

Times of Preparation and Testing: Five Seasons in David's Life

I. WHY WE SHOULD STUDY THE LIFE OF DAVID

A. The life of David is a dramatic and inspiring story, with heroic virtue, scandal, power, etc. It is a must-read. The Bible tells us more about David's life than any other except Jesus.

B. God called David "the man after God's heart." By studying David's life we learn what God is looking for and how David developed the "spiritual root system" in his secret history in God.

¹⁴The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart. (1 Sam. 13:14)

1. To ***obey the commands*** of God's heart—setting our heart to fully obey God

2. To ***study the emotions*** of God's heart—cultivate an intimate relationship with God

3. To ***contend for the purpose*** of God's heart—to seek to the fullness of God's purpose in our generation. Find out what God is doing in your generation, and throw yourself into it.

³⁶David...served the purpose of God in his own generation. (Acts 13:36, NASB)

C. God's eyes are searching the earth for something very specific: for people with a loyal heart.

⁹For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. (2 Chr. 16:9)

D. David is a witness or model for obedience and faith. We can identify five key cates and seasons in his life and the specific tests related to each season.

⁴Indeed I have given him [David] as a witness [model] to the people. (Isa. 55:4)

II. BETHLEHEM (1 SAMUEL 16-17)

A. ***The Bethlehem years*** (David's teen years): David was tested by rejection and by being faithful in the mundane. He found his identity in his relationship with God as he focused on understanding that God loved him, and on cultivating his love for God. His sense of success was found in his relationship with God and in being faithful in small things. David had to overcome rejection by his family in this season (1 Sam. 16:7-11).

¹⁰ Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen these."¹¹ 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"...¹² He sent and brought him in...and the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!" (1 Sam. 16:10-13)

¹⁰When my father and my mother forsake me...the LORD will take care of me. (Ps. 27:10)

¹¹My loved ones and my friends stand aloof...my relatives stand afar off. (Ps. 38:11)

B. David was faithful to serve behind the scenes in mundane ways. He was responsible with small details like keeping the sheep and leaving his supplies in good hands (1 Sam. 16:10-11; 17:22).

III. GIBEAH (1 SAMUEL 18-20)

- A. **The Gibeah years** (from about age 18 to 22): David was tested by early success and popularity. After killing Goliath, he was promoted to national prominence. He married King Saul's daughter, moved into the royal court in Gibeah, and was celebrated by all Israel.

²*Saul took him that day, and would not let him go home to his father's house anymore...*

⁵*And Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people. (1 Sam. 18:2-5)*

- B. Early promotion can be part of one's preparation for future destiny. In this season some become too busy with the new opportunities and are distracted from their relationship with God.

²¹*The crucible [is] for silver...but man is tested by the praise he receives. (Prov. 27:21, NIV)*

IV. ADULLAM (1 SAMUEL 21-31)

- A. **The Adullam years** (from about age 23 to 30): David was tested by adversity in the wilderness for about seven years as King Saul and 3,000 soldiers sought to kill him. The Lord was training David to be Israel's great warrior king. When God raises up a "David," He trains them in the "seminary of Saul" by using a demonized leader to mistreat them.

¹*David...escaped to the cave of Adullam...²Everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him. So he became captain over them. And there were about four hundred men with him. (1 Sam. 22:1-2)*

- B. 1 Samuel describes how a young David was mistreated by an older, jealous leader—King Saul. 2 Samuel describes how an elderly David was attacked by a young, ambitious leader—Absalom. Nobody could stop God's will in his life but David—not Saul, not the Philistines, nor any other.

V. HEBRON (2 SAMUEL 2-5)

The Hebron years (from age 30 to 37): David was tested by receiving only a partial fulfillment of the promises for which he had long labored and waited. In Hebron, he was king over the tribe of Judah. This was only one of the 12 tribes that God had promised him about 13 years earlier.

¹*David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go up to any of the cities of Judah?" And the LORD said to him, "Go up." David said, "Where shall I go up?" And He said, "To Hebron." (2 Sam. 2:1)*

VI. JERUSALEM (2 SAMUEL 6-24)

The Jerusalem years (from age 37 to 70): David was tested by the pressures related to walking in the fullness of the promises, blessings, influence, and prosperity that he received. David's season of greatest blessing was also his most dangerous season spiritually speaking. David's greatest failures are recorded in Scripture during this season of his life.

¹¹*Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments...¹²lest—when you have...built beautiful houses...¹³and your silver and your gold are multiplied...¹⁴when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the LORD... (Deut. 8:11-14)*