

Seek Ye First...

"...the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

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DAVID—GOD'S CHOICE

Tom Moore

What can you do to be ready when God gives you an opportunity to do something significant? God could use many of us in very important ways if we were just ready when the opportunity came our way. There is so much work to do all around us for the Cause of Christ, but Jesus said, "the harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few" (Matthew 9:37). One reason for the shortage is that many are not ready. Perhaps we are distracted, inattentive, or spiritually disqualified – so we did not see or take advantage of the opportunity presented us. In this issue of Seek Ye First we are going to look at a man who was given an opportunity to do something very special for the Lord – a man who took advantage of the opportunity and blessed the whole world.

David's Calling

1 Samuel 16:1 describes the calling of a man chosen by God. Man would not have chosen David – he was "a nobody." Saul, the present king, was head and shoulders above the rest (1 Samuel 9:2) - he had what men look for. It is evident that David did not have what it took to please men – he didn't even impress Samuel. Becoming man's choice and becoming God's choice are two totally different things. If we are looking for men to notice us, we will be doing things to please them – and ignoring things that please God (Proverbs 14:12).

A Courage of Convictions

Samuel had a little problem that needed to be solved. He was afraid to do what God told him to do (1 Samuel 16:2a). You see, anointing another king while Saul was still on the throne would be considered an act of open treason. Saul was already fighting bouts of depression and paranoia, and getting more unpredictable every day. Saul just might kill Samuel. It is not always easy fulfilling God's wishes, but where there is a will there is a way (1 Samuel 16:2b-3). God wanted this done in secret for it would be several years before David would ascend to the throne. So, they all go through the consecration rituals, the elders, Samuel, and Jesse' family (1 Samuel 16:4-5). Unknown to all of them, Samuel was watching as the sons of Jesse came in (1 Samuel 16:6). Samuel, using human judgment, immediately notices

the one he thought God would pick. Samuel probably thought himself to be a pretty good judge of character – just like most of us do. But he was wrong (1 Samuel 16:7). Man tends to look at and be concerned with other's physical appearance. You see, Eliab had eye catching physical characteristics like Saul. We tend to judge people by what we see physically in them. This is why when choosing leaders in the church God has given the qualifications and has not left it up to man.

Preparing to Serve God

How are we going to be ready to be used by God for something special? Put our efforts into the things God looks at (1 Samuel 16:7). Remember, we want to concentrate on being God's choice. God is looking for people who have the right hearts before Him. God is looking for good hearts (2 Chronicles 16:9). Do you see what God is looking for? God did not find this in the seven older sons of Jesse. If you want to be used by God for something special, then take an inward spiritual inventory. In your heart of hearts – whom do you serve? David was a man after God's own heart – that was the stated conclusion that God had of David's life. Would that be true of us? Well, Samuel quit second guessing God after the first blunder with Eliab (1 Samuel 16:8-13). Maybe that would be a good thing for you and me to do as well. Jesse, evidently, didn't even think David was worth considering. Where was David? With the sheep – faithfully attending to the job he was presently entrusted with.

Faithful in Service

When God is looking for someone to do something special, He looks for one who is faithful to what he is currently doing. Where did David go after being anointed to prepare for his kingship to come - to the palace? No, he went back home to his father's sheep. Where do you find David when he is not playing music for Saul? He was with the sheep! David was preparing for his kingship among the sheep.

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Our Purpose

The editors of *Seek Ye First* produce this biblical journal to provide scriptural material dealing with the issues that are currently affecting our families, our nation and the world. Our intent is to challenge souls to return to the "old paths" (Jeremiah 6:16) for their sole source of authority in religious matters. Our policy is to speak as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11), encouraging people to study to show themselves approved unto God, enabling them to rightly divide the word (2 Timothy 2:15). We make every effort to deal boldly with the issues that confront Christianity, with no apology, and strive to do so "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15).

RISING TO POWER

Jeff Sweeten

Power is a heady thing. According to the Peter Principle, most rise to their own level of incompetence, eluding peak performance by just being themselves. David was unique in this regard. While the job would be demanding, it would also be divine. Keeping this mind helped David, on several occasions, to keep his focus and avoid the plague of pride that is all too common to current culture. In fact, it can be safely stated that David's mistakes always began with a departure from fellowship with God. It was his faithful walk with God that elevated him above his fellows, and paved the way to his rising to power.

