

HEART LIKE HIS

Seeking the Heart of God Through
a Study of David

Beth Moore

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The Author

Beth Moore realized at the age of 18 that God was claiming her future for full-time ministry. While she was sponsoring a cabin of sixth graders at a missions camp, God unmistakably acknowledged that she would work for Him. There Beth conceded all rights to the Lord she had loved since childhood. However, she encountered a problem: although she knew she was “wonderfully made,” she was “fearfully” without talent. She hid behind closed doors to discover whether a beautiful singing voice had miraculously developed, but the results were tragic. She returned to the piano from which years of fruitless practice had streamed but found the noise to be joyless. Finally accepting that the only remaining alternative was missions work in a foreign country, she struck a martyr’s pose and waited. Yet nothing happened.

Still confident of God’s calling, Beth finished her degree at Southwest Texas State University, where she fell in love with Keith. After they married in December 1978, God added to their household two priority blessings: Amanda and Melissa.

As if putting together puzzle pieces one at a time, God filled Beth’s path with supportive persons who saw



something in her she could not. God used individuals like Marge Caldwell, John Bisagno, and Jeannette Cliff George to help Beth discover gifts of speaking, teaching, and writing. Twelve years after her first speaking engagement, those gifts have spread all over the nation. Her joy and excitement in Christ are contagious; her deep love for the Savior, obvious; her style of speaking is electric.

Beth’s ministry is grounded in and fueled by her service at her home fellowship, First Baptist Church, Houston, Texas, where she serves on the pastor’s council and teaches a Sunday School class attended by more than two hundred women. Beth believes that her calling is Bible literacy: guiding believers to love and live

God’s Word. *A Heart Like His: Seeking the Heart of God through a Study of David* grew from her fervent desire that women know greater intimacy with God.

Beth loves the Lord, loves to laugh, and loves to be with His people. Her life is full of activity, but one commitment remains constant: counting all things but loss for the excellence of knowing Christ Jesus, the Lord (see Phil. 3:8).

Foreword

Little did I know when I met Beth Moore 12 years ago that we would both be writing for the Baptist Sunday School Board. I can truly say that from the beginning of our friendship I knew God had selected this young woman for great things. Beth is my Sunday School teacher at Houston’s First Baptist Church. I can honestly say that each Sunday Beth is just as vivacious and exciting as she is on the videos you will be watching during your study. God always gives her fresh, new material, and she is faithful to present His Word to others as He teaches it to her.

I never dreamed when I started this study that there was so much I didn’t know about King David and his life. The one theme that runs through the entire study is that God’s love for us is not conditional, and that He can and will do great things for anyone who seeks to know and love Him. I am encouraged by this study to know that I too can have a heart like His.

Carole Lewis
National First Place Director

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Tragic Ends and Faithful Friends

Day 1

A Case of Overkill

Day 2

The Living Dead

Day 3

Alone with God

Day 4

The Death of Israel's Giant

Day 5

A Fallen Friend

Our fourth week will no doubt stir some deep emotions in our hearts. We may not always be able to relate to David's extreme circumstances, but we can easily relate to his feelings. We will see David, because of Saul's efforts to kill him, panic and go to live with the enemy. We will witness his great distress and learn from his example how to respond when we feel completely alone. We will seek answers to the following questions.

Principal Questions

Day 1: Why did David settle in the land of the Philistines?

Day 2: What happened when Saul sought the help of the woman from Endor?

Day 3: Why was David greatly distressed and what did he do as a result?

Day 4: What were the circumstances surrounding Saul's death?

Day 5: How was David's relationship with Jonathan distinguishable from all his other relationships?

David's doubts and fears did not exempt his name from the heroes of faith listed in Hebrews 11. You and I can also experience times of defeat and still live lives of faith. This week we will encounter the God who was David's sustaining force through his bleak circumstances.

Let's be careful how much application we draw from this lesson about the dearly departed. God did something very rare that day. He gave Saul a vision of Samuel raised momentarily from the dead so He could smack Saul in the face with His sovereignty. I don't want to mislead you. We cannot conclude from this encounter that we'll be wearing the same clothes eternally (Hallelujah!), that our loved ones can ask God to let us appear to them after we're dead, or that it's okay for us to seek to talk to the dead.

