


Learning how to
talk to God
from the great prayers of the Bible

David's Prayer of Adoration

2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 8

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DAVID'S PRAYER OF ADORATION

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The majestic creator of the universe has invited us to talk to Him. Think about that.

Prayer is the wonderful gift of experiencing a relationship with God and having a conversation with Him. This invitation to pray proves how much God loves us and cares about us. It's permission to cry out to Him for help and ask Him to meet our needs. And it really makes a difference. Prayer makes a difference because He promises to listen and He promises to act.

So, why do we pray so little? Why don't we pray more? One reason is self-reliance. We think we can handle life without God. So we rely on self, on money, and how smart we are. Another reason we don't pray is a lack of faith. Perhaps we've tried and it didn't work, so we stop praying. Yet, when life falls apart, we can't help crying out to God.

God invites us to talk to Him, and nothing could be more important in our discipleship than learning how to talk to Him ... and how to listen to Him. So this spring, we are going to ***learn how to talk to God from the great prayers of the Bible***. We're going to study the great prayers of David and Solomon. The desperate prayers of Jonah and Jeremiah. The great prayer of Jesus in garden. We're going to see how Jesus talked to His Father and how Jesus prayed for us. We're also going to study the great principles of prayer like praying with faith, asking according to His will, and how to intercede for others. But the goal is not to learn more, but to pray more!

There are all kinds of prayer, and we're going to study many of them. Prayers of asking and prayers of thanksgiving, prayers of desperation and prayers of repentance. This morning, we're going to look at David's great prayer of praise and adoration, at his reaction to the majesty of God.

David's original prayer is recorded in 2 Samuel 7 and later became a song recorded in Psalm 8. The context of 2 Samuel 7 is David offering to build a magnificent temple for his magnificent God. Even though it was an offer to honor God, the Lord said no. Instead, it would be David's son, Solomon, who would build the great temple. Instead of being disappointed, David was elated and offered a great prayer of gratitude and adoration.

In 2 Samuel 7, we get to listen in as David talks with God.

Then King David went in and sat before the Lord and prayed, "***Who am I***, O Lord God, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? (*What did I do to deserve such blessing?*) And now, in addition to everything else, you speak of giving your servant a lasting dynasty! (*the promise that a descendant of David would rise up as the Messiah and reign forever*) ... What more can I say to you? ... Because of your promise and according to your will, you have done all these great things ... How great you are, O Lord God! ***There is no one like you***" (2 Samuel 7:18-22, NLT).¹

What can we learn from David's prayer? Three things – *humility, gratitude, and awe*.² These are the ingredients of a true prayer of adoration.

“WHO AM I?”

David “sat before the Lord.” He was a man of prayer, and he had a personal relationship with God. And David said, “***Who am I***, O Lord God, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?” (2 Samuel 7:18, NLT).³ David sat before God, thought about his life, and was humbled at all the ways God had blessed him.⁴ What an example for us. To sit before God, think about our lives, and remember all the ways God has blessed us.

As he sat there, I can imagine David remembering his days as a shepherd boy, the youngest of Jesse's children.⁵ And yet, after reviewing all his older brothers, God found David to be the one worthy to be the next king of Israel. A ten-year-old boy was chosen by God to be the next king of Israel.

I can imagine David remembering Israel's battle with the Philistines.⁶ He was only a teenager at the time. David remembered the fear of his brothers and the fear of Israel. But what he remembered most were the insults of the Philistine giant Goliath.⁷ David insisted that someone do something, but his older brother told him to shut up. But the teenager dared to fight the giant with a slingshot. As Goliath hurled insults at Israel's God, David hurled a rock that struck Goliath in the middle of his head, and he fell to the ground. Both sides of the battlefield gasped in disbelief. Then David cut off Goliath's head and held it up in victory. I can imagine David sitting before God and remembering that day, his first taste of the power of God in his life.

David became a great warrior.⁸ His reputation was so great that when his army returned from battle women danced and sang, “Saul has slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands” (1 Samuel 18:7). David sat before God and remembered those victories.

And David remembered the day he became king. He was 30 years old. And now years later, he remembered how God had worked in his life and blessed his life, and he sat before God and said, “Who am I, and who is my family, that you have blessed us so?”

