

Norman C. Schwab  
Yacolt EV Free  
June 21, 1998

### **David: A Look Back**

In the summer of 1993 Michael Jordan's father, James Jordan was murdered. Circumstances surrounding that event are still cloudy, but my guess is that Michael would give up all his investments and millions in the bank to have his father back. Does anyone here miss their father? Even those here whose fathers are still alive, long to restore there relationship with their father. He may be alive but physically or emotionally distant...that can be even more difficult. A day like today brings all the hurt and pain back to the surface, reflecting on what happened to dad my hero?

Before the 1993 murder, Michael Jordan was interviewed by columnist Bob Greene. Michael related: "My heroes were my parents...It wasn't that most of the world would necessarily think that they were heroic. But they were the adults I saw constantly, and I admired what I saw. If you are lucky, you grow up in a home where you can learn what kind of person you should be. And on that count, I was very lucky. It may well have been the luckiest thing that ever happened to me. To Michael Jordan, his parents were more important than all the basketball success in His life.

Growing up as a child it is very easy to take your father for granted. I had no idea how blessed I was. Looking back It's now very easy to see how providentially blessed I am for my parents. My father is not flashy, not necessarily a charismatic riveting speaker, but he stands tall above all others as a rock of solid faith. He is a kind and gentle man. He is a loyal and humble man who loves God above all others. He is not a fake. I should know well as his son. He is not perfect..in fact in some ways he can be quite peculiar. But he is a great dad. He has given me far more than I will ever realize. His faith is genuine of sterling quality. My dad is a Caleb who will hit the finish tape strong. Dad is my hero!

I sat in my office this week wondering what David's son Solomon would think about the life of his father as he remembered back after his death. If Solomon were to write a tribute to the life of His father, what

themes would be included? What things would Solomon want to take note of to avoid making the same mistakes? Time can give perspective. As an old woodsman once said, A tree is best measured when its down. How does the forest of David's life look when viewed in a large look back?

Many impressions of David's life flash across my mind. The teenage shepherd vaulted into fame as a national hero and giant slayer. The dark points of David's life. Adultery with Bathsheba, murder of his friend Uriah. I think what a cold blooded killer. How is it possible that he can do that and still be used by God...even called in Acts 13 one who is a man after God's own heart? I reflect on how even in the down times David keeps coming back, coming back to God in humble dependence and repentance of his sin. I look back and see a man's life. Not someone who's actions have been polished clean by a political-religious spin doctor. We read David's story and see the good the bad and the ugly. David is refreshingly human, no glossy Bible hero. You name it David has struggled with and been there and done that. Looking back on David's life you see a gritty, realistic, laundry room spirituality. David was a guy who slugged life out with God not just in the temples on Sunday morning, but the whole week. On the battlefield, on the green pastures, in a cave or in a palace. Behind enemy lines, in the bitter dust of defeat or dancing in the streets. Rocked by fools, regaled by the masses or rejected by his son. Struggling with family problems, lust, power, revenge envy, anger, unmet expectations and shattered dreams. Losing his friend, death of a mentor, conflicts with neighbors, in the throne room and in the bedroom. God was constantly refining and challenging David to dependence and obedience. We could watch David and God in stark realism.

What does a relationship with an Almighty God look like? I am encouraged when I see that David's life is not defined by momentary blips of failure, as we see a man who clung to God's grace and eventually fell back into the arms of God. Through all the ups and downs of life, ultimately his victory depended on David's attitude toward God. Circumstances in our life will sometimes wildly fluctuate. There will be time of fame and failure, power and humiliation, strength and defeat. Your attitude may not reverse those present circumstances, but an

uplook toward God will certainly improve your outlook. Going God's way always end up being the best way to go. It never fails. Father knows best.

David wasn't a great hero because he was perfect. He wasn't even close. Far from it. David was great not because of who he was but who He knew, in Whom he put his trust. When confronted he responded in humble repentance before God. So at the end of our study we take a look back. What are some of the themes that revolved around David's life?

I think the first thing Solomon would say he saw in the life of his father David was that #1 Appearances can be deceiving. When David was just a teen called into the house from watching the sheep out in the back forty. David surprised to see the great prophet of Israel at his house. Surprised that he was ready to anoint the next king of Israel. Surprised that it was not one of the sons of the current king Saul. Surprised that it was not any of his older, stronger, more talented older brothers. God passed by all of them and hand-picked David. Appearance is not always reality. God loves to take the weak, nobodies of this world and make them somebodies. Not because of their own greatness but because of the greatness God pours into them. I Corinthians 1:28 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. He has chosen the weak things to shame the wise.

