

David: A Long Obedience in Seeking God Builds A Rock Solid Life II Samuel 22

David had a lifelong love for God that drew him to seek the Lord. He was drawn toward the Lord with an embracing kind of love. He is a model placed before us in God's Word of what pleases the Lord.

Start with me at the beginning of Psalm 18, where we saw the last recorded words of David. David's relationship with the Lord was not theoretical, it was real and it was HIS and he knew it and said it—to the end!

DAVID WAS A BONDSLAVE OF GOD

In the Psalm we read this morning, David becomes the third and final person in the Old Testament to be described as "the servant of the Lord". This is the powerful word "bondservant" we know from the New Testament. So David's life has many examples for us.

Note again the first verse in Hebrew, the little paragraph before the first verse.

*Psalm 18: 1-2 To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of **David the servant of the Lord**, who spoke to the Lord the words of this song on the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. And he said:*

Among the verses of God's Word only Moses and Joshua are given this familiar title from the New Testament.

In Deuteronomy we are introduced to Moses as 'the servant of the Lord' (17x):

Deuteronomy 34:5 So **Moses the servant of the Lord** died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord.

Then Joshua (2x) is also given that title in Joshua 24:29.

Joshua 24:29 Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, **the servant of the Lord**, died, being one hundred and ten years old.

Then in our opening section of Psalm 18 as well as Psalm 36 we find David being granted this honorable title. Look at the superscription of this Psalm.

Psalm 36:1 To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David **the servant of the Lord**.

So David was a servant of the Lord. We need to always remember that—

WE ARE BONDSLAVES OF GOD

Now, there is one last place these words appear in all of God's Word. Look at II Timothy 2:24 for one of the most challenging verses about what God expects from us as his servants.

2 Timothy 2:24 And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,

In this verse God says His servants are to first flee something; they as a true servant of God must **not to be** characterized as those who "quarrel". Here is the page out of the Greek dictionary of New Testament Words.

#3164 machomai: "to fight (of armed combatants, or those who engage in a hand to hand struggle); of those who engage in a war of words, to quarrel, wrangle, dispute".

As much as we are to speak boldly for the Lord without compromise, we are to do so with the attitude of meekness, gentleness, and humility. We are never to be harsh, abusive, overbearing, unkind, thoughtless, or pugnacious. There is to be a softness in the authority of a godly Christian, just as there was in Jesus when He said:

Matthew 11:29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

*Then Paul explains in quick succession three positive attributes to pursue. Christ's bondservant must also be **able to teach**. The term does not refer so much to possessing vast knowledge or understanding as to having notable ability to communicate effectively the knowledge and understanding of God's Word.*

*The godly leader who is an honorable vessel must be **patient when wronged**, which is perhaps the hardest qualification mentioned here.*

When we are faithfully witnessing and living for the Lord, it is not easy to graciously accept unjust criticism. In addition to being our example, Jesus is also

*our resource for being **patient**. Patience is a fruit of Christ's own Holy Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:22), who will provide the strength we need for bearing His fruit.*¹

So David in a real sense gives us New Testament era servants of the Lord so much of an example. And that is what we see in—

Psalm 18: DAVID'S CONFESSION ABOUT SEEKING GOD

Psalm 18 is the record of David's heart and his deep affections and love for the Lord throughout his life. No matter how often David stumbled and fell—he was sheltered, secured, and sought by the God who can always be trusted. There are some simple lessons about his life we can see.

1. God hears our cries. In Psalm 17 listen to David's pleadings to God as he requests:

Psalm 17:1 Hear a just cause, O Lord, Attend to my cry; Give ear to my prayer which is not from deceitful lips.

2. God responds to our cries. Psalm 18 is God's answer; an incredible description of the God who responds. So because of that David saw the Lord (18:3) as worthy of praise.

3. God delivers us from evil. David expressed his life as the Lord delivering him from his enemies. "He delivered me.." (Psalm 18:16) This is what we need today—a personal deliverer who knows just where we are at all time, and who is strong enough to deliver us from even the strongest of enemies. Think of what you know about the Cross of Jesus. Christ has already defeated all our enemies once and for all. He is only waiting to make that real and true in our lives today. If you need help right now—He is available and able to deliver you right now from any fear, any bondage, any addiction, any abuse induced hatred or debilitating shame.

