

2 Samuel Devotionals

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2 Samuel DEVOTIONALS OUR DAILY BREAD

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2 Samuel 1:17-27

Compliments For An Enemy

Why did David say that Saul and Jonathan were "beloved and pleasant in their lives"? (2 Samuel 1:23). We can understand why he would say this of Jonathan, his good friend. But why say this of King Saul, who had brought him so much sorrow?

There were good things David could say of Jonathan that he could not say of Saul. Yet, instead of pointing out Saul's faults and failures, he commended what was good in him: his courage, his military victories, and his prosperous kingdom (2 Samuel 1:21-24).

David's graciousness causes me to wonder: How often have I brooded over and judged the flaws of my opponents? How often have I been offended when others have found good in those who have harmed me? How much do I dwell on the bad I see in someone rather than the good that God and others can see?

The Bible says that we need to leave judgment in the Lord's hands, for when Jesus returns He will "reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God" (1 Corinthians 4:5).

Do we focus only on the traits that make our enemies so unlikable? Accentuating the positive qualities of those who trouble us is a good way to deal with resentment, and to transform our hatred into love (Matthew 5:44). —David H. Roper

We're told to love our enemies
Who in this life we face,
For showing love that's not deserved
Reveals to them God's grace. —Bosch

It's hard to hate someone when you're complimenting

[2 Samuel 1:1-16 God Doesn't Need Help](#) - Theodore Epp

Second Samuel opens with the account of a messenger coming to David and telling him that Saul and Jonathan and many others were dead.

Thinking to gain David's approval and possibly receive a reward from him, this messenger, who was an Amalekite, told David that it was at his hands Saul had died.

He said he had come upon Saul, who was still alive even after falling on his own sword. Saul had pleaded with him to kill him before the Philistines came upon him and mutilated his body while he was still alive.

The young man claimed he did as Saul requested. Some Bible students believe the young man told the truth; others believe he lied, but whatever the correct version is, he took his story to the wrong man.

David had always had a strong aversion to raising his hand against God's anointed. Neither would he permit any of his own men to do it. So when this young Amalekite claimed to have killed Saul, David had him put to death.

David did not want what the Lord did not give to him. He would not take by force what God had promised.

So many of us make the mistake of feeling we have to help God fulfill His promises.

"Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all" (1 Chron. 29:11).

2 Samuel 1:17-27 An Emergency Of The Spirit

Read: 2 Samuel 1:17-27 | Bible in a Year: Song of Solomon 1-3; Galatians 2

David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son. —2 Samuel 1:17

In March 2011, a devastating tsunami struck Japan, taking nearly 16,000 lives as it obliterated towns and villages along the coast. Writer and poet Gretel Erlich visited Japan to witness and document the destruction. When she felt inadequate to report what she was seeing, she wrote a poem about it. In a PBS NewsHour interview she said, "My old friend William Stafford, a poet now gone, said, 'A poem is an emergency of the spirit.'"

We find poetry used throughout the Bible to express deep emotion, ranging from joyful praise to anguished loss. When King Saul and his son Jonathan were killed in battle, David was overwhelmed with grief (2 Sam. 1:1-12). He poured out his soul in a poem he called "the Song of the Bow": "Saul and Jonathan were beloved and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided. . . . How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle! . . . I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; you have been very pleasant to me" (vv.23-26).

When we face "an emergency of the spirit"—whether glad or sad—our prayers can be a poem to the Lord. While we may stumble to articulate what we feel, our heavenly Father hears our words as a true expression of our hearts. By David C. McCasland

Sometimes I do not pray in words—
I take my heart in my two hands
And hold it up before the Lord—
I am so glad He understands. —Nicholson

God does more than hear words; He reads hearts.

INSIGHT: Although Saul had treated David as his enemy, David did not treat Saul as his. When Saul and his son Jonathan died in battle, David honored them in the song in today's passage, which opens and closes with the refrain "How the mighty have fallen!" (2 Sa 1:19,27).

2 Samuel 1:11,17-27 Lament For A Friend

August 25, 2009 — by Bill Crowder

I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; you have been very pleasant to me. —2 Samuel 1:26

As a pastor, I was often asked to lead funeral services. Typically, the funeral director would give me a 3 x 5 index card with all the particulars about the deceased so I would be informed about him or her. I never got used to that, however. As practical and necessary as it may have been, it seemed a bit trite to take a person's earthly sojourn and reduce it to an index card. Life is too big for that.

After David received news of Jonathan's death, he spent time recalling the life of his friend—even writing a lament that others could sing as a way to respect Jonathan (2 Sam. 1:17-27). David recalled his friend's courage and skill, and he spoke of the grief that caused him to lament deeply. He honored a rich, pleasant, heroic life. For David, it was an intense time of mourning and remembrance.

When we grieve for a loved one, it is vital to recall the cherished details and shared experiences of our lives together. Those memories flood our hearts with far more thoughts than an index card can hold. The day that grief visits our hearts is not a time for short summaries and quick snapshots of our loved one's life. It is a time to remember deeply, giving God thanks for the details, the stories, and the impact of an entire life. It's time to pause, reflect, and honor.

At journey's end, take a long look back

At the details of the story;

Take time to review the godly life

Of your loved one now in Glory. —Branon

Precious memories of life can temper the profound sadness of death.

[2 Samuel 2:1-11 Waiting for God's Time](#) - Theodore Epp

Second Samuel 2 opens with these words: "And it came to pass after this, that David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron" (v. 1).

David found, as we will too, that we never lose anything by believing God and then patiently waiting on Him. But we will surely suffer if we take things into our own hands and rush blindly ahead.

The word "Hebron" means "alliance" or "communion" in contrast to Ziklag, which refers to self-will. Being allied with God and being in communion with Him, David was in a place to be led in the will of God.

David's reign began by reigning first over Judah. It was not necessary for David to take the throne; God saw that he received it. God moved him back to Hebron, and his own tribe anointed him king.

Seven and a half years went by, however, before the whole kingdom was put under his hand. David still had to wait, but it was God's time he was waiting for, not people's.

"There is a time there for every purpose and for every work" (Eccles. 3:17).

[2 Samuel 3:1,7-18 Now Then Do It](#) - Theodore Epp

David's waiting on the Lord indeed paid off. At the end of seven and a half years, God began to arrange events so that David was finally crowned king of all Israel.

Abner, who was general of the armies of Israel, had put Ish-bosheth on the throne of Saul to reign over 11 tribes. However, when Ish-bosheth quarreled with him concerning one of Saul's concubines, Abner retaliated by scheming to turn the kingdom over to David.

A very practical admonition comes from a statement made by Abner that we can apply to our own hearts. Abner went to the people of Israel and said that they had sought for David in the past to be their king, and he added, "Now then do it" (2 Sam. 3:18).

Make Christ king in your life. He is God's appointed King as David was appointed and then anointed for the kingship of Israel.

Remember, the name "Christ" means the "anointed of God," and as such He has been appointed and anointed to be king in our lives. So make Him king today.

The work of redemption that Christ did for us is a finished work. The work of the Holy Spirit, on the other hand, which is forming Christ in us, is progressive. Have we ever progressed beyond Calvary?

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection" (Heb. 6:1).

[2 Samuel 5:1-10 The King Gives Victory](#) - Theodore Epp

So impregnable did the Jebusites think their fortress to be that they jeered at David and his men, saying that the blind and the lame could hold it against David's army.

"Nevertheless," we are told, "David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David" (2 Sam. 5:7).

David then moved into the city and made it the headquarters for his government, and later on it became the central place of worship for God's people. Eventually Solomon's great temple was erected in Jerusalem.

From this city the Lord Jesus Christ will rule in the Millennium and establish His New Jerusalem of which the Prophet Ezekiel spoke.

There is a rich spiritual lesson for us here. Some habits of sin are so deeply entrenched in our minds and bodies that we have struggled in vain against them from the day of our new birth.

We may have felt it was no use to try to overcome these habits and that we might as well give up. What we need, of course, is to let the King, the Lord Jesus Christ, lead us in the battle against this entrenched sin.

We can never defeat the Enemy by ourselves. It must always be done through the strength of Christ.

"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31)

2 Samuel 5:17-25 Two Victories

November 7, 2013 — by Dave Branon

David inquired of the Lord. —2 Samuel 5:19

Bible in a Year:

Jeremiah 40-42; Hebrews 4

King David was up against a familiar foe. Years before as a young shepherd boy, he had faced down Goliath, the top Philistine warrior, by killing him with a well-placed stone (1 Sam. 17). Now David was king of Israel, and here come the Philistines again! They heard he was king, and they decided to attack (2 Sam. 5:17).

What do we do first when trouble is on the way? We could panic. We could plan. Or we could first do what David did—pray. "David inquired of the Lord" (v.19), and God guided the king.

David had to fight two battles with the Philistines—one at Baal Perazim and one at the Valley of Rephaim. It was a good thing he consulted God, because in these two battles there were two different strategies. In the first one, God won the battle with His power alone: "The Lord has broken through," David recorded (v.20). For the next one, God gave David an action plan, and when he carried it out, the Israelites won (vv.23-25).

Each day we face many challenges. Although there is no one-size-fits-all answer, our first action should always be to consult God. As He guides us, we can have confidence in Him. Then, whether the victory comes through His miraculous intervention or through His guidance, all the glory goes to God.

Not to the strong is the battle,

Not to the swift is the race;

Yet to the true and the faithful

Victory is promised through grace. —Crosby

To stand up to any challenge, spend time on your knees.

2 Samuel 6:12-23 Let Loose Your Praise!

November 11, 2001 — by Julie Ackerman Link

Shout to God with the voice of triumph! For the Lord Most High is awesome. —Psalm 47:1-2

On the left side of the aisle three people sat stiffly in the pew; on the right side sat a man in a wheelchair. When the congregation stood to sing, the man on the right had someone help him stand. The three on the left had their arms folded; the man on the right strained to lift his weak arms toward heaven. As the music swelled to a crescendo, the man on the right closed his eyes and struggled to make his mouth form the words of the familiar song; the three on the left stared straight ahead, their lips sealed.

Obviously I do not know the hearts of anyone in this story, but when I heard it, I knew I had to examine my own. The story reminded me that I often do more pouting than praising in church. Instead of concentrating on the God I worship, I often criticize the way others are worshipping.

When King David worshiped the Lord exuberantly, his wife called him shameless. He said, "I will be even more undignified than this and will be humble in my own sight" (2 Samuel 6:22). He knew that being God-conscious couldn't co-exist with being self-conscious.

Taking worship seriously means taking ourselves less seriously. Worship is not about holding on to our dignity; it's about letting loose our praise.

Worship, praise, and adoration,

All are due to Jesus' name;

Freely give your heart's devotion,

Constantly His love proclaim. —Anon.

We can never praise God too much!

2 Samuel 6:12-23 Light As A Feather

August 27, 2009 — by David H. Roper

A merry heart does good, like medicine. —Proverbs 17:22

We Christians can sometimes be a joyless lot, preoccupied with maintaining our dignity. That's an odd attitude, though, since we're joined to a God who has given us His wonderful gift of joy and laughter.

It's okay to have fun! Each family expresses it in different ways, of course. I'm thankful that our house has been a house of laughter. Water fights, good-natured (albeit stiff) competition, gentle ribbing, and hilarity came easily to us. Laughter has been a gift of God's goodness that carried us through some of life's darkest days. The joy of the Lord has often been our refuge (Neh. 8:10).

When King David brought the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem from the house of Obed-Edom, he danced "with all his might" before the Lord (2 Sam. 6:14). The Hebrew word has the idea of joyful exuberance and is akin to our expression "kick up your heels." In fact, in verse 16 it says that David was "leaping and whirling." Michal, David's wife, felt that his antics were unbecoming to the dignity of a king and reacted with stern severity. David's response was to announce that he would become even more "undignified" (v.22). His spirit was buoyant and he felt "as light as a feather."

Take time to laugh! (Eccl. 3:4).

A merry heart is like a medicine—

It's soothing for your sadness, gives you joy;

So lift your voice and let your spirit soar—

True happiness is yours without alloy. —Hess

Wholesome laughter has great face value.

