

What kind of a man would...

do whatever God asked him to do, who would pray, “lead me, show me, train me, direct my path to do Your will”?

What kind of a man would...

have the moral excellence to live out the great ancient virtues of courage, perseverance, loyalty, honesty, justice, patience, generosity, humility, and faith?

What kind of a man would...

announce to the world, “I am a man of prayer”?

What kind of a man would...

be so filled with remorse for sin in his life that he would fall on his face, ask and plead for forgiveness , and then say, “As far as the East is from the West, so far has He removed our transgressions from us”?

What kind of a man would...

love the Lord with all his heart and all his strength, declaring, “I love You, O Lord, my strength. I will praise You, O Lord, my God with all my heart”?

What kind of a man would...

really love his neighbor as himself and write,
“Lord, who may live on Your holy hill? He who
does his neighbor no wrong and casts no slur
on his fellow man?”

What kind of a man would...

lead others, one or a nation, to worship the
Lord with praise on his lips and adoration in
his heart with words like, “O Lord, our Lord,
how majestic is Your name in all the earth”?

What kind of a man?

A Man
After
God's Own
Heart

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INTRODUCTION

I FIND THAT I relate to David's life in many ways having spent the last 25 years delving into his personality, motives, his actions and yes, even his secrets. If you know his story, chances are you relate to him too. Throughout my life I have had to face many of my own giants, both in the great opportunities that God brought my way as well as the challenges that came as a result of my own mistakes. Maybe that's why the life of David has always intrigued me so. He was a passionate worshiper of course. I can relate to that. I also relate to how the Lord continued to love and even use David despite the times he messed up. God's amazing grace for David and for me hopefully gives you hope as well.

The opportunities and struggles of my own life have resulted in their good and bad endings. Some of the good things that happened for me: winning my college conference tennis championships in the 50's, beginning the Continental Singers in the 60's, creating the Christian Artists' Seminar

in the Rockies in the 70's along with the Jeremiah People, doing 1,000 live concerts in the U.S. plus hundreds more internationally in the 80's and developing the Young Continentals in the 90's. There were also a few personal physical achievements: climbing Kilimanjaro in Africa at 19,340 feet, summiting Aconcagua in Argentina at nearly 23,000 feet and later going to the base camps of Mt Everest and Anapurna in Nepal.

I also had to face some serious challenges because of poor decisions regarding my own choices which resulted hurt, pain and grief to my family, myself and others: dealing with divorce and fearing I might lose my position - even in the ministries God used me to create, experiencing what it was like to have my wings broken not just clipped, but useless, hanging to my sides, feeling just like David did in Psalm 40 and clinging to the Lord as he pulled me out of the pit. I found myself having to navigate a bankruptcy with the Continental Board of Directors in the 2,000's but then watched as the Lord brought us out the other side with a better and stronger future ministry through the Continentals Global Foundation that is still making possible for talented Christian

youth to have the “Continental Life Changing Experience” wherever they live in the world.

So you see, I am not writing from the perspective of having it all together. My life like David’s and possibly like your own life, is filled with flaws and imperfections— amazingly none of which has disqualified me from being loved, adored, and even used by God. Living the Christian life now, though, is harder than when I was a kid or head of a ministry. The distractions of the world are so many and the persecutions coming are very real. It’s the reason I wrote this book and am personally focusing hard on becoming a person after God’s heart. We need to be strong and willing to stand up for what we believe. We were born for this time. Let’s get ready to do our part. That’s what I’m doing.

FOREWORD

MANY GREAT BOOKS have been written about King David. When I first thought about writing this book, I naively thought it might be the first one that would be focused just on David's heart.

Then one day, on a sudden impulse, I went to Google and typed in "David, a man after God's own heart." To my amazement, there were 2,900,000 entries on the subject! This was shocking information for someone about to write a book on this subject.

I could have been devastated, but in my experience, I knew God either had a plan for me to write this for myself, write it for people like you, or maybe, just to be able to talk about it, intelligently, to someone.

