

Preservation by consecration

This article is from the "Edifying the Body" section of the Church of God Big Sandy's Web site, churchofgodbigandy.com. It was posted for the weekend of Nov. 7-8, 2009.

By Bernie Monsalvo

GLADEWATER, Texas—King David of Israel understood and practiced the values of commitment, dedication and *consecration* to God. Yet he was also a man who sinned and therefore cried out to God for *preservation* and deliverance.

I want to focus on David's insight in dealing with God. God was never far away from David's mind. Perhaps more interesting to me is David's degree of commitment to his Creator and Savior. David's example of commitment should be an inspiration to us and a guide to help us grow in grace, knowledge and a meaningful relationship with God.

Foundational ideas

In Luke 10:25 a lawyer asked Jesus, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Obviously, this is a question in our minds as well. I often ask this question of myself because I don't want to be like the college student who asks his teacher, "What do I have to do to pass this class?" That question really means, in many cases, "What is the *absolute bare minimum* that I have to do to get a passing grade in this class?"

Jesus answered the questioner with a question: "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?"

The lawyer was familiar with Deuteronomy 6:5, so he replied: "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

Christ told him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live."

On another occasion another lawyer, or perhaps the same lawyer quoted in Luke 10:25, asked, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"

This time Jesus gave the answer and elaborated on the meaning of Deuteronomy 6:5. Jesus said to him:

"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second

is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40).

Christ explained that a relationship with God follows a relationship with our fellowman as well as an implied love for self. If we constantly put ourselves down, then our tendency will be to put others down. If you don't like what you see in yourself, then you will be critical of others with the same set of problems. The adage applies: It takes one to know one.

Background material

King David of Israel was the eighth and youngest son of Jesse. David was born in the town of Bethlehem.

The name of the mother of Jesse, who apparently was a humble man, is not recorded. Some think his mother was the Nahash of 2 Samuel 17:25.

As to David's personal appearance, we know only that he was red-haired, with beautiful eyes and a fair face (1 Samuel 16:12; 17:42).

His early occupation was tending his father's sheep on the uplands of Judah.

He frequently passed the time with his shepherd's flute, while he learned from his varied experiences and environs.

David's first recorded exploits were his encounters with the wild beasts of the field. He mentioned that with his own unaided hand he slew a lion and a bear when they came out against his flock, beating them to death in open conflict with a club (1 Samuel 17:34-35).

While David, as a ruddy youth, was thus engaged with his flocks, Samuel paid an unexpected visit to Bethlehem, having been guided there by a divine command (1 Samuel 16:1-13).

We know of David's exploits in battle, beginning with his confrontation with Goliath. We know about his sins and weakness in regards with the fair sex. We also know that he suffered and paid a tremendous price in his personal family life. We also know that God could not use him to build the Temple.

'I am *Thine*, save me'

How did David see himself? A note by Joseph Symonds written in 1653 brought something to my mind:

"David, a man after God's own heart, would be saved, but not after the manner of the men of this world, that would be saved to be their own and to enjoy themselves at their own will; but he in being saved would be God's, and at his disposing: 'I am *Thine*, save me.' There is a threefold strength in this argument."

Psalm 119:94: "I am *Thine*, save me; for I have sought thy precepts."

David consecrated himself to God. "Save me" is a comprehensive prayer with a prevailing argument. Consecration is a good preparation for preservation.

If we are conscious that we are the Lord's, we may be confident He will save us. We are the Lord's by creation, election, redemption, surrender and acceptance. Therefore we can justify our firm hope and belief that God will save us.

Our assurance of salvation takes childlike faith. The need of salvation is better realized by the Lord's people than by any others, and therefore their prayer, "Save me," carries a special significance and weight. They know that only God can save them, and there is no one else to turn to but to cry to Him alone.

As Christians, we know that no merit is to be found in ourselves. We must find a reason for any value God sees in us fetched from his grace. We are *His*, because we have sought His precepts.

The Lord does not forget

Nature itself teaches us that a father will treat his child well, as will the husband his wife, etc. God Himself follows this same law. As the Creator, He is more capable than any human could possibly be, and He loves more fully, gloriously and indeed perfectly in fulfilling His law in a way that no one else could possibly do. There is no father like Him, no friend, no husband like Him.

"Can a woman forget her sucking child? Yet will I not forget You" (Isaiah 49:15).

