INCONVENIENT to Your Life:*** v. 18c from the one before the priests, the Levites.
3. ***God's Word must become Your GUARDED Treasure:*** v. 19a And it shall be with him,
4. ***Reading the Word Must become YOUR Personal Habit:*** v. 19b and he shall read it
5. ***Nurturing Your Soul must become a LIFELONG Habit:*** v. 19c all the days of his life,
6. ***Spiritual Growth takes up Your Time, and is Not Instantaneous:*** v. 19d that he may learn to fear the LORD his God
7. ***God Wants Your Obedience not Just Going Through the Motions:*** v. 19e and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes,
8. ***God Expects You to Choose Humility:*** v. 20a that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren,
9. ***God Expects Your Submission:*** v. 20b that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left,
10. ***God Wants to Bless You and offers You a Spiritual Heritage:*** v. 20c and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.

Think Eternal

Before we go, do you ever stop and think about what eternal life means? When our threescore and ten are passed, we do not end, we just get moved to better quarters.

What we did on Earth does not end. Did you notice that we have been reading what Moses wrote? His faithfulness serving God 3,500 years ago impacts all of us today.

We just read from Paul, whose faithful ministry 2,000 ago touches all of us through the copy of the Word, and this Gentile Church we attend. Paul was OUR Apostle. His church plants end up here in Kalamazoo if you really think about it.

All that to say, you can invest in people: your wife, husband, children, grandchildren, and spiritual brother, sisters, and children in the Lord. And listen, this is the big part: you and I are going to be alive and conscious in a far better location, as we get to see what happens to all the investments we made.

Life is like a garden. You plant it in a day, you reap from it spring, summer, and fall. What are you planting that will follow you to Heaven?

Paul & Linda McIlwaine invested their lives with the ATA people, captured their language, and made a NT possible in that language. That investment will follow them FOREVER! Invest in God, it lasts forever.