The notion of kingship was already in the mind of God when He sent Samuel to Jesse, saying, "fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons." (1 Samuel 16:1). And, from this heavenly purpose, arguably the greatest King Israel would ever know, save Christ, would be divinely selected. To say that David's beginnings were humble, however, would be an understatement. A shepherd boy, this youngest of Jesse's sons was perceived as anything but a potential potentate, and David's unassuming assault on Israel's throne was humanly hindered at every turn.

Upon Samuel's arrival and the revelation of his intentions, a proud father was all too ready to comply with the celestial call. Every good father wants his son to succeed, so Jesse's prospect parade began with his oldest, Eliab (a patriarchal standard to be sure). Then, there was Abinadab, then Shammah, all the way through seven of his sons. Samuel was convinced that the first one had to be the new king and was ready to pour the oil when God rejected him, having no idea that he was just the beginning of a long line of unsuitable suitors. Samuel was thoroughly puzzled over God's repeated rejection of son after son. So, God clarified: "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (v. 7). Evidently, those attributes most important in our culture's assessment of potential, misguided though they be, isn't a novel perspective; humanity, unfortunately, continues to remain as shallow as ever. As the last son bowed his head in rejection, Samuel shrugged and searched the mind of God. "And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all the young men here?' Then he said, 'There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep.'" David was not even in the running! God does indeed look at things differently, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Perhaps we should pause momentarily and note that righteous judgment has little to do with superficial appearances. Divine distinctions are based upon the inner person (1 Peter 3:4). In a society consumed with the visible trappings of style, status, and standing, great potential is often overlooked, slighted, or consigned to oblivion for want of divine depth in the Christian's perspective. Someone correctly observed, "Beauty is only skin deep; ugly goes

to the bone.” Indeed, looks can be deceptive. God’s commentary on hasty judgments demands that the child of God “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24). We must make judgments; let them be righteous judgments.

Down the road, King Saul must have been thinking, “I’m always the last to know.” David’s anointing was not a public event, but he soon became prominent in the public eye as salve and soother to a despondent and rejected king, for “the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul” (1 Samuel 16:14). Saul’s arrogant disobedience and continual departures from divine will would torment him beyond the reach of David’s soothing harp, but with David’s growing popularity, so also did King Saul’s jealousy grow. It soon became necessary for David to run for his life. Becoming the king’ javelin-shishkebab during a royal tantrum was a final incentive, and David was consigned for a while to the life of a fugitive.

David’s life in flight was never a dull moment, but as a expatriated vagabond, he was afforded opportunities he would never have embraced while sitting with feet under the king’s table. It is interesting how tragedy can work to our benefit; it’s all in perspective. David could easily have pined his life away after the tearful goodbye from his dear friend Jonathan (the king’s son, 1 Samuel 20:17). Instead, he built an army from renegade riff-raff and soldiers of fortune, earning a reputation as leader of men. This education in exile readied him for the unification of Israel, and would deliver to Solomon the greatest earthly kingdom God’s children had and would ever see.

On the other hand, with this rise in power and influence, came other opportunities; dark and sinister temptations to which a lesser man might have succumbed. David’s character as a leader, but especially as a godly man, rose like rich cream to the top of fresh milk. He discerned that what appears to be opportunities are often temptations in disguise. One whose life is dedicated to God can easily make this distinction. There was no partial dedication to God in the mind of David, and nine times, in his Psalms, he writes that he praised, sought, and obeyed God with his “whole heart” (Psalm 9:1; et al.). In fact, his love for God was so deep that he would not even sacrifice to God that which cost him nothing (1 Chronicles 21:24). It was this very attitude that stayed his hand when an exhausted King Saul could easily have become an expired Corpse Saul. From a javelin-safe distance, David would lift a regal piece of material he had liberated from Saul’s tunic, and even Saul would have to concede in tears, “Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil” (1 Samuel 24:16).

A Christian’s greatest power lies in the willingness to submit to God. Our culture doesn’t encourage submission, and sees it as a sign of weakness. The Bible sees it differently. Great Bible characters were great by virtue of their submission (e.g. Hebrews 11). True power does not originate from within, but comes from our alliance with the Almighty God (Colossians 1:11). The apostle, Paul, would write, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13). David’s life, good, bad, and ugly, is defined and distinguished by his loyalty or his leaving God. In response to divine directive, David reigned, but he never forgot Who gave him power to rise above himself.