4. God wants to walk with us. Do you need a partner or friend today? May I recommend Jesus? He is waiting, walking beside you even now and wanting to share your thoughts and actions. Jesus will never leave you, He will never forsake you or dump you for someone else. He promises that "...I am with you always..." (Matthew 28:20). That is why I depend on Him more and more each year of my life. And that is what should be happening to all of us.

5. God will not be mocked. In v. 26 God is shown as the One who repays man according to his deeds. The who law of sowing and reaping and the unstoppable wheels of the consequence engine is reflected by the last like of this verse.

Much like Haman who was hung on the very gallows he built for innocent Mordecai; and Laban cheating the same Jacob who has already cheated his own brother Esau; and

¹ Adapted from MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary; II Timothy*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983, electronic edition, in loc.

David who reaped murder and adultery from his sons after he had himself adulterated and murdered Uriah for Bathsheba—we serve a God who warns us to not be deceived, God is never mocked—for whatever a man sows, that is what he will reap (Galatians 6:7).

God is worthy of our worship. The word used for “God” in Psalm 18:31 is Eloah—the God who is to be worshiped.

6. God is all we could need. And in v. 32 the word for “God” is EL—the Almighty God of Omnipotence in His Power.

7. God is worthy of our life long praise. Especially note his life long praise to God in Psalm 18:46 The Lord lives! Blessed be my Rock! Let the God of my salvation be exalted.

This Psalm of praise to God is actually recorded twice in the Bible here and in II Samuel 22. It is repeated intentionally for emphasis. In II Samuel 22 it is set as the *historical record* of David’s final words. In Psalm 18 it is captured as the *personal testimony* of this life long, God seeking servant of the Lord.

This evening please join me in your Bibles at II Samuel 22:1-23:7. This morning we saw these words made into David’s personal song in Psalm 18. This evening we are going to see some life long disciplines or habits that made David have a rock solid life even under stress. I call this a--

A GOD SEEKING LIFESTYLE

At the end of his life, in his last words David gets to look back. II Samuel 22 is that summary. When David does look back--all he sees is grace. God has covered the sins, and left the record of David’s life long pursuit of seeking the Lord.

There are some given names that stick and stay. Take for instance how many people still Xerox documents although they have never seen a Xerox copier; the same for ‘hand me a Kleenex’, even though it is far from being made by Kleenex. But the use of that name has spread to the entire usage of that action. We see something similar when God puts a title on people.

- When I say the Friend of God many of us may want and hope to be—but that is what God calls Abraham.
- Similarly the Apostle John will always be the one that Jesus loved. That is his special title given in God’s Word, and what God says sticks.
- Moses was the one that we know got to know God face-to-face and he was also the meekest man on earth. It is hard to shake such a handle when God puts it on you.

- As we come to the end of David's life God identifies him by a special title, he says that David was a man after God's own heart.

As far as we know David didn't hear that title; that is just how God saw his life long obedience. What do you have in your life that God sees? What life long habits does He admire about you?

In these next few weeks look back on David's and see what God saw in him. David practiced a long obedience in **seeking God** as we have seen in Psalm 18 and II Samuel 22 today. This was that unusual habit David had to look for God wherever he was.

Next time we will see David's long obedience in—

- **worshipping God** (that incredible heart that gushed up rivers of worship even from the parched ground of difficult days);
- **trusting God** (that amazing way David turned his fears into opportunities to trust God even more. So what we find in David--

So in the midst of a hard life, a life of stress, a life of constant demands, a life on the run and a life of endless struggles—David chose to make regular, long term investments in seeking God. A long obedience in seeking God means--

SEEKING GOD THROUGH ALL OF LIFE

David compounded his investment in God. David cultivated a life long desire to seek the Lord in every avenue of life. So should we.

A great way to start is to do what David did. There are three general areas David sought the Lord—while at work, when in danger and fear, and when he was discouraged and depressed. Let's start with seeking God at work since most of us spend a long time each week working.

- Seeking God when at work is Psalm 23.

Have you ever thought of where David was when he made one of his greatest discoveries about God? He was young, alone, and at work! What does Samuel tell us was his job? He was a shepherd boy. So he worked outdoors with sheep.

Seeking God all through life would mean that David would have to start on the job looking at what he did through the eyes of God, and seeing God's Hand in all he did. What I just described is maybe the best known of all the Psalms, the 23rd!

As a boy, David decided to seek God while at work each long day and night. From his earliest days on the hillsides as a shepherd, David sought God. He looked at life, even a life as lonely, monotonous, and mundane as watching sheep—with such a God heartedness that just his reflections on seeking God as a shepherd are immortal.

