To understand the heart of David is difficult from our vantage point. We see a boy with his sheep, a young man challenging giants, and a man with huge mistakes as well as huge successes in his life. Remember it was David who brought the nation together, who planned and financed Solomon’s temple, and who wrote many of the Psalms that today still touch many hearts. One Psalm, written by David, places our attention appropriately upon the secret of his success as a man of God. It is not found in the Book of Psalms. It is a song he wrote as he neared the end of his life and is now recorded in II Samuel 22. Verse 36 places everything into perfect perspective. *Thou hast given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy gentleness has made me great.* Our relationship with our Lord is based upon his gift of salvation. It is the foundation block that everything else stands upon. David also understood that nothing in his own self was of any lasting value. The gentleness of God, His bending down towards man in love, His tender care for us, His compassion delicately touching our lives—that is what makes anyone great. The understanding of that truth may allow any of us to develop into men and women *after God’s own heart.*

1. We are all spiritually crippled in God’s sight.
2. David extended kindness to Mephibosheth for Jonathan’s sake. God extends his kindness to us for Jesus’ sake and the price he paid.
3. David never mentioned Mephibosheth’s physical problems. He treated him as if nothing was wrong at all. God has so completely forgiven us, that He treats us as sons and daughters.

David was indeed *a man after God’s own heart.*

The Bible records the faults as well as the failures of men and women. It is easy to focus upon those blemishes. On a large white canvas, a black smudge is easily seen and gathers attention. That dark spot becomes the focus of consideration instead of the vast white areas that are unscathed by discoloration. David made an enormous mistake with Bathsheba. He compounded that sin by murdering her husband—a man whom David had known and considered a friend for many years. Nathan, the prophet, confronted David openly. Nathan put his life on the line when he challenged David. The king could have had him executed right then and there. Instead, David immediately admitted his guilt and asked for forgiveness from God. In Psalms we are given a first-hand look into the private thoughts of this man as he dealt with this issue. His instant humility and heart condition are traits God desires in all. He was *a man after God’s own heart.*

Few families have suffered as much heartache as did David’s. Partly as punishment by God for David’s behavior and sin, and partly because of poor parenting skills, this was a dysfunctional family with a capitol “D”. Within the confines of his immediate family David witnessed disrespect, the untimely deaths of four of his children, incestuous rape, a political coup to take over his throne, and murder. Through all the sorrow, the Bible reminds us of the fact that David never lost sight of his God and the strength that can be found in a personal relationship with Him. *A man after God’s own heart.*

**King David**

Red hair and freckles are not physical characteristics most associate with those of Middle Eastern descent. However, the Bible describes one young man in Jewish history as exhibiting those traits. He was portrayed as a fearless fighter, possessing a hot temperament. A man so fraught with character flaws, that many of us would probably shy away from him as a person. Presiding over the poster family for domestic dysfunction, he was found guilty of marital infidelity and murder. In spite of all the negative attributes, he was called by God a *man after God’s own heart.* How could this be? The answer to that question necessitates a deeper look into the life of a man we know as King David.

That journey begins near Bethlehem, where David, as a boy of probably sixteen, tended sheep. God identified him to Samuel, who then anointed him to be king of Israel. We find out later in the Biblical text that, at this young age, he had fearlessly killed a bear with his bare hands! Even as he told the story to others, it was not in arrogance, but in humble recognition of God’s mighty hand at work in his life. *A man after God’s own heart.*

Still a young man, David traveled to visit his brothers, who were with Saul, fighting the Philistines. It was here that he was introduced to a giant of a man named Goliath. Nearly nine and one half feet tall, this angry Philistine, each morning, would stand in front of the armies and shout a condescending dare for anyone to step forward and fight him. No one accepted the challenge, and in naiveté, he volunteered. Or, was he actually oblivious to the realities here? No, David understood the power in the hand of God. With confidence, he stepped forward to fight Goliath with only a sling as a weapon. Take note that he grabbed five stones in preparation for the fight. As he ran toward the man, he loaded his sling and let a stone fly. It struck the giant in the forehead, knocked him unconscious, and David took Goliath’s own sword and cut off his head. David’s confidence and trust in God displayed here is multiplied many times over, when we find in Scripture the reason for the five stones. Goliath had four relatives, probably brothers, who David met later in life. But he was prepared to face all of them together in that first meeting. *A man after God’s own heart.*

The accolades David received became a thorn in the heart of Saul. David soon had to run and hide in the wilderness. A relatively large group of men gathered around him there. The Bible describes them as being fraught with personal problems of their own. David learned to be a leader under the most difficult of conditions. He made many mistakes, but each time, when reminded of his failures, he humbled his heart immediately and sought the forgiveness of God. His songs recorded in Psalms give us a picture of his heart—complete trust and reliance upon God. *A man after God’s own heart.*

Among the many bright spots in the life of David, few shine brighter than his treatment of the son of his best friend. After the untimely death of Jonathan, David had a choice to make. The prudent reaction, in the eyes of the world, would have been to hunt down and destroy any remaining members of the family of Saul, to ensure his own throne and security. He had made a promise to Jonathan, and was determined to keep it. Jonathan’s crippled son, Mephibosheth was located and brought to live in the palace of David for the rest of his life. In this touching story are some spiritual lessons for us to see.

**Phrases You Probably Didn’t Know Came From the Bible**

*To escape by the skin of your teeth—*Job 19:20

*A drop in the bucket*—Isaiah 40:15

*A behemoth*—Job 40:15-24

*A scapegoat*—Leviticus 16:8

*Casting pearls before swine*—Matthew 7:6

*The ends of the earth*—Deuteronomy 33:17

Please, do not read the next sentence!

You little rebel! I like you!

