

Women's Bible Study –Fall 2009

## What's in the Heart: A Look into King David's Heart

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A Heart Of Prayer 2 Samuel 7

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### A HEART OF PRAYER

Introduction ---This chapter, 2 Samuel 7 is a pivotal point in the OT.

From here on, biblical prophecy refers to the promise God makes to David that his dynasty will last forever, ultimately fulfilled through His Son, Jesus the Messiah. The NT opens in Matt 1:1 "A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham....."and closes in Revelation 22:16 "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star. There are 59 references to David in the New Testament.

Now let's look at how David's desire to build a house for God becomes a wonderful promise for David and his family and all believers since that time.

#### A NOBLE PURPOSE---David's Desire

2 Samuel 7:1-3 (Parallel account almost word for word—1 Chronicles 17)

*"After the king was settled in his palace and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, he said to Nathan the prophet, 'Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent.' Nathan replied to the king, 'Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the Lord is with you.'"*

David has been involved in subduing the enemies of Israel and now is enjoying a time of peace and rest as king. The victories mentioned in 2 Sam 8 probably took place before chap 6. God has given David "rest from all his enemies around him"---the perimeter borders were secure. There was an interlude of peace.

In our lives we can enjoy times of "rest" from a hectic schedule, our children are doing well, our health is good, or a crisis has passed and we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. We can take time to reflect on our future and maybe begin formulating some goals for ourselves and our family, a project to consider, or possibly a ministry in an area that is not being covered in the church. When we are at "rest" from our usual routine---and there are no demands, our spiritual ears are open to hear God speak to our hearts. We have time to listen to Him. *"Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him."* Psalm 37:7

Maybe today God is asking you to be "still" and take time to wait on Him, that He may show you a new insight on serving Him.

As David has time to reflect on this peaceful time within his “palace of cedar” where he is living, he begins to think about the ark that has just been brought back to Jerusalem as we studied in last week’s lesson. It begins to bother him that here he is dwelling in this beautiful palace and God’s dwelling—the ark---is in a tent, something so plain and temporary. So he expressed his thoughts to Nathan, the prophet. We don’t know much about Nathan, or his background, but it seems David knows him well and confides in him his thoughts and plans wanting to hear his spiritual advice. Contrast this with that of Saul and his relationship with Samuel, whose godly wisdom he really didn’t want to hear or follow.

Nathan, knowing David’s humble heart and his personal love for the house of God encourages him, “do whatever you have in mind, go ahead.... The Lord is with you.” Nathan had not consulted the Lord on this matter and merely commended David to do what was in his heart--- this seemed like a worthy endeavor.

However, that night Nathan received a word from the Lord to give to David. Notice that God did not even let 24 hours pass before He gives Nathan a correction, and a “real” message for the king.

**APPLICATION**—How often God speaks to us when it is dark, when we have finished the tasks of the day and our mind is at rest. Have you ever been awakened in the night with a thought, a unique idea, or insight on something you had been reading or an action that needed to be corrected? Did you lay awake and think about it or did you get up and write it down? I have a dear friend whose husband was a doctor and she gave me one of his pens that lights up enough so you can write on a pad of paper without turning on the light. It has come in very handy to write down those “night insights” that I would never remember in the morning.

### **A WONDERFUL PROMISE**--- The Davidic Covenant

This second meeting between David and the prophet Nathan has great significance as it sets out the beginnings of the temple and the Davidic Covenant---both of which had a profound effect on Israel’s religious and national life for years to come.

God tells Nathan to give David this message.

2 Samuel 7:4-7

*“Go and tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving*

*from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'"*

Here are a couple of slides to help us get a better understanding of what the "tent" or tabernacle that housed the "ark of the covenant" looked like and why David wanted something more permanent.

God says to David, "I have not dwelt in a house all these years since I brought the nation out of Egypt. I have been mobile and moving with you everywhere with a tent as my dwelling. I have never asked any of the rulers of my people to build me a house.

It is interesting to note here that God's dwelling in a tent, always being with them and not limited to a building, was a foreshadowing of Jesus, the Messiah, "the Word, who became flesh and dwelt or "tabernacled" among us."(John 1:14). When Jesus ascended to heaven he left the Holy Spirit to indwell us so we could have a continuing relationship with God. From Genesis to Revelation God's goal is to build and maintain a relationship with His children.

