

# A Man After God's Heart

By R.T. Nusbaum

*"And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will."*

(Acts 13:22-23)

There is a contrast between Saul and David. Saul was a good man. In many ways, he was a better man than David. For example, David had a man killed – murdered. He did this because he had committed adultery with the man's wife. If that wasn't bad enough, Bathsheba became pregnant. Saul didn't commit near the degree of sins that David did, nor near as many.

In fact, if you compare David's deeds to many in the Bible, he would be counted among the worst. So what was it that made David so special to God. The Bible says, "He had a heart after God." Saul may not have failed as much but he did not have the tenderness toward the Lord that David had.

Notice the difference between King Saul and King David. Scripture says that David was a man after God's own heart. The Lord looks on the heart and not on the outward appearance. God told these words to Samuel concerning Saul and David. Many people look good outwardly. They appear unto men as though they were righteous, but God knows their heart. Their motivations are for self and their methods are not God's ways. There are others, like David, who appear as faltering and failures, yet God loves and honors them.

I think the place where we tend to miss it is in relation to understanding the will of God. Most conceive the will of God as a specific set of rules that must be obeyed perfectly. They conclude that if a person does this, then he has done the will of God. But David broke major commands such as eating of the shewbread that was only meant for priests. Much of the things he did was in clear violation of the legal things God commanded. Is it possible to fail in relation to things God has commanded and yet still be honored by God?

## **The Heart And The Outward**

"The high places were not removed from Israel. Nevertheless the heart of Asa was loyal all his days" (II Chronicles 15:17).

King Asa is an example of someone whose heart was right toward God but all his outward dealings had not yet been transformed. For those who look on the outward, they will see the high places allowed by Asa. They know that the High Places were not of God and even specifically condemned by God. When they put two and two together, they may conclude that Asa was not a godly king and that he should be removed and shown before

the people as bad. But God does not look on the outward appearance. He knows the heart. Despite the outward wrongs that remained and were even a stumbling block for others, God declared that this king was 'of God.' Some people still remain confused as to how he could be right with God yet the "high places" still remain.

There are some who believe you must be perfect before you could lead God's people but Paul said, "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on . . ." (Philippians 3:12). But never forget, perfection is not the goal – Christ is the goal. If Christians of today lived during the time of the Apostle Paul they might accuse him of justifying his present incompleteness and would have possibly encouraged him to stop the ministry until there was more growth. However, Paul said "God put me in the ministry..."

In Acts 13:22 we read, "And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart which shall fulfill all my will." Notice the phrase "fulfill all my will." The will of God may be related more to conforming to the image of Christ than it is coming to sinless perfection (Rom. 8:26-29).

A person may appear outwardly holy but have very little conformity to the Life and nature of Christ. They have an outward show of law keeping but not by Life. However, another person may not seem to exhibit much gains in what we term "personal holiness" yet have major areas within that have been thoroughly changed into the image of Christ. If that person continues on to know the Lord, his life will soon demonstrate much outward victory. Some seek for quick growth but don't have much root, while others are willing to let the majority of their growth be inward, under ground and deep rooted, waiting patiently till that breaks forth into fruit before the eyes of men. The apostle Paul said there are people who want your flesh circumcised now, in an outward form, so that they may glory in your flesh (Gal. 6:12-13).

When our life and emphasis become more focused on being "fruit inspectors" in relation to other people's lives rather than having a personal heart after God, then we have failed concerning the will of God, even if we appear perfect in our doings.

The human eye is a marvelous thing. It has the capacity to catch everything that is going on around us or it can "focus." When the eye focuses, it shuts out everything else and makes that one thing that we concentrate on pre-eminent. Christ may be prominent in our lives but He is not pre-eminent until we have let the things on earth become dim and He becomes the only love of our heart. It can be described in another way – it is a heart after God. \*\*\*