We arrive at God's sovereign purpose for supernaturally intervening. The encounter ends with the harsh news of the imminent death of Saul and his sons. I find myself hoping even Saul's life had an ultimately happy ending. When Samuel said, "Tomorrow you and your sons will be with me," we do not know what Samuel meant. He may have simply meant, "You are about to die." Or he may have meant Saul and his sons would join Samuel among the redeemed. I'd like to think that Saul and his sons took the opportunity to settle business with God, knowing of their imminent demise. Sometimes the most merciful thing God can do in a rebellious person's life is let him know he is going to die so he can beg the mercy of God.

DAY 3 Alone With God

Begin your study by reading Today's Treasure and by praying that God will speak to you through His Word.

Today our emphasis switches from Saul back to David. When we last saw David, he had entered an alliance with Achish, a Philistine and the son of the king of Gath.

Read 1 Samuel 29:1–30:6. What two arguments did the Philistine commanders make against David to keep him out of battle?

- David might turn against them during battle.
- Achish showed favoritism to David.
- The battle would be too risky for David.
- David might attempt to regain Saul's favor.

David and his men returned to Ziklag after a three-day journey. What did they discover when they reached their destination? Choose one.

- Ziklag had been raided.
- Ziklag had been burned.
- Their wives and children had been taken captive.
- All of the above

Describe the response of David and his men according to 1 Samuel 30:4.

Reread verse 6 carefully. Why would the men want to stone David?

Today's Treasure
"David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the Lord his God"
 (1 Sam. 30:6).

David was greatly distressed over the blame his men cast on him. He responded by finding “strength in the Lord his God.” What are a few things David might have done to find strength in his God?

I'd like to draw a few points from the verses we've just considered. The passage paints perfect portraits of human nature.

1. Hurting people often find someone to blame. When we've suffered a loss, just like David's men we often look for stones to throw—and someone at whom to throw them. Notice that David also suffered the loss of his family. He did not know if he would ever see them again. He had taken many lives. I'm sure he assumed his enemy would not blink an eye at taking the lives of his wives and children. David cried the same tears the other men cried, but because they needed someone to blame, they focused their anger on him.

2. Nothing hurts more than our children in jeopardy. Many things hurt and cause us to search for stones to throw, but, as in verse 6, nothing has the potential to cause bitterness in spirit like matters involving our children. They are our Achilles' heel, aren't they? Someone can treat our child unfairly and we're ready to pounce. We almost can't help living by the philosophy: *If you want to make an enemy out of me, just mess with my kid.* Can you imagine how many poor decisions have been made when parents have hastily thrown the stones of retaliation in behalf of their children? We are so tempted to intervene. Sometimes intervention may be appropriate. But whether or not it's appropriate to get involved beyond the necessary emotional and spiritual support, *no stones are allowed.*

David's men ultimately arrived at a place of reason. They chose not to act at the peak of their emotions—a wise response for all of us.

3. Nothing helps more than finding strength in our God. Sometimes no one offers us encouragement or helps us find strength. We'd better be prepared at times to strengthen ourselves in the Lord. Knowing how to encourage ourselves in the Lord is essential. The *New International Version* says: “But David found strength in the Lord his God.” Others can help and be encouraging, but this kind of strength comes only from the Lord.



Reflect on this principle a moment. In what ways can you encourage yourself in the Lord?

Without a doubt, the most precious *and painful* times I have had in this Christian experience were times when I realized I was all alone with God. Such times forge an unforgettable, inseparable bond. Don't miss the opportunity. I am convinced that God sometimes stays the encouragement of others purposely so we will learn to find it in Him.

Have you ever been angry at someone for not being as supportive as you would have liked? Yes No If so, could it be that God wanted you to find strength in Him by yourself? Would you be willing to forgive the person you believed failed you and consider what God wanted from you? If your

answer is yes, please use the lines below to ask for God's help and insight.

Read 1 Samuel 30:7-31. How did David make the decision to pursue the captors? _____

Why did 200 men stay behind? _____

What was the raiding party doing when David saw them? Choose one.

- They were eating and drinking.
- They were reveling because of the plunder they had taken.
- They were scattered over the countryside.
- All of the above

How long did it take for David and his men to fight them?