[2 Samuel 7:1-13 When God Says No](#) - Theodore Epp

Nathan commended David for his desire to build a temple and then went to his own house. That night God spoke to the prophet, and as an obedient servant, Nathan brought the word to David. The message was no.

God was not going to allow David to build a house of worship for Him. The Lord, however, was pleased with the intentions and the attitude of David's heart in this matter.

Years later, after David's death, Solomon built a magnificent temple and in his dedication message said, "It was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. And the Lord said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart" (1 Kings 8:17,18).

Though God said no to David's building a temple, He was so pleased with David's attitude that He made a covenant with him in which He promised to establish the house of David forever.

Can you take a no from God? He knows what is best for all of us. Remember, His promise to David was "I will be with thee for ever" (see 2 Sam. 7:16). This promise is ours also, for He has said He will never leave us nor forsake us (see Heb. 13:5).

"As for God, his way is perfect" (2 Sam. 22:31).

2 Samuel 7:1 Everything Comes from God

Read: 1 Chronicles 29:14–19

All of it belongs to you. 1 Chronicles 29:16

I was 18 years old when I got my first fulltime job, and I learned an important lesson about the discipline of saving money. I worked and saved until I had enough money for a year of school. Then my mom had emergency surgery, and I realized I had the money in the bank to pay for her operation.

My love for my mother suddenly took precedence over my plans for the future. These words in the book *Passion and Purity* by Elisabeth Elliot took on new meaning: "If we hold tightly to anything given to us, unwilling to let it go when the time comes to let it go or unwilling to allow it to be used as the Giver means it to be used, we stunt the growth of the soul. It is easy to make a mistake here, 'If God gave it to me,' we say, 'it's mine. I can do what I want with it.' No. The truth is that it is ours to thank Him for and ours to offer back to Him, . . . ours to let go of."

Everything belongs to God.

I realized that the job I had received and the discipline of saving were gifts from God! I could give generously to my family because I was sure God was capable of seeing me through school another way, and He did.

Today, how might God want us to apply David's prayer from 1 Chronicles 29:14, "Everything we have has come from you, and we give you only what you first gave us"? (nlt).

Lord, we know there is nothing that we have that we obtained on our own. It's all Yours. Help us to have open hands for You to give and take as You please. Increase our faith.

Everything belongs to God.

By Keila Ochoa

INSIGHT: Today's reading puts the true object of worship front and center. David's prayer in 1 Chronicles 29:14–19 appears nowhere else in the biblical account and focuses the reader's attention on God rather than on the temple or on King David. This makes perfect sense given the timeframe and audience of the book. Although we cannot be certain, Jewish tradition identifies Ezra as the chronicler. And it's believed he wrote between 450 and 400 bc, with his primary audience being those who had recently returned from exile in Babylonia. The books of 1 and 2 Chronicles are unique in that they are historical accounts written long after the events they describe. About half of Chronicles is material repeated from earlier Old Testament books.

2 Samuel 9 GREATLY VALUED

"Mephibosheth...shall eat at my table like one of the king's sons." -2 Samuel 9:11

A British factory worker and his wife were excited when, after many years of marriage, they discovered they were going to have their first child. According to author Jill Briscoe, who told this true story, the man eagerly relayed the good news to his fellow workers. He told them God had answered his prayers. But they made fun of him for asking God for a child.

When the baby was born, he was diagnosed as having Down's syndrome. As the father made his way to work for the first time after the birth, he wondered how to face his co-workers. "God, please give me wisdom," he prayed. Just as he feared, some said mockingly, "So, God gave you this child!" The new father stood for a long time, silently asking God for help. At last he said, "I'm glad the Lord gave this child to me and not to you."

As this man accepted his disabled son as God's gift to him, so David was pleased to show kindness to Saul's son who was "lame in his feet" (2 Samuel 9:3). Some may have rejected Mephibosheth because he was lame, but David's action showed that he valued him greatly.

In God's eyes, every person is important. He sent His only Son to die for us. May we remember with gratitude how much He values each human life. -J D Branon

Lord, may we see in those we meet
The imprint of Your image fair,
And may their special dignity
Grow stronger from our love and care. -DJD

Everyone is valuable to God.

2 Samuel 9:1-13 SPECIAL PEOPLE

"Be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted." - 1 Peter 3:8

Hubert H. Humphrey, former senator, vice-president, college professor, and family man, spoke proudly and lovingly of his family in a television interview. Then his eyes moistened as he recalled the birth of a very special granddaughter with Down's syndrome. "It happened several years ago," he said, "and do you know, that little girl has brought more love into our family circle than had existed before."

A few years later Humphrey died, and after the graveside service the family found it difficult to leave the cemetery. But it was this grandchild who lifted their spirits. "Grandpa is in heaven, not in this casket," she said. What a blessing that little girl with a disability has been to the Humphrey family!

As king, David could have eliminated Saul's household for Saul's attempts to kill him. But he desired instead to show favor to any living member of Saul's family for Jonathan's sake. When told about Mephibosheth, who was "lame in his feet" (2 Samuel 9:3), David showed him special kindness. I believe his physical condition, as well as his place in Saul's household, brought out the best in David.

People with disabilities fulfill a unique place in God's plan. Let's learn from David's example.- H. V. Lugt

They will not realize right away
The leading role they're asked to play,
But with this child sent from above
Comes stronger faith and richer love.-- Massimilla

People with a disability have a unique ability to teach us how to love.

2 Samuel 9 The Value Of A Life

Mephibosheth . . . shall eat at my table like one of the king's sons. —2 Samuel 9:11

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As this man accepted his disabled son as God's gift to him, so King David was pleased to show kindness to Saul's grandson who was "lame in his feet" (2 Samuel 9:3). Some may have rejected Mephibosheth because he was lame, but David's action showed that he valued him.

In God's eyes, every person is important. He sent His only Son to die for us. May we remember with gratitude how much He values each human life.

Lord, we would see in those we meet
The likeness of Your image there,
And may their special dignity
Grow stronger from our love and care. —D. De Haan

Everyone is valuable to God.

By Dave Branon

2 Samuel 9 Where Can We Lean?

I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father's sake. —2 Samuel 9:7

"What a wonderful funeral!" Cindy remarked as we walked out. Helen, our friend, had died. And friend after friend celebrated her by sharing stories of her all-around fun behavior. But Helen's life wasn't all jokes and laughter. Her nephew spoke of her faith in Jesus and her care for others. She had taken him into her home when he was young and struggling. Now in his twenties, he said of his Aunt Helen, "She was like a mom to me. She never gave up on me in my struggles. I am sure that if it wasn't for her, I would have lost my faith." Wow! What an influence! Helen leaned on Jesus and wanted her nephew to trust Him too.

In the Old Testament, we read that King David took a young man named Mephibosheth into his home with the purpose of showing him kindness for the sake of his father, Jonathan (David's friend who had died; see 2 Sam. 9:1). Years earlier, Mephibosheth had been injured when his nurse dropped him as they fled after the news that his father had been killed (2 Sa 4:4). He was surprised that the king would care for him; he even referred to himself as "a dead dog" (2 Sa 9:8). Yet the king treated him as his own son (9:11).

I'd like to be that kind of person, wouldn't you? Someone who cares for others and helps them hang on to faith in Jesus even when life looks hopeless.

Lord, You showed the ultimate kindness by rescuing us when we were helpless in our sins. May our lives be marked by kindness so that others will see You in us.

God does most of His work for people through people.

By Anne Cetas

INSIGHT: Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, could have been heir to his grandfather's (King Saul) throne and a potential threat to David's kingship. But David promised his best friend, Jonathan (1 Sam. 20:42), that he would care for his family. In today's passage we read how David made good on that promise (2 Sam. 9:9-13).

2 Samuel 9:11

by Dave Branon

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2 Samuel 11:3

Grandfather of Bathsheba By comparing 2 Samuel 11:3 and 23:34, some believe that Ahithophel was the grandfather of Bathsheba, and that he was enraged because David had committed adultery with her. So Ahithophel may have wanted Absalom to destroy David and take the throne from his father. But when he saw Absalom following advice that would lead to defeat, he was so despondent that he gave in to despair and took his own life instead of committing the matter to God.

[2 Samuel 11:1-5 Facing Sin](#) - Theodore Epp

We have seen before that God does not gloss over the sins of His children. David, though a man after God's own heart, was not sinlessly perfect. We come now to the darkest hour in this great man's life.

It seems that the higher the peak of victory, the deeper the fall a believer can sustain. Though David was one of God's choicest men, he gave way to selfish desires that have left a blot on his name that time has not erased.

David's sin of adultery was not the end of his fall. It led him to commit murder also. David sank into spiritual deadness with no apparent thought of repentance until God shook him to the very depths of his soul, and then he returned to his senses and sought God's forgiveness.

David's sin was recorded for our learning. The Bible does not hesitate to reveal and denounce sin. God's Word conceals nothing. When necessary, it pulls aside the curtain and discloses the human heart.

We are stunned as we think of a man like David, wondering how he could have fallen so low. Will God be able to consider him the man after His own heart following this terrible incident?

But can we point the finger at David and excuse ourselves? Are we able to face sin in our own lives, not just in David's life?

"He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion" (Prov. 28:13, NASB).

[2 Samuel 11:6-15 The Unchanging Flesh Nature](#) - Theodore Epp

David's scheme was to bring Uriah home on a military furlough, hoping that he would be considered the father of Bathsheba's child. Uriah was much more righteous than David in this. He would not permit himself to relax until the war was over.

David then resorted to extreme measures. To the sin of adultery he added the sin of murder. He wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. It contained instructions that Uriah must meet death in battle.

Uriah--honest, upright and fully dedicated to his nation and to his king--was given a letter with his own death warrant in it to be handed to Joab, the leader of Israel's army.

If David could not cover up his sin by his plots, then he would seal Uriah's lips so that he could not accuse David of being the father of Bathsheba's child.

Some of us think that when a person such as David falls into such terrible sin, the reason must be that he was not a true believer. We must never forget that the evil nature inherited from Adam, or the flesh, in the believer is no different than in the unbeliever.

Until we see this, we will never understand the sovereign grace of God and God's sovereignty in the methods He uses in our lives.

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9).

2 Samuel 11-12 Filling Up Empty

December 26, 2001 — by Mart De Haan

Read: Psalm 62:1-12

Do not trust in oppression, nor vainly hope in robbery; if riches increase, do not set your heart on them. —Psalm 62:10

"This house ain't worth robbing," said a thief who seemed to feel he was wasting his time. According to a news report, the burglar broke into a home and held the owner at knifepoint while looking for money. He ransacked the place but turned up only \$3 in change, \$5 in a wallet, and a few pieces of cheap jewelry.

The thief apparently concluded that the homeowner was worse off than he was, so he gave back to him the \$8 he was going to

steal. "I think he was disgusted," said the 32-year-old victim. "He couldn't believe that was all the money I had."

We might smile at the bad fortune of this thief. But we can often have a similar kind of experience. It happens whenever we try to take something that God has not given us. Following the path of envy, jealousy, adultery, theft (Psalm 62:10), or just plain stubborn willfulness, always results in more trouble than profit.

David, the psalmist, learned this the hard way. When he stole Uriah's wife, he ended up with far more trouble and far less happiness than he had bargained for (2 Samuel 11-12).

Father, help us to believe that it never pays to take what You have not given. Help us not to waste our lives chasing things that leave You out and leave us empty.

The little choices we must make

Will chart the course of life we take;

We either choose the path of light

Or wander off in darkest night. —D. De Haan

Sin is never worth the trouble.

[2 Samuel 12:1-10 Sowing and Reaping](#) - Theodore Epp

David's harshness and lack of pity were due to his being out of touch with God. No wonder he failed to remember the judgment prescribed by the Law. At this point the Holy Spirit gave Nathan boldness to say to David, "Thou art the man" (2 Sam. 12:7).

Through Nathan, the Lord reminded David of His sovereign choice of David, of His protection of him through the years of Saul's bitter enmity, of his elevation to the throne and of the abundance of God's provision for him.

In spite of God's mercies, David had despised God's commandment. God hid nothing from His servant. David was forced to face his sin.