Who could ever look on the lowliest job of the day (being a shepherd) in the same way as before once David showed how he viewed his job? Through Psalm 23 we find that to David the seeker of God, **the Lord** became his **[my] shepherd**.

He looked at himself and saw that he was just like a weak, helpless and often confused lamb. And if he a mere human child could care for sheep and meet all of their earthly needs—how much more would the Lord be sure that **David shall not want**.

From the desolation and barrenness of the arid desert David could believe that he could have so much provision that he could **lie down in green pastures**. Instead of anxiously eating as if there would never be enough, he could quietly rest satisfied.

Facing the deadly thirst of the wilderness, David saw that seeking God meant that he would always be **led by waters that are stilled** and drink in peace and safety. As a boy he saw that an anxious sheep was prone to sickness and injury so he always made his sheep feel safe and secure so the Lord as he entrusted his life into His care **restored his soul**.

When tempted to displease the Lord or dishonor Him David thought about how he led his sheep so he asked the Lord to **lead him in paths of righteousness for the sake of God's Name**. Even in the narrow canyons where a sheer vertical drop meant certain death for any sheep and so there was no place to go in a predator showed up, the sheep could completely trust the shepherd who was guarding as well as guiding them so that **yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for Thou are with me**.

Thinking about God at work also made David look down at his tools and see that God's **rod and staff** could **comfort** him, just as his tools were used for the protection and correction of his flock.

Even when enemies were prowling all around the shepherd kept them at such a distance by his sling and staff that a weak and timid lamb could be confident enough to put its head down in the grass where it couldn't see what was going on—and just trust the shepherd. So David accepted that **God prepared a table** for David so that even in the most anxious times David could resort to trusting God and eat **in the presence of my enemies**.

Although his enemies never left him alone for his entire life time, David had his eyes opened so that as he looked back at life he saw in every trouble, every struggle and every pain was covered with God's tracks because **surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life**. Most sheep never realize how much the shepherd does for them—but David decided he was going to look back and see just how great it was to have God always directing and leading in each situation for the glory and good of God.

And finally just as David for all those years always had a safe and secure place prepared each night for his flock to rest in complete security and comfort. So David as the years

passed swiftly by he could also rest assured that at the exactly perfect moment—he also would head home and **dwell in the House of the Lord forever.**

David had a life long pursuit of God and he started by seeing God while he was at work. Have you started looking for the Lord in His Word and carrying Him in your heart and mind all day long?

So in the midst of a hard life, a life of stress, a life of constant demands, a life on the run and a life of endless struggles—David chose to make regular, long term investments in seeking God. A long obedience in seeking God means--

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- Seeking God when in danger and distress is Psalm 59, 56, and 34.

Have you ever gone on a vacation, or stayed with friends, or headed off to school or a conference--and found that all of your normal spiritual routines go all messed up?

How would you like to live on the go? Sleeping in a cave one night, by a stream the next and staying up all the next running for your life? How would your spiritual life do under those circumstances? David lived like that for much of his life in danger, yet he made it. How did he do that? He was seeking God when in danger and fear, in struggles and pain, and in discouragement and depression. Let me just sketch a few of these ways we can also learn to seek the Lord.

In I Samuel 19:11 **David faces family conflict and danger**. Just after Saul tries to murder him, David writes **Psalm 59**. His prayerful responses to these tough times are captured and show a pathway through conflict and danger to the One who is closest of all.

David finds an ***unshakeable trust in God's protection***. Some key truths from this Psalm are:

- David **turns to God** in his fearful times v.1.
- David **trusts God** in his fearful times v.9.
- David **triumphs through God** in his fearful times v. 16.

Remember when Paul was in similar times? 2 Corinthians 2:14-17

2 Corinthians 2:14-17 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.16 To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?17 For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

Soon after, David is captured and goes from fear to terror to nearly a complete breakdown because of fear.

In 1 Sam. 21:10-12 when David is captured at Gath he writes about this in **Psalm 56**. In this Psalm David is confident (Ps. 56:9)! Why! "THIS I KNOW THAT GOD IS FOR ME". He confesses a **distinct impression God is on his side!**

- **Seek God.**
- **Cry out to Him.** Four times in three verses (v. 4, 10-11) David cries to Elohim—the Creator of the dove and everything else!
- **Remember His closeness in alone times.** This Psalm was very popular. Psalm 56 is quoted by the writer of Hebrews 13:6 (Psalm 56:4, 11); by Paul in

Romans 8:31 (Psalm 56:9); and most of all by Jesus Himself in John 8:12.