David learned that the giants appearance and strength can be deceiving. They can look so large and intimidating. The biggest giants are so persistent day after day they come out and mock your weakness and play to your fear...They have huge powerful weapons. They appear to be so overwhelming that no one could ever defeat them. Are you thinking about that enemy giant looming large in your life. Be it a health issue, relationship conflict, financial, emotional struggle. Staring into the face of your giant, it's tempting to avoid, tempting to ignore, appease, accommodate that giant enemy in your life. It is tempting to start fighting against the wrong giant, shooting at each other, even the ones who love you. We are tempted to focus on our terrible odds and grow paralyzed by our fear. But David learned that appearance is not reality. David knew that when God was on his side, he was never the underdog...no matter how bad things may appear.

This past week, I was reading to Nathaniel a book about British Navy battleships and their leaders. I was intrigued by one of England's

great leaders Admiral Lord Nelson. Early in his career Nelson had his right arm blown away. He was known as the one armed Admiral. His ingenuity and expertise in Navel battle was renowned. During a navel battle of Trafalgar, a French sharpshooter from Napoleon's forces fatally wounded and killed British Admiral Lord Nelson. A page toward the end of the book showed a copy of a Poster placed all over England mourning the death of their much loved Admiral Lord Nelson. On the posters were written these words. "Britons! Your Nelson is dead. Trust not in an Arm of Flesh, but in the Living God. What said the brave Nelson? God hath given us the victory. His Arm is not cold in death, nor shortened that it cannot save. (listen to this) Britons Fear God, Fear Sin and then fear nothing! Wow! What an incredible challenge for a people who lost their national hero and were in danger of losing hope. Fear God...Fear sin and fear nothing else.

I believe we fear too many other things because we lack fail to fear the right things. Our faith is weak and ineffectual because we fear other things far more then we fear God and fear sin. We will fear the opinions of others, we fear financial setbacks, we fear ridicule and embarrassment, we fear a loss of security. We fear loss of relationship, friendship. We fear a loss of position, respect and health all far before we truly fear God and fear sin. These are the enemy giants that loom large in our life. They are fearsome and intimidating. They are powerful with great weapons of destruction. But if we are paralyzed because of them it is because we are captured with the worlds game of appearances. Fear God and Fear sin, and fear then fear nothing.

We are charmed by appearance. If it looks alright then it must be all right. Wrong. David knew that God looks passed the pretty face, passed the make-up, passed the muscles, passed the talent and skills. He does not place His divine tape measure around the brain..but measures the heart. God is interested only in this. Are you willing to follow me. Is your heart willing to beat with the same passion as mine. God looked at David and saw a heart that beat for God. Not a perfect heart but one that returned to God.

I think another theme that Solomon would reflect back on his father's life would be the sense of God's sovereignty that played out in David's life. God's choosing, power and timing. David had been anointed

as King over Israel. He had miraculously become a national military hero overnight by slaying the hyper pituitary giant Goliath. Yet, it was not God's time for David to become king. God had so many lessons for him to learn. God will train his greatest leaders in the desert of obscurity. Back to the smelly sheep. On the run from King Saul. Hiding out in caves. With more than one chance to easily end Saul's life. David does what? Refuses to touch the Lord's anointed king. David knows that God is sovereign He is in control. His timing is perfect. Holy cream never forces it's way to the top. David knows that cream will always rise to the top in God's perfect timing. In His life David learned that playing God is never wise. God will place and displace whom he chooses in His perfect timing.

David saw Himself not as the all powerful king of the middle east, but as a vice-regent. A hand of God to do God's will for His people. He learned that while the world gives the illusion of power. God can and will override that at anytime He chooses. When David stepped over the line, God was gracious in giving him a short lease. David wanted to do such a good thing in bring home the ark to Jerusalem, but was slammed when he didn't do it the way God wanted it done. David did it his own way, God said do it my way, I want that baby carried with rings and poles not carried along in a wooden cart. David learned to be concerned with the things that God was concerned with. David learned to do it God's way. A strong theme that played out in David's life was God's in control. He would write in a poem, a psalm. "my soul wait thou only upon God for my expectation is from Him." Where do your expectations come from?