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Theme This Issue:

A Study of David

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DAVID—THE KING OF CONSOLATION

Michael Light

Only God Himself knows how many millions of people have been strengthened by the writings of David in the psalms. This great king of Israel is credited with having written 73 of the psalms. Of the 150 psalms, 100 of them tell us who the writer was. The book of psalms is the only book in the Bible the Holy Spirit divided into chapters for us. Each psalm is a chapter, which can stand independently.

David was a man of tremendous talent. As a warrior he knew no equal. As a politician he enjoyed great success. Concerning his poetry and music, he is the most famous of all times. The book of Psalms is the most impressive collection of poetry the world has ever seen. We can lose ourselves for hours in the beauty and grandeur of its themes.

I know of no book that has meant so much to people when the trials of life come. When death and illness are present so too is the great consolation given to us by God through this great man. On many occasions I have visited the hospital rooms of fellow members whose lives are in great danger, and whose prognosis is bleak. Often they will comment on their two great sources of strength; one being prayer, and the other being the psalms of David.

As we have set forth in this series of articles, David was a multi faceted man. He experienced more in one life than most men do in a hundred. Because of this his writing seems to be universal in application. His heart knew fear, and despair, as well as anger and frustration. He often felt alone and abused. He faced death on multiple occasions with no one caring except for God. It is this sense of total reliance upon God that moves us so greatly.

David knew that without God he was nothing. “The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower” (Psalm 18:2-3). Without the help of God he would fail miserably. “Unless the LORD had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence” (Psalm 94:17). He also was confident, that with God’s help all things were truly possible. While in his youth he was very aware of this fact. “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word” (Psalm 119:9). In 1 Samuel 17 as he was preparing to face Goliath, he boldly asserted that God would deliver the Philistine into his hands. He understood that as a soldier of the most high God, he could not fail.

In the years between his being anointed king of Israel and the actual assumption of the throne, he showed great patience and trust in God. On several occasions he could

have easily killed king Saul, but he withheld his blade. God had anointed Saul king and David would not presume to kill God’s anointed. Many of the psalms depict this idea of needing to trust in God totally. We can learn a great deal from these passages. Most of us struggle with being patient. We need to lean on the Lord and trust in His timing in our lives.

No doubt the most popular of his works is the twenty third Psalm. Notice this wonderful passage:

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”

This Psalm was the first passage of scripture I ever remember memorizing as a small child. While this section of scripture is often quoted at funerals, it is really not about death. It is a passage that truly describes the way our lives should be. We should see God as our deliverer and sustainer. We should see ourselves as sheep and God as our Good Shepherd. When the enemies come upon us, God is our protector. When we are in want God is the furnisher of all our needs. “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). When death and danger are near by, God is more than able to sustain us.

The image captures in a capsule fashion the life we as Christians are to live. Heaven is promised to those who stay faithful (Matthew 25:21) to the Lord. In a day and age when the church faces enemies from all quarters, it is especially comforting to refer to this passage and others in the book of Psalms to remind ourselves that God is truly the one in control. David’s life, while great, pales in comparison to the help his Psalms have given the world as it faces problems. May our appreciation of the great comforter of Israel be increased as we meditate upon the good he has done.

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Guest Article...

DAVID THE SOVEREIGN

R. L. Popejoy

In reply to Israel's clamor to be like the other nations, God gave them Saul, a king after their likeness. Later, God would give them a king after His own likeness, David. Willmington would speak of "Saul as Israel's first king, David as Israel's finest king and Solomon as Israel's fabulous king." David, according to Hester "must have had an unusual combination of desirable qualities – modesty, sincerity, warmth, piety, faith, courage, and a brilliant mind. Many scholars rank David as the foremost character in the Old Testament." (H.I. Hester, The Heart of Hebrew History, p. 177). David's life can be broken down into three major areas: the years of Reputation (1 Samuel 18:7); the years of Running (19:10-12, 18); and the years of Reigning (16:13; 2 Samuel 2:4; 3:5). We shall direct our thoughts to David's reign.

