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# **A Man After God's Own Heart**

**# 951-B**

**Series: God's Living Legends II**

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*Heavenly Father, what a privilege to come into Your presence, and what joy there is to know immediately because of the blood of Jesus Christ, You hear us. Whenever we ask according to Your will You hear us, and we know that we have the petitions we have desired of You. We ask that You would take Your Spirit, and Your Spirit would take Your Word, and You would speak to our hearts about what our hearts should look like.*

*In Jesus' name. Amen.*

How many of you think we live in an age of specialization? If you want the carburetor or alternator worked on in your car—of course, most of them don't even have those anymore—you don't go to a garage anymore; you go to a carburetor or alternator specialist. If your little toe is in trouble, you go to a microtoeologist I guess. If he decides it's your toenail, he won't work on the toenail. He'll send you to nailicist or something like that. No one does everything anymore.

How many of you have called the phone company to try to get something done? Can I see your hands? Now, if you work for them, please forgive me. The first thing that happens is the line is busy. I have never understood that. I thought they just had to plug in another line. So, you keep calling back and finally, someone comes on the line and you say, "I need my phone fixed." And they say, "What's wrong with it? Is it the earpiece or the mouthpiece?" You say, "I don't know." "Well, we have two departments; an earpiece department and a mouthpiece department. We'll come look at it a week from next Wednesday." That's always encouraging. And you say, "By the way, while they're out here could they look at my bell? It doesn't work. So they say, "Well that would require a bell technician. Is it a round bell or a square bell?" "Never mind. I didn't want a bell anyway."

Specialization. I work with a computer, and it usually breaks down and the breakdown is usually here. I usually have to use

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a WATS line. You know what a WATS line is. That's when nobody locally knows "WATS wrong." So you make a long distance call and the guy on the other end of the phone puts you on hold. And they play this FM music so loud, and it's so distorted that your eardrum goes on hold after a while. Finally, they keep blurbing back on this tape recording, "Please don't hang up." That keeps you awake. Finally, someone comes on the line in and says in a hurry, "Software or hardware." Well, you don't know what they mean. You finally tell them and they ask, "What model do you have?" "Model? I don't know." "Call back." And you start all over.

Next time you call they have modernized. I never have figured this out. You call up. They pick up the phone and a recording comes on in tones you cannot understand. It goes like this, "Garble, garble, punch 1. Garble, garble, punch 2. Duh-de-dud-de-duh, punch 3. By then you have forgotten what punch 1 was, but you didn't hear it anyway. And all you want to punch is the phone. Finally, someone comes on the line and says, "Yes. What did you want to work on, word processing, data processing, general ledger, payroll or Astrosmash? We have a specialist in every department." And the specialist finally comes on the phone and that's all they talk about; that one thing.

We live in an age of specialization. Please forgive me doctors, but the medical profession leads the way. I understand, there are so many parts to the human body it only seems natural that no one person is going to work on all of them. So most people only work on one of them. So you go to a kidney man for your kidneys, an eye man for your eyes, a bone man for your vertebrae, and a nerve man when you get the bill.

Specialists. The most skilled, most necessary specialist of them all is the heart specialist. You can have a bad toe and not walk so well. You can have a bad ear and not hear so well. But, when the heart stops beating you've got a big problem, don't you? Aren't we glad there are heart specialists?

If you were to open the paper tomorrow morning and see this ad, wouldn't you be a bit surprised?

WANTED: MILLIONS OF NEW HEART SPECIALISTS  
NO SCHOOLING REQUIRED  
NO EDUCATION NECESSARY  
PLEASE CALL THIS NUMBER!

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So you pick up the phone and call the number and you don't even get a recording. God answers the phone. You say, "Is that you, Lord?" "It's me. I'm looking for men and women who are concerned with healing of the heart," He says. "Would you like to become a heart specialist?"