*2 Sam 7:8-10 "Now then, tell my servant David 'This is what the LORD Almighty says I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth. And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed."*

God says, "David, I've taken you from the fields as a shepherd boy and put you on the throne and I have been with you wherever you have gone. I have given you victory over your enemies and have brought Israel into a place of blessing so they no longer need to move.

*2 Sam 7:11-16 "The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before men; your throne will be established forever."*

David, you want to build a "house" for me of stone, but I will build a "royal house" for you, a family that will reign forever. "House" here has two meanings--- a building and a family line.

God was promising to provide his people with leadership through David and his family after him and years ahead in the future through Jesus, the Son of David. This will ultimately be fulfilled in the millennium reign when Jesus returns to earth to be on the throne to rule forever.

As it has been often said about David, "he was a man after God's own heart", he had a great love for God and desired to please Him in every way. God knew the desire of his

heart and acknowledged it in 1 Kings 8:18 as Solomon, son of David says, *“The Lord said to my father David, ‘Because it was in your heart to build a temple for my Name, you did well to have this in your heart.’”*

In 1 Chronicles 22, God tells David that even though he will not permit him to build a “house”—temple for him, that will be done by his son Solomon, but he will let him gather all the materials and ready them for the building.

### Promise or Covenant?

Even though this passage does not call this promise a covenant, David recognizes it as one. Later he mentions it as a covenant in 2 Sam 23:5 ---God’s promise an “everlasting covenant” with him. Psalm 89:3,4 *“I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, ‘I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations.’”* Psalm 89:28-37 gives further verses of God’s covenant with David.

The dictionary definition of covenant is an agreement between two or more persons; in the Bible it is a solemn promise between God and man. This covenant is called the Davidic Covenant and is a continuation of Covenants made with Abraham and Moses. They are unconditional and depend totally on God to carry them out.

In verse 18, Nathan, it says, *“reported to David all the words of this entire revelation.”*

Do you wonder if Nathan wrote this down as the Lord gave him this message? If this had been in our day, don’t you suppose he would have typed this into his computer so as not to miss a word, then hit “save” to a file for future reference, before printing a copy for David? I think David would have wanted to read and re-read what God promised to him and his offspring.

### A HUMBLE PRAYER---David Prays

After Nathan finished giving David the message from the Lord, *“then King David went in and sat before the Lord”* and gave us this beautiful prayer.

*2 Sam 7: 18-21 “Who am I, O Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? And as if this were not enough in your sight, O Sovereign LORD, you have spoken about the future of the house of your servant. Is this your usual way of dealing with man, O Sovereign LORD? What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Sovereign LORD. For the sake of your word and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made it know to your servant.*

Can you reflect on a time when God answered a prayer or showed you a new revelation of His character so that you were overwhelmed at His goodness and in awe of His power? Did your heart overflow with praise and thanksgiving like David’s? Did you sit in His Presence so humbled and full of gratitude you were almost unable to express your thoughts? What words did you use?

As we look at the rest of David's prayer let's consider the phrases he uses that form a sort of pattern that we can model in our prayers. In the first two verses we see humility and gratitude and recognition that He is the "Sovereign LORD" ---used 7 times in this prayer. David recognizes over and over God's mighty power and control of all things, and how humbled he is that the God of the universe should do this for him.

*2 Sam 7: 22-24 "How great you are, O Sovereign LORD! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears. And who is like your people Israel---the one nation on earth that God went out to redeem as a people for himself, and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations and their gods from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt? You have established your people Israel as your very own forever, and you, O LORD, have become their God."*

In verse 22 we see David's praise of who God is---"the Sovereign Lord, there is no other God," and praise for what He has done for His people, Israel. In verse 23 David remembers what "awesome wonders" God has done. Here we see adoration and praise.

*2 Sam 7:25-26 "And now, LORD, God, keep forever the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house. Do as you promised, so that your name will be great forever. Then men will say, 'The LORD Almighty is God over Israel! And the house of your servant David will be established before you.'"*

In verses 25-26 David makes a bold petition that God will do as He has promised for His glory. David realized that what God promised was wonderful for him and his descendants, but it was ultimately for God's glory.

*2 Sam 7:27-29 "O LORD Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant, saying, 'I will build a house for you.' So your servant has found courage to offer you this prayer. O Sovereign LORD you are God ! Your words are trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant. Now be pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you O Sovereign LORD, have spoken, and with your blessing the house of your servant will be blessed forever."*

Finally in verses 27-29 David is recognizing God's sovereignty and his faithfulness to carry out what He has promised. Verse 28 is really a theme verse for this passage. "O Sovereign LORD you are God ! Your words are trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant."