The key to David's reign was his ability to receive with meekness the engrafted word (James 1:21). David was exactly what God was looking for; God was searching for a man after His heart. This statement is made in contrast to the character of Saul who played the fool by blaming others for his actions (1 Samuel 13:14). Saul blamed everyone but never himself. Unlike Saul, David's heart was tender and could be pricked with the truth. David accepted responsibility for his sins. No man can confess and truly repent unless he is willing to take full responsibility for his sin. Regarding David's sin of not having the Levites move the ark, "David was afraid of the Lord that day, and said, How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?" (2 Samuel 6:9).

Concerning his sin with Bathsheba, he not only confessed, "I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Samuel 12:11), but he willingly accepted the punishment he unwittingly gave to himself (v. 5-6, 7-14). Indeed, David would repay fourfold (v. 6): first, the child would die (v. 18); second, Amnon rapes his half-sister Tamar (13:14); third, Absalom kills Amnon two years later (13:29); and fourth, Absalom rebels against David and is slain (15:6, 12; 18:14). "The chief flaws one can discern in his character are...his indulgences toward his sons, and of course his actions where Bathsheba was concerned. While his adultery and murder cannot be condoned, with this glaring exception he was in every way the ideal ruler. When we remember also his contribution to the temple, the cultus, and the Psalter, it is no wonder that his reign was regarded as a golden age, and that Scripture consistently viewed him as the proto-type of the Messiah, who was to be 'great David's greater Son.'" (D.F. Payne, ISBE, p. 876). Although his failure to discipline his sons caused enormous damage, the sin with Bathsheba is of

course the defining moment of David's reign. Adultery, deception, murder are not the traits that Israel frequently observed in David.

David's sin was aggravated and included consequences regardless of God's forgiving nature. "Sin committed under the conditions favorable to the resistance of temptation becomes thereby aggravated in character." (C. Chapman, The Pulpit Commentary, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, p. 233). Even our own laws teach us the difference between "assault" and "aggravated assault." Nathan told David that his sins had "given great occasion (rlp) to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme" (12:14). With these words Nathan admonished David and then departed.

Regarding his sin in failing to trust God by numbering the people, David again accepted responsibility, "I have sinned," and would not offer a sacrifice that cost him nothing (1 Samuel 24:12, 24). Far too many today confess that they have sinned and then begin to blame everybody for their demise. Sorry, God will not swallow excuses and neither should elders. People sin because THEY CHOOSE to sin! It may be because they choose to neglect something (Hebrews 2:1-2), or because they choose to follow after human wisdom (Matthew 16:8), or because they choose to rebel (2 Peter 2:15). Regardless, THEY CHOOSE!

Saul still lives! He lives in the mentality that would cause a man to blame God for forsaking the assembly; when he says, "If I do not provide for my family, I am worse than an infidel" (1 Timothy 5:8). When in reality the men who generally speak these words have very little spiritual blood running in their veins. God did not speak out of both sides of His mouth. He does not establish one statute that will cause a man to violate a second one! As clearly as Adam was removed from the beauty of the garden and Saul from the approval of God as king, so shall we today be removed from the blessings of salvation for the sin of shifting! Shifting the blame to someone else. David still lives! He lives in the leader who, when he is confronted with God's word genuinely seeks out opportunity to confess his sin having truly repented thereof. Integrity demands that we are willing to admit when we transgress!

Finally, according to 1 Chronicles 29:29 "the acts of King David, from first to last, behold they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer."

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DAVID'S DARKEST DAY

Michael Light

When we consider the greatest characters in the Bible, I suspect King David would make the list of most people. The image of David and Goliath no doubt stands out in the minds of the vast majority of us. David was a talented poet, gifted musician and fierce soldier. Ironically, his second most famous day (the first being the battle with Goliath) is also his darkest. In 2 Samuel 11 we find the story of David and Bathsheba. During the season when the kings typically went to war, David lingered behind. One evening while walking on his roof he observed a woman taking a bath. **“And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, ... and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself” (2 Samuel 11:2).** After seeing her, his gaze turned to a lustful look. He later sent for her and had her brought to his palace where he committed adultery with her.