God is interested in the whole man—body, soul, spirit, mind, emotions, and will. But according to the Scriptures, His primary role is the treatment of diseases of the heart. Not the heart that goes thumpety-thump; the heart that goes thinkety-think. And God has some special equipment. MRIs and scans are not new. Since eternity past, God has had this machine called the omniscient machine. With it He is able to scan the hearts of millions of men and women at the same time and relay signals back to heaven of the exact conditions of everyone.

Strangely enough, God is looking for some very specific symptoms; symptoms we wouldn't recognize even if we saw them. Symptoms, believe it or not, that a heart specialist wouldn't recognize either. He is looking for men, women, boys, and girls who have hearts shaped just like His! He's looking for men and women after His own heart. That's literally what it means. And it's possible for you to become a heart specialist just by reading the manual and looking for the symptoms that indicate premature heart failure. This study is for that purpose.

God wrote the Book. It's a biography. In addition to having the biography of God, Himself, there is encased within it, an incredible, real life flesh-and-blood biography of a man after God's own heart. As we begin, I would remind you that about three lessons ago, we started on a journey. The journey was to walk through the life of David, but first we wanted to look at his predecessor, a man named Saul, to find out what took place that enabled David to become what he became, and what God used to get him there.

### A KING REJECTED

You may remember Saul's first opportunity to demonstrate what he was really like. He presumptuously intruded on the office of Samuel. He became afraid because the troops were evaporating and there were threats from the enemy. Rather than obey, Saul decided to usurp the power of Samuel the prophet. But he compounded it, because when confronted with his sin, he gave excuses. Samuel, you'll remember, at that point early in

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Saul's kingdom said this:

And Samuel said to Saul, 'Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel forever.

But now thy kingdom shall not continue: [Here's the reason and here's the phrase; I love it.] the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.

(I Samuel 13:13,14)

Now it was early in the life of Saul, and it would be some time before he would be removed from the throne. But in the mind of God, it was a finished job. His long-range fruitfulness as a leader would be limited because God looked at his heart and He found an incurable heart disease; incurable, because Saul would not take the cure. He said he didn't need a doctor.

So God turned on His machine and he scanned the hearts of millions of men and women. He was looking for one thing—a heart shaped just like His. Guess what He came up with? An unlikely candidate; the youngest of eight sons, the great-grandson of Ruth and Boaz. He was a shepherd by trade, the youngest of a big family of brothers. And he had received the same kind of abuse that Joseph had received at the hand of his brothers. A highly unlikely candidate wouldn't you say to be king, and to lead God's people. A shepherd? But there was something unusual about this man. Inside of that shepherd was a heart that looked strangely like God's.

That's what it means; a man after God's own heart. It means a man whose heart beats like God's does. His desires are the same as God's. His heart is so in tune with pleasing God that he would rather die than grieve God's heart. It doesn't mean sinless; we're going to find that out very quickly about this man, David. But it means there is an internal quality about him that those looking in from the outside might not ever discern. God was looking for a man after His own heart.

The thing we need to realize, beloved, is you and I could be that man or woman. It doesn't mean you have to be educated; you can still be a man after God's own heart. It doesn't mean you have to be talented; you can still be a woman after God's own heart. You don't have to be able to sing or preach. This man,

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David, could sing and play, but you don't have to. You just have to have a heart shaped like God's.

### A KING SELECTED

Let's see what happened when this king was selected.

Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? [It's all over.] Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons."  
(I Samuel 16:1 NKJV)

God had chosen a man; a little different from our electoral college, isn't it? God had chosen a man after His own heart, and He was about to reveal that man.

So it was, when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, [Wow—loose translation.] "Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him!"  
(I Samuel 16:6 NKJV)

An incredible memory verse, if you haven't already memorized it.

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."  
(I Samuel 16:7 NKJV)

Do you see what He was saying? "This lad may have all the credentials for greatness. You may be impressed with his looks, his talents, his intellect, even with his religion or his spirituality, but he's not My man."