The context of 2 Samuel 7 is David's desire to build a magnificent temple for his magnificent God. But God said no, because David had been a “man of war” and “shed blood.”⁹ The Lord commended David's heart and promised to fulfill his dream and that the temple would be “exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout all lands,” but that Solomon, David's son, would be the one to build it (1 Chronicles 22:5, NAS).¹⁰ So David spent the last half of his life accumulating tons of gold and silver and materials for the temple.

In addition to the temple, the Lord promised David, “Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever, your throne shall be established forever” (2 Samuel 7:16, NAS). David wanted to build a temple, God wanted to build a kingdom, an eternal kingdom, one over which the Messiah would reign. The Lord promised that the Messiah would be a descendant of David, and that promise was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.¹¹

David “sat before the Lord” and was humbled that God cared about him. “Who am I?” (2 Samuel 7:18, NAS). Later in Psalm 8, he said, “Who are we that you should care about us?” (Psalm 8:4). David was amazed that someone as big as God would care about someone as small as him.

David “sat before the Lord” and was filled with gratitude for all the ways God had blessed him. He said, “You have brought about all this greatness (all these blessings)” (2 Samuel 7:21, ESV). David was overwhelmed with gratitude for God’s current blessings but also for the promised blessings to come.

Again, what can we learn from David’s prayer? Humility, gratitude, and awe.

“THERE IS NONE LIKE YOU”

David’s life can be summed up with one phrase, a phrase found in 2 Samuel 7:22. ***“O Lord, there is none like You.”***¹² David was awestruck by God. A survey of the Psalms tells us why he repeated that phrase so often.

David said, “There is none like You,” ***because he had seen and experienced the majesty of God.*** In Psalm 8, David said, “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth” (Psalm 8:1, NAS). Psalm 19, “The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak, and night after night they make him known” (Psalm 19:1-2, NLT).

David said, “There is none like You,” ***because time and again he ran to God for help.*** In Psalm 18, he said, “I love you, Lord; you are my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my savior. My God is my rock, in whom I find protection. He is my shield, the power that saves me, and my place of safety” (Psalm 18:1-2, NLT). Psalm 46, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble” (Psalm 46:1).

David said, “There is none like You,” ***because no one else knew him so completely and loved him so unconditionally.*** In Psalm 139, David said, “O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up. You understand my thought from afar ... How precious are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them!” (Psalm 139:1-2, 17, NAS). David experienced a personal and intimate relationship with God, and so can we.

David said, “There is none like You,” ***because there was no one else to whom he could pour out his heart.*** I love Psalm 62:8 where David said, “Trust in Him at all times ... and pour out your heart before Him” (NAS). In Psalm 5, he said, “O Lord, hear me as I pray. Pay attention to my groaning. Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for I pray to no one but you ... Each morning I bring my requests to you and wait expectantly” (Psalm 5:1-3, NLT). And in Psalm 116 he said, “I love the Lord because he hears” (Psalm 116:1, NLT).

David said, “There is none like You,” ***because no one else was as patient with his doubts, his complaints, and his questions.*** David dared to pray, “O Lord, how long will you forget me? Forever? How long will you look the other way?” (Psalm 13:1, NLT). In desperation, he prayed, “I pour out my complaint before Him” (Psalm 142:2, NAS). Psalm 69, “I am exhausted from

crying for help; my throat is parched. My eyes are swollen with weeping, waiting for my God to help me ... But I keep praying to you, Lord, hoping this time you will show me favor ... O God, answer my prayer” (Psalm 69:3, 13, NLT). God listens to prayers like that.

David said, “There is none like You,” *because no one else had shown such mercy and forgiveness and grace*. David’s greatest fall was his affair with Bathsheba, and yet, God forgave him.¹³ Because he prayer in repentance, “Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight” (Psalm 51:4, NIV). In repentance, David appealed to God’s grace. “But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth” (Psalm 86:15, NAS).¹⁴

That was David’s experience with God, and we can experience Him in the same way. And when we do, we too will say, “There is none like You.”