So my thoughts of concern quickly turned into a more excited motivation. If that many creative people have written, or spoken, about this subject, just think how important this must be and how many people might be interested in knowing

the *secrets* of becoming a person after God's own heart?

Are you one of those people? I hope so. If so, this is for you.

Although this book does recount some of David's famous exploits and adventures, it is primarily about his heart. That's where God looked and about which He said, "I don't look at what men look at; I look at the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7). So the heart is where we will look, too.

The heart is where we will find *David's Seven Secrets*. What God saw in David's heart, He can also see in your heart if you are willing to embrace it, believe it, and then act on it.



After many of my pastor friends read the pages to follow, each of them encouraged me to provide a Bible study to accompany this book. So I have added guidelines for a simple, easy-to-lead Bible study at the back of this book. My prayer is that it helps further your walk with God!

PRELUDE

The heart of the matter...is the heart!

“Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me
and lead me, in the way everlasting.”

—DAVID, PSALM 139:23–24

“Out of the overflow of the
heart, the mouth speaks.”

—JESUS, MATTHEW 12:34

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord
Open the eyes of my heart.

I want to see you,

I want to see you

—WORDS AND MUSIC BY PAUL BALOCHE

DAVID IS ONE of those biblical characters whose adventures and successes people love to read and hear about. But the greatest and most compelling thing about David is totally different than all the activity surrounding his vibrant life. It is more important than all the battles he waged and armies he conquered. It looms larger than all Israel's borders he expanded and richer than the billions of dollars' worth of gold and silver and things he accumulated.

It was a secret so amazing, so powerful, so wonderful, and yet so awesome that God actually said, "I have found David, a man after my own heart." The secret was in David's heart, and only God could see it. Everyone else missed it. The secret of what God saw is found in David's life story, his struggles, his own writings and songs, his prayers, his worship, and his motives.

There are seven secrets. The Christian life is about these seven secrets. Now we will begin to expose each one, capture it, and make it our own! Wouldn't it be fantastic if one day God would look down at your heart and say, "There is a person after my own heart, a person who will do whatever I want him or her to do"?"

The secret of what God saw is found in David's life story, his struggles, his own writings and songs, his prayers, his worship, and his motives.

7 SECRETS

In Jeremiah 17:10, God says, "I, the Lord, search the heart and examine the mind to reward man according to his conduct."

Here are four versions of 2 Chronicles 16:9:

- "For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him" (NIV).
- And they "run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to make Himself strong in behalf of those whose heart is blameless before Him" (TAB).
- And they "search back and forth across the whole earth looking for people whose hearts are perfect before Him" (TLB).
- And they "Move to and fro throughout the earth that He may

strongly support those whose heart is completely His” (NAS).

All of these versions of this verse wonderfully demonstrate that God is promising to strengthen and support any person whose heart is fully committed to Him. He is looking for your committed heart right now! What does He see in your heart?

Have you ever wondered what part of you is your heart? Surely it is more than the muscle beating in your chest. Is it your mind, what you think, what you dream, and what motivates you? Is it your spirit, that part of you that makes up your personality and emotions? Is it your soul, that part of you that is life itself and what we think of as God's, eternally? Which one is He looking at to see if you are committed enough to Him to be a person after His heart?

When the Bible talks about the heart, it is talking about all of these inner parts at the same time, all of who you are on the inside. This is your heart. This is the committed part of you He is looking for. His eyes sweep throughout the earth looking for your committed heart. This is absolutely breathtaking!

Consider these final and powerful words David said to his son, Solomon, as he neared the end of

his life, knowing that Solomon was to carry on his legacy: “And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve Him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you... Consider now, for the Lord has chosen you”! (Chron. 28:9–10). God chose David, and Jesus said the same of his followers, including you and me. “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit” (John 15:16). That is such an incredible truth. So now, what about bearing fruit and becoming a person after God’s heart?