When the victorious group returned conflict erupted over the plunder. What was David's apparent reasoning why they must all "share alike"?

Let's share a few words of application based on our second reading assignment as we conclude today's lesson:

1. Assured victory does not mean easy wins. God told David in advance he would "certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue" yet we see references to exhaustion (v. 10), hard work (v. 17), a non-stop, 24-hour battle (v. 17), and four hundred escapees (v. 7). God was absolutely true to His Word. The *end* was exactly as God had promised, but what we often don't count on is the *means*. God often gives us a victory that requires blood, sweat, and tears. Why? Because He is practical. When He can bring about a victory and strengthen and mature us all at the same time, He's likely to do it!

God revels in overcoming and undergirding all at once. You see, God's idea of victory has virtually nothing to do with *plunder*. It has to do with *people*. *What* comes out of a battle isn't nearly as important as *who* comes out of a battle. That day God not only worked a victory *through* David. He worked one *in* David. The man after God's own heart came out of battle with grace and mercy and a little better grasp of God's sovereignty. God gave him the opportunity to participate firsthand in the fight.

2. We don't have to "win big" to win. No wholesale slaughter resulted. Quite the contrary, four hundred men got away, yet God called it a victory! David could have been furious with himself because he let some guys get away. Instead, he chose to focus on the ones he brought home: their families, his family. If your family has come out of a serious battle intact, fall on your face and praise your faithful God. The victory is yours.

We constantly fight an unseen enemy. God has assured us the victory, but He has told us to take an aggressive stand against the Evil One, covering ourselves in His armor.

We're going to win, but victory is going to take blood, sweat, and tears—His blood, our sweat, and tears from both of us.

When was the last time God brought you victory but the battle was difficult?

Describe what He accomplished in you through the difficult battle.

Thank Him not only for what came out of the battle but who!

D A Y 4

The Death of Israel's Giant

Today's Treasure
"When the armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he too fell on his sword and died with him"
(1 Sam. 31:5).

Begin your study by reading Today's Treasure and by praying that God will speak to you through His Word.

Today we close the portion of our study of King David recorded in the Book of 1 Samuel. Some Scripture lessons are hard to swallow while others make us laugh. God, in His infinite wisdom, tucked something to learn inside every one. We must come to a place of important closure today before we proceed to our next book of the Bible.

Read 1 Samuel 31. First Samuel 31:1 records the victory of the Philistines over Israel. Based on God's promise to Israel in Deuteronomy 11:22-25, why do you think Israel lost the battle?

What request did Saul make of his armor-bearer? Choose one.

- guard Saul with his life kill Saul with his sword
 guard Saul's sons' bodies run and get help

Why do you think the armor-bearer would not kill Saul? Record several possibilities if you can.

W E E K 6
A Man After God's Own Heart

Day 1

Humble Beginnings

Day 2

Compulsory Praise

Day 3

A Virtuous Man

Day 4

Room in the Palace for More

Day 5

Shunned Sympathy

Our sixth week of study highlights many of the virtues of King David. We will catch a glimpse of the qualities God may have seen when He looked in David's heart and chose him to be His servant. We will discover more of what being a man or a woman after God's heart really means. David's reign over the nation of Israel begins with integrity and administrative adeptness. Let's revel in a chapter dedicated solely to the best of King David!

Principal Questions

Day 1: How did God respond to David's desire to build a house for His name?

Day 2: How did David respond to God's promise to build a house for him?

Day 3: How did David reveal a literal dedication to God?

Day 4: Who was Mephibosheth, and how did he become a member of David's family?

Day 5: Why did David want to show kindness to Hanun?

I can think of no greater honor than to be called a person after God's own heart. May David's example keep our hearts moldable until God can use the same words to describe us!

heart for worship. No one had such a depth of cooperation with God. In all these ways David provides a picture of Jesus. Christ dedicated His every treasure to God, His Father, and will return for us when the Father nods. He will rule in justice and righteousness. As Chief Administrator, He will delegate the responsibilities of the kingdom to the faithful on earth. The characteristics God saw and loved so much in David are those most like His Son. God has one specific bent toward partiality: He loves anything that reminds Him of His only begotten Son. To be more like Christ is to be a man or woman after God's own heart.