- When we see and experience the majesty of God, we will say, “There is none like You.”
- When we run to God for help and He helps, we will say, “There is none like You.”
- When we understand that no one else knows us so completely and loves us so unconditionally, we will say, “There is none like You.”
- When we pour out our hearts to God, trusting that He hears our prayers, we will say, “There is none like You.”
- When we experience His patience with our doubts and complaints and questions, we will say, “There is none like You.”
- When we receive mercy and forgiveness and grace, time and time again, we will say, “There is none like You.”
- When we’re humbled by the fact that the God of the universe cares about us, we will say, “There is none like You.”

O Lord, let us experience You so personally and so intimately that we too can say, “There is none like You.”

“HOW MAJESTIC IS YOUR NAME”

David’s original prayer is recorded in 2 Samuel 7, and Psalm 8 is a later hymn of that prayer.

“O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth ... When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have set in place, what is man that you should think about him, and who are we that you should care about us?” (Psalm 8:1, 3, NIV).

These are not just good lyrics. This is a reflection of David's heart, and we catch him daydreaming. "When I consider," David said. To "consider" is to behold, to study, to ponder, to meditate, to contemplate.¹⁵ This was not a casual thought. David carefully and deeply pondered the majesty of God.¹⁶ He thought of the universe as the "work" of God's "fingers."

David was a student of God, yet more than a student. His response was as emotional as it was intellectual. "O Lord, our Lord!" Psalm 8 is not a term paper. It's a song. It's not a statement of faith. It's a cry of the heart. And that's the purpose of this series. To learn how to walk with God and talk to God and listen to God.

David was a student of God, and he was also a king. He possessed absolute power. He reigned over an entire nation. He was considered great and honored with glory. And yet, he deflected all the praise and honor when he said, "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is **Your name** in all the earth" (Psalm 8:1). David wanted all of Israel to praise the majesty of God. David wanted the whole world to praise the majesty of God, when he said in Psalm 33, "Let all the earth fear the Lord. Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him" (Psalm 33:8).¹⁷

But what did David mean when he called God "majestic"? The Hebrew word "majestic" means noble, excellent, stately, and glorious.¹⁸ Majesty means superiority. David believed God was superior in every way and declared before Israel, "Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all" (1 Chronicles 29:11, ESV). "Who is like you, O Lord?" Moses asked, "Who is like You – majestic in holiness and awesome in glory?" (Exodus 15:11, NIV).¹⁹

So, what does it mean to experience the majesty of God? It's being interrupted ... surprised ... stunned ... awestruck. That's how David felt. He was awestruck by the glory and majesty of God.

"When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have set in place" (Psalm 8:3, NAS).²⁰ As king, David looked at the same stars he looked at when he was a shepherd boy. And he was in awe of what he saw.²¹ Even more, he was in awe of the one who created what he saw. He was awestruck by the fact that "the Lord merely spoke, and the heavens were created," that God "breathed the word, and all the stars were born" (Psalm 33:6, NLT).²²

I never tire of looking at this photo. It's called the "pale blue dot." It is one of the most stunning and humbling photos ever taken. It was taken in 1990 by Voyager 1 looking back at Earth four billion miles away. That pale blue dot is Earth. The late astronomer Carl Sagan made this comment about the Voyager photograph.

"Look again at that dot ... That's home. That's us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives. The aggregate of our joy and suffering, thousands of confident religions and ideologies ... every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilization, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful child, inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals, every corrupt

politician, every “superstar,” every “supreme leader,” every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived there – on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.”²³

Sagan was right, but he missed the point. As an atheist, he missed the majesty of God. What did David say when he looked at the stars? “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have set in place, what is man that you should think about him, and who are we that you should care about us? ... O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!” (Psalm 8:3, 9).²⁴

This morning, we’ve looked at David’s prayer of adoration? And what is adoration? It’s expressing what we feel and what we think. It’s the heart reacting to God. Praise is awe, reverence, and respect for the majesty of God. To praise is to acknowledge and to declare who He is. Praise is honoring Him.²⁵ To praise is also adoring Him, delighting in Him, and enjoying Him as our loving Father. C. S. Lewis said, “We praise what we enjoy” and “praise completes the enjoyment.”²⁶

CONCLUSION

What can we learn from David’s prayer? *Humility, gratitude, and awe.*

When David “sat before the Lord” and prayed, he said, “Who am I? ... Who are we that you should care about us?” David was humbled that someone as big as God cared about someone as small as him.

