

HOW TO MAKE YOUR LIFE COUNT!

LYL The Service: Live Your Life

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The truth is all of us here in this place have only **one life to live**.

- We are only given **one life** to make our **dreams a reality**, **one life** to **leave a mark** on our generation!
- Life's **greatest tragedy** is **not** being able to live life to the fullest, to the greatest.

What does God say **greatness** is?

Let's read 1 Samuel 16:7 together...

1 Samuel 16:7 (NKJV)

*"The Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks **at the heart**."*

Circle "**heart**".

God says that greatness is determined by **character**, not by reputation.

- The heart of the matter is a matter of the heart.
- The character is the bottom line.
- If you want to make your life count, if you want to be great, it's a **matter of the heart**.

We're going to look at **David**, one of the greatest men who ever lived.

- He was a **king**, a **shepherd**, a **poet**, a **general**.
- He wrote the most beloved book in the Bible -- **Psalms**.
- He **united the kingdoms**.
- He was a **giant killer**.

He had an **incredible line up of achievements**. But God **wasn't** impressed with any of those things.

What **impressed God** about David was his **heart**.

In Acts 13:22, this is what God has to say about David....

God said that David is a "*man after my own heart*."

Are you a person after God's own heart?

Do you want to be?

God says that David had a heart for Him.

How do you **know** a person's heart?

- By looking at the way they respond to three circumstances in life. There are **three great tests** of your heart in life, all starting with the letter, "S", **sin, stress and service**.
- Today we're going to compare how David handled these things with how you handle these things.

1. First test: Sin

David's response to sin was a **repentant** heart.

What is sin?

Sin can be in a form of a **wrong thought and intent**, or a **wrong action** like lying, stealing, cheating and killing.

David had a **tender** and **sensitive conscious**.

- When David blew it, he **admitted** it.
- He didn't **hide** it.
- He didn't **deny** it by saying, "Oh, I did not do it!"
- He didn't **make excuses** for it by saying "I had no choice... I had to do it because there was no other way out."
- He didn't **rationalize** it by saying "It wasn't really my fault... it was somebody's fault... It's not that bad... Everybody is doing it!"
- When somebody confronted David with his sin he said, "You're right. I blew it." He was very **sensitive**, very **broken**. He was very **quick to repent**, to **admit his wrong**.

What was David's sin?

He had committed **adultery** with Bathsheba and worse still, **murdered** her husband in cold blood so that he could get her.

Psalm 51:1-3 from the **Living Bible** says,

"O loving and kind God, have mercy. Have pity upon me and take away the awful stains of my sins. Wash me, cleanse me from this guilt. Let me be pure again for I admit my shameful deeds."

This is David's **prayer of confession** after he had sinned.

- He **admitted** to God that he had sinned, that what he had done was wrong.
- He doesn't **deny** it.
- He doesn't **excuse** it.
- He doesn't **blame** Bathsheba.

He is **honest** to God and that's the **first characteristic of a heart after God**.

The Bible **tells the truth**.

- It's called the Holy Bible, but you'll never find a book that has more murder and rape and incest and problems.
- It's all in there because the Bible tells the truth.
- When it talks about man it talks about his **good** and his **bad**. The Bible paints David, warts and all. It says he was a king, a poet, a great leader. He was also a liar, a betrayer, an adulterer, and a murderer. It shares his successes but it also shares his struggles.

Truth: You don't have to be perfect to