God was saying to Samuel, "You don't have the equipment I have. I have an x-ray machine, and I'm looking at the heart of man and Eliab has come short. There is something in his heart that disqualifies him. Keep looking."

Now, what is the heart? Let me give you a definition. The heart, very simply, is two things.

1- It is the real you. It is what you think when you think no one knows what you think. That's the heart.

2- It is what you would do if there were absolutely no restraints and no consequences. That's the heart.

Let's say someone wrongs you. I'm sure it hasn't happened to you, but maybe it has happened to someone you know. Let's

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say hypothetically, it has happened to you. Someone really does something to offend you. And you get this great big Christian smile on your face and say, "That's alright. Don't worry about it." That's good. You did what God told you to do. And you begin feeling incredibly spiritual. But what about inside of you? You're angry. You're thinking thoughts of obscenity, perhaps. You're thinking thoughts of revenge. You're boiling inside, but you're grinning that Christian grin that says, "That's okay." You're so proud of yourself and people around you are in awe of you. But God is looking at your heart and saying, "Whoa!" You see, you have become so enamored with how well you're behaving, you have deceived yourself and failed to keep your appointment with the heart specialist.

Maybe you see something on television or in a movie that you shouldn't watch. And you turn to someone who is with you or to your mate, and in self-righteous disgust you say, "That's awful." But what if in your heart of hearts, you really enjoy it? And if there were there no restraints or consequences, and no one knew but God, you would watch it again. You see, you have deceived yourself into thinking, "As a man *behaves* in his life, so is he." The Scripture doesn't say that. The Scripture says, "As a man *thinketh* in his heart, so is he." What he would do if there were no restraints or consequences, so is he. That's what determines whether or not you're a man after God's own heart. Now, for the four of you who would like to go on, we will turn to verse 8 and continue God's search.

So Jesse called Abinadab, [I'm glad they didn't make him king. I would have to pronounce that so many different times.] and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one."

Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one."

Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these."

And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all the young men here?" Then he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep." [In other words, I didn't even bother to call him.] And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here."

So he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes and good-looking. [There was something



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different about his face.] And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him, for this is the one!"

Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brothers, and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose, and went to Ramah. (I Samuel 16:8-13 NKJV)

Do you see what happened? God got His man. There was a whole nation of men out there who seemed more qualified. There were seven brothers who looked to be more qualified. But there was out on a hillside a young shepherd who had something none of the rest of them had. He had a heart shaped just like God's. People couldn't see it. Samuel couldn't see it. Jesse couldn't see it. God could see it.

There was a quality of guilelessness, a kind of integrity and humility. He would rather die than offend his God. And he believed his God to be who He said He was. You say, "Wow. Wouldn't it be neat to know what makes a guy like that tick? Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could have an X-ray of his heart, blow it up and look at it so we could see where we fall short in being men and women after God's own heart? Wouldn't it be neat if we could move alongside of him in the prayer closet and listen to him pray?"

You can't do that with Joseph. You can read an awful lot about his life, but you can't really see his heart. You can't do that with Moses. You can read a lot of what he has written and what he did, but you can't really know his heart. You sure can't do that with Job. You can read an awful lot about his anger and frustrations and how he came around, but you really can't know his heart.

There is really only one man in Scripture that I know of, whose heart God ripped open, laid out on the pages of Scripture and said, "Here." He took this man David, a man after His own heart and penned all of these Psalms that literally allowed this man's real nature to flow into yours. It is not coincidental because he was a man after God's own heart.

What I want us to do for the next few minutes is take an EKG of David's heart. We're going to be looking at his life for the next few weeks; following him as he ministers, makes his great mistake, and repents. We will follow him through bitter times and great times. And I hope you will take these few minutes with

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me and look at his heart. And maybe, in the weeks to come, you'll do a study on your own because we can only take just a tiny glimpse this morning.