When David “sat before the Lord” and prayed, he was overwhelmed with gratitude for God’s blessings, not only for God’s current blessings but also for the promise of blessings to come.

And when David “sat before the Lord” and prayed, he said, “There is none like You!” David was in awe of the majesty of God and his prayer was his response.

NOTES

¹ David's prayer is also recorded in 1 Chronicles 17:16-20.

² See similar thoughts in David F. Payne, *1 & 2 Samuel*, The Daily Study Bible Series (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1982), page 191.

³ David was essentially saying, "Wow, just look at what God has done for me and my family!" [Mary J. Evans, *The Message of Samuel*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), page 199]].

⁴ Part of the context of 2 Samuel 7 is a dream David had one night, where the Lord reminded David that He had raised him up from being a shepherd to being a king, that He had defeated all his enemies, and that He would raise up a ruler, the Messiah, to reign over His kingdom.

⁵ See 1 Samuel 16.

⁶ See 1 Samuel 17.

⁷ See 1 Samuel 17:26.

⁸ See 1 Samuel 18:6-8.

⁹ See 1 Chronicles 17 and 28:3.

¹⁰ See 2 Chronicles 6:8 and 2 Samuel 7:12-15.

¹¹ The New Testament genealogies list Jesus as a descendant of David, just as God promised. See Matthew 1:1, 6, and Luke 3:31.

¹² The phrase, and close versions of it, are repeated in Exodus 15:11 (Moses), Deuteronomy 3:24 (Moses), 1 Samuel 2:2 (Hannah), Psalm 40:5 (David), Isaiah 45:5, 14, 18 (Isaiah), Jeremiah 10:6-7 (Jeremiah).

¹³ See 2 Samuel 11.

¹⁴ "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12, NAS).

¹⁵ The Hebrew word for "consider" is ra'ah, and means to behold, inspect, ponder, or contemplate.

¹⁶ Matt Redman writes, "Here we stand in an age that is thirsting for wonder. In our information-overloaded society, there seems to be no room left for mystery and fascination. Yet just when we're tempted to shrink God down to size – or kick Him out of the equation altogether – there in front of our eyes stand the wonders of His universe. A great big, awe-inspiring reminder of just who it is we're dealing with. Worship has no room for 'know-it-alls.' The souls who live in the ordinary and the mundane will rarely aspire to climb higher in praise. And reverence for God will never flow freely from a heart that shrinks Him down to earthly proportions. God makes worshippers out of wonderers. If we allow them, the beauty and vastness of the cosmos will help lead us to higher ground of worship." [Louie Giglio and Matt Redman, *Indescribable* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2011), page 69.]

¹⁷ At the coronation of his son Solomon as king, David praised his glorious and majestic God. "Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is over all things. Riches and honor come from you alone, for you rule over everything. Power and might are in your hand, and it is at your discretion that people are made great and given strength" (1 Chronicles 29:11-12, NLT).

¹⁸ See TWOT 28.

¹⁹ "The Lord reigns and is robed in majesty" (Psalm 93:1, ESV).

²⁰ See also Psalm 19:1-2, "The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak, and night after night they make him known" (NLT).

²¹ The stars are like a choir praising God. The stars overwhelm our senses and saturate our minds with the majesty of God. That's why the Bible says, "Stop and consider the wonders of God" (Job 37:14).

²² See Isaiah 40:26, "Look up into the heavens. Who created all the stars? He brings them out like an army, one after another, calling each by its name. Because of his great power and incomparable strength, not a single one is missing" (NLT).

²³ Quote by Carl Sagan about the "pale blue dot" photo of earth taken by Voyager 1 in 1990. [Giglio and Redman, *Indescribable*, page 60.

²⁴ In the book of Isaiah, God asks every person in the world, "Look up into the heavens. Who created all the stars?" (Isaiah 40:26, NIV). And God answers, "ME!"

²⁵ See Psalm 29:2, "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name."

²⁶ Quoted by J. I. Packer and Carolyn Nystrom, *Praying – Finding Our Way through Duty to Delight* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006), pages 100, 106.