To make matters worse Bathsheba conceived. Upon learning of her pregnancy she sent word to David. As bad as this was, he compounded the problem by trying to cover it up. In a desperate attempt to hide the vile deed he had done he had her husband, Uriah the Hittite, sent home from the front lines of the military. David made a pretence of seeking information about the war, but his true desire was to have Uriah spend a night or two at home with his wife to cover up what he and Bathsheba had done.

We see in this portion of the story that Uriah was a man of great character. He would not go in to his wife and take pleasure at being home while his lord, Joab, and his fellow soldiers were in the field. As is so often the case, one sin leads to many others. David stoops even lower. Once he becomes aware of the fact that Uriah didn't spend the night at home, he tries again. This time he gets the man drunk. Even in an inebriated state, Uriah still refuses to go home. Shockingly, David's descent into the dark abyss of sin isn't complete.

As the irrationality of sin grips his heart, David decides to murder this loyal soldier, Uriah. And in one of the most cruel acts in literary history, David has Uriah deliver the papers which command his commanding officer to place him in a place of certain death on the battlefield. **“And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die” (2 Samuel 11:14-15).** David's wishes are carried out, and this good man's life is forfeited to satiate the lust of his king. Later, David has Bathsheba returned to the palace and he marries her. **“And ... she mourned for her husband.**

And ... David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife” (2 Samuel 11:26-27).

God however, was not pleased, and sent Nathan the prophet to confront David. Nathan told David a story of two men. One of the men was extremely wealthy and possessed large herds of sheep, the other was poor and had one little ewe lamb (which he loved dearly). A traveler arrived and spent the night with the wealthy man. The rich man took the one little lamb from the poor man and butchered it to feed the traveler. When David heard this story he was livid. His rage led him to say, **“As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity” (2 Samuel 12:5-6).**

The next phrase to come from the mouth of Nathan is deafening in its impact, **“Thou art the man” (2 Samuel 12:7).** At this moment the weight and the enormity of what he had done comes crashing in on David. God showed him how hideous and callous his action concerning Bathsheba and Uriah had been. **God wasn't finished with King David,** He had Nathan pronounce several curses against David. Notice these pronouncements as set forth in verses ten through fourteen: (1) Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; (2) I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house; (3) I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun; (4) the child that is born unto thee shall surely die.

There is a hard life lesson illustrated for us in the story of David and Bathsheba. The sin with Bathsheba seemed like a one time problem, but in truth the consequences were to destroy most of the rest of his life. Paul would warn us later, **“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Galatians 6:7-8).**

One lesson that should be apparent to us all, is that we mortals cannot always see the end of the results of not staying true to God. Sin by its very nature deceives us. It **always costs more than it's worth. We must learn that the wages of sin are harsh and bitter.** If we sow wild oats we will reap a bitter harvest. David never saw the price he would have to pay for his iniquity. May we learn from his mistake and avoid the same in our lives.

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DAVID'S APPOINTMENT WITH DEATH

Tom Moore

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). That one time appointment with death faces all of us. We cannot cancel it and we cannot show up late. Once in a while, before it is upon us, we need to talk about it. That is what I want to do in this article. We now come in the life David to that point where he is facing his one time appointment with death. He is now an old man and has seen much in his life. He has been at the top and at the bottom, the beginning – and now, at the end. We've seen him face life, now we will see him face death

In 1 Chronicles 28 we find two special points concerning the way that David faced death – aspects we can admire and strive for ourselves. In 1 Chronicles 28:1 we find David participating in what was probably his final act as king. What a meeting this must have been – all of the leaders, from the King on down – some perhaps, up in years. David now, will rise from his bed and say, "Hear me, my brethren, and my people: As for me, I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building: But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood" (1 Chronicles 28:2-3). The building of the temple was David's great ambition in life, but God told him NO. Now, what did David do in the face of a life ambition that was frustrated because it was not the will of God? Did he complain? Did he resign his post? Did he die bitter? NO. As a matter of fact, he gave himself even more fully to serving the Lord and His will in the areas where God said "YES."