I took 73 Psalms that seem for certain to have been written by David. There are probably many more. I've tried to determine what common denominators there were about his heart that we can put together to see why God called him something so special. We will look at five of them in this lesson, and I'm going to ask you to pray with me as we look at them. And I'm going to ask you to take the Scripture, use it as an x-ray machine, and turn it back on your own heart.

Let's take a picture of the heart of David and hold it up against ours.

### 1- Here was a man who really knew who God was.

Somehow, every book I've ever read about one of the greats of God who turned the world upside down and became legends in their time had one thing in common. When they spoke of God, there was a kind of awesomeness when they realized who He was. David knew who God was. He knew He was a friend; we'll see that in a moment. But first of all, there was an awe in David's heart at the very mention of God's name. Is there in yours?

O LORD, our LORD, How excellent is Your name in all the earth, Who have set Your glory above the heavens!

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,

What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?

For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor.

(Psalm 8:1,3-5 NKJV)

In my distress I called upon the LORD, [You've done that.] And cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, And my cry came before Him, even to His ears.

(Psalm 18:6 NKJV)

Now, listen to David's consciousness of God's response to prayer.

Then the earth shook and trembled; The foundations of the hills also quaked and were shaken, Because He was angry.

(Psalm 18:7 NKJV)

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The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. (Psalm 19:1 NKJV)

David said, "All I have to do is look outside and there is God in all of His splendor!"

The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein.

For He has founded it upon the seas, And established it upon the waters. (Psalm 24:1,2 NKJV)

Give unto the LORD, O you mighty ones, Give unto the LORD glory and strength.

Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

The voice of the LORD is over the waters; The God of glory thunders; The Lord is over many waters.

The voice of the Lord is powerful; The voice of the Lord is full of majesty. (Psalm 29:1-4 NKJV)

Who established the mountains by His strength, Being clothed with power;

You who still the noise of the seas, The noise of their waves, And the tumult of the peoples. (Psalm 65:6,7 NKJV)

O God, when You went out before Your people, When You marched through the wilderness, Selah

The earth shook; The heavens also dropped rain at the presence of God; Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel. (Psalm 68:7, 8 NKJV)

LORD, what is man, that You take knowledge of him? Or the son of man, that You are mindful of him?

Man is like a breath; His days are like a passing shadow.

Bow down Your heavens, O LORD, and come down; Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.

(Psalm 144:3-5 NKJV)

Such awe at the power of God. Do you see how that affected his ability to pray and believe God in the presence of a giant; his ability to stand before God in honesty when faced with his sin? He understood the power of God. Do you? How do you view God? Is He a pal who hangs around to bail you out of trouble? Is He a judge who is waiting to pass sentence upon you when you make the smallest mistake? Do you view God in your heart of hearts as some kind of tired shadow of His former self who, at one time,

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was able to do great things but doesn't seem to be around much anymore? No, beloved. You need to understand God the way David did. God needs only to speak, and the mountains tremble; the heavens quake. And He need but touch that crisis in your life and it will explode with meaning.

If someone were to ask you in one paragraph to describe God, what would you say? It would tell an incredible amount about your concept of who He is. David knew who God was. He understood the majesty of our God. Beloved, you and I need to come to understand that if we are to have hearts shaped like his.

There is a second thing about David that you cannot help but see when you read the Psalms, and that is:

2- He hated sin and what it did, and he understood more than any other Old Testament character, by far, what the depravity of man was all about.

The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. [This was His conclusion.]

They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.

(Psalm 14:2,3 NKJV)

Can you think of any other Old Testament saint who had that perspective of the depravity of man?

God looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God.

Every one of them has turned aside; They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.

(Psalm 53:2,3 NKJV)

He understood the depravity of man. More than that, he understood what sin does to you personally, and to him personally.

Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. Selah (Psalm 4:4 NKJV)

For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness, Nor shall evil dwell with You. (Psalm 5:4 NKJV)

The wicked shall be turned into hell, And all the nations that forget God. (Psalm 9:17 NKJV)

What other Old Testament saint understood that?

LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in

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Your holy hill?

He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart; (Psalm 15:1,2 NKJV)

Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be innocent of great transgression.

(Psalm 19:13 NKJV)

David wasn't sinless; far from it. That's not the issue. David saw sin from God's perspective—something you don't toy with without getting burned. Now, I'm going to ask you a question. How sensitive are you to sin today compared with five years ago? If you have been a Christian awhile, the problem is that the media and the forces about us are trying to force us into a mold of lowering our stands of what is and isn't sin. The world about us looks at things, talks about things, says things, and thinks things today, that 10, 20, or 30 years ago, would not even be discussed.

Now, we as Christians, look at them, think about them, and are prone to relax and say, "Well, it's a different world." It's true. Same God. Same Word. Same sinful nature of man. The problem is, the Scripture says that every day we live we should become increasingly—that's what it means—in ever increasing splendor, from one degree of glory to another (II Corinthians 3:18), less and less tolerant of sin in our own lives, and hating more and more what Satan is doing in this world. Satan wants it to work in reverse. David understood what sin was and he understood the depravity of man. He hated sin.

The third common denominator—and I think this is what gives balance to David's life—he knew what sin was and he hated it. He hated it so much, that he came to an understanding early in his life, of the mercy of God.

### 3- He knew what it was to be forgiven.

That's the balance. If Satan can get us in one extreme or the other, he's got us. He understood both the righteousness and mercy of God in balance. What about you? Can you bathe yourself in the fountain of the mercy of God and leave your guilt behind you? Or do you carry it around in a knapsack? Do you bottle it up, put it in little jars, and carry it around all day long in case there is a convenient need for guilt.

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If you don't grasp the mercy of God, you cannot ever come to handle the depravity of man and the awesomeness of your sin, because you never dealt with your sin in the past.

Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses, For they are from of old.

Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; According to Your mercy remember me, For Your goodness' sake, O LORD. (Psalm 25:6,7 NKJV)

For Your name's sake, O LORD, Pardon my iniquity, for it is great. [It's awful.] (Psalm 25:11 NKJV)

Here was a man who understood the depravity of man and awesomeness of sin but he also understood the magnificent mercy of God. So he didn't ever want to sin again because of God's beautiful mercy.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.

Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit. (Psalm 32:1,2 NKJV)

What other Old Testament saint had that kind of grasp on the mercy of God?

Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. (Psalm 51:1-3 NKJV)

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. (Psalm 51:7 NKJV)

Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. (Psalm 51:10 NKJV)

Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit. (Psalm 51:12 NKJV)

As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:12 NKJV)

David understood forgiveness. He was a man after God's own heart. Forgiveness means you understand the gravity of sin, and therefore, it makes the awesomeness of God's mercy that much

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sweeter, and you refrain from sin that much more quickly. The balance of it sets you free.

There is a fourth quality about David's life that you can't help but see as you go through the Psalms.

### 4- David knew how to be honest with God.

I don't know about you, but David understood the sovereignty, power, mercy, and depravity of man so well. Yet, he was able to look God in the eye, open his heart up and say, "Lord, this is how I feel. Now, You do whatever is right."

Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak; O Lord, heal me,  
for my bones are troubled. (Psalm 6:2 NKJV)

Have you ever prayed like that? Or do you like to give God a lot of words so He'll think you are spiritual? God looks on the heart. He knows what you're thinking. David said:

My soul also is greatly troubled; But You, O Lord—how long  
[before something happens.]? (Psalm 6:3 NKJV)

I am weary with my groaning; All night I make my bed  
swim; I drench my couch with my tears.

My eye wastes away because of grief; It grows old because of  
all my enemies. (Psalm 6:6,7 NKJV)

How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever? How long will  
You hide Your face from me?