Look at the elements we see in David's prayer ----humility, gratitude, praise, adoration, thanksgiving, boldness for God's glory, and trust in God's faithfulness to do all He has promised. If you look at other great prayers in the Scriptures you will see many of these same elements, in the prayers of Nehemiah, Daniel, Hezekiah, and Jehoshaphat. It would be good for us to incorporate these components into our own prayers.

## **A HEART OF PRAYER**-----David's Psalms

When you think of David, what is the first thing that comes to your mind? Do you think of shepherd, warrior, musician, king, or Psalm writer? Psalm writer comes to my mind. How did he get to be a Psalm writer? From David's earliest years spent as a young shepherd boy out in the fields with his father's flocks he has experienced solitude and developed a relationship with God.

He has come to know the character of God, His trustworthiness, faithfulness, and love that he could depend on in his daily life.

He has learned how to have a heart for prayer by talking to God about everything that goes on in his life---joys, troubles, and sorrows. These experiences of God's tender care and direction have enabled him to write these wonderful Psalms that run the gamut of emotions we can all relate to; discouragement, unconfessed sin, fear, anger, anxiety, depression, love, mercy, forgiveness, and God's complete knowledge of our inner thoughts, etc.

How thankful we are to David for expressing his thoughts and emotions in the Psalms so we can use them in our prayer and worship. Do you ever take a Psalm or parts of various Psalms and pray them back to God? David puts into words what our hearts feel. I hope some of you took the challenge of writing your own prayer of praise and thanksgiving using portions or phrases from some of your favorite Psalms.

According to the Chronological Bible, David's Psalms 138, 139, and 145 come right after 2 Samuel 7. I would encourage you to read them and maybe understand them in a new light after having studied this passage in 2 Samuel.

**DEVELOPING A HEART OF PRAYER**---How do we develop a heart of prayer? Why should we pray? The Bible is filled with verses about prayer and its importance.

**PRIORITY**-- 1 Thess. 5:17 says "*pray continually*"----we should have an attitude of prayer. There are over 100 references to prayer in your Bible concordance. We have Jesus' example of prayer. He considered it a priority and "rose early before dawn" (many references in the gospels) to talk to His heavenly Father and get His guidance in His activities. If Jesus thought it was a priority---how much more should we make it a priority in our lives.

**PRIVILEGE** Prayer is such a "privilege" for us. We are given the opportunity to communicate with the Creator of the universe, the Person who made us. He knows exactly how we operate and what we need. Why do we fail to seek His direction in our lives every day?

Prayer is like having our own little built-in cell phone or GPS. We can call God or contact Him at any time (Jeremiah 33:3)---He is never out of range---we never need to leave a voice mail--He is always waiting for our call to talk to Him. He knows the map of our life and can give us the right directions for our journey. If our signal is weak, our spiritual battery needs to be plugged in and recharged.

Jim Cymbala from the Brooklyn Tabernacle, says in his book, **BREAKTHROUGH PRAYER**, "God has an answer to every challenge we face, and he will reveal it to us as we pray in childlike faith. Our struggle is to slow down long enough to spend time with God to do two things---ask and listen."

OBSTACLES What are the obstacles to consistent prayer? Wrong priorities and distractions are at the top of the list. Whenever we get very busy and stressed out in our jobs, school, home, church, etc. what is the first thing to be removed from our schedule? Most likely prayer---we will catch up tomorrow. When we do take time to pray, our minds are distracted by thinking about all the things that need to be done that day, etc. Bill Hybels, the pastor of Willow Creek Church in Chicago, has a great book on prayer, "*TOO BUSY NOT TO PRAY*". This book has been out a number of years ---it's really a classic. In it he says, "Satan doesn't care if we are busy for the Lord, as long as we don't pray. When we pray God works, and His power is released."

Bill Hybels said a big help to him has been to keep a prayer journal. He writes down 1 page in a spiral notebook and prays over what he has written down---the concerns for that day. He said it helps him to keep focused and not be distracted and to listen to what God has to say to him.

MOTIVATION What motivates you to pray? Often a problem or a crisis will motivate us to pray with greater fervency. We desperately need God's help. Sometimes answered prayer, seeing God's faithfulness inspires us to pray with more passion. I have found that keeping a notebook of jotted down prayers (not necessarily every day but some of the bigger issues needing God's solutions) and seeing God's faithfulness really inspires me.