A third theme that surrounded David's life was that of dependence. David didn't always have this one nailed down, but eventually he returned to depending on God and not himself. When David was at his worst, he would turn to the only One he knew worth trusting in. He turned back to God. This may well be why he was called a man after God's own heart. In Ziklag after several years of living a life of duplicity, befriending the enemy, spinning lies and deception, it all comes crashing down at Ziklag. David finds himself in the target of being stoned by his men because of bad choices that affected his army. Living a life apart from God will produce a string of bad choices. The best thing you can do is to bury your face in the dust before God in brokenness and confession. Return your dependence to the only one worth depending on. In the dust

I Samuel 30 David strengthened Himself in the Lord his God. He turned back in dependence. Some today see their life speeding wildly out of control. You don't know how to stop the reckless train and get off. You need to turn back in humble confession. There is nothing we can do but be wheeled into God's presence on the hospital gurney of dependence pushed along by the grace of God. It is never too late for the come through God. Jeremiah 33:3 Call unto me and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things that you don't even know about.

The grace of God. There is nothing better than that. I think that would be the 4th theme that would reflect from David's life. Grace from God and Grace extended to others. We can look at the David and Bathsheba incident and learn negatively about jealousy, lust, anger, revenge, but really it's about God's grace in taking David at His worst and reaching out to His ugliness. Not removing the consequences, but welcoming him back into relationship. Psalm 51 READ.

There is no better old testament passage on grace then the story of Mephibosheth. This was the crippled son of David's best friend Jonathan. Any other king would have eliminated the prince of the former King. No king of the Ancient Near East would allow a cripple to hang around his palace. But David wasn't any ordinary king. He welcomed Mephibosheth into his home, welcomed him to eat at his table. Everyone in Jerusalem, when they saw old Mephibosheth struggling with his disability, they knew their was only one reason he was even alive, let alone allowed to eat at the kings table. Everytime they heard the distinctive sound clump-clump drag. They knew Mephibosheth had received great grace and kindness from King David.

Grace is total acceptance. No performance is necessary. It is not something that could be earned. Grace takes the initiative and reaches out to our fears, our emptiness and brokenness and gives us that which we do not deserve. Grace always welcomes you back.

Maybe this morning you have spent your life running and falling on your face, breaking your leg, left a cripple by your own poor choices and sin. Addicted to pleasing yourself...spinning around the track but always ending up in the same frustrating same spot. Nothing seems to satisfy and you continue to run and hide. Suddenly you realize it is God that you are running from. Are you ready this morning to admit you have

blown it, a life long blow before God? Are you ready to do business with your sin and admit before God that you cannot, or will not keep control of your life. Will you trust him with taking over the keys to you kingdom and repent and say God I'm a sinner. I've been trying to run my life, my way and it doesn't work. God break me, make me into what you want. God here are the car keys to my life. You do the driving from here on.

God's grace is always available in the midst of our disabilities and sin. The almighty God of the universe wants to be our father. He wants a relationship with you. he wants to bring us out of our hiding to be found and favored with His kindness and grace. For us today that grace is found at the foot of the cross, That is where real satisfaction and purpose in life begin. God reaches down and finds us, brings us to his table and covers our sin with His table cloth of grace. Our sin filled limp through life is a constant reminder of His grace..His amazing grace. At the cross where Jesus Christ paid our sin debt in full and suffered and died. When we come to Christ in belief, repentance, giving Him control of our lives, He delights to replace our emptiness with His fullness, our dissatisfaction with delight, our falleness with favor. our rebellion with righteous rejoicing, our suffering with satisfaction our disability with His total ability. God's grace want to meet us right where we are. We are all once enemies of God. yet he reconciled, renewed our relationship to God by the death of His son Jesus. But..you must be drawn by His Spirit and accept his grace. He cannot give you what you refuse to receive. If you are not born of God you will be living in misery and defeat, far off from God. He wants to love us even when we were yet sinner, even when we couldn't possibly repay. he wants to rain down upon us his special favor an grace. he wants us to experience the real satisfaction that can be found only at the foot of the cross. His grace is truly amazing. Do you need to restore your relationship with God? Do you need a father today? I can think of no better day then today to accept his gift of grace, give Jesus the keys to your life and say. I'm yours God. Do with me whatever you want. I trust you and your grace will see me through. Are you ready this morning to clear things up with God?