Nathan's message to David not only reminded him of God's tender mercy, love, abundant gifts and honor but also warned David that, because he had sinned, he would reap a harvest of sorrow.

"Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife" (v. 10).

The Lord made it very plain in the New Testament that believers cannot escape reaping the kind of harvest they sow. We cannot hide our sin; we will not get away with it. The secrets of the night are not hidden from God.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7).

See Related Devotionals:

- [Psalm 51:1-17 Getting Right With God](#)
 - [Hebrews 12:1-13 God's Purpose in Chastising](#)
-

[2 Samuel 12:11-23 Restoration Follows Forgiveness](#) - Theodore Epp

When God forgives, He at once restores. He never carries a grudge. Nevertheless, we must expect to face consequences because of our sin.

The Lord uses the rod of discipline on His children, and one aspect of that discipline is to let us reap what we sow. While He restores us to fellowship, the bitter cup we have brewed for ourselves has to be drunk.

David lived for 20 more years, but the seeds of murder and lust that he had planted bore fruit in his own family.

Another son was born to David and Bathsheba, and David "called his name Solomon: and the Lord loved him. And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he called his name Jedidiah [beloved of the Lord], because of the LORD" (2 Sam. 12:24,25).

David and Bathsheba's first son was taken from them because of their sin. But in the grace of God, their second son was chosen of God to succeed David on the throne.

Surely this was an indication of God's complete forgiveness of David and a fresh evidence of God's mercy. On one hand we see the severity of God. On the other, we see His grace, since the lesson He taught His child had been learned.

"I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (Ps. 32:5).

2 Samuel 12:1-13 Space Junk

Orbiting our planet at speeds more than 4.5 miles per second is a growing collection of space junk. Nuts, bolts, and other discarded debris from space flights are presenting a real hazard to future spacecraft. Their sheer speed makes the tiniest object strike with the impact of a bullet. During one of the shuttle missions, a speck of paint created a pit a quarter-inch wide in a window of the craft.

One study revealed that there are 110,000 objects larger than 1 centimeter in orbit. Their combined weight is 4 million pounds! To avoid a space junk disaster, the US Space Command monitors orbiting debris for NASA.

Sinful choices create their own kind of junk—unintended consequences. When Achan stole and hid forbidden booty, it cost him his life (Joshua 7). After King David committed adultery and murder, family discord followed (2 Sa 15-18).

Do you have any "junk" in your life? Sin's consequences have a way of accumulating. When we confess our sins to God, He promises to forgive and cleanse us (1 John 1:9). For those we have hurt, we can seek ways of righting wrongs through restitution (Luke 19:1-8). The God of grace will give us wisdom in dealing with bad decisions from our past and help us to make good ones in the future. —Dennis Fisher

What shame can overwhelm the soul
Because we've chosen paths of sin!
But if we humbly call on God,
He'll grant anew His peace within. —D. De Haan

The law of sowing and reaping has never been repealed

2 Samuel 12:1-14 David's Lament

You may already know the story. King David, Israel's most illustrious ruler, the man after God's own heart, became the seducer, the adulterer, the liar, the murderer—utterly pitiless and unmoved by his monstrous misdeeds. Israel's ruler was now ruled by sin.

A year had passed since David committed adultery with Bathsheba and orchestrated the murder of her husband. David deteriorated physically and emotionally. His gnawing conscience kept him restless and melancholy. At night he tossed and turned.

When David was brought face to face with his corruption, his defenses crumbled. He cried, "I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Samuel 12:13). And Nathan the prophet replied, "The Lord also has put away your sin." Despite the devastating consequences of David's sin, he was assured of God's forgiveness.

After realizing the extent of his sin and its consequences, David penned Psalm 51, a song of repentance and pleading for God's forgiveness. "I acknowledge my transgressions . . . Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (vv.3,7).

Are you suffering the consequences of sin? Admit your wrongs and ask God to cleanse your heart. He will show mercy and restore your joy if you turn to Him. —David H. Roper

Our sinfulness can sap our joy
And make us feel far from the Lord;
Confession and repentance, though,
Provide the way to be restored. —Sper

Repentance means hating sin enough to turn from

2 Samuel 12:1-14a

Burying Our Heads

Contrary to common belief, the ostrich does not bury its head in the sand to ignore danger. An ostrich can run at a speed of 45 miles per hour, kick powerfully, and peck aggressively with its beak. As the largest and fastest bird in the world, it doesn't need to bury its

head.

"Burying your head in the sand" is a saying that describes someone who wants to ignore his shortcomings or those of others. The prophet Nathan did not allow King David to forget his sins of adultery and murder (2 Samuel 12:1-14). It took a brave man to confront a king about his errors. Yet Nathan was obedient to God and wise in his approach.

The apostle Paul urged the early church to confront sin. He said, "If a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1). We are to confront our brothers and sisters in Christ about their sin with the view of restoring them to fellowship with God. We must also recognize that we are not immune to the same temptations.

We shouldn't go looking for sin in the lives of other believers, of course. But neither should we bury our head in the sand when it needs to be confronted. —Albert Lee

Father, help me live today
With thoughtfulness in what I say,
Confronting wrong with truth and fact,
Expressing gentleness and tact. -Hess

Slander seeks to destroy; rebuke seeks to restore

2 Samuel 12:1-14b NAIL HOLES

"I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,' and You forgave the iniquity of my sin." - Psalm 32:5

All sin carries a price tag. Its consequences may range from minor to major, but the bill always comes due. Somebody always pays.

There's a story about a boy whose father pounded a nail in the barn door every time the boy did something wrong. Soon there were many nails. Then one day the boy accepted Christ as Savior and began living for Him. To impress upon his son the wonder of being forgiven, the father took him to the barn and pulled out every nail from the door. "That is what it means to have all your sins forgiven," he said. "They are gone forever."

The boy was deeply impressed. Then looking at the door he asked, "But Father, how can I get rid of the holes?"

"I'm sorry," said the father, "but they will remain."

The psalmist David paid dearly for committing adultery with Bathsheba and engineering her husband's death to cover up his sin. Guilt sapped his strength (Ps. 32:3-4). Even though he confessed his sin, and God "removed the nail," David carried with him a deep sorrow (2 Samuel 12:15-17). But this did not rob him of the blessedness or forgiveness.

Even though we may have to live with the consequences of sin, we who have trusted in Christ as the sacrifice for our sins can rejoice in His complete forgiveness. -- D D H

How blest is he whose trespass
Has freely been forgiven,
Whose sin is wholly covered
Before the sight of heaven.-- Psalter

Although God heals the wounds of sin, scars may remain.

2 Samuel 12:1-13 The Wounds Of A Friend

Faithful are the wounds of a friend. —Proverbs 27:6

Not everyone appreciates correction, but David did. He felt indebted to those who corrected him and realized how much he owed them. "Let the righteous strike me; it shall be a kindness. Let him rebuke me; it shall be as excellent oil; let my head not refuse it" (Ps. 141:5).

Correction is a kindness, David insists, a word that suggests an act of loyalty. Loyal friends will correct one another, even when it's painful and disruptive to relationships to do so. It's one of the ways we show love and help one another to grow stronger. As Proverbs 27:6 states: "Faithful are the wounds of a friend."

It takes grace to give godly correction; it takes greater grace to receive it. Unlike David, who accepted Nathan's correction (2 Sam. 12:13), we're inclined to refuse it. We resent the interference; we do not want to be found out. But if we accept the reproof, we will find that it does indeed become "excellent oil" on our heads, an anointing that makes our lives a sweet aroma wherever we go.

Growth in grace sometimes comes through the kind but unpleasant correction of a loyal friend. Do not refuse it, for "he who receives correction is prudent" (Prov. 15:5) and "wise" (9:8-9).

When others give us compliments,
They are so easy to believe;
And though it's wise to take rebukes,
We find them harder to receive. —Sper

Correction from a loyal friend can help us change for the better.

By David H. Roper

2 Samuel 12:1-15 Redirected Paths

As part of a gospel outreach to the community, a group of Christians brought in a popular professional athlete to give his testimony. When he arrived, one of the organizers noticed he was acting arrogant. He pulled the guest aside and said, "We've been praying for this event for a long time. People out there need to see Jesus in you. You are being cocky, and that's not going to do anyone any good."

Standing up to a famous athlete is one thing, but can you imagine standing up to a king? That's what Nathan the prophet did when he found out about David's sin with Bathsheba. He stood before the monarch, told a story about a rich man who had stolen from a poor man, then said to David, "You are the man!" (2 Samuel 12:7). Instead of being irate with Nathan, David confessed his sin and sought restoration.

It's never easy to confront, and for some it's extremely frightening. Yet bad behavior that will hinder God's work must be rebuked.

The athlete recognized his problem, had a fruitful ministry that day, and later thanked the man who confronted him. David was restored to God's favor. Someone you know may be headed down the wrong path. Ask the Lord for the courage and wisdom to redirect him. —Dave Branon

Dear Lord, I would be bold and do my part
To turn a friend from self-destructive ways;
Grant me the grace to counsel heart to heart,
And help him follow You through all his days. —Hess

Overlooking sin allows it to grow.

2 Samuel 12:1-13 Off Track

November 21, 2008 — by Anne Cetas

Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? —2 Samuel 12:9

When I sat in my car at the start of the automatic car wash, I didn't know that my left front tire was not properly lined up with the track. The car wash started but my car wasn't moving, so I accelerated. That caused my tire to jump the track.

Now I was stuck—I couldn't move forward or backward. The car wash continued through its cycle without my car. Meanwhile, cars began lining up and waiting for me. I was glad when two workers at the station helped me get my car back on the track.

Sometimes in our Christian lives we get off track too. King David did in a big way. He committed adultery with Bathsheba and later ordered that her husband be put "in the forefront of the hottest battle" and left there to be killed (2 Sam. 11:3-4,15-17). David's actions were way out of line with how God wanted him to behave as His chosen king.

David needed help to get back on track. The Bible says that "the Lord sent Nathan to David" (12:1). He confronted him about stealing another man's wife, and David wisely repented (v.13). Nathan took a risk to help David get right with God, even though his sin still had dire consequences.

Does someone you know need your help to get back on track?

Fellowship with other Christians

Strengthens us when we are weak,

Reprimands when we are sinning,

Helps us when God's will we seek. —Sper

True love dares to confront.

2 Samuel 12:1-15 Collision Course

January 7, 2012 — by Dennis Fisher

Be sure your sin will find you out. —Numbers 32:23

My wife and I were driving on an expressway when we saw a driver turn left into a median turnaround that was intended for emergency vehicles only. He was planning to make a U-turn and head back the other way.

Looking to his right, the driver waited for an opening in oncoming traffic, so he failed to notice that a police car was backing up toward him on his left. Finally seeing an opening in traffic, the U-turn driver pulled out and rammed into the back of the police car.

It's not unusual for us to think we can get away with doing something wrong. After King David committed adultery with Bathsheba, he too was focused on "getting away with it." But he was on a collision course with Nathan. His adultery, deceit, and murder "displeased the Lord" (2 Sam. 11:27), so when Nathan exposed David's grievous sin, the king was deeply remorseful. He confessed, repented, and received God's forgiveness. But the consequences of his sin never departed from his household (12:10).

If you've been trying to get away with something, remember that "your sin will find you out" (Num. 32:23). Turn yourself in to God. Don't hide. Instead, seek His gracious forgiveness.

God knows all you've thought or done—

From Him you cannot hide;

Confess to Him and He'll forgive

Through Christ the crucified. —Hess

We have to face our sins before we can put them behind us.

2 Samuel 12:1-15a Who's In the Picture?

My daughter came home from school one day with a brain teaser. See if you can figure it out.

Imagine that you are a school bus driver. A red-haired student gets on the bus and begins combing her hair with a green brush. At the next stop two more students get on and say in passing that they like the color of the driver's new blue cap. As they walk to the rear of the bus, the shorter of the two shouts back, "I wouldn't let that red-head stay on the bus if I were you. Her brush clashes with your hair!" What color is the bus driver's hair? Think about it. Remember, you are the bus driver. (Answer: your hair color.)

If you didn't see yourself in that story until I told you, you're not alone. King David made a similar mistake with another story. He became furious when a prophet of God told about a rich man who stole a poor man's pet for his dinner. Yet it became very clear as Nathan bluntly said to David, "You are the man!" (2 Samuel 12:7).