How long shall I take counsel in my soul, Having sorrow  
in my heart daily? How long will my enemy be exalted over  
me? (Psalm 13:1,2 NKJV)

Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in trouble; [Have you  
ever prayed like that?] My eye wastes away with grief, Yes,  
my soul and my body! (Psalm 31:9 NKJV)

My heart is severely pained within me, And the terrors of  
death have fallen upon me.

Fearfulness and trembling have come upon me, And horror  
has overwhelmed me.

So I said, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away  
and be at rest. (Psalm 55:4-6 NKJV)

Have you ever turned to the Lord in honesty and said, "Lord, if it weren't for You, I wish I could get on a 727, start flying, and never come back." The interesting thing is that almost every time David opened his heart up like that and was honest with God, in

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the same Psalm, you will find that followed by an ocean of praise and adoration. Because the minute he began to think about it, talk about it, and open up to God about how he felt, he realized that what really mattered was who God was.

In every one of those Psalms where he poured his heart out and said, "Lord, I can't take anymore," suddenly in the next verse he said, "Lord, how adequate You are." He was honest with God. Oh, that we could learn to do the same.

### 5- He knew how to spend time with God and have intimate fellowship with Him.

That's a tough balance. He was in awe at who God was. He couldn't even speak His name without trembling at the marvel of God's power. But at the same time, he knew God was his best friend, and that God cared about the very hairs of his head which were numbered.

Keep me as the apple of Your eye; Hide me under the shadow  
of Your wings, (Psalm 17:8 NKJV)

What a personal God Jehovah was to David.

As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be  
satisfied when I awake in Your likeness. (Psalm 17:15 NKJV)

Just to know You are there, Lord. That's all I need.

And could a shepherd ever open up his heart any more than David did in Psalm 23, when he said:

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me  
beside the still waters.

He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of  
righteousness For His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of  
death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and  
Your staff, they comfort me. (Psalm 23:1-4 NKJV)

Is your God that personal to you? Or is He some kind of doctrinal deity who stands around in the wings waiting to see if you dot the i's and cross the t's and you have the intellectual part straight? Or, is God so real and personal to you that you understand the awesomeness of His power, the devastation of sin, the reality of forgiveness, and you can be so honest with Him that you not only know He is the creator of heaven and earth;



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He's your best friend.

David was a man after God's own heart. And God knew it. In the next few lessons, we are going to walk alongside this fellow and look at his life. He's no cardboard saint, that's for sure. He's a real man in a real world and he made a mess out of things more than once. But somehow, inside of him, there is a heart shaped just like God's. He was a man after God's own heart, so God saw to it that His Spirit recorded things about this man's life, thoughts and prayers that we don't have from anyone else.

I want us to think about four conclusions that I came to from studying the life of David through the Psalms.

Statement 1- God does not see us the way others do and God doesn't see us as we see ourselves. I can remember a number of years ago, being at business meeting at a professional club. We were sitting around tables and video had just been introduced. That will tell you how long ago it was. They had a video camera perched up and they moved it from table to table. When they got to our table, I honestly nudged the guy next to me and said, "Who is that bald-headed guy?" I really did. The guy didn't know what to say, but finally he said, "It's you!" Now, I had looked in the mirror every morning and I had this big head of hair. It was curly and everything. And I was thin.

When you look in the mirror, you see what you want to see. And when you look in the mirror of the Word and compare your own life, you see what you want to see. But that VCR didn't lie. The problem is, God doesn't see us the way we see ourselves, and God doesn't see us the way our compadres see us, as spiritual giants because we do this and say that. God has this machine, and He looks right into the heart. And beloved, what God really cares about is what you would do were there no restraints and no consequences. He really wants to know what you think when you think no one knows what you think.

God is a heart specialist. If you were a heart specialist and all you ever did was use a stethoscope to see if the thing was beating, you would never really know if someone had a heart disease, would you? You have to take x-rays and EKG's. God says, "I don't want you to be satisfied with what you see in your life. I want you to be satisfied with what's inside of you, because that's what I'm looking at. And I'm going to ask you to take a deep breath and think about that in the week to come.