A mother can hardly forget her child. Nature teaches her to have a heart of compassion and mercy for her child. But God's compassion surpasses even a mother's.

"Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely *they* may forget, Yet I will *not forget you*" (Isaiah 49:15).

God does not change. "Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

You are our Father

We diligently work toward coming to a place where we can say to God: "I am Thine, I am Yours, I need you more than You need me."

We rely on the covenant God has made with us that documents that He is our Father and Friend.

This is the point of Isaiah 63:16: "Doubtless You are our Father, though Abraham was ignorant of us, and Israel does not acknowledge us. You, O LORD, are our Father; our *Redeemer* from everlasting is Your name."

Our conclusion is sure: *Doubtless* He is our Father, and therefore we call on Him for help.

To You I lift my soul

The spirit of man receives encouragement and strength in his relationship with God, so much so that man can say in truth, "I am *Thine*."

God, then, says to the creature, His creation: "I am also *yours*."

David understood these concepts. He wrote in Psalm 27:1-3:

"To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul [my whole being]. O my God, I trust in You [completely, without reservation]. Let me not be ashamed [let me not care what others think of me]; let not my enemies triumph over me [and, if they win, I still have You]. Indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed [watch over us]; let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause [there will always be evil men who wish us harm; just don't let me give them a reason]."

I am *Your servant*, I am *Your servant*

Never did a spouse speak to her husband, whom her soul loved to the highest, more willingly, and say, "I am *thine*," than the spirit of an upright man saying to God: "Lord, I am *thine*."

And He loves Him with a love of thankfulness. "Have you really given *yourself* to me," says God, and "shall I then withhold Myself from you?" Have You, who are so great, done all this for me, and shall I stand out against You? The gracious man will willingly acknowledge himself to be the Lord's.

The saints often do this: David wrote about it more than 20 times; he acknowledges it in Psalm 116:16:

"I am *Your servant*; I am *Your servant*." To say it once was not enough. He says it and he repeats himself, showing the sincerity of his spirit and to witness that his heart was happy that he was not his own but the Lord's.

The knowledge of our interest in God goes much further than our approaches to God. When a man is once assured, and can say with a clear spirit, "I am *Thine*," he will naturally cry, "Save me." Such a man is a man of prayer. He is comfortable in addresses to God, and conversing with Him.

David acted on his commitment to God

David was anointed king of all Israel. He had reached the height of his glory. He ruled over a vast empire, and his capital was enriched with the spoils of many lands.

But in the midst of all this success he fell, and his character was stained with the sin of adultery (2 Samuel 11:2-27).

It is characteristic of the Bible that, while David's military triumphs are recorded in a few verses, the sad story of his fall is given in detail. It's a story that is recorded in the Bible because it's a story of warning.

His crime, in his attempt to conceal it, led to another. He was guilty of murder. Uriah, whom he had grossly wronged, an officer of David's corps of heroes (2 Samuel 23:39), was, by David's order, "set in the front of the hottest battle" at the siege of Rabbah, so he would die.

God sent Nathan the prophet (2 Samuel 7:1-17; 12:1-23) to bring David's crimes home to him, to sting his guilty conscience.

David became a true penitent. He bewailed his sins before God. The 32nd and 51st Psalms reveal the deep struggles of his soul and his spiritual recovery. Bathsheba became his wife after Uriah's death. Her firstborn son died, as Nathan predicted.

She gave birth to a second son, whom David called Solomon ("peace") and who ultimately succeeded him on the throne (2 Samuel 12:24,25).

After the successful termination of all David's wars, he thought of building a temple for the Ark of God. God did not allow him to complete this project, because he had been a man of war.

However, God sent Nathan to him with an encouraging and gracious message (2 Samuel 7:1-16). On receiving it David entered the sanctuary, the tent where the ark was, and sat before the Lord and poured out his heart in devout thanksgiving (2 Samuel 7:18-29).

The building of the temple was reserved for Solomon, who would be a man of peace (1 Chronicles 22:9; 28:3).

In all of his endeavors I think David understood and practiced the values of commitment, dedication and *consecration* to God. He also cried out for *preservation* and deliverance. No wonder God said, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after Mine *own heart*, which shall fulfill all My will" (Acts 13:22).

I think it's time to renew again *my own* commitment to God's ways.