We can read the Bible but fail to see ourselves in the picture. We tend to forget that the Bible was "written for our admonition" (1 Corinthians 10:11). Do you see yourself in the pages of Scripture? How long since you've realized how personal these letters from God are to you? —Mart De Haan

Your heart and conscience cannot safely guide,
For they are darkened by the sin inside;
But if you want to have a picture true,
The Word of God will mirror what is you. —Hess

The Bible gives us a picture of who we really are.

12 Samuel 2:1-23 Flyleaf Wisdom

All right, Mary, I confess. While I was a guest at your home in Manila, I used your Bible one day for my devotions. When I opened it, I saw these words written on the flyleaf: Acknowledgment. Acceptance. Adjustment.

Those words express the steps that believers in Christ need to take when they receive bad news. I see these actions illustrated in the life of David.

Acknowledgment. When David was confronted by Nathan about his sin, he admitted his guilt (2 Samuel 12:13). When we are faced with a problem, whether it's the result of our sin or not, it's futile to run from the truth.

Acceptance. When his infant son died as punishment for his sin with Bathsheba, David accepted it as God's will (vv.19-23) and learned from it. We too need to see difficulties as opportunities to trust God and to grow spiritually (James 1:2-4).

Adjustment. David turned to the Lord for forgiveness and help, and he later wrote about what he had learned (Psalm 32). For us, we may need to ask the Lord for the ability to make a lifestyle change or to take some specific action.

Have you been hit hard by bad news? These steps from Mary's Bible can help you to handle it in a way that will please the Lord and result in good. —David C. Egner

Day by day and with each passing moment,
Strength I find to meet my trials here;
Trusting in my Father's wise bestowment,
I've no cause for worry or for fear. --Berg

God takes us into His darkroom to develop our character

2 Samuel 12:1-23 Moving Past Sinful Failure

April 21, 2011 — by Randy Kilgore

I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins. —Isaiah 43:25

How should we handle moments of faith-failure, when we've damaged the kingdom of God in the eyes of our friends and family or dishonored God in our actions?

We can learn from King David after his humiliation in the Bathsheba scandal. Though the terrible consequences of that sin could not be avoided, he found his way back to a relationship with God that made it possible for him to continue to serve Him. We too can find our way back.

David's pattern in 2 Samuel 12 serves us well: We need to declare our error candidly (v.13) and seek God's forgiveness. Then we can ask God that others be spared the consequences of our actions (v.16). Finally, we need to recognize that sometimes the consequences simply cannot be avoided and must be endured. While we always mourn those consequences, we can't allow them to so consume us that we cease to be servants of God (vv.20-23).

Satan not only delights in the moment of our failure but also in the spiritual inactivity that sometimes snares us in our remorse. When we've blown our witness, we are and should be humbled. But we should not multiply the damage by retreating into silence and obscurity as ambassadors of Christ. We can move past failure.

Action Suggestion

If after you've confessed your sin to God, you still suffer

with guilty feelings, memorize Proverbs 24:16 and

1 John 1:9 and ask God to help you believe His Word.

God forgives our sins completely to restore us to His presence and service.

2 Samuel 12:1-14 The Pharmacist

Nathan said to David, "You are the man!" —2 Samuel 12:7

The pharmacist had a good reputation. He was a family man and a good businessman. News reports listed his worth in the millions. Yet, to increase his profits, this trusted professional began to dilute the strength of the chemotherapy drugs he was dispensing. He was caught and convicted of the crime. He left many health-care workers asking, "How could this happen?"

Some of the same questions must have been asked about King David. Known as a man after God's own heart, he used the power of his office to take another man's wife (2 Sam. 11). Then he conspired to take her husband's life. The man who died was one of David's own military officers who was away from home fighting the king's battles.

We could look at the failures of well-known people to feel better about ourselves. But if we feel good about the wrongs of others, we don't know ourselves. The Bible doesn't tell us about the sins of David to weaken our sense of moral alarm, but to put all of us on notice.

The failures of others should cause us to be more aware of our own weaknesses and need for the grace of Christ. Only in the knowledge of our weakness will we be dependent on the strength of our God.

The Bible, O Lord, is just like a mirror
That shows me the need of my heart,
For in it I see an accurate image,
A portrait of me—every part. —Hess

The Bible is a mirror that reflects how God sees us.

By Mart DeHaan

2 Samuel 12:13-23 The Answer Is No

Children are so lovable and innocent—until their parents say no to their demands. When that happens, some kids scream uncontrollably, insisting on what they want.

When our children were little, my wife and I thought it was important for them to learn to accept no for an answer. We felt this would help them to handle the disappointments of life more effectively. We prayed that it would also help them submit to God's will.

Today's Bible reading records King David's admission of guilt when confronted by Nathan. David was forgiven, but God let the consequence of his sin fall on the baby conceived out of wedlock. David fasted and prayed to the Lord day and night for his son's healing. In spite of his sincere petitions, the baby died.

Instead of behaving like a demanding child and being angry with God, David got up, washed, changed his clothes, "went into the house of the Lord, and worshiped" (2 Samuel 12:20). His actions teach us an important lesson: Sometimes we must accept no from God as the answer to our pleas.

In times of difficulty or loss, we should seek God's help and deliverance. But we must still trust Him if He does not answer our prayers the way we want Him to.

Have we learned to take no for an answer?—Albert Lee

I do accept Your will, O God,
And all Your ways adore;
And every day I live I'll seek
To please You more and more. —Anon

2 Samuel 15:13-26

Displaced

David fled Jerusalem, driven from his home by his son Absalom, who had gathered an army of supporters. As he escaped, he instructed Zadok, his priest, to take the ark of God back to Jerusalem and to lead his people in worship there. "If I find favor in the eyes of the Lord," he mused, "He will bring me back and show me both it and His dwelling place." But if not, "Here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him" (2 Samuel 15:25-26).

Perhaps, like David, you've lost the power of self-determination. Someone has seized control of your life, or so it seems.

You may fear that circumstance and human caprice have overturned your plans. But nothing can frustrate God's loving intention. Tertullian (150–220 AD) wrote, "[Do not regret] a thing which has been taken away . . . by the Lord God, without whose will neither

does a leaf glide down from a tree, nor a sparrow of one farthing's worth fall to the earth."

Our heavenly Father knows how to care for His children and will allow only what He deems best. We can rest in His infinite wisdom and goodness.

Thus we can echo David's words: "Here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him." —David H. Roper

If you are helpless in life's fray,
God's mighty power will be your stay;
Your failing strength He can renew,
For He's a God who cares for you. —D. De Haan

We can leave our cares with God because God cares

[2 Samuel 16:5-12](#) Father Knows Best

Unlike David in 2 Samuel 16, we like to take revenge, silence our critics, insist on fairness, and set everything right. But David told those who wanted to defend him: "Let [Shimei] alone, and let him curse; for so the Lord has ordered him" (v.11).

It seems to me that as the years go by, we grow—as David did—in the awareness of God's protective love. We become less concerned with what others say about us and more willing to give ourselves over to our Father. We learn humble submission to God's will.

We may, of course, ask our opponents to justify their charges, or we may meet them with steadfast denial if they charge us falsely. But when we have done all we can do, the only thing left is to wait patiently until God vindicates us.

In the meantime, it's good to look beyond the words of those who vilify us to the will of the One who loves us with infinite love. We need to say that whatever God permits is for His ultimate good in us or in others—even though our hearts break and we shed bitter tears.

You're in God's hands, no matter what others say about you. He sees your distress, and in time will repay you with good. Trust Him and abide in His love. —David H. Roper

Each day we learn from yesterday
Of God's great love and care;
And every burden we must face
He'll surely help us bear. —D. De Haan

It takes the storm to prove the real shelter

[2 Samuel 16:5-14](#)

In God's Hands

In 2 Samuel 16:5-14 we read of King David being cursed by Shimei. This happened while David was fleeing from his son Absalom, who wanted to kill him.

Unlike David, we often want to silence our critics, insist on fairness, and defend ourselves. But as we grow in our awareness of God's protective love, we become less concerned with what others say about us and more willing to entrust ourselves to our Father. Like David, we can say of each critic, "Let him alone, and let him curse" (2 Samuel 16:11). This is humble submission to God's will.

We may ask our opponents to justify their charges, or we may counter them with steadfast denial. Or, like David (v.12), we can wait patiently until God vindicates us.

It is good to look beyond those who oppose us and look to the One who loves us with infinite love. It is good to be able to believe that whatever God permits is for our ultimate good—good, though we're exposed to the curses of a Shimei; good, though our hearts break and we shed bitter tears.

You are in God's hands, no matter what others are saying about you. He has seen your distress, and in time He'll repay you for the cursing you have received. So trust Him and abide in His love.

—David H. Roper

THINKING IT OVER

Read 1 Peter 2:20-23. How did Jesus respond to words spoken against Him? What did He do and not do? In what situations can you follow His example?

We can endure life's wrongs because

2 Samuel 18:1-18,33 Good Grief

August 19, 1999 — by Herbert Vander Lugt

O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your place. —2 Samuel 18:33

Family members grieved deeply when 32-year-old Cindy died, but they also experienced great comfort. They knew that Cindy had a strong personal faith in Jesus. They also were confident that she left this world knowing she was greatly loved. And when she died, they had no regrets because they had enjoyed a good relationship with her.

King David's grief was not lessened by any such comforting thoughts. He knew his son Absalom had died as a rebel. David, I am sure, had regrets about the kind of example he had set in his life (his multiple marriages, his sin with Bathsheba, and unresolved family disputes).

We cannot prevent the death of family members, but we can do much to lessen our grief when it happens. Right now we can commit ourselves to put God's glory and the good of our loved ones above our own selfish desires. We can talk to them about our faith in Christ. We can express our love for them. And we can make sure that we have done everything possible to resolve conflicts. This may call for humble confession—and that may not be easy—but a restored relationship will lessen the grief when a loved one dies.

What can you do to prepare for good grief?

The death of people whom we love

Brings sorrow and deep pain;

But if our loved ones know the Lord,

Our loss becomes their gain. —Sper

Right relationships in life ease the sting of grief in death.

2 Samuel 18:31-19:4 Preventing Regret

November 23, 2009 — by Bill Crowder

The king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept. —2 Samuel 18:33

In the 1980s, the British band Mike and the Mechanics recorded a powerful song titled, "The Living Years." The songwriter mourns his father's death, because their relationship had been strained and marked by silence rather than sharing. The singer remorsefully says, "I didn't get to tell him all the things I had to say." Struggling with regret over words unsaid and love unexpressed, he laments, "I just wish I could have told him in the living years."

King David similarly regretted his broken relationship with his son Absalom. Angered over David's refusal to punish Amnon for raping his sister Tamar, Absalom killed Amnon and fled (2 Sam. 13:21-34). David's servant Joab knew that he longed to go to his fugitive son, so he arranged for Absalom to be brought to him. But their relationship was never the same again. Absalom's bitterness sparked a conflict that ended with his death (18:14). It was a bitter victory for King David, causing him to lament his lost son and their failed relationship (18:33). No amount of grieving, however, could undo David's heartache.

We can learn from David's regret when dealing with broken relationships. The pain of trying to make things right can be hard. But it's much better to do what we can to make things right "in the living years."

For Further Study

Do you have a strained relationship with someone?

For help, read [What Do You Do With A Broken Relationship- - Discovery Series?](#)

2 Samuel 21:1-14 God's People, God's Honor

God's reputation is either enhanced or maligned by the attitudes and actions of His people. Today's Bible reading illustrates this truth.

During the reign of David, God punished Israel with a 3-year famine because David's predecessor King Saul had attempted to exterminate the Gibeonites (2 Samuel 21:1). His action violated a solemn promise Joshua and the rulers of Israel had made with Gibeon in the name of "the Lord God of Israel" (Joshua 9:18). God's honor was at stake.

When David asked the Gibeonites how he could make amends, they demanded that seven men from the descendants of Saul be handed over to them to be hanged. The Bible does not tell us that the Lord demanded this retribution, and the death of Saul's sons and grandsons must have grieved God's heart. Yet He allowed the executions to go forward so that the agreement His people had made in His name would be renewed. The Gibeonites therefore knew that God was a God of honor.