As David faced death he was aware of the unique opportunity a dying person has in influencing people for good. David is speaking to the people of Israel some of his very last words. And notice they were not words of frustration or disappointment. They were words of encouragement for others to serve God. David isn't focused on himself - he is focused on the needs of others (1 Chronicles 28:8). When a man speaks from his deathbed, people listen. They know what he says will be important. This idea of people, perhaps family and friends, gathered around a dying loved one, listening to his last words is something that is largely lost in our day – and probably to our detriment. I would hope that, if the circumstances preceding my own death allow it, I could say a few words to those

with whom I have shared life. And I would hope my words would be similar to those of David. Go back and read the dying words of men like Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Joshua. Each of them charged those they were leaving behind to serve God with all their heart. Coming from the words of a dying man, these words carried much weight and influence.

As David was about to die he was determined to pass the torch of service to the one who would take his place. "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever" (1 Chronicles 28:9). What tremendous words to pass on to a son! The aged, battled scarred king, veteran of many battles of life, gives last minute words of instruction to his young, inexperienced son. Do you think Solomon remembered those words? Those are the kind of words that are remembered for a lifetime.

Now notice, though David was not allowed to build the temple, he had not given up hope that it would be built. In 1 Chronicles 28:10-11, 20 you can almost see David and Solomon laying on the floor, looking at the plans of the temple and discussing what needs to be done. Too many people are obsessed only with themselves as they near the end of life. They become depressed and irritable, and they miss a golden opportunity. Well, the whole thing was very moving to Israel. So moving that they took up an offering to be sure that the temple project that Solomon was inheriting would be successful (1 Chronicles 29:6-9, 21-25). And then, perhaps in a matter of days or weeks, the end came for David (1 Chronicles 29:26-28).

When our time of death draws near, will we be found in bitterness or contentment? Will we be thinking of ourselves, or others? Will we use this once in a lifetime opportunity to influence people in the strait and narrow path? A final question that must be asked, "Will we be ready for death?" Will God say, "Depart from me thou wicked servant?" Or, will He say, "Enter though into the joys of the Lord?"

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- Hillcrest Church of Christ
Stephenville, TX
- Magnolia Church of Christ
Magnolia, AR
- North Main Church of Christ
Malvern, AR
- McCloud Church of Christ
McCloud, OK
- Portland Church of Christ
Portland, TX
- Rising Star Church of Christ
Rising Star, TX

Individual Contributions

- Mr./Mrs. Ronald Allen—Lake City, FL
- Ed Armstrong—Pecos, TX
- Johnny/Mindy Arnold—Harrison, AR
- Norman/Loma Barnes—McCloud, OK
- James Berry—Montgomery, AL
- James/Jean Berry—Montgomery, AL
- John Brown—Magnolia, AR
- Margaret Chandler—Camden, AR
- Charlene Chesshir—Cisco, TX
- Mr./Mrs. Wayne Griffitt—Leonard, TX
- Lloyd/Elsie Haggerty—New Braunfels, TX
- Justin/Sydney Hewlett—Cleburne, TX
- Pauline Hopkins—Brownwood, TX
- James/Doris Jacobs—Humble, TX
- Jarrett Family—Granbury, TX
- Wilma Jewett—Poolville, TX
- Aaron LeMond—Bangs, TX
- Michael/Carrie Light—Bangs, TX
- Jack Lusk—Sidney, TX
- Cynthia McIntyre—Magnolia, AR
- Mr./Mrs. James Meredith—Dixon, MO
- T.W./Mary Meredith—Coldwater, MS
- Weldon Miller—Mt. Pleasant, TX

- Anna Ruth Moore—Bangs, TX
- Tom/Carole Moore—Malvern, AR
- Eddie/Oleta Pafford—Bangs, TX
- Mr./Mrs. Allen Phillips—Rising Star, TX
- Ruth Price—Temple, TX
- Kenneth/Anna Reed—Bangs, TX
- Brandon/Amanda Renfroe—Birmingham, AL
- Cecil/Rena Robertson—May, TX
- Charles/Julienne Sweeten—Camp Wood, TX
- Ray/Lucile Sweeten—Uvalde, TX
- Jeff/Kelly Sweeten—Odessa, TX
- Steve/Cathy Wilson—Rising Star, TX

In Memory Of

- Ora Cate
- Ken Burchett
- Helen Hunter

Memorials Given By:

- Bangs Church of Christ
- Bernice Chick
- Michael/Carrie Light
- Terry Burress

Seek Ye First...

P. O. Box 41
Bangs, TX 76823-0041

Address Correction Requested

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