



LEARNING FROM KING DAVID

What would you expect to learn from the life of David? From David's writings? From the Psalms of David? One would expect, for example, to learn a lot of wisdom from Solomon:

"Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore. And Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt" (1 Kings 4:29–30 NASB).

"And men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom" (4:34 NASB).

Similarly, we must search the Scriptures for what was spiritually unique about David. What he excelled at. In short, he was a man after God's own heart.

"But now your kingdom shall not endure. The LORD has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you" (1 Samuel 13:14 NASB).

I would expect to learn the following from the life of David:

1. How to be a man or woman after God's own heart; that is, how to think, speak, and do things that are in keeping with God's character and will (1 Sam. 13:14).
2. God's heart (what His will and character are).
3. Great faith, trusting God, taking life-threatening risks by stepping out in faith (as, for instance, in killing a bear, lion, and Goliath as a teenager):

Then Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth

while he has been a warrior from his youth.” But David said to Saul, “Your servant was tending his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued it from his mouth; and when he rose up against me, I seized him by his beard and struck him and killed him. “Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God.” And David said, “The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” And Saul said to David, “Go, and may the LORD be with you” (1 Samuel 17:33–37 NASB).

How could a teenager kill a lion or bear? General Moshe Dayan, soldier, scholar, politician, and son of the Holy Land, gives some arresting insights:

As a shepherd lad tending his father’s flocks, David had fought and killed a lion and a bear. In each case, the wild animal had seized and run off with one of the sheep. He had pursued it, retrieved the victim from its jaws and saved it from being devoured. This, however, was the least dangerous part of the struggle, for the mouth of the beast was stuffed with the wool of the sheep it carried. The difficult part came when the animal had abandoned its prey and turned on David. This was the decisive moment. David had quickly grasped its beard with his left hand, and with his right hand thrust his shepherd’s knife in its throat. His advantage over the beast lay in his ability to get close to it while its jaws were clamped on the victim it was busy dragging; and when it let go and bared its sharp teeth at David, the knife was already in its throat. David knew from his experience with the lion and bear that in hand-to-hand combat what counted were a cool head, self-confidence, agility—and above all the capacity to perceive and strike at the vulnerable points of the adversary (Moshe Dayan, *Living With The Bible*, Bantam Books 1978, pp. 172–173).

4. How to have faith, steadfastness, and patience in testing and pass tests from God: seven years of hiding in the wilderness (Psalm 18, 34, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 63, 142; cf. 1 Samuel 19–2

- Samuel 1) and Absalom's Rebellion (Psalm 3; cf. 2 Samuel 15–19).
5. Prayer: most psalms are either prayers (Psalm 8, 17, 61, 86, 143; cf. 2 Samuel 7:18–29) or include prayers (Psalm 6, 7, 39, 60). There are, however, no prayers in Psalm 1, 2, 23, and 37.
 6. How to rule over people in a godly way; that is, principles of godly leadership: as a godly King of Israel and a type of the Messiah's future rule over his Kingdom (Psalm 7:3–5; 35:11–28; 38:19–20; 109:1–5).
 7. How to treat your enemies: Saul (1 Samuel 24, 26), Nabal (1 Samuel 25), Shimei (2 Samuel 16:5–14; 19:18–23), Absalom (2 Samuel 18:33), imprecatory prayers (Psalm 35:4–8; 109:6–20; 137:7–9), cries for help and protection (Rock, Fortress, Stronghold, Refuge, Shield in Psalm 18:2, 31:2–3; 62:2, 6–7; 144:1).
 8. How to treat undeserving people in grace: Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9, 16:1–4; 19:24–30), Shimei (2 Samuel 16:5–14; 19:18–23).
 9. What to do when you're being disciplined by God: the Bathsheba Affair (Psalm 32, 51) and his sin of numbering the people (2 Samuel 24:10–14). Notice that, in both cases, David's confession of sin (2 Samuel 12:13; 24:10) does not prevent or remove divine discipline (12:10–23; 24:11–15).
 10. Blessings for obedience: he was chosen king of Israel because of his godly heart (1 Samuel 16:7), rose quickly to the top as commander of Saul's army (18:5), enjoyed unmatched military success (18:14–15), had widespread fame ("has slain...his tens of thousands" 18:6–7; 29:5), reputation (18:30), popularity (18:6–8), and great riches (he set aside a lot of money to build the future Temple, 1 Chronicles 28:2–5). David was successful in everything because the LORD was with him (1 Samuel 16:13, 18; 18:14; 2 Samuel 7:3 = 1 Chronicles 17:2; Psalm 51:11).