

David strengthened himself in the Lord his God

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1 Samuel 30:6

What's the first thing you do in time of trouble?

Everybody has problems from time to time, but not everyone tries to solve their problems in the same way.

What IS the best way?

One person in the Bible who had more than his share of trouble was David.

For example:

- He was pursued by King Saul.
- He barely escaped several assassination attempts.
- He had to spend much time hiding in the wilderness.
- His entire family was kidnapped on one occasion.
- His friends turned against him and were ready to kill him.
- He suffered the shame of having committed adultery and murder.
- His son Amnon raped his daughter Tamar.
- His other son Absalom murdered Amnon.
- Absalom led a revolt against his father.
- Absalom himself was killed, much to David's grief.

Need I go on? David was certainly a man with many problems!

Yet somehow, he survived them all and has come to be remembered as *"a man after God's own heart."* How was he able to do this?

We can find the answer as we consider what David did when faced with one of his most serious problems, as recorded in...

1 Sam. 30:1-6, *"And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; And had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way. So David and his men came*

to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives. Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God."

What David did in times of trouble.

The context of 1 Sam. 30:1-6. At this time in his life, David was living in Ziklag, southeast of the Gaza Strip.

Having fled from King Saul; and he was now aligned with the Philistines (Goliath was a Philistine).

The Philistines were preparing to battle King Saul, and David and his men had gone to join with the Philistines (along the Southeastern coastline of the Mediterranean Sea, including the Gaza Strip).

But the Philistines did not fully trust David, so they sent him and his men back to Ziklag.

Reading 1 Sam. 30:1-6, we find:

- That the town of Ziklag had been attacked and burned by the Amalekites (Am'-el-e-kites) (south of Ziklag) (vs. 1).
- The women and children had been kidnapped, including those of his family (vs. 2-5).

Naturally David is distressed; but on top of this, the people are ready to kill him for not having been there when he was needed. (vs. 6).

But notice carefully the last part of verse six. What does David do when he has lost his family, and his own life is threatened?

The Scriptures in verse 6 says:

- 1 Sam. 30:6, "... *but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.*"
- 1 Sam 30:6 (NKJV), "... *But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.*"

This is what David did first in times of trouble... He strengthened himself in the Lord his God! With the strength he received, he was then able to deal with whatever the problem was before him!

But what does it mean to “*encourage* (strengthen) *himself in the Lord his God*”? In an effort to answer this question, we can find it helpful to consider some of the Psalms written by David during troublesome times.

How David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.

In times of trouble, David often composed psalms.

While pursued by Saul, he wrote Psalm 59. Psalms 59:1-4, “*Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me. Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men. For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O LORD. They run and prepare themselves without my fault: awake to help me, and behold.*”

When imprisoned in Gath by the Philistines, he wrote Psalm 56. Psalms 56:1-2, “*Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me. Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou most High.*”

Fleeing from Absalom, his son, he wrote Psalm 3. Psalms 3:1-2, “*LORD, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me. Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah.*”

Hiding in the wilderness of Judah, he wrote Psalm 63. Psalms 63:1-11, “*O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me. But those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth. They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes. But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.*”

From these psalms, we can glean how David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.

From Psalm 56, we learn that David would place his trust in God to help him.

- Psalms 56:3-4, “*What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.*”
- Psalms 56:9-11, “*When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me. In God will I praise his word: in the LORD will I praise his word. In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.*”

From Psalm 59, we learn that David was determined to continue praising God for His help. Psalms 59:16-17, “*But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble. Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy.*”

From Psalm 63, we see that David overcame his problem of loneliness by:

Seeking the Lord. Psalms 63:1-2, “*O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.*”

Praising and praying. Psalms 63:3-5, “*Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.*”

Meditating upon the Lord. Psalms 63:6-7, “*When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.*”

In each of these psalms, David is basically saying the same thing...

- In time of trouble, put your trust in the Lord.
- Stay close to Him, through praising Him and praying to Him.
- Do this, and you will be made strong as the Lord supports you!

Psalms 63:8, “*My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.*”

This was how “*David strengthened himself in the Lord his God*”, and was able to face and overcome his problems with the help the Lord gave him.

How about us today? In times of trouble, do we follow David’s example? Consider a few thoughts along this line...

Dealing with our problems today.

We face many problems, even as Christians. Some are related to family, or other matters of personal concern; some are related to jobs, and the issue of financial security; some are related to problems that arise in the church.

In many cases, people try to tackle their problems alone or they just escape from the source of their problems. They leave God completely out of the picture. Sometimes they even forsake Him entirely; by no longer praising Him and praying to Him daily; by neglecting the assembly in which we gather to edify one another and worship God.

The reasoning is often expressed this way:

If the problem is personal, "Let me get my life straight, then I will be able to serve God and live for Him."

If the problem is because of someone else, "I cannot get along with so-and-so, so I'll just leave."

