

People of Promise
David
606 words

A Searching Promise

David:
The King with an Open-Door Policy

1 Samuel 16:7; Psalm 139:23-24

No one in Scripture, outside of God's only-begotten Son, displayed such a tender heart toward God as David. And no one verse in Scripture reveals David's heart toward God more than Psalm 139:23: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts."

These words were not just poetic platitudes to David. They were as real, as pragmatic, as the sling and stones he carried in his shepherd's bag. And no wonder--it was as a young shepherd, through a promise made to the prophet Samuel, that David learned about God's knowledge of the human heart. While God made the promise to Samuel the prophet when he anointed David to be king, it was made indirectly to David himself. God chose David as king, and judged him as king the rest of his life, on the basis of his heart.

Saul was the first king of Israel, but when he failed to follow God's commands he was removed. So God sent Samuel the prophet to the village of Bethlehem to anoint a new king. In Bethlehem lived a man named Jesse who had eight sons, one of which would be revealed to Samuel as king upon his arrival. In beauty-pageant style, Jesse had seven of his sons come before Samuel, but with each one God said, "No." The very first of Jesse's sons that Samuel saw, Eliab, was the one he would have picked. Even his name was impressive: Eliab means "God is father." It was then that God corrected the prophet's priorities with a promise of eternal importance: "The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7).

Samuel was looking for someone to replace Saul, who had been "an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites--a head taller than any of the others" (9:2). "There [was] no one like him among all the people" (10:24). God was about to choose a new king who was also unique in Israel, but for a totally different reason than Saul. David was chosen because of his heart.

He was the youngest of Jesse's sons, and was in the fields tending the sheep. Jesse hadn't even considered calling him in. But because of his heart, God chose him to be king (1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22). In time, Samuel no doubt related to David what God had said about the priority of the heart. And David obviously remembered it for the rest of his life. When he was preparing his own son, Solomon, to succeed him as king, he warned him that "the LORD searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts" (1 Chron. 28:9). No wonder David prayed so willingly for God to search his own heart.

He had known from his youth that this is the first place the eyes of the Lord fall.

If you are ever unsure about the motives of your own heart, and need God to sort out and clarify your conflicting feelings, think of David:

- Have I invited God to show me what he sees in my heart?
- What will I do about that which he sees and with which he is not pleased?
- Have I thanked him for revealing to me what I often cannot see for myself?

David prayed, on the basis of God's promise to Samuel, that God would search his heart. His prayer was a poetic way of saying, "God, show me what is in my heart!" Giving God an open-door policy to your heart is a kingly thing to do.