Just as Israel profaned God's holy name by their wickedness (Ezekiel 36:22), so too we can dishonor God today by the way we live. Let's pattern our lives after Jesus. Then we will bring honor to God's name. —Herbert Vander Lugt

God's reputation is at stake
In all we say and do;
So let us pray for grace to live
A life that's good and true. —D. De Haan

We honor God our Father when we live like His Son.

2 Samuel 21:17

People Helping People

But Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, came to his aid. 2 Samuel 21:17

Sometimes we win great spiritual victories or reach a seemingly unattainable goal without the help of a friend or companion. This was true of David when as a shepherd lad he killed Goliath with nothing but a sling and faith in God. In later years, however, he would have been slain by a giant named Ishbibenob if his nephew Abishai had not come to his aid. Now, are we to conclude that God was with David when he met Goliath, but not when he confronted the second giant? I don't think so! The Lord simply used a different means to take care of His servant. The first time, He used David's skill with the sling; the second time, He used Abishai's strength and military prowess

[2 Samuel 22:1-7](#)

Spiritual Weightlifting

I first met Noel when he was in the early stages of overcoming drug dependence. He had put his faith in Christ, and he was becoming a well-established disciple. One day he admitted, "When I first trusted the Lord, I felt powerless and needed to depend on Him for everything. But now that He's made me stronger, I'm afraid I'm not depending on Him as much."

I believed that Noel still depended on the Lord, but I needed to reassure him somehow. So I said, "Noel, when someone starts weightlifting, which weights should be used first?" Noel replied, "The lightest ones."

Then I said, "Though the weights are hard to lift, they feel lighter when the muscles increase. So what should one do next?" With a knowing smile, Noel replied, "Increase the weights!" "That's what the Lord is doing with you," I reasoned. "The loads you first carried feel lighter now, for you are spiritually stronger. But don't become overconfident. The Lord will keep increasing your load to remind you of your limited strength. You'll never outgrow your need to depend on Him!"

What about you? Are you getting stronger as a Christian? Do you still sense your need to call on the Lord and depend on His strength? (2 Samuel 22:2-4). —Joanie Yoder

Each time that we depend on God
To meet our daily needs,
Our strength in Him will be increased,
Like mighty trees from seeds. —Sper

We grow stronger as we depend on God's strength.

2 Samuel 22:1-20

BADGER BRAINS

"The rock badgers are a feeble folk, yet they make their homes in the crags." -- Proverbs 30:26

We could learn a lot from the rock badger. This small animal (also called a coney or hyrax) knows

where to go when danger comes. The large ragged crags jutting up from the mountains form a perfect hiding place for the badger. If an eagle swoops down and tries to capture him the little animal is protected by the rock. The eagle would have to tear the mountain apart to get to its prey.

When a lion is on the prowl for lunch, the badger goes undetected by lying close to the rock because he is the color of the mountain.

As long as the badger hides in the rocks, he is safe. If he wanders away into the grassland, he is dead meat. The most courageous badger in the world is no match for even a small lion. The badger is wise enough to know that his strength lies not in working out at the gym but in taking shelter in the crags.

If you have the brains of a badger, you'll figure out where your strength lies. "Be strong in the Lord," the Scripture urges us, "and in the power of His might" (Eph. 6:10). "The Lord is my rock and my

fortress," cried David after being hunted by his enemies (2 Samuel 22:2). Badgers know where their strength lies. Do you?-- H W Robinson

He cannot fail, your faithful God,
He'll guard you with His mighty power;
Then fear no ill though troubles rise,
His help is sure from hour to hour.-- Henry G. Bosch

You have nothing to fear if you stay close to the Rock of Ages.

2 Samuel 22:1,21-37 The Strongest People

March 29, 1998 — by Mart De Haan

God is my strength and power, and He makes my way perfect. —2 Samuel 22:33

The picture in the newspaper caught my attention. Above the caption "Strong Man" was a photo of a workman displaying what seemed to be superhuman strength. He appeared to be lifting a piano up to a second story apartment porch. An explanation under the picture plus one discernible clue, however, told the unseen story. By looking closely I could see a cable attached to the piano. The real power to lift it was coming from a crane above, rather than from the man below.

That scene reminded me of the way the Lord works in and through those who trust Him. Looking at our circumstances, we don't see God. Yet He is there.

God revealed this truth to men like David, whose psalm of deliverance is recorded in the book of 2 Samuel. Those who observed David might have attributed much of what he did to his own effort, but he knew that it was the Lord who made him strong. God was providing strength from above, even as His servant acted and struggled in obedient faith below.

If we are trusting Christ as our ultimate source of power, we too can know the secret of the strongest people in the world.

You may not be the strongest or the greatest,

Your presence may not even count at all;

But when you put your trust in Jesus' power,

You are assured He'll never let you fall. —Hess

God's strength is best seen in our weakness.

2 Samuel 23:8-17 In Memory

President Harry Truman was once asked to speak at a fund-raising project to help the children of a White House guard who was slain in the line of duty. With great emotion he said, "You can't imagine just how a man feels when someone else dies for him."

David must have had a similar experience in response to his three mighty warriors. When he expressed a longing for a drink from the well of Bethlehem, Adino, Eleazar, and Shammah voluntarily broke through the Philistine camp and got it for him. They were so devoted to their leader that they risked their lives to fulfill his wish. Their courage so moved David that he would not wet his tongue with one drop of that precious liquid. Instead, he poured it out as an offering to the Lord, saying, "Is this not the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives?" (2 Samuel 23:17). Their act was as noble as if they had died for him.

Most nations set aside a day to remember those who have fought in their wars, especially those who have sacrificed their lives to defend freedom. They deserve to be honored and respected.

Thank God for veterans and for their families. And let's ask Him to help us reinforce our liberties with personal righteousness and prayer for our leaders. —Dennis J. De Haan

Lord, keep us mindful of the cost,
The price of liberty—
Brave men and women gave their lives
To conquer tyranny. —D. De Haan

Freedom always comes with a price.

[2 Samuel 24:18-25](#)

A Pair of Moccasins

A doctor was working in a remote area of Minnesota many years ago when a Native American family begged him to come and help their elderly grandmother who was gravely ill. He went, diagnosed her condition, and then gave them detailed instructions for her care.

The woman recovered, and a few weeks later the entire family made the journey to the doctor's office in town. They ceremoniously presented him with a 150-year-old pair of moccasins made by a great-great-grandfather. When the doctor protested because the gift was cherished and valuable, the head of the clan replied, "You saved my mother's life. We insist that you accept these moccasins. We do not express great appreciation with a cheap gift."

We see this same principle in 2 Samuel 24. David was told to offer a sacrifice to God on land owned by Araunah. As king, he could have taken the piece of land and the animals to make the sacrifice, but instead he purchased them. Araunah offered to give David what he needed, but David said he would not "offer burnt offerings to the Lord . . . with that which costs [him] nothing" (v.24).

By definition, a sacrifice has a cost. So when you give to the Lord, give generously. —David C. Egner

What shall I give You, Master?
You have redeemed my soul;
My gift is small but it is my all—
Surrendered to Your control. —Grimes

Sacrifice is the true measure of our giving.

[2 Samuel 24:1-17](#) The Ways Of God

Have you ever puzzled over statements in the Bible that seem to contradict each other? For example, 1 Chronicles 21:1 states that the one who "moved David to number Israel" was Satan, but 2 Samuel 24:1 says it was the Lord. How do we explain this? We know that God never tempts anyone to sin (James 1:13).

The answer lies in the way the Old Testament writers expressed the ways of God. They sometimes ascribed to God what He merely allowed, knowing that He permits us to make wrong choices and then uses the tragic results to accomplish His good purposes.

In 2 Samuel 24:1, we read that God "moved David" to take a census of Israel. This is clearly a case when God allowed Satan to influence David, for it was an attempt to assess Israel's military strength. This reflected the same sin of pride and self-reliance that was prevalent in the nation. As a result, God judged the people and their king.

So what was the good purpose God accomplished by allowing Satan to influence David? Although many Israelites died, the nation itself was spared and purified. The Lord punished the guilty but also showed His mercy.

God's ways may be beyond our understanding, but we can always trust Him to do what is right.—Herbert Vander Lugt

FOR FURTHER STUDY: Are the Scriptures reliable?

For answers, read...

[Studies In Contrast: Resolving Alleged Contradictions In The Bible](#)

God may conceal the purpose of His ways, but His ways are not without purpose.

Devotionals

F B Meyer

Our Daily Homily

It was very lovely and pleasant of David to say so. He had no hesitation, of course, in saying this of his beloved Jonathan, every memory of whom was very pleasant, like a sweet strain of music, or the scent of the spring breeze; but he might have been excused for omitting Saul from the graceful and generous epithets he heaped on the kindred soul of his friend. But death had obliterated the sad, dark memories of recent days, and had transported the Psalmist across the dream of years to Saul as he was when he was first introduced to him. All that could be said in praise of the first Hebrew king was crowded into these glowing lines—the courage, martial prowess, swiftness to aid those who required help, his pleasantness and courtesy in address.

This is the love of God, which He breathes into the hearts of His children. They become perfect in love, as He is. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." It is Godlike for His children to love their enemies, bless those who curse them, and pray for all who despitefully use and persecute them. Is such love ours? Do we forbear from thinking evil? Do we look on the virtues more often than the failures of our friends? Do we cast the mantle of forgiveness over the injuries done to us, and dwell tenderly on the excellences of our foes? Such is the love which never fails, but endures when faith has turned to fruition, and hope has realized its dreams.

We need most of all a baptism of love. A piece of clay will become fragrant if placed in contiguity to attar of roses. Let us lie where John did, on the bosom of incarnate love, till we begin to love as he.

2 Samuel 2:4

The men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king.

Thus was David anointed a second time. Hitherto he had been the leader of a troop; now he became king of his own tribe: and his kingdom clustered around the ancient city of Hebron.

Typically, we learn that our blessed Lord will be acknowledged King of His own people, the Jews, before He is accepted by the world at large. Now, His kingdom is in mystery—it is in the Adullam stage. Men are gathering to Him from all quarters; but as yet the world does not recognize it in their political calculations. But ere long the Jews will recognize Him as King, and then we may begin to expect His enthronement over the populations of the globe. When they repent and are converted, times of repenting will come to all the world.

Experimentally we are taught, that as each new department of our life unfolds, we should give Christ a fresh coronation. The attitude which we took up years ago, of complete consecration, must be applied perpetually to each fresh development of experience. Each new step should be characterized by a definite waiting on God, that there may be a fresh enduement of power, a recharging of the spirit with His might. Was He King in the cave, then be sure to acknowledge Him as such, now that you are called from obscurity into the glare of noon. Whenever God says, by the circumstances of your life, Go up; always kneel at the feet of Jesus, saying, "Lord, in the very little I found my joy and strength in serving Thee only; and now, amid the greater responsibility and publicity of my life, I desire to be Thy earnest, simple-minded, whole-hearted follower."

Have you anointed Jesus as your King? Do not fail. Remember how near of kin He is.

2 Samuel 3:1

David warred stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul warred weaker.

The war between the flesh and the Spirit is long, but the end is sure. As the Baptist said of Jesus, so must the flesh say of the Spirit,

He must increase; I must decrease. Sometimes, in the long strain of the war, our spirit dies down. Will the bugle never cease to ring out its alarm? Will the assaults never come to an end? When shall we be able to lay aside sword and breastplate, and to enter the land of rest? Oh to be able to say with the Apostle, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith"!

Yet take heart. The assaults diminish in frequency and strength in proportion as they are faithfully resisted. Each time you resist success fully you will find it easier to resist. The strength of the vanquished foe enters the vanquisher.

Moreover, ultimate victory is secured. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4-5). It makes a great difference to the soldier, when he belongs to an All-Victorious Legion, and serves under a Captain that never lost a fight. And there can be no doubt as to the issue in your heart or mine. "He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet."

