

Be a Berean!

The Bereans ...received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day. (Acts 17:11)

["Be a Berean" will regularly cover topics that arise during the "Acts 29" and "Lifted Up" Bible classes. Contact Franklyn Pfeil—liftedup@lockportalliance.org—with questions or comments.]

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"A Man After God's Own Heart"

In all of Scripture, only King David is designated by God as "**a man after My own heart**" (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22).

Why David? Isn't he the one who had an affair with Bathsheba, then conspired to have her husband killed? Does God condone such things?

No, God does not condone any form or shape of sin whatsoever. After this episode, David's life was ceaselessly beset with the consequences of sin. Death, treason, incest, rape, and revenge visited his family--just as the prophet Nathan, who had exposed David's sin, had foretold:

**Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight?
Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house** (2 Sam. 12:9-10).

David's beloved infant son fell ill. Though he fasted and begged God for the life of the child, God said No. David had prayed facedown upon the earthen floor for seven days. When he found that the child had died,

he arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he went into the house of the LORD (2 Samuel 12:20).

It may have been there in the house of the LORD that David, broken in spirit, cried out,
Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation. (Psalm 51)

Later on, he fought a civil war against the forces led by his favorite son, Absalom, who was killed in the war's decisive battle. Soon thereafter, prematurely aged and enfeebled, he relinquished his crown just before his relatively early death.

The Bible records that God did forgive David's sin; he did not lose his salvation (see 2 Samuel 12:13). But the evidence seems clear that God did not restore the joy of His salvation. God chose to let sin's consequences play themselves out in David's life. If He must, God will tether a wayward child to His heart with sorrow -- if there is no other way to keep the child from wandering into further danger.

Given the evidence of his life, how can he be singled out as a man after God's own heart? It seems that the answer lies in the meaning of the word 'after.' 'After' indicates direction, and not necessarily proximity. 'After' shows the direction of a heart, and not necessarily that heart's current proximity to God's standards.

The Bible's account of King David's life shows us how things might not be as they appear to our sight. When God had chosen young David to be king, the prophet Samuel mentioned that David's older brother looked the way we think a king should look. But **the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance, for the LORD sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."** (1 Sam. 16:7)

In the Gospel of Luke, a young man took his inheritance to a far country and wasted it all on a reckless and sinful life. When he had sunk as low as a Jewish man could--feeding pigs as a hired hand--he got back up and sought after his father's forgiveness.

I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before you.

And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. (15:18, 20)

The prodigal son was "yet at a distance," but the father saw the direction of his heart.

Jesus Christ left his Father's house and came to a 'far country,' where **he emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant** (Philippians 2:7).

There he fell -- under the weight of a cross on his way to seek his Father's forgiveness for my sins, and for yours, for David's, and for the prodigal son's. To all who saw him, he appeared to be a broken, defeated man. He didn't look like a King. **But the LORD sees not as man sees.**

Then Jesus fell again.

And then He fell again. A man after God's own heart, carrying the sin and sorrows of the world, Jesus got back up.

Forsaken, dead, and buried, **He arose from the earth, and went to His Father's house.**

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It is our fervent hope that you will Be a Berean by attending one or more of these Bible-based classes this week! —

“Acts 29” Bible Class—Sunday at 9:45

“Everyday Wisdom for the Average Joe”—Sunday at 9:45

"The Lord's Prayer"--Sunday at 9:45

“Lifted Up” Continuous Bible Class—Thursday at 6:00 p.m.