We have several more virtues to behold on days 4 and 5. I look forward to meeting you there. Thank you for your dedication to God's Word. May His Word make us more like His Son.

D A Y 4

Room in the Palace for More

Today's Treasure
"David asked, 'Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?' "
(2 Sam. 9:1).

Begin your study by reading Today's Treasure and by praying that God will speak to you through His Word.

Today we continue to study the virtues of the man God chose to be king—a man after God's own heart. We've caught glimpses of humility and a desire for accountability. We've seen him worship with abandon. We've noted a spirit of cooperation and felt the breezes of his hope brush against our faces. We've heard the beat of his heart escalate with rapid dedication after each victory. We've seen him rule in justice and righteousness, seeking the good of his people, and we've seen his wisdom in administration as he developed a leadership team.

Through David, we've caught momentary glimpses of Christ, not just a man after God's own heart, but a man with God's own heart. How wonderfully typical of a proud and loving father! Off and on throughout the Old Testament, God raised up men for the specific purpose of revealing wonderful secrets about His beloved Son. As if He could only go so long without talking about His Son, the Old Testament is filled with portraits capturing sudden snapshots of Christ. God sometimes used Old Testament figures like Isaac, Moses, and David to say, "My Son is like this." King David had moments when he resembled God's Son—times when God might have said, "See this guy? His heart reveals what my Son is like." Today we will have the pleasure of seeing a tender aspect of David's heart. Join me as we study with a spirit of anticipation.

Read 2 Samuel 9:1-13. Read verse 1 carefully. What emotions do you think David might have been feeling that caused him to ask this question?

Whose kindness was David wanting to show according to verse 3?

How did Ziba describe the son of Jonathan?

What two ways did David want to show kindness to Mephibosheth for the sake of his father, Jonathan? Choose two:

- He invited Mephibosheth to eat at his table for the rest of his life.
- He wanted to make Mephibosheth second in command.
- He wanted to restore all the land of Saul to Mephibosheth.
- He wanted to give Mephibosheth a Hebrew wife.

According to verse 8, what do you think Mephibosheth was feeling?

Correct the following statement based on verse 11. Draw a line through the error and write the correct words in the margin: "Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of his honored guests."

Don't you love God's Word? How I praise Him that His Word is not just a book of rules and regulations, dos and don'ts. The Bible is a book of the heart! Realize God's Word reflects God's ways as you read a story like the one we've read today. His heart must be so tender.

In our previous lesson, the spotlight shone brightly on the zenith of David's reign. God gave unparalleled success. David was famous throughout the land, both hailed and feared for being the foremost example of God's power on earth. Now we travel from his public feats to his private feelings.

David knew well the familiar feeling we all know as loneliness. You heard his loneliness at the top as he said, "Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?" David had conquered kingdoms and subdued enemies. He had servants at his beck and call. All was momentarily quiet and peaceful—and he missed his best friend. God had fulfilled Jonathan's wish and given David everything, but Jonathan wasn't there to share it with him. David sought the next best thing. Ziba, a servant of the house of Saul, told him about Jonathan's son Mephibosheth. Ziba's choice of words is interesting. "There is still a son of Jonathan," and in the next breath he utters, "he is crippled in both feet." His choice of words and timing intimates he might have suspected the son's handicap to disqualify him from anything the king sought. In the encounter between David and Mephibosheth we see several characteristics of God displayed. Consider with me the following virtues of God.

1. His loving-kindness. Notice: David was searching for someone of the house of Saul to whom he could show *God's* kindness, not his own (v. 3)!

How does God first describe Himself in Exodus 34:5-6 when he "proclaimed his name, the Lord" to Moses?

The Lord is first of all *kind*. Compassionate. He desires to deal with us first in *mercy*. If we refuse to accept His mercy, He often deals with us in the way He must; but He is above all *kind*. As a man after God's own heart, David was tender. His heart was full of loving-kindness, and he was anxious to pour it out on a willing vessel.

2. His initiation of the relationship. “Where is he?” David inquired. Then he summoned Mephibosheth immediately. Note that he did not seek David. David sought Mephibosheth! David was the king! What could he possibly have needed? He had everything! But he *wanted* someone to whom he could show God’s kindness.