At any moment we may look for the sudden collapse of a great portion of the confederacy of evil, which has so long menaced us; as when Abner suddenly came to Hebron to give in his adhesion to David. What a huge piece of cliff fell that day into the sea! Expect the sudden collapse of evils which have long troubled you.

2 Samuel 4:9

As the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity.

It was the midday of David's life, and, looking back, he saw how good the Lord had been to him. Step by step God had brought him up out of a horrible pit, and from the miry clay, setting him upon a rock, and establishing his goings. What need was there, then, that men should interfere to hasten the unfolding of the Divine purposes? It had been his lifelong habit to wait. Whatever he needed he looked to God to supply. Whatever difficulties blocked his path, he looked to God to remove. Whatever men stood in his way he looked to God to deal with them. Twice in the wilderness he refused to take Saul's life. He had executed the Amalekite because he claimed to have slain Saul on Gilboa. And, in pursuance of the same policy, he could have no complicity in the act of the murderers of Ish-bosheth, even though they made his way clear to the throne of Israel.

Let God redeem thee out of all thine adversities. Do not lose heart or hope. Do not put forth thy hand to snatch at any position or deliverance by an act which might afterward cause thee shame or sorrow. "Trust in the Lord, and do good. Roll thy way upon the Lord. Trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him" (Psalm 37:3-7, r. v.). He who turns glaciers to rivers that pass away, will remove all thy difficulties and perplexities. He shall cause thee to inherit the land. He will promote thee in due time, and give thee to see thy desire upon thine enemies. He who redeemed thy soul by His most precious blood cannot fail thee, however long He may tarry. Remember that He ever liveth, and loveth, and reigneth.

2 Samuel 5:13

And David took him more wives out of Jerusalem.

This is terribly disappointing! According to the ideas of the surrounding nations, the greatness of a monarch was gauged by the extent of his harem. But the law of Moses put severe restraint on the multiplication of wives, "that his heart turn not away" (Deuteronomy 17:17). It seems as though the soul of David sank into sensual indulgence and luxuriance. It lost much of its early hardihood and strength in consequence; and at this period of his life those seeds were sown, which in after years brought forth such a plentiful and terrible harvest of anguish, murder, and impurity in his family.

Few of us realize how much our character owes to the stern discipline to which God subjects us. The only way to keep us healthy and vigorous is to send us many a nipping frost, many a keen northern blast. The bleak hillside breeds stronger natures than the warm sheltered valley. The difference between Anglo-Saxon and Negro is largely wrought by temperature and soil. The campaign, with its strain on every power of endurance, trains better soldiers than the barracks. As David was a stronger, better man, when hunted like a coney in the rocks of Engedi, so are we braced to a nobler life, when all things seem against us.

Few of us can be trusted with unbroken happiness. God is compelled to withhold what the flesh craves. But where prosperity has shone on your path, be very careful not to abuse it. Consider it as indicating God's loving trust in you. He would rather convey His lesson in sunshine than in storm. But walk carefully and humbly, looking to Him constantly for daily grace, and never relaxing the girdle about the loin.

2 Samuel 6:3

They set the Ark of God upon a new cart.

This was their mistake. The Divine directions were explicit that the Ark of the living God must be carried on the shoulders of living men. There would have been no stumbling of oxen, no swaying of the Ark to falling, no need for Uzzah to reach out his hand, if only this simple direction had been obeyed. This breaking forth of God was to recall men to simple absolute obedience to the rules and regulations that had been so explicitly laid down in the Levitical code. It could not fall into disuse without grave loss to the entire people. Better that one life should be sacrificed for disobedience than that the whole nation should be impoverished for the relaxation of that ancient law.

We are fond of bringing new carts to God. At every birthday we build the new cart of good resolution, and place thereon the Ark of God. We will be different, and on our fresh endeavors the Lord of Hosts shall ride; but we must drive, and if needs be, steady the Ark. Ah! it is not long before the oxen stumble, and Uzzah who drives is smitten to the dust of death.

God wants, not new carts, but the living shoulders of consecrated men. We must live for Him, surrendering ourselves to His service; not driving, but being driven; not conducting, but being impelled; not imposing our thoughts on Him, but being willing to submit ourselves absolutely to Him. There is no need to fear God, if only we will obey Him, and in obedience discover the laws by which we may approach and serve Him. Then the power which otherwise flames forth to destroy will become the useful servant of our faith, and we shall be able to undertake great things for God.

2 Samuel 7:25

Do as Thou hast said.

This is the voice of a childlike faith.

Note what led to these words.— Nathan had just unfolded to the King all the purposes of God's heart toward him. That He would establish his throne, deliver him from his enemies; and set up his dynasty to succeed him— this and much else. David's heart was full of joy and gladness— he knew that God would not run back from His word; but He felt none the less the duty of claiming the fulfillments of these guarantees. So it is with all the promises of God; though they are Yea and Amen in Christ, it is requisite for us to put our hand on them; plead them before God; and claim their fulfillment with appropriating faith.

Notice the attitude in which David uttered these words.— "He sat before the Lord." Was not this the position of rest and trust? On another occasion, he lay all night upon the earth (2 Samuel 12:16), in an agony of prayer, because not sure of God's purpose, and hoping to turn God by the extremity of his anguish. But there is a marvellous alteration in the tone of our prayer, so soon as we can base it on the declared purposes of God. We enter into His rest; we put ourselves in the current of His purposes; we sit before the Lord.

Mark the blessedness of communion with God.— It is as a man talks with his friend. We are not required always to kneel when we pray, or to con over a certain form of words; we can sit and talk with God, catching up His words as they fall on our hearts, and reflecting them back on Him in praise, and prayer, and happy converse. All true prayer originates in the declarations of God's love, to each of which we answer, Do as Thou hast said.

2 Samuel 8:11

The silver and gold he had dedicated of all nations which he subdued.

David might not build the temple, but he was bent on making provision for it. Indeed, Solomon had never been able to do as he did, unless his father had gathered these stores of gold and silver. Thus other men labor, and we enter into their labors; but the accomplished building is credited by God to each. He does not forget David when Solomon's temple stands complete. The reward is proportioned to each man's service, according to his share.

It is a glorious thing when we not only defeat our foes, but get spoils out of their overthrow which we can use for the service of God and man. It is as possible for us as for David. Out of our failures, temptations, mistakes, let us get the power of helping and directing others. In death Jesus won the keys of death and Hades, and the power to become a merciful and faithful High Priest; and now He ever liveth to make intercession for His people (Hebrews 7:25).

But the main lesson of this chapter is the foreshadowing of God's purpose, that Gentiles should contribute to the building of His Temple. What was literally true in the case of the Temple of Solomon, is spiritually true of the heavenly Temple, the Church. From every nation, and kindred, people and tongue, souls are being gathered, who form a spiritual house, a holy Temple in the Lord. The whole world is destined to contribute to that structure, which is being prepared secretly and mystically, but shall ere long be manifested in its full glory. It is very interesting to get this suggestion from the chronicles of a nation so exclusive and haughty as the Jews. "They shall come from the East and West..."

2 Samuel 9:7 (9a)

Thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.

Four times in this chapter we are told of the lame man eating bread at the royal table. But what are these facts recorded and repeated for, save to accentuate the infinite blessings which come to us through the Divine love?

Mephibosheth had done nothing to merit the royal favor. Not a word is said of his being well-favored and attractive. So far from that, he was lame on both his feet, and probably a sickly invalid. In his own judgment he was worthless as a dead dog. His state was impoverished; no deed of prowess could win David's notice; he was almost entirely at the mercy of his servant, Ziba. In these respects there are many analogies to our own condition in the sight of God. We are lame indeed; and, so far as we are concerned, it is quite impossible that we should ever win the Divine regard, or sit at His table among His sons.

But between David and Jonathan a covenant had been struck, which had provided for the children of the ill-fated Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:14-16). It was because of this sacred obligation that Mephibosheth fared as he did. Look away, child of God, to the covenant struck between God and thy representative, the Son of His love. It is idle of thee to seek to propitiate the Divine favor, or earn a seat at His table; but if thou art willing to identify thyself with thy Lord, and to shelter thyself in Him by the living union of faith; if thou canst base thy plea on the Blood of the everlasting covenant— then the provisions of that covenant between Father and Son shall be extended to thee: and because of God's love to Jesus thou shalt sit at the Divine table, and be regarded as one of the heirs of the great King.

2 Samuel 10:12

The Lord do that which seemeth Him good.

Israel was arrayed against overwhelming odds. To human sight it must have appeared very improbable that Joab would be able to hold his own. However, he made the best arrangements he could; exhorted his men to be of good courage and do their utmost; and then piously left the issue to the God of battles.

There are times in all lives when the case seems desperate. How can we meet with ten thousand him who cometh against us with twenty thousand! Heart and flesh fail. What resource is there, then, save in the flight of the lonely man to the only God? It is for God to act, since the help of man is vain.

In your personal straits.— When patience is exhausted; when the last handful is taken from the barrel; when complicated trials meet and hem you in; when the iron gate and the keepers before the door appear to render escape impossible— then look up, God is marching with reinforcements to your aid.

In your work and war for God in the world.— We too often act and speak as if success were to be won by the forces that we may be able to bring into the field, whereas God asks us for nothing more than fidelity and the right disposition of such forces as we can command; He will do all the rest.

In your outlook on the conflict between good and evil.— It is quite true that there appears to be an infinite disparity between the one and the other. But there are other forces in the field than appear. There is another host of which God Himself is captain. When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifts up the standard. "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven to thy help."

2 Samuel 11:1

David tarried still at Jerusalem.

Ah! fatal dalliance in the arms of sensual ease! It led to David's undoing. It was the time of the year when kings generally went forth to the fight; and in earlier days David would never have thought of leaving to Joab or others the strain and stress of conflict when there were hard knocks to give and take. Indeed, on more than one occasion his followers had remonstrated against his exposing the Light of Israel to the risks of the battlefield. But now he sends Joab and his mighty men to fight against Ammon, while he tarries securely at Jerusalem. In this fatal lethargy he betrays the deterioration of his soul. Already the walls were broken down, and entrance into the citadel was easy. We are not surprised to learn that as he sauntered lazily on his palace roof in the sultry afternoon he was swept away before the rush of sudden passion, and took the poor man's ewe lamb to satisfy the vagrant, hungry impulse which suddenly came to him.

Beware of hours of ease! Rest is necessary; times of recruiting and renewal must come to us all; nature positively demands re-

creation; but there must be no neglect of known duty, no handing over to others of what we might and could do ourselves, no tarrying behind the march of the troops when we should go forth with them to the battle. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. Be most on guard when not actively engaged against the enemy. One unlocked gate may admit the foe to the citadel of the life, and rob you of peace for all after-days. The luxury of the plains of Capua was more fatal to the soldiers of Hannibal than the passage of the Alps.

2 Samuel 12:29

And David went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it.

Victory might seem to have been forever forfeited after so great a fall. We could not have been surprised had we been told that from this time onward the course of David's conquests had stayed. And yet this thought would be a misconception of God's dealings with the penitent. Where there is true contrition, confession, and faith, He not only forgives, but restores; He not only restores to the enjoyment of His favor, but reinstates in opportunities of usefulness. So Jesus not only met the apostle who had denied Him, and put him back into the old position of happy fellowship, but gave him a commission to feed His sheep and lambs.

We have sometimes met backsliders who have doubted the possibility of their forgiveness; or, if they have realized this, they have never dared to hope that they could ever be what they had been. And so long as faith refuses to believe in the perfect work of God's love, it must inevitably take a back seat. Let us seek for such an entire faith in God's forgiving and restoring love as to dare to believe that we are put again into the old place, and allowed to anticipate the same victories as aforesaid. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Directly David said, "I have sinned," in the flash of a moment Nathan said; "The Lord hath put away thy sin"; and when Joab sent tidings that Rabbah was about to fall, David was permitted the honor of its final capture, though it had been associated so closely with Uriah's death. Where sin abounds grace superabounds, and reigns through righteousness. Dare to believe this.

2 Samuel 13:31

Then the king arose, and tare his garments, and lay on the earth.

