

The Life of David: Feeling the Loneliness of Career, Temptations & Failure II Samuel 6-11

David from the Bible was just a man. He had a job, a house, a family, and all the other little details of life. Though he was a King, an inspired Psalm writer, and a man after God's own heart: he was also 100% normal human.

So as we look at the longest stretch of David's life, the 40-year career he had as King of Israel, we come to areas that can touch our lives deeply.

Most of us will never face a ten foot tall giant—and kill them with a stone and sling. Most of us will never be famous as musicians, or have spears thrown at us, or hide in caves: but nearly all of us will do a form of monotonous, repetitive work for much of our lives.

Whether teaching school, working in health care, industry, sales, or service: most jobs are tedious; and get as tiring as the old, out of date magazines at laundromats.

Part of the curse is that work is hard, and it takes sweat and toil to earn enough to survive.

Though David was rich, he still had to work for 40 years! Join me in II Samuel 6 and get a small glimpse of these long years.

Faithful in The Long Haul

2 Samuel 6:1-23 Again David gathered all the choice men of Israel, thirty thousand. 2 And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, whose name is called by the Name, the LORD of Hosts, who dwells between the cherubim. 3 So they set the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart. 4 And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill, accompanying the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark. 5 Then David and all the house of Israel played music before the LORD on all kinds of instruments of fir wood, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on sistrums, and on cymbals. 6 And when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. 7 Then the anger of the

LORD was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him there for his error; and he died there by the ark of God. 8 And David became angry because of the LORD's outbreak against Uzzah; and he called the name of the place Perez Uzzah[c] to this day. 9 David was afraid of the LORD that day; and he said, "How can the ark of the LORD come to me?" 10 So David would not move the ark of the LORD with him into the City of David; but David took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. 11 The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite three months. And the LORD blessed Obed-Edom and all his household. 12 Now it was told King David, saying, "The LORD has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God." So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness. 13 And so it was, when those bearing the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, that he sacrificed oxen and fatted sheep. 14 Then David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was wearing a linen ephod. 15 So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet. 16 Now as the ark of the LORD came into the City of David, Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window and saw King David leaping and whirling before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart. 17 So they brought the ark of the LORD, and set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it. Then David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. 18 And when David had finished offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts. 19 Then he distributed among all the people, among the whole multitude of Israel, both the women and the men, to everyone a loaf of bread, a piece of meat, and a cake of raisins. So all the people departed, everyone to his house. 20 Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, "How glorious was the king of Israel today, uncovering himself today in the eyes of the maids of his servants, as one of the base fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!" 21 So David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me instead of your father and all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel. Therefore I will play music before the LORD. 22 And I will be even more undignified than this, and will be humble in my own sight. But as for the maidservants of whom you have spoken, by them I will be held in honor." 23 Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.

Pray

In II Samuel 6 David has entered the longest and most normal part of life. Somewhere in this period is when **David begins to feel a new type of loneliness from the years of unending work in his career.** The Psalms of this era are very rich for our spiritual nurture

David writes of his desires to serve the Lord as he enters his career as King David over Israel. He most likely was inspired to write three Psalms in this period: **Psalm 15, 24, 68** in this time.

- Psalm 15 is the Portrait of a Godly Man

- Psalm 24 is hymn to the Greatness of God
- Psalm 68 is a testimony to God's Faithful Care

One special note on the Psalms is the usage of the Psalms in the daily Temple worship from Solomon's time through the time of Christ. Here are the Psalms that were sung¹ each day at the Temple:

- Sunday—Psalm 24.
- Monday—Psalm 48.
- Tuesday—Psalm 82.
- Wednesday—Psalm 94.
- Thursday—Psalm 81.
- Friday—Psalm 93.
- Saturday—the Sabbath Psalm 92.

Psalm 15 seems to be the outline Jesus used for the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 5-7 follows quite closely² the flow of this Psalm.