But, you know, God is angered if we seek to solve our problems without Him! God considers such a person as cursed!

Jer. 17:5-8, *"Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."*

A good example of God's displeasure when His people fail to look to Him for strength is found in Isaiah.

When attacked by Assyria (Iraq today), Israel placed her trust in Egypt. Isa. 30:1-2, *"Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin: That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!"*

Because of this, God promised to frustrate the efforts of Israel to solve her problems by herself, or look to one of her neighbors, especially one that was sometimes her enemy!

- Isa. 30:3, *"Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion."*

- 31:1-3, “Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD! Yet he also is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words: but will arise against the house of the evildoers, and against the help of them that work iniquity. Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. When the LORD shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall fail together.”

Yes, God wanted Israel to trust in Him, not in themselves.

Isa. 30:15-16, “For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift.”

Even so today, God wants us to put our trust in Him.

- James 4:8, “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.”
- 1 Pet. 5:6-7, “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”

The truth of the matter is this...

It is NOT “God helps those who help themselves”; but rather, Prov. 3:5-6, “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

When we leave God out of the picture in solving problems, one thing is certain: God leaves us to deal with those problems on our own, and without His help!

Another thing is possible: In an act of loving discipline, God might frustrate our efforts to solve our problems independent of His help (He certainly disciplined Israel that way!)

Conclusion.

So let us learn from one experienced in dealing with problems — David.

In times of trouble, look to the Lord for your strength! Trust in the Lord, and be steadfast in praising Him and praying to Him. Don't forsake Him, nor forsake the assembly of the saints in which we draw near to Him.

Let what David said of himself be true of us as well: Psalms 63:8, "*My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.*"

Remember that those who trust in God will find strength, deliverance, and true happiness!

Do you trust in the Lord? Or in your own strength? Let the Lord be your deliverance! Especially when it pertains to the problem of the guilt of sin.

How does a person get rid of his guilt and become a Christian? The following are the steps necessary to make that happen:

- **Faith.** Heb. 11:6, "*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*" When I was in high school (I was about 17 years old), a neighbor boy my same age told me he was an atheist. Since I had been baptized, I took the opportunity to talk to him about the scriptures. He told me that he could see that living the life of a Christian was good, but he wasn't sure if he believed there was a God. But to be on the safe side, maybe he should go to church, and when he dies and stands before God (if there is a God) on the day of Judgment (if there is a Judgment), maybe if God sees that he has gone to church and lived a good life that God would send him to heaven (if there is a heaven), and not to hell (if there is a hell). I told him, "It doesn't work that way. You have to believe in Him with all your heart or you cannot please Him."
- **Repentance.** Acts 2:38, "*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*" Acts 11:18, "*... Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*" If while you were sleeping, you heard a noise in the other room, and you think to yourself, "There's a burglar in my house!" So you reach for your cell phone, and as quietly as you can, you call the police, tell them there is a burglar in your house, and you give them your address. Soon, you heard them arrive and

capture the thief. He yells, “I’m sorry; I’m sorry!” What is he sorry for? He is sorry that he got caught; not that he stole. In true repentance the thief would be sorry that he ever stole and wants to change his life so that he would never steal again. That is true repentance. It is a change of mind that brings about a change of action. That is what we have to do before we can become a Christian.

- **Confession.** Rom. 10:9-10, “*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*” What do we confess? That we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Note that in the above scriptures that faith (believing), repentance, and confession are “**UNTO**” righteousness, life, or salvation. “Unto” means toward something; not that one has already attained.

- **Baptism.** It is baptism where righteousness, life, and salvation are attained. Jesus, himself, was baptized to fulfill all righteousness, “*But John forbid him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*” (Matt. 3:14-17). Jesus was baptized because God said it was the right thing to do. Did you see how pleased God was about Jesus being baptized? Jesus also said “*it becometh **us** to fulfil all righteousness.*” We are baptized because it fulfills His righteousness, not because it is of our righteousness.

In fact, if we are not baptized, we are still in our sins. “*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*” (Acts 2:38). Peter, what did you say the reason of baptism is? “*for the remission of sins*”. Why would anyone want to leave out the step that removes our sins?

Jesus commanded that to reach salvation we must be baptized. “*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*” (Mark 16:15-16).

Ananias told Saul (before he was rename Paul) the very same thing, *“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”* (Acts 22:16). Baptism is a requirement given by God.

Baptism is called a burial. *“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”* (Rom. 6:4). Our old man is to be dead to us. *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”* (Rom. 6:3-6). Baptism is God’s blueprint for applying the blood of Christ in our lives by baptism. We are free from our old sins only when we are baptized.

This doesn’t mean “sprinkling. The scripture above says baptism is a burial. We don’t take a dead body to the cemetery and sprinkle a little dirt over it; we bury the body.

If you have not yet become a Christian, won't you consider it today?