Throughout the incidents of this chapter, the soul of David touched the bottom of the sea of anguish and remorse. The circumstances narrated were in themselves sad enough; but there was a more bitter element in them for David, because he knew that they were the harvest of which his own sin was the seed. Here began to be fulfilled the sentence of God through Nathan, "The sword shall never depart from thine house."

He had broken up the peace of another's home, and peace had quitted his home, never to return. He had defiled the purity of Uriah's wife, and the purity of his own daughter had been trampled under foot. He had smitten Uriah, and now Absalom had murdered Amnon. Through those awful hours when the entire fate of the whole of his family seemed trembling in the balance, he drank to the dregs the cup of bitterness. Oh, how true are the apostle's words: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Sin resembles the Australian weed, which when once it is sown in the waters will spread with such rapidity as to spoil their beauty, and choke their flow. We must distinguish between the penal and natural results. The penal were borne by Christ for us all, and are remitted forevermore; but the natural remain even to forgiven penitents, as they did to David. Still, God's grace may transmute them into blessings, and cause pearls to grow where before there had been gaping wounds. Ask God to take in hand the natural consequences of your sins, and make them means of grace and ennoblement.

2 Samuel 14:14

Yet doth He devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him.

The means that David devised were really inadequate. He allowed his heart to dictate to his royal sense of justice and rectitude, and permitted Absalom to return to his country and home without one word of confession, one symptom of penitence. The king was overmastered by the father; and the result was disastrous. It shook the respect of his people, undermined the foundations of just government, slackened the bands of every family in the land, and confirmed Absalom in his willful and obstinate career. "What!" said he to himself, "does my father bid me come back without conditions? Does he demand no confession or reparation? Then he condones my sin."

Let parents be warned. If your children disobey, and violate the rules of your home, you have no right to treat them as you did before, until they have owned their sin. You must insist on penitence, confession, and reparation, though it take hours or days or

even weeks of suffering and pleading to bring it about.

Into what relief does David's mistake throw God's way of forgiveness and salvation! Had he acted as David, and as so many wish us to believe, He would have reinstated the human family in the Paradise of His love without waiting for the work of the Mediator; or the confession of the prodigal. By the arbitrary exercise of His sovereign will He might have wiped out the record of our sins without our concurrence. But it would have been to the irreparable undoing of man. Hence it behoved Christ to suffer, by His blood making an atonement for our sins, and by His Spirit bringing us to penitence and confession.

2 Samuel 15:26

Here am I, let Him do to me as seemeth good unto Him.

There is the patience of hope. We love to gird ourselves in the vehemence of our self-will, to go where we choose, to rule the lives of others; but as the years pass and our pride is humbled, the sinews of our strength slackened, and the radiance of early prospects overcast, we are willing to hand ourselves over to our Father, saying, "Behold, here am I; let Him do to me as seemeth good unto Him."

It was thus that Isaac was passive in the hands of Abraham. It was thus that Jesus spoke to His Father, "I come to do thy will, O my God." It was thus that the maiden who was blessed above women, answered the angel's message. It was thus that Paul, when urged not to go up to Jerusalem, avowed his willingness to live or die, as the Lord might choose.

God is ever working upon us through circumstances; and, as in the present case, sometimes He overrules the plottings of wicked men to fulfill His Divine purpose. His will is sometimes brought to us in a cup which a Judas holds to our lips. How blessed to be able to say, as we go forth to meet our Father's will, Behold, here am I! and to look beyond the plottings and machinations of our enemies to One who loves us infinitely. Whatever He permits must be good. Good, if driven as an exile from our home; good, if exposed to the revilings of a Shimei; good, if the heart breaks in bitter tears. All must be good which the good Lord permits or appoints. Many were the afflictions of David, but out of them all he was delivered. When he had learned the lesson, the rod was stayed. God did not take away His mercy from him. Thou too art in His hands, and He will certainly bring thee again, and show thee the city and His habitation.

2 Samuel 16:14

The king and all the people came weary, and refreshed themselves there.

A Great weariness falls often on our souls. We are wearied because of the greatness of our way, and inclined to say there is no hope. Memory tires us, perpetually casting up the record of past unfaithfulness and transgression. The bitter way of the natural consequences of sin is toilsome and difficult to the feet. We faint before the averted eye of former friends and the pitiless criticism of foes. Longings for a vanished past, for life and love, for purity and peace, grind heavily in the soul. Our King has known something of human weariness, though not from all the sources that cause it in His subjects.

But amid the presence of our weariness the voice of God may be heard saying, "This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing." There is rest for weary souls beneath the shadow of the cross, in the sight of which the burden rolls away. There is rest and refreshment as we sit in the banqueting house of Christ's manifested and realized affection. There is refreshment as we eat of His flesh and drink of His blood; as we yield our will to His; as we sit with Him in heavenly places. We assuredly find Him to be "a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isaiah 32:2).

There is no hill Difficulty without its arbor; no desert without its oasis; no sultry heat without its shadow of a great rock; no weariness without its pillow; no intolerable sorrow without its solace; no weariness without its refreshment; no failure of man without a very present help in God.

2 Samuel 17:21

Arise, and pass quickly over the water.

The water of Jordan may serve as an illustration for our position. Our David has passed over the waters of death, and in doing so has taken us with Him. There is a sense in which in the morning light of Easter Day all who believed passed over with Him, so that "by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over to Jordan."

We all hold the doctrine of Substitution: Do we sufficiently realize that of Identification? Not only did Jesus die for us, but we died

with and in Him. In Him, as the true Noah's Ark, the whole Church passed over the Jordan of death from the old world to the new. There are some who do not understand that in the purpose of God we are already standing on resurrection ground. Across the water we can hear the murmur of the world, and detect its corruption; but we are the inheritors of the world in which there is no death nor corruption nor the dominion of sin. When a man realizes this he no longer braces himself up to meet death, because he knows that in the person of Christ he has left it behind forever.

What is true, however, in God's purpose should be the aim and goal of our daily striving. To us there comes the unceasing call, "Arise, and go over Jordan." There is always a thither and a hither side for every experience and act. We may always do as the world does; this is to stay on the death side. We may always do as Christ does; this is to pass over to the risen and living side. Reckon that you have died, and mortify the deeds of your body. "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness."

2 Samuel 18:22–23

Wherefore wilt thou run? ... Come what may, said he, I will run. (r. v.)

Joab did not love David, as Ahimaaz did, and could not understand what made the young man so eager to carry the tidings. Doubtless Ahimaaz and Cushie entirely misinterpreted the heart of David, and thought that he would be glad to hear that the rebellion was stamped out, and Absalom was dead. And it was because of the pleasure which he thought to give his king that the swift-footed son of Zadok pleaded for permission to run. What though there would be no reward, or that it would fall to the lot of Cushie, who had already started at Joab's command— that mattered not, the love of David constrained him.

How often that question of reward is thrown at the servants of God. It is one of the favorite taunts of the world; as Satan said of Job, that we do as we do because we are paid. "Doth Job serve God for nought?" And nothing so startles men as disinterested service. They cannot account for it; but it wins their respect. "Reward or no reward; recompense or none; smiles or tears, come what may, let me run." That is the spirit that becomes a Christian, and convinces the world. "The love of Christ constraineth us."

Ahimaaz outran Cushie. The one was a volunteer for love's dear sake; the other, a bond-servant, doing as he was told. Love loaned wings to his feet, and speeding past his fellow bore him first into David's presence. So God's will is done in heaven: "The cherubim ran and returned like a flash of lightning." So God's will is done on earth: "They departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. And behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail!"

2 Samuel 19:42

The King is near of kin to us.

There are two derivations for the word king: one from the word can— the king is the man that can do things; the other from the word kin— the king is closely related to us, of our kith and kin. In either case, there is a beautiful meaning, as touching our Lord and Savior. He is King, because He has overcome our enemies, and can overcome. He is King, because He has taken on Himself our flesh and blood, and has forever made us one with Himself. The King is our kinsman. Our kinsman is King.

It is very comforting to know how really our Lord has identified Himself with us. The Gospels are full of the wonderful story. His kinship was manifested, in—

His Prayers.— He bade us speak to God as our Father; in that marvellous possessive pronoun, not only linking us all to one another, but including Himself in our petitions, save when we ask for forgiveness.

His Infirmities.— "We have not a high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." His hunger and thirst; His weariness and exhaustion; His suffering unto death all accentuate the closeness of the tie between us.

His Temptations.— "In all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." The avenues through which the tempter could approach Him were those by which He assails us also. No temptation took Him, but such as is common to man. So to every, lonely soldier of His He draws near, saying, "Be of good cheer; I have passed through it all. I am your brother in the fight; I feel for you with a quick sympathy; the glories of my throne do not alter my true-hearted love."

2 Samuel 20:2

The men of Judah clave unto their King.

We are reminded of the exhortation of the good Barnabas, that with purpose of heart the converts of Antioch should cleave unto the Lord. This is the test of a true faith. We often come to the dividing of the paths. We stand on the watershed of the hills: that way

leads back to Moab with its fascinations; this on to Canaan with its spiritual attractions. Orpah and Ruth must choose. Each is equally profuse in speeches and tears; but the ultimate test of love is whether they will stay or go. Which will cleave to the widowed Naomi? She is the truest lover; her fidelity will attest the fervor and strength of her affection. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, and returned to her people and her gods, while Ruth “clave unto her.”

We must cleave to Jesus, in spite of the derision of the multitude. We must be prepared to stand with Him when He stands alone, or goes forth alone to die. We must be willing to stem the mighty tide of the world which has left Him and pours past us. Though all forsake Him, yet we must cleave.

We must cleave to Jesus, in spite of the rebellion of the flesh. Our whole nature may sometimes rise in insurrection, demanding some for bidden fruit. It is no child's play then for the lonely will to stand by itself in unshaken fidelity and loyalty; but it must.

We must cleave to Jesus when He seems to rebuff us. Only those who can stand so sharp an ordeal, are exposed to it. But sometimes we are called to pass through it as job, that angels may learn how Christ's lovers cling to Him, not for His gifts, but for Himself.

2 Samuel 21:1

Because he slew the Gibeonites.

The Gibeonites were under the protection of a special covenant, which had been entered into between them and Joshua. That covenant was the outcome of a ruse on their part. But since it had been most solemnly made by the leaders of Israel, it held good. The fact of their deceit and chicanery could not absolve Israel from the oath which had been passed for their safety. For centuries the provisions of this covenant had been observed, till Saul invaded them, and slew the Gibeonites. This was a grievous sin, which, according to the religious light of the time, seemed to demand blood; and David proposed to atone for blood by blood. Nothing but blood could atone for sin so black and dark.

We are also protected by a covenant, into which the Father has entered with the Son, not for our worthiness or merit, but only because He would. The provisions of that covenant engage to take us to be His people, to remember our sins no more, and to make the Divine law the object of our love (Hebrews 8). And the argument is irresistible, that if man is so mindful of a covenant as to feel that its infraction is a sin which can only be expiated by blood-shedding, it is impossible to suppose that God will ever run back from His.

O my soul, thou mayest rest secure in this here is an everlasting rock; this foundation shall suffice thee forevermore. Thou art in the Son of His love. Though thou art sinful and evil, yet thou art included in the covenant which is more lasting than that of day and night. Jesus has met its conditions on thy behalf, and has undertaken to secure thy obedience and holiness.

2 Samuel 22 Solid-Rock Faith

Read: Psalm 18:1-3,46

The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer. —Psalm 18:2

My wife and I both have grandmothers who have lived past 100. Talking with them and their friends, I detect a trend that seems almost universal in the reminiscences of older people: They recall difficult times with a touch of nostalgia. The elderly swap stories about World War II and the Great Depression; they speak fondly of hardships such as blizzards, the childhood outhouse, and the time in college when they ate canned soup and stale bread 3 weeks in a row.

Paradoxically, difficult times may help nourish faith and strengthen personal bonds. Seeing this principle lived out, I can better understand one of the mysteries relating to God. Faith boils down to a question of trust. If I do stand on a solid rock of trust in God (Ps. 18:2), the worst of circumstances will not destroy that relationship.

Solid-rock faith allows me to believe that despite the chaos of the present moment, God does reign. Regardless of how worthless I may feel, I truly matter to a God of love. No pain lasts forever, and no evil triumphs in the end.