When the Bible talks about the heart, it is talking about all of these inner parts at the same time, all of who you are on the inside.

7 SECRETS

Does it motivate you, knowing that you have been chosen by the Lord to go and bear fruit? How does it make you feel to know He is looking at your heart today to see if you are committed to Him?

What did God see in David’s heart, deep down, that made him the Lord’s special choice? These are

the secrets that will unfold, one by one, from his own life and his own words. He faced his giants and did what God wanted him to do.

One

BRING ON THE GIANTS

DAVID'S SECRET #1

He Did What God Wanted Him to Do

IHAVE FOUND DAVID, son of Jesse, a man after my own heart. He will do everything I want him to” (God, Acts 13:22).

“Show me the way I should go, for to You, I lift up my soul. Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; may Your good spirit lead me on level ground...for I am Your servant” (David, Ps. 143:8, 10, 12).

I am a servant, I am listening for my name,
I sit here waiting, I've been looking at the game
That I've been playing, and I've been staying
much the same. When you are lonely, you're the
only one to blame.

I am a servant, I am waiting for the call, I've
been unfaithful, so I sit here in the hall.
How can you use me when I've never given all,
How can you choose me when you know I'd
quickly fall.

So you feed my soul and you make me grow,
And you let me know you love me.
And I'm worthless now, but I've made a vow, I
will humbly bow before thee.
O please use me, I am lonely.

I am a servant getting ready for my part,
There's been a change, a rearrangement in my
heart. At last I'm learning, there's no returning
once I start.
To live's a privilege, to love is such an art. But I
need your help to start,
O, please purify my heart. I am your servant.

—"I AM A SERVANT," WORDS AND MUSIC

BY LARRY NORMAN

In the days before kings, prophets ruled as
judges in the land. The last of these great prophets
was Samuel. When he was old, he appointed his
two sons as judges, but they turned away from
God and chose dishonest gain and accepted bribes
and perverted justice.

So the elders of Israel came to Samuel and
asked for a king to rule over them like all the

other nations had. Samuel was displeased with their request, so he prayed to the Lord.

The Lord told him, “Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their King. Warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do” (1 Sam. 8:7, 9).

Samuel followed God’s instructions and brought together members of each of the tribes of Israel. Benjamin was selected. From Benjamin, clan by clan, Matri was chosen, and from his clan the family of Kish was chosen. From Kish, his son, Saul, was chosen. His description was like this: “An impressive young man without equal among the Israelites, a head taller than any of the others” (1 Sam. 9:2).

Samuel said to all the people, “Do you see the man the Lord has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people” (1 Sam. 10:24).

Samuel followed God’s instructions
and brought together members
of each of the tribes of Israel.

7 SECRETS

Saul had a great beginning. He was thirty when he became the king and immediately put an army together. The battles with the Philistines began, and Israel's army inflicted punishment on all the other neighboring kingdoms as well. However, over the course of his reign, Saul became less dependent on the Lord and more confident of his own abilities and successes. His instructions from the Lord, through Samuel, were only partially fulfilled. Once, in an impatient moment, he offered up a burnt offering, something only the prophets or priests were allowed to do.

Then came Samuel's devastating words: "You acted foolishly. You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. But now, your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out *a man after his own heart* and appointed him leader of his people..." (emphasis mine, 1 Sam. 13:13-14).

Soon word came to Samuel from the Lord: "Fill your horn with oil, and be on your way. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king" (1 Sam. 16:10).

JESSE'S YOUNGEST SON

A big change was in the wind for Israel, though it would not happen for some time. In the beginning, Samuel was afraid to anoint one of Jesse's sons for fear that Saul would have him killed. So the Lord told him to take a heifer with him and say he had come to sacrifice it to the Lord. He was to invite Jesse and his sons to the occasion.

When they arrived, Samuel saw the eldest son, Eliab, who was strong and tall. He thought for sure this was the one the Lord had selected. But the Lord said these immortal words: "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but *the Lord looks at the heart*" (emphasis mine, 1 Sam. 16:7).