## A Man After God's Own Heart

That's God's perception of you. It isn't how fancy you are or how active you are in the church, or even how much of a ministry you have. It's how much of a heart you have.

Statement 2- God is looking for a certain kind of man and woman to entrust the kingdom to. We know that. He calls them a man or woman after His own heart! He wants men and women who would rather die than break his heart; men and women who are willing to stand alone whatever the cost, if the cost means honoring the name and the Word of God. He is looking for men and women whose hearts are shaped like His; who have the mind of Christ. Those who are willing to become slaves or servants, if need be, to do the will of God.

Statement 3- Every Christian has a chance to become that kind of man or woman. God doesn't produce in a separate mill over here on the side, some super saints. He gives us all some tough choices. Based on those choices, He turns our hearts around.

Statement 4- Where other people are involved, we can't always discern who is and who isn't a person after God's own heart. We would think it's the most visible people—the preachers, teachers, singers, the ones who are so outgoing. I'm not sure that's true. I've been around a couple of years now. It seems like a couple of hundred. And I can tell you that I can count on one hand, the men and women who I think may well be men and women after God's own heart. I know one thing; I'm not one. There are very few people that I know who are.

I was just thinking of a widow I know who has very little opportunity to serve. She's never in the limelight, but she stays behind the scenes. And since she has so much time, she just prays and prays and prays until the heavens open and God changes lives. She has God's perspective.

I think of a young woman I know who is greatly afflicted in her body, and is unable to do all the things we can do. But that affliction has brought God's perspective into her life, and she has such a mature, unshakeable faith, that no matter what happens, she sees it from God's point of view. I think that's a woman after God's own heart.

I know a man who has a physical affliction that's so severe he can't do any of the things we can do. He has to content himself with just knowing God. And over the last few years, he has come

## A Man After God's Own Heart

to know God as very few people I know have ever known Him. And because of that he has a consciousness of sin and the mercy of God. He is being reshaped into the image of God. He has a heart shaped like God's.

I think of a couple I know who are so quiet and humble in their ministry, yet their lives are so transparent and so available to people, they don't even think of themselves. They only allow Christ to pour Himself through them. I think of them as a couple after God's own heart.

I'm going to ask you and myself, in the week to come, to pray with David, Psalm 139.

Search me O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts;

And see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way. (Psalm 139:23,24 NASB)

In other words, "Lord, whatever it takes, fashion my heart after Yours." It's important, beloved.

Because...

### A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

If someone were simply to ask you  
What's the greatest thing you can do  
To leave your mark for eternity  
When all of life is through,

What would be your answer?  
What tribute could there be,  
What thought would honor God the most  
When He, your name did see?

I believe the greatest thing  
God could yet impart,  
Would be the words, "This child became  
A man after my own heart."

This, my son or daughter,  
Found a touch of the divine,  
Because within their life there beat  
A heart shaped just like mine.

A Man After God's Own Heart

A heart that grew to stand in awe  
At what his God had done,  
A heart that lived for just one thing  
To glorify the Son.

A heart that did not need acclaim  
A heart that just believed,  
A heart that would but rather die  
Than see my spirit grieved.

They may not have found greatness  
Nor heard the world's acclaim.  
The greatest thing to them was just  
To bear the Master's name.

Would you like to please the heart of God?  
Beloved, here's where you start.  
Quietly ask God to make you  
A man after His own heart!

Let's pray.

*Our Father, we pray that in the days to come You will allow us to not be content with what we think we are, and in particular, with what others think we are. Turn the searchlight of Your Word inward that we might see ourselves as You see us, for you look not on the outward appearance, but on the heart.*

*Our blessed Father, our prayer for this day would be that You would help us to visualize this coming week as our every thought proceeds into our minds, what we think when we think no one knows what we think.*

*In Jesus name. Amen.*

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