Solid-rock faith sees even the darkest deed of all history, the death of God's Son, as a necessary prelude to the brightest moment in all history—His resurrection and triumph over death.

Lord, You are the Rock, the object of my faith. My faith stands on You and not on my shifting feelings; otherwise I would be sure to fall.

Christ, the Rock, is our sure hope.

By Philip Yancey

INSIGHT: Psalm 18 is a song of thanksgiving. The long superscription, taken from 2 Samuel 22:1, gives the circumstances that led David to write this song of deliverance: “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.” David used seven metaphors to describe the Lord: He is a rock, fortress, and deliverer. He is our strength, shield, horn of salvation, and stronghold (vv. 2-3).

2 Samuel 22:26-37 Greater than the Mess

You, Lord, are my lamp; the Lord turns my darkness into light. 2 Samuel 22:29

A major theme of the Old Testament book of 2 Samuel could easily be “Life is a mess!” It has all the elements of a blockbuster TV miniseries. As David sought to establish his rule as king of Israel, he faced military challenges, political intrigue, and betrayal by friends and family members. And David himself was certainly not without guilt as his relationship with Bathsheba clearly showed (chs. 11–12).

Yet near the end of 2 Samuel we find David’s song of praise to God for His mercy, love, and deliverance. “You, Lord, are my lamp; the Lord turns my darkness into light” (22:29).

Life is messy, but God is greater than the mess.

In many of his difficulties, David turned to the Lord. “With your help I can advance against a troop [run through a barricade]; with my God I can scale a wall” (v. 30).

Perhaps we identify with David’s struggles because he, like us, was far from perfect. Yet he knew that God was greater than the most chaotic parts of his life.

With David we can say, “As for God, his way is perfect: the Lord’s word is flawless; he shields all who take refuge in him” (v. 31). And that includes us!

Life is messy, but God is greater than the mess.

Lord, we cannot read about the failures and difficulties of others without being reminded of our own. We bring them all to You, seeking forgiveness and Your power for a fresh start. By David C. McCasland

It’s not too late to make a fresh start with God.

INSIGHT: In 2 Samuel 22 David celebrates the faithfulness of God. Many of the same ideas and some of the same words are found in Psalm 18. The superscription to Psalm 18 says: For the director of music. Of David the servant of the Lord. He sang to the Lord the words of this song when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. These words were so important to David that he reflected on them often. Bill Crowder

2 Samuel 22:1-8 Let Your Balloon Go!

I will give thanks to You, O Lord, . . . and sing praises to Your name. —2 Samuel 22:50

The participants at a conference in a church in Nebraska were given helium-filled balloons and told to release them at a point in the worship service when they felt like expressing their joy. All through the service, balloons ascended one by one. But when the meeting was over, one-third of the people had not released their balloons. I wonder if they couldn’t think of any reason to praise God.

King David would have let go of his balloon when singing his song of praise recorded in 2 Samuel 22. God had delivered him from all his enemies (v.1). Earlier, when hiding from King Saul in the rocky desert, he had learned that true security is found only in God (1 Samuel 23:25). David’s heart had to “give thanks” and “sing praises,” for the Lord had become David’s rock, fortress, deliverer, stronghold, refuge, and Savior (2 Samuel 22:2-3,50).

What has the Lord been for you throughout your life? Your peace in a chaotic time? Your comforter amid loss? Your forgiver of a sinful choice? Your strength in a difficult task?

Take out a piece of paper and write down your list of thanks. Then take time to praise God for all He is and all He has done.

Let your balloon go!

From your heart give God your praise

For His blessings all your days;
Lift your voice to God above—
God of mercy, God of love. —Hess

Praise is the overflow of a joyful heart.

By Anne Cetas

Out of the Deep

Read: 2 Samuel 22:17–20

He reached down from on high and took hold of me. 2 Samuel 22:17

I scanned the water intently, on alert for signs of trouble. During my six-hour shifts as a lifeguard, I watched from the side of the pool to ensure the safety of those swimming. Leaving my post, or even becoming lax in my attentiveness, could have grave consequences for those in the pool. If a swimmer was in danger of drowning due to injury or lack of skill, it was my responsibility to pluck them from the water and return them to safety on the pool deck.

After experiencing God's aid in battle against the Philistines (2 Sam. 21:15–22), David likens his rescue to being drawn out of "deep waters" (22:17). David's very life—and that of his men—was in serious danger from his enemies. God buoyed David as he was drowning in disaster. While lifeguards are paid to assure the safety of swimmers, God, on the other hand, saved David because of His delight in him (v. 20). My heart leaps for joy when I realize that God doesn't watch over and protect me because He's obliged to but because He wants to.

Thank You, Lord, for seeing my struggles and standing ready to save me.

When we feel overcome by the troubles of life, we can rest in the knowledge that God, our Lifeguard, sees our struggle and, because of His delight in us, watches over and protects us.

Thank You, Lord, for seeing my struggles and standing ready to save me. Help me to trust Your rescuing love more fully. By Kirsten Holmberg

God delights in saving His children.

INSIGHT: As David's years added up, his strength began to fail. Yet this was his chance to recall once again the many times the Lord had heard his cry for help and rescued him from trouble. In the course of a wonderful—yet difficult—life, David knew the emotions of fear and adrenaline rush. As a young man, wild animals stalked his father's sheep. Later there was the threat of Goliath, the murderous pursuit by Saul, and military battles on many fronts. In one of his last wars with the Philistines, David became exhausted. A Philistine thought this was his opportunity to kill the king of Israel. But one of David's soldiers rushed to his side and killed the Philistine. It was a close call. After that, David's men said, "Never again will you go out with us to battle, so that the lamp of Israel will not be extinguished" (2 Sam. 21:17). God had been so faithful to David that his soldiers made the mistake of thinking that without him they themselves would be defeated by their enemies. Do we need to learn as they did that rescue comes only from the Lord? Mart DeHaan

2 Samuel 22:36

Thy gentleness hath made me great.

The triumph of God's gentle goodness will be our song forever. In those far distant ages, when we look back on our earthly course, as a grown man on his boyhood, and when the words of this Psalm shall express our glad emotions, we shall recognize that the Hand which brought us thither was as gentle as our mother's; and that the things we craved, but failed to receive, were withheld by His gentle goodness. Our history tells what gentleness will do.

The Apostle besought the Corinthian converts by the gentleness of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:1). Though there were abuses amongst them that seemed to call for stringent dealing, he felt that they could be best removed by the gentle love which he had learned from the heart of Christ. The wisdom which is from above is gentle as well as pure; and in dealing with the sin that chokes our growth, it is probable that gentleness will do more than severity. The gentleness of the nurse that cherishes her children; of the lover to her whom he cherishes above himself; of the infinite love which bears and endures to the uttermost— is the furnace before which the foul ingredients of our hearts are driven never to return. We might brave the lion; we are vanquished by the Lamb; we could withstand the scathing look of scorn; but when the gentle Lord casts on us the look of ineffable tenderness, we go out to weep bitterly.

That He has borne with us so lovingly; that He has filled our lives with mercy even when compelled to correct; that He has never altered in His tender behavior toward us; that He has returned our rebuffs and slights with meekness and forbearance; that He has never wearied of us— this is an everlasting tribute to the gentleness that makes great.

2 Samuel 23:4

As the light of the morning when the sun riseth, a morning without clouds.

The dealings of God with man are compared to morning light, and the sprouting of tender grass in the sunshine that follows rain. The one may refer to youth, and the other to age. In each there is sunlight: in the one case it is before the clouds have gathered; in the other after they have dispersed.

Clouds.— There are many different sorts: the cirrus, like platines in the sky; the cumulus, in heaps, like the summits of distant mountains; the strata, or long bars; the nimbus, heavy with showers. There is a counterpart for each in human life, without which we should miss much of those experiences of light and shade that so frequently reveal the nature of the light. We should not know God's comfort and very present help, if it were not for the clouds which are born in the marsh-lands of trouble. Who does not prefer the changeful beauty of an English spring to the unclouded blue of Italian skies?

The Light of the Morning.— The love of God steals over hearts as the dawn. He is the Rocks; but His advent breaks gently as light. So God's love came to Lydia, whose heart opened as a flower its petals. This makes it difficult for some of us to decide the moment of our regeneration; only we know that, once darkness, we are now light in the Lord.

Clear Shining after Rain.— We all know something of cloud and rain. If we did not, our lives would be arid as a desert. Rain is necessary to fructify the seeds that lie buried in the soil; but clear shining is needed too. Times of joy are needed equally as those of sorrow. The tender grass is the child of rain and sun. Hast thou had tears, thou shalt have smiles! Hast thou had clouds and rain, thou shalt have clear shining!

[2 Samuel 24:1-14 A Misplaced Confidence](#) - Theodore Epp

This last attack of Satan upon David took place about 38 years after David had ascended the throne and about two years before his death.

Satan was successful for a brief time in enticing David into sin, which should remind us all that we are never free from being tested. At the same time we can have God's victory.

If we fall, we can find forgiveness and restoration if we are genuine in our repentance.

Ordinarily nothing would be wrong with numbering people. Census taking is done periodically by any alert government.

But numbering the children of Israel was a matter of pride. David wanted to know how strong his nation was militarily. His strength really was in God, but David was putting his trust in his armies when he numbered the people.

God's advice was, "You do not need to number the people. I have taken care of this situation." The strength of Israel's army meant nothing if God was not with them.

The same is true in our spiritual life. Until we can say with true conviction, "I am nothing," God cannot do much for us. He has chosen that which is nothing to confound the wisdom of the wise (see 1 Cor. 1:26-29). Our sufficiency is of God, not of ourselves (see 2 Cor. 3:5).

"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man" (Ps. 118:8).

[2 Samuel 24:18-25 When Is It a Sacrifice?](#) - Theodore Epp

The Lord not only stayed the plague, but through Gad He also instructed David to build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Ornan, the Jebusite (1 Chron. 21:18).

The Lord was very specific about this and left no alternative in the matter.

Why this particular spot was chosen does not appear in the narrative, but later on in 2 Chronicles 3:1 we have this statement: "Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite."

If David had been a grasping, selfish man, he might have looked on this as an opportunity to fulfill the will of God without any cost to himself.

He had been passed over when the plague struck men in Israel, and now a rich man had offered him a threshing floor for an altar and animals and grain for the offerings.

But David refused to bring before the Lord that which cost him nothing. "And the king said unto Araunah [Ornan], Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing" (2 Sam. 24:24).

What a tremendous lesson for us. It is one thing to serve on boards and committees that handle the affairs of others; it is quite another to make decisions that affect us personally.

It is not a sacrifice to the Lord if we give of that which costs us nothing.

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:17).

See Related Devotionals:

- [Psalm 51:1-17 Getting Right With God](#)
- [Hebrews 12:1-13 God's Purpose in Chastising](#)

2 Samuel 24:24

Neither will I offer burnt-offerings ... of that which hath cost me nothing.

God's love to us cost Him something. He spared not His own Son, and that Son spared not His blood. But how little our love to Him costs us! Let us understand that where there is true, strong love to Jesus, it will cost us something. Love is the costliest of all undertakings.

It will cost us Self-denial. Christ and self are perfectly incompatible; to have the one we must be prepared to surrender the other. The heart subtly schemes to hold both; but it does not deceive Christ. He knows in a moment when we have preferred to spare ourselves and to sacrifice Him, or to obey Him and sacrifice ourselves. We know it also. At first we may find it an effort to count all things but loss for Him; but as we go on doing it, and drink in the fresh air that breathes about the mountains of self-denial— above all, as we see the smile of pleasure on His face— our hearts leap with joy, and we love to give Him everything, not thinking of the cost, any more than Mary did when she broke the alabaster box of very precious ointment. After all, it is but fitting that we offer our bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God."

It will cost us Companionships. Those who knew us will pass us with averted faces. It will cost us hard-earned money; for we shall realize that we have no property in anything that we possess. It will cost us high repute amongst our fellows. But what shall we mind if we gain Christ? You cannot give up for Him without regaining everything you have renounced; but purified and transfigured. Did not the Lord say so? And did He not add a hundredfold, with persecution. Let us heartily respond, "Lord, Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love Thee!"