A Godly Man's Habits

Psalm 15 is to men what Proverbs 31 should be to women. There is in Psalm 15 a wonderful, changeless portrait of those blessed ones who may dwell in God's presence. The Spirit of God gives us, through David, in verses 2-5, a marvelous description of a godly man—one who longs to be holy, as God is holy.

Open there with me and listen to these powerful words:

Psalm 15 (NKJV) A Psalm of David.

1 LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle?
Who may dwell in Your holy hill?

2 He who walks uprightly,
And works righteousness,
And speaks the truth in his heart;

3 He who does not backbite with his tongue,
Nor does evil to his neighbor,
Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend;

4 In whose eyes a vile person is despised,
But he honors those who fear the LORD;
He who swears to his own hurt and does not change;

5 He who does not put out his money at usury,
Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.

¹ John Phillips, Exploring the Psalms, vol. 1, page 180.

² John Phillips, Exploring the Psalms, vol. 1, page 121.

He who does these things shall never be moved.

The following six traits identify the disciplines we should prayerfully cultivate in our lives. As we look at each one of them, be an active listener by responding, “allow, invite, welcome, and give yourself over to” the truths that impact you from each verse.

Then bow before the Lord, and let the very Word of Christ spill forth into your life, drenching you—absorbing into your soul and changing every aspect of your life—your marriage, home, life, and all!

Here are some of the disciplines we should cultivate.

1. Lives Committed to Personal Integrity v.2

A godly man is first described as one “*who walks uprightly, and works righteousness*” (Psalm 15:2). His walk exemplifies integrity. In other words, he is what he looks like; he is what he says he is. Many Christians have problems with either spiritual anorexia or bulimia.

Anorexic Christians are so busy that they claim to have no time to read the Bible.

Bulimic Christians typically binge on the Word Sundays, but promptly purge such feedings by later ignoring God’s message.

That is the spiritual condition of so many people. Godliness is characterized by internalizing—being a doer of the Word, and not just a hearer. A godly walk is guided by integrity, and displays works of righteousness.

2. Tongues Bridled by Internalized Truth v.3a

David goes on to say that one who is godly “*does not backbite with his tongue*” (Psalm 15:3). Not only does he walk with integrity and work righteousness, but truth is what he speaks inside and out. He doesn’t slander with his tongue because he’s not a malicious gossip, as Paul talked about in 2 Timothy 3.

Awhile ago, I was riding with my children in the car when one of them said, “Did you hear about ...?” I replied, “No, but before you tell me, who did you hear that from? Do you know for a fact that is true?” The response was, “No, they just said it was.” I explained, “That is slander because you don’t know for sure whether or not it is true.

And you are going to tell me that person is bad because someone else said so, and you’ve never even talked to the person?”

We need to model the confession that we sometimes don't have first-hand knowledge of a situation, and so we choose to remain silent lest we falsely accuse another. Children need to be taught this truth from James 1: *"If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless."*

A good rule of thumb is this: If you're not part of the problem, or part of the solution, you shouldn't discuss the problem in the first place, because that is slander. Proverbs 6:16 reports the seven things which God considers an abomination. Sowing evil reports about others is right next to the gross immoralities of licentious living.

A godly person will not only: internalize truth, walk with integrity, and work righteousness, but he will also speak truth in his heart and to others; he won't slander with his tongue.

3. Hearts Governed by Love From Above v.3b

In the middle of Psalm 15:3, David says that a godly man *"does [not do] evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend."* This is what we as New Testament believers are to invite God to do in our lives. Ask Him to make this verse real in your daily experience. James 3:17 states, *"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."*

Such a man will be characterized by living the truth. When a friend listens to and receives an accusation against another, it can be devastating. One who lives by the Truth will not do such a hurtful thing. The church has been hurt most by Christians who take up reproaches against each other—fighting, dividing, and speaking evil. Christ said, *"If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand."* How can the house of God survive with such evil in its midst? A godly man will commit to not doing evil to his neighbor, and to not taking up a reproach against others. This is a huge commitment—but with God it is possible.

