



## A Man After God's Own Heart

### *Dedication, Service and Surrender to God*

King David was not a perfect man. He had many weaknesses and fell into sin on several occasions. However, God was impressed with David, and for good reason. Psalm 89 has a beautiful account of God's commitment to David.

The New Testament gives this statement about David:

*(Acts 13:22 KJV) "And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, **a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.**"*

David was after the heart of God. To be after the heart of God he had to live for and pursue the will of God consistently. God could trust that David would fulfill the will of God at any cost and that pleased God.

Some scholars believe that one of David's sins was that he got a little full of himself and began to consider expanding the borders of Israel beyond what God had directed because he "numbered" the fighting men of Israel. The Bible clearly says that Satan moved him to do this. Satan always hits at a weakness.

*(1 Chronicles 21:1 KJV) "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel."*

The accounts in 1Chronicles 21 and 2Samuel 24 reveal that God was displeased with David concerning this and brought severe judgement. David knew he had sinned right after he had Israel numbered. The prophet Gad came to David and announced three different judgements that David was to choose from as punishment. David made an interesting statement in his choice:

*(2 Samuel 24:14 KJV) "And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man."*

David understood God and knew Him to be merciful. David also knew that man would have no mercy. David's choice brought the death of 70,000 in Israel at the hand of a destroying angel. When the angel reached Jerusalem and was ready to destroy there as well, God stopped the angel.

When David sees the angel, he admits to God that he was the one that had sinned and that the people had not. He also asked that God's hand be against him and his house rather than against the people of Israel. I like that. David took personal responsibility for what he had done. These days people try to find someone else to blame. It seems that no one is personally responsible for anything any more. A murderer might say, "*I didn't kill that person, the bullet did.*" David didn't run from what he had done - the essential key in restoration.

David is then instructed by the prophet to raise up an alter to the Lord in order to offer a sacrifice. The problem was that the place where he was instructed to build the alter did not belong to David.

The owner of the property sees all of this happening along with King David coming to see him. In submission to the King, the owner offers the land and his animals for the sacrifice freely to King David. This offering was to avert the plague from the people. Serious business.

King David refuses to take it and he makes an astounding statement:

*(2 Samuel 24:24 KJV) "And the king said unto Araunah, 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.** So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver."*

I find David's behavior in this very interesting. As the King, David could have just taken the land and the animals when it was offered to him. But, David understood God. David knew that if there was no personal cost in the sacrifice then it was void of his involvement. If it doesn't cost you, then it isn't your sacrifice - and you have nothing vested in it.

I see this as one of the biggest problems in the church financial world today. Almost all of the ministry, particularly on finances, is based on entitlement. Because the Bible reveals to us many benefits as a child of God, people have begun to view these things as entitlements rather than an inheritance - which is a gift. When you are entitled to something, you pay no price for it, you expect it as a right, and you are often not grateful for getting it. Out of this comes all the teaching about how to work the "Kingdom system" to make it produce for you.

The financial teaching I hear today is humanistically based. Without saying it, the Word of God is presented as an enhancement to the human experience to those who understand it's mysteries and can work them. The focus is on humans and not on God, or His will.

The most successful pastor (now in heaven) in all of New England said some remarkable things to me. This man built a very large church - and it was paid for. He then expanded it - and that was paid for. I was sitting with him at a minister's conference while a pastor from a poverty stricken country in Europe was sharing his need for money to build a church. My pastor friend said to me, "*I was wondering what that \$150,000 in the bank was for.*" And, he gave it to the pastor in need on the spot. This New England pastor did not have a money problem.

I asked my pastor friend how he did what he did because no one else has done anything like it. I know other pastors that have big churches, but they have big mortgages and angry contractors, but they are all "believing" for more money. This pastor said to me, "**Scott, you have to teach the people to sacrifice. If they will sacrifice to see God's will done, they will prosper.**" There is no sacrifice without there being a personal cost. "Sacrifice" seems to be a dirty word among charismatic, Word of faith people these days. There is lot's of talk about the sacrifice Jesus made for us and what it has provided for us, but I don't hear of any sacrifice needed on our side to see the Kingdom of God advance. Consequently, the people are continuously promised what God will do for them if they sow their seed. The focus is never on God - only on the people's return in giving. We need to teach our people that there is a time and purpose for us to sacrifice.

The Bible tells us that David offered “burnt” offerings and “peace” offerings.

*(2 Samuel 24:25 ESV) “And David built there an altar to the LORD and offered **burnt offerings and peace offerings**. So the LORD responded to the plea for the land, and the plague was averted from Israel.”*

The burnt offering symbolizes dedication, service and entire surrender to God. It is interesting to note that the burnt offering was the only offering that non-Israelites were allowed to bring. David was demonstrating his surrender to God, to His will, and to His service. No wonder God said that David was a man after His own heart that would fulfill all His will.

David also made a peace offering. The peace offering symbolizes completion, the complete peace with God. It also is an offering of thanksgiving and of acknowledgement of mercies received. David had faith in God!

I believe that David knew he had to be personally vested in the burnt offering for it to have its meaning and for God to receive it. This gave him the confidence to then offer the peace offering that demonstrated he knew he had received the mercies of God. In this offering, please notice what was **not** an element. There was no promise of a financial return, yet it had cost David quite a sum of money to obey God. I would like to ask a question. Does everything we give to God have to be conditional upon what our return will be? Can't we just give ourselves in surrender to God and to His will? Is there always supposed to be a view towards some harvest? I remember hearing brother Kenneth E. Hagin say that our motive for giving to God should be love for God.

David was not poor. In this passage David is speaking to his son, Solomon, about building the Temple.

*(1 Chronicles 22:14–16 KJV) “Now, behold, in my trouble **I have prepared for the house of the LORD** an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight; for it is in abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto. Moreover there are workmen with thee in abundance, hewers and workers of stone and timber, and all manner of cunning men for every manner of work. **Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, there is no number**. Arise therefore, and be doing, and the LORD be with thee.”*

“No number” means you cannot count it because it is so large. Apparently David gave the biggest building fund offering ever made. David was extremely wealthy, but his focus was on the will of God rather than on his own luxury, even though he lived in luxury. Obedience to the will of God and willingness to sacrifice for the Kingdom is what made David wealthy.

It has been estimated that around eighty percent of the Christians in America live a carnal life, do not tithe, and do not pursue the will of God. They may **go** to church, but they are not living **for** God. It’s irresponsible to tell them that God will supernaturally multiply their giving if they just “sow their seed.” God blesses those that dedicate, serve and surrender to God, and that means something has to be given up on our part.

The birth of poverty is plainly seen in the scripture. There was no poverty until the man did what he wanted to do and disobeyed God’s direct command (Genesis 2 and 3). In other words, the man did not dedicate to, serve and surrender to the will of God - a burnt offering. The man lived in paradise and “had it all” until he chose to not remain surrendered to the will of God. At that point, the curse of poverty came upon the entire earth.

Lack of dedication brings poverty. Dedication brings blessings. Lack of service to God brings poverty. Serving God wholeheartedly brings blessings. Lack of surrender brings poverty. Surrender to God brings His blessings. You can’t sow a seed big enough to be blessed of God while at the same time you are not dedicated, serving and surrendered to God.

Perhaps its time for a burnt offering.