One by one, seven of Jesse's sons were paraded before Samuel, and none was selected. Because none of them were chosen, Samuel asked Jesse if those were all of his sons. Jesse replied that the youngest son was not there; he was tending the sheep. Samuel told Jesse to send for him immediately and that he would not sit down until he arrived.

When the youngest son arrived, Samuel saw a

boy with a fine appearance and handsome features, ruddy from being out with the sheep day and night.

Then the Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; he is the one" (1 Sam. 16:12). Samuel anointed him in the presence of his family, and from that day on, the spirit of the Lord came on David in power.

When the youngest son arrived, Samuel saw a boy with a fine appearance and handsome features, ruddy from being out with the sheep day and night.

7 SECRETS

What an amazing beginning for a young teenager! You can imagine all the things that might have been going through his mind. For sure, it was the experience of a lifetime, his destiny laid out before him, never to be forgotten. Nothing but a kid watching some sheep one moment, in line to be the future king the next.

The teen years are the time when a young person needs to make the choice to become someone whose heart is fully committed to the Lord. Giants are just ahead, and it's time to get prepared. God's Word is the armor that's necessary, along with an unwavering desire to become all that God wants

him or her to be. And isn't it just like the Lord to choose the least likely and weakest to become the greatest?

“Weak” was not a description for David from that point on, however, as the Spirit of God came on him in power. He was courageous enough to chase down a lion at one time and a bear another, while rescuing a helpless little lamb. Without a spear or a club, he was able to kill each predator with his bare hands, as he would relate to King Saul at a future time.

But for now, David went back to the sheep with his sling, his harp, his songs, and his thoughts. He could see God's greatness in those hills and skies of Bethlehem. Without a doubt, he reaffirmed his loyalty and devotion to the God who was laying out the plan, the call, and the destiny for the rest of his life.

In time, he earned the reputation as being one who sang and played the harp beautifully. So when Saul began suffering spells of deep depression, panic, paranoia, and anxiety, along with evil hallucinations of all kinds, the young shepherd from Bethlehem was asked to come to play and sing to soothe the king's crazed moods. The music calmed his spirit.

David went back and forth from his father's ranch to the palace to play for the emotionally disturbed King Saul. These occasional visits eventually culminated in a confrontation with a giant!

What about giants in your life and mine? Are we strong enough to follow through with what we know God wants us to do, even if a giant stands in the way? Like the apostle Paul said a thousand years after David killed Goliath, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). Certainly not a meager giant!

We all have to identify our own giants and be sure the Lord is giving us the go-ahead to stand up to them.

THE BRAZILIAN CONTINENTALS

So it was with some Brazilian Continentals who made the decision to stand up to their giants, and then actually got help from some giants as well.

Vilar Goncalves, a young man from Belo Horizonte, believed God wanted him to bring a musical program to the main auditorium in his city. The city officials did not want him to use their auditorium for a Christian concert. It was well known that the facility was used for anything but Christian activities. He was denied again

and again. He persisted, though, and eventually, by paying a large rental price, he was given permission for his performance, the first ever by the Brazilian Continentals.

Following Joshua's battle plan for success, Vilar and his group went down to the auditorium the week of their premiere and marched around it every night for six nights in a row, singing, praising God, and praying that He would give them His blessing and spiritual success for their upcoming performance.

On the seventh night, after marching, they were sitting in a circle outside the auditorium, again praying, when the audience from another performance came out of the venue. The young people were ridiculed, spat upon, kicked, and derided for their beliefs. Fearing a physical attack by one of the men in the street, Vilar stood up and faced him. Vilar is an athletic, soccer-playing, well-built man, but he had no intention of violence. As he stood there, two of the men fell back, screaming, "Don't let them hurt us!" and ran off.

Suddenly, standing behind the group there appeared two men taller than nine feet, with drawn swords, looking very much like giants. The defenders appeared just in time to protect the