4. Thoughts Captivated by God Above v.4a

David goes on to describe a godly person as one *"In whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the Lord"* (Psalm 15:4a). A godly man will respect the truth so much that he has the right heroes. Do you know why I'm very careful about what posters my children put up in our house? I don't want them to have heroes who are reprobates—those whose lives are not governed by God. Should you have a hero who is a reprobate? No, even if that person happens to be the greatest in your favorite music or sport.

The *USA Today* once featured a phenomenal bowler, a man whose bowling average was 285. He laid claim to having had twenty-five straight perfect-score

games of 300. I found that to be amazing—until I discovered that he bowls on a 15-foot-long alley! He stands right in front of the pins, and then throws the ball.

On the surface, he looked like a great bowler, but whenever he plays by the same rules as other bowlers, he's only average. Before viewing others as real heroes, and thinking that they're "the best," find out whose rules they're playing by. Are they playing by the rules that count—God's rules? A godly man will respect truth so much that he chooses God's kind of heroes.

Not only is a reprobate despised in his eyes, but he "*honors those who fear the Lord ...*" The upright and godly become chosen heroes. Rather than wasting time, money, energy, and emotion on the world's heroes by striving to impress his peers, a godly man chooses to honor time-tested men and women of faith—those in his school, work place, or church who genuinely love and follow Christ. In doing so, this practice also establishes righteous role models for his children.

5. Promises Guarded by Truth Within v.4b

David says that a godly man "*swears to his own hurt and does not change*" (Psalm 15:4b). In Matthew 10, as Christ's apostles went out, He instructed them to accept the first offer of hospitality whenever they went into a new town. Why did He say that? Before they preached initially, no one knew who they were. Usually, the lowliest people would extend an invitation to eat with them. (They'd simply add a little extra water to the stew!)

However, once the apostles preached their first message, the affluent suddenly said, "Come on up here on the hill—where we live!" What were the apostles to do? Christ expected them to keep their commitment to the first people who invited them. A godly man won't change his decision based upon how it will help him. God's way is to swear to our own hurt; make the decision that's right, and never change it for external reasons.

6. Goals Lived for Life Beyond Today v.5

David went on to say that a godly man "*does not put out his money at usury [interest], Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent*" (Psalm 15:5).

He can't be bought. In Israel, interest was customarily charged to foreigners, but never to fellow Israelites. People in Israel didn't borrow money unless they were in need. They didn't have long term loans; they inherited land; they would save, buy, and then construct. But when they were in desperate need, they would borrow. At such times, Israelites were not to take advantage of another person's plight. A godly man won't take advantage of someone who is hurting. He can't be bought; he can't be swayed from what is right.

A godly man would thus resist this type of offer: "If you let this go through in spite of the fact that it's not up to specifications, we'll reward you handsomely!" Or, he'd refuse to compromise, in spite of possible repercussions, when asked to do something shady like this example: "Just let that report go through, even though it's not totally honest. After all, we don't want the people at corporate headquarters to get mad at us!" A godly man can't be bought; he doesn't take a bribe against the innocent; he won't let the unsuspecting be taken advantage of because it would benefit him. That is internalized truth.

He also avoids the inward bribes of rationalizing away human greed, as in this example: "If I use cheaper materials, I'll make more profit and it will be years before my patients or customers would ever find out."

So starts the long road of David's career. What a wonderful testimony to what it was about David that pleased God. These should be also our habits for the long and the short hauls of life.

Why not just repeat those with me as we prepare to give ourselves to the Lord at the communion time.

- 1. Lord, I want my Life Committed to Personal Integrity v.2**
- 2. Lord, I want my Tongues Bridled by Internalized Truth v.3**
- 3. Lord, I want my Heart Governed by Love From Above v.3b**
- 4. Lord, I want my Thoughts Captivated by God Above v.4a**
- 5. Lord, I want my Promises Guarded by Your Truth Within v.4b**
- 7. Lord, I want my Goals Lived for Life Beyond Today v.5**