Memorial Stones illustration---Over and over in the OT God reminds the Israelites to remember His commands and obey them, and remember what He has done. When Joshua was leading the Israelites to cross the Jordan river into the promised land he had 12 men each take up a stone from the middle of the river and bring it to the other side and set up a "memorial" to remember what God did for them that day. "*When your children ask what these stones are for, you can tell them that God cut off the flow of the Jordan so that they could cross to the other side*". (Joshua 4:1-7 & 22-24) "He did this so *that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God.*"

In Psalm 78:3-7 "*we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done. He....commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so the next generation would know them.....they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.*"

For many years I have kept an ongoing list of specific milestones in our marriage and family life, of situations that required much prayer and showed the power of God. Last winter I took that list and made it into something tangible, a more visible reminder of God's evidence in our lives for His glory. Right out of college I taught kindergarten a few years, so I like visual, easy to understand examples.

I collected some river rocks from the landscaping in the yard and labeled them with a sharpie pen the dates of these significant events. Most of them have a Scripture verse on the other side. I also have one for each of our 7 grandchildren and their date of birth. They enjoy looking through the box and finding their own rock. Right now they all fit into this beautiful box that Sally gave me and it sits on our coffee table. When the children or a guest asks what do these stones mean? I have an open opportunity to tell the stories of God's wonderful deeds and His love for us through the years.

This Memorial Stone collection also serves as a reminder to me of God's faithfulness and a motivation to be more diligent in prayer.

Legacy---If you could, what would be the number #1 thing you would like to pass on to your children and loved ones ---a legacy.  
I would like to pass on my love for God and His Word and a heart for prayer. All of us have the opportunity to set a good example.

Here are some Prayer Principles that may be helpful.

Priority---set aside time each day---early, Jesus' example.

Place---wherever --- not be distracted ---focus on God

Practice---consistency ---make it a daily habit

Pattern---ACTS--adoration, confession, thanksgiving, petitions

(The Missions program is also using this acronym---

"A Call To Serve" --- God where do you want me to serve?)

Pour out your heart---talk to God--- (Phil 4:6-7 LB)

Patently listen--- God wants to talk to you---to make you a blessing to others so that His name is glorified.

A quote from Jim Cymbala---"The world has yet to see a Christ like, victorious, fruitful believer who was not a person of considerable prayer." May we all become more effective prayer warriors for God's kingdom. James 5:16 "*The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man (or woman) is powerful.*"

We are in the middle of our Missions Emphasis week. We have been hearing about the wonderful things God is doing in all parts of the world and how important it is for us to uphold them in prayer. Daily they are facing challenges most of us cannot even comprehend. I'd like to share a little story from a medical missionary with Overseas Crusades that I heard several years ago, but the type of experience is just as relevant today and illustrates how God uses our prayers to help people on the other side of the world.

This medical missionary was sharing with his home church some of his experiences of serving in a small field hospital in Africa. He traveled by bicycle through the jungle to a nearby city every 2 weeks for supplies. It was a two day journey and required camping overnight on the way back. On one of these journeys he stopped to collect money from a bank, purchase supplies and began the 2 day journey back to the field hospital. When he arrived in the city he saw 2 men fighting and one was seriously injured and so he helped him and at the same time was witnessing to him about Jesus. He traveled back the 2 days, camping overnight without incident. Two weeks later he repeated the journey.

When he arrived he was approached by the young man he had treated on his earlier trip. He told me he had known that he was carrying money and drugs (medicine). He told him that some of his friends went with him and followed him into the jungle, knowing that he would camp overnight. He said, "we were waiting just outside your campsite for you to go to sleep. We were going to kill you and take your money and drugs. But just as we were about to move into your campsite, we observed and counted 26 armed guards standing around you."

At this the missionary laughed and said that he was all alone out in that jungle campsite. “No”, the man said, “I was not the only one to see the guards. My 5 friends also saw them and we counted them. It was because of those 26 guards that we were afraid and left you alone.” At this point in the missionary’s sharing a man stood in the audience and asked, “Can you tell me the exact date that this incident occurred?” The missionary took a moment and then told him the date. The man from the audience then related this story. “When it is night in Africa it is day here. On the night of your incident, it was morning here and I was preparing to go play golf. As I was putting my golf bag in the car, I felt the Lord leading me to pray specifically for you. In fact, the urging was so strong that I called several of the men in this church together to meet with me here in the sanctuary and pray for you. Would all of those who met with me on that morning please stand up?”

The men who met to pray that day stood up. The number was exactly 26.

We should never underestimate the power of prayer!