- **Remember that God cares.** The tears in the bottle phrase speaks loudly of God's promise to never leave us, never forget us, a

But as the time goes on his confidence fades and in 1 Sam. 21:13-15 we see him go into a terrible time of fear. Yet as he looks back on this dark hour he writes **Psalm 34**. In this Psalm we see David magnifying God. Because of his **unwavering awareness God was watching**.

- Psalm 34:3 Oh, magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together. [**he gives glory to God**]
- Psalm 34:4 I sought the LORD, [**even in tough times he always sought for God**]
- Psalm 34:6 This poor man cried out, [**During tough times he had a proper view of himself; he was poor in spirit as Christ would later say.**]
- Psalm 34:8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD [is] good; [**he had a personal experience of God**] Blessed [is] the man [who] trusts in Him!
- Psalm 34:9 Oh, fear the LORD, [**During tough times he practiced the presence of God, acknowledging Him is to fear him. it changed his behavior. If we believe right we will behave right!**]
- Psalm 34:15 The eyes of the LORD [are] on the righteous, [**During tough times he knew he was in touch with God**]
- Psalm 34:22 The LORD redeems the soul of His servants, And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned. [**During tough times the cross is the ultimate refuge**] (NKJV)

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- Seeking God when in doubt and discouragement is Psalm 13, 40, and 70.

David left Gath and was so alone that he despairs. And now David feels abandoned as moves to a new location that is very foreign to him. David wrote **Psalm 13**—how to overcome the feelings of despair, abandonment and loneliness when we are in a very dark situation that seems hopeless.

1. **My life feels like an endless struggle.** *Psalm 13: 1a How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever?* By repeating himself four times he shows how deep this feeling runs. **What David says is, "I just can't go on."**
2. **My life seems to have lost God's blessing.** *Psalm 13: 1b How long will You hide Your face from me?* David saw a lack of the apparent blessing on God. **My family doesn't seem blessed anymore. My work doesn't seem blessed anymore. My ministry doesn't seem blessed anymore. My spiritual life doesn't seem blessed anymore.** **What David says is, "I don't SEE YOU anymore in my home, my work, or my life."**
3. **My mind seems so troubled.** *Psalm 13: 2a How long shall I take counsel in my soul, Having sorrow in my heart daily?* David said that he had dark thoughts and uncontrolled emotions. **What David says is, "I can't stop these feelings of dejection and abandonment."**
4. **My life seems to have lost God's victory.** *Psalm 13: 2b How long will my enemy be exalted over me?* **What David says is, "I am constantly defeated."**

- **David feels intensely alone as moves to a new location that is very foreign to him.** In First Samuel 21: 11 as he fled from Saul to the Philistine city of Gath, David wrote **Psalms 40 and 70**—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are in a new situation that is very foreign situation. And in these Psalms he gives the pathway out of the pit that end with praising from the pits and praying from the pits. **The Pathway out of the Pits**

1. **LIKE DAVID--REMEMBER GOD'S WORK IN YOUR LIFE.** David first notes the five ways God had worked in his life. Here is God's grace directed towards David—*Psalm 40: 1-3* The first step out of the pits is to remember God's work in our lives. Like David, we need to remember God's work of grace in our lives.
2. **LIKE DAVID--REAFFIRM YOUR TRUST IN GOD.** *Psalm 40: 4-5* David verbally says that he trusts God. Like David, we need to reaffirm our trust in the Lord.
3. **LIKE DAVID—RENEW YOUR SUBMISSION TO GOD.** *Psalm 40: 6-8* What a beautiful way to look at hard times! God is tunneling a well of water to refresh me; God is making room to bury into my life His greatest treasures.
4. **LIKE DAVID--REPEAT TRUTHS ABOUT GOD**—He is Righteous. *Psalm*

- 40: 9-12. Like David, we need to repeat truths about the Lord.
5. **LIKE DAVID--REJOICE IN GOD EVEN IN THE PITS.** *Psalm 40: 13-17*
(=*Psalm 70: 2-5*) Like David, we need to rejoice in the Lord.
 6. **LIKE DAVID--PRAY FOR OTHERS WHILE YOU GO THROUGH THE PITS.** *Psalm 40: 16-17*

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