

Forming the Heart of David

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Many places in scripture we see that during a time of great need, a man or woman of God appears to deliver a Word from the Lord and/or bring deliverance, seemingly out of nowhere. Their origins and/or training for the task are a mystery, and their sudden appearing like the signature of the God that sent them. John the Baptist, Gideon, many of the prophets— at first glance they all just seem to appear with no warning and immediately start doing what needs to be done. Many times, it only seems that way to the people of their time, other times they just appear in scripture, and we get no direct back-story. There is literally no word in the bible about Elijah before he appears before King Ahab and declares a drought. Moses disappeared in disgrace after murdering a man, only to re-emerge suddenly after **40 years** with the boldness to confront Pharaoh to his face, and with the authority to work powerful signs of deliverance. And probably the most surprising of all, a 14-year old runt/shepherd boy named David, on an errand for his dad, ends up taking down a giant, leading the Israelite army to victory, and eventually, becoming king. Not only that, when he is finally king, he sets up kingdom that God said will *never* end.

Reading these accounts, it can all feel a bit intimidating and disheartening for anyone who desires the Church to become what God intended it to be, especially those just starting to see how desperate our situation is. Take David as an example. His “technique” appears to be like he just showed up and *shazam!* knew what to do. It’s hard to model a discipleship program based on such an example. It is hard not to wonder how David even got the “heart of David” we talk about so much. We can see the effects in his life, but the causes are elusive. Since many *in* the Church are starting to awaken to the true state *of* the Church, questions that have been asked by a few in the past are starting to emerge on a macro-level: “What training did David get that enabled him to make such righteous choices and eventually lead and change the course of his generation and generations after him?” Or in other words, “What we’re doing isn’t working, how do we get what he had?”

Most of us could offer the short answer (“Well, uh, it’s from the Lord, I guess”) but how that looks in real life, everyday, and how we move toward it, very few of us know. I sure don’t. We have, as I’ve heard it said, “lost the knowledge.” And the knowledge we have is at best “book knowledge”— factual understanding without experience.

But there is hope. If we want what David had (a part of what Jesus walked in), if we want to see hearts like his arise in this generation so that the “glory of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (II Cor. 4:6) would be seen in this age, we must nail our instincts of “analysis, then action” to the Cross and just do what he did.

While this may seem like we’re back to the original problem, the truth is we can know more about David’s upbringing from scripture than it first seems. We just have trouble seeing what the Lord is saying with our limited vision (read: carnal thinking). Though it is not spelled out chronologically in one succinct passage of scripture, the conditions of his early life are implied through several passages. And more than that, because God is a generational God, we can also see how the formation of David’s heart for God actually started in a long line of righteous

choices in his family, all the way back to Judah, at least. By thinking generationally, we can also understand that as we pursue the Lord and try to make righteous choices, our greatest reward is to increase the capacity for God's love in future generations.

In this way, we will gain the knowledge we need by walking out righteous choices for the Lord over the course of decades, learning what we need on the trail as we submit to fathers and mothers in the faith. This is nonsense to the natural mind, but it is the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps there are so few like David in our generation because so few have made or are making choices with the intent to produce righteousness in their great-grandchildren.

Judah chose righteously, as did Salmon, Rahab, Boaz, Ruth and Jesse. All of their choices, for good and for bad, helped form the infrastructure of David's heart, and we will look at this over the course of the next few articles.