Read each of the following Scriptures. Note how David’s action in seeking Mephibosheth pictures God’s action in seeking and loving us.

Luke 19:10 _____

John 15:16 _____

1 John 4:19 _____

God is always the initiator of the relationship, always looking for someone who will receive His loving-kindness!

3. His complete acceptance. David did not hesitate when Ziba informed him of Mephibosheth’s handicap. In the Old Testament people considered physical imperfection to be shameful, but David summoned Mephibosheth exactly as he was. How reflective of the heart of God! So many wait until they can get their act together before they approach God. If only they could understand, God calls them just the way they are; then He empowers them to get their act together!

What does Matthew 9:12 tell you about the heart of God? Choose one.

- God helps those who help themselves.**
- Jesus came to minister to the broken and hurting.**
- The self-inflicted must find their own remedies.**
- The healthy ones first discover God.**

Picturing the scene when David met Mephibosheth brings me to tears. Imagine the king sitting on the throne, surrounded by splendor. His brightly adorned servants open the door, and before him stands a crippled man. The Word says, “When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor.” With crippled legs he crept before the king, then he bowed before him! Can you imagine the difficulty for a handicapped man to get down on his knees, press his forehead to the floor, as was the custom, then rise up? Mephibosheth was obviously humiliated. “What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me (v. 8)?” Have you ever felt like Mephibosheth? I have. Surely everyone who has ever accepted Christ as Savior has crept before Him, crippled from the fall of sin, overcome by our unworthiness against the backdrop of His Majesty’s brilliance. “To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved” (Eph. 1:6, KJV)!

4. His calming spirit. As Mephibosheth practically came crawling before the king, David exclaimed, “Mephibosheth!” He knew him by name ... just as Christ knows us (John 10:3). David’s next words were, “Don’t be afraid.” How many times have we seen those words come from the precious lips of our Lord: “It is I. Don’t be afraid.”?

- To the twelve as He sent them forth, “Don’t be afraid!” (Matt. 10:31).
- To a bunch of scaredy-cats in a storm, “Don’t be afraid!” (Matt. 14:27).
- To Peter, James, and John overcome by His glory, “Don’t be afraid!” (Matt. 17:7).
- To the father of a dying child, “Don’t be afraid” (Mark 5:36).

How very Christlike David was in this moment.


5. His delight in restoration. “I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather” (v. 7). David’s first desire was to restore Mephibosheth. He had been so hurt by the fall. He had lived with such shame. The king could hardly wait to see Mephibosheth’s shame removed and his life restored. David knew about restoration. He penned the words, “He restores my soul” (Ps. 23:3). Perhaps the most grateful response we could ever offer God for our restoration is to help another be restored. I was nearly overcome when I looked up the name *Mephibosheth* and found that it means, “shame destroyer” or “image breaker.”³ What a precious portrait of our Savior! He has been my shame destroyer and my image breaker!

6. His desire for another son. Mephibosheth came stooped as a servant before the king. The king came before Mephibosheth to make him a *son*. He was family—invited to sit at the king’s table to partake of his fellowship as one of his own! Imagine the sight when he first limped to the table set with sumptuous delights, surrounded by festive activity, and sat down, resting his crippled legs at the king’s table. Hallelujah! We are like Mephibosheth! No matter how many sons the Father has, He still wants more to conform into the image of His first and only begotten, virgin born!

Delight in writing 1 John 3:1 on the lines below:

That’s us, all right. One day, when we sit down to the ultimate wedding feast, the lame will be healed, the blind will see, the restored will leap and skip with ecstatic joy! We will be surrounded by the ministering servants of heaven! He is a God of loving-kindness. He’s just searching for someone with whom to share it. Not just the moment when we first bow before Him and acknowledge that He is king, but every single time we sit at His table. Joint heirs. Sons. Daughters. He is the shame destroyer. The lover of the lame.

I would never have learned to walk with God on healthy feet had I never experienced sitting at His table as a cripple. My emotional and spiritual healing has come from approaching God in my handicapped state and believing I was His daughter and worthy of His love.

 **I believe God has used His Word today to cause you to relate to Mephibosheth in some way. Glance over the ways David’s actions picture the virtues of God. How has this lesson described you?**

Isn’t God wonderful?