

A Man After God's Heart

by Bryan Gibson

That's the kind of man God was looking for in his next king, and he found one in David (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22). We should expect, then, to find some good qualities in David, qualities we would do well to imitate if we want to be described in the same way.

Let's begin with his humility—the key to the other virtues he possessed. Put yourself in David's place. You're still just a young man, but you've killed Goliath, the mighty Philistine champion (1 Samuel 17:48-54); you've assumed command of King Saul's army (1 Samuel 18:5); and women are singing your praises ("Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands"—1 Samuel 18:7). Might be tempting to strut a little, don't you think? Not David. When King Saul offered his daughter to him, David responded, "Does it seem to you a light thing to be a king's son-in-law, seeing I am a poor and lightly esteemed man?" (1 Samuel 18:23). When God later promised him that his house and kingdom would be established forever (through the reign of Christ), David reacted in similar fashion: "Who am I, O Lord God? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far?" (2 Samuel 7:18). "On the day when the Lord had delivered him from the hand of all enemies, and from the hand of Saul" (2 Samuel 22:1), David didn't boast; instead he spoke the words of a song to the Lord, praising HIM for this salvation from his enemies (read all of 2 Samuel 22). Not hard to see why the Lord picked David, is it?

Because David was humble, he was always willing to confess his sins. He did so when he sinned with Bathsheba ("I have sinned against the Lord"—2 Samuel 12:13); and when he sinned by numbering the people ("I have sinned greatly against the Lord in what I have done; but now, I pray, O LORD, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly"—2 Samuel 24:10). But David wasn't forgiven merely because he confessed; he was forgiven because he came back to the Lord with a broken and contrite heart (Psalms 38:8; 51:17). Maintain this kind of heart, and you can still be a man after God's heart.

David also loved his enemies, a quality near and dear to God's heart (Matthew 5:43-48). He demonstrated it toward Saul, when after Saul had tried just about every means available to kill him (e.g. 1 Samuel 18:10-11; 19:9-10), he resisted the urge to do the same to Saul (1 Samuel 24:1-22). He also demonstrated it toward Abner and Ishbosheth, two of his chief rivals. You would have thought David would have been delighted when they were both killed, but he mourned over both of them (2 Samuel 3:31-39; 4:9-12), just like he did when he heard the news of Saul's death (2 Samuel 1).

God is still looking for men (and women) after His own heart. Has he found one in you?