Learn Your Bible

Resources to help you learn and understand the Bible

Advanced Study 002: Character Study 1: David

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Read 1 Samuel 13:13-14; 16:7 and Acts 13:21-22.

Introduction. When King Saul acted presumptuously in contravention of the Lord's command, the Lord looked for a man "after his own heart" to replace David as King. He chose David. This former shepherd boy was far from faultless, and like Saul before him, contravened several of God's commandments*. (See especially the incident with Bathsheba, in 2 Sam 11:1-17, in which he breaks at least 4 of the Ten Commandments. Can you identify them?). God, Himself, said of David, "You are not to build a house for my Name, *because you have shed much blood on the earth in my sight*". Why, then, was he *a man after God's own heart*?

Read some of what he did, said and wrote and see what qualities made him a man *after God's heart*. (Remember, he wrote at least half of the Psalms. The heading of most Psalms tells you the author)

1. Consider. Here are some places to start looking. (Note: These ten passages do not necessarily reveal 10 separate characteristics; they are just some incidents and writings that might give an overall impression of David's faith and character.) Add to these your own knowledge of David and any other Scriptures you think maybe relevant.

    1 Samuel 17:41-47 (David and Goliath)
    1 Samuel 24:1-12 (refusing to kill his enemy, Saul)
    2 Samuel 12:15-23 (on the death of the son born through his adultery)
    2 Samuel 16:5-12 (on being cursed by Shimei)
    Psalm 18:1-6
    Psalm 23
    Psalm 26
    Psalm 27
    Psalm 51
    Psalm 138

2. Compare. Read Matthew 5:3-11 and Colossians 3:12-16.   Which of these Christian standards may be seen in David? (Note: David was by no means perfect. If you have the time and inclination, you might like to look for any of these standards which were *not* characteristic of him.)

Self-examination: How would you react in similar situations to those faced by David? Would "A man (or woman) after God's own heart" be a suitable epitaph at the end of your life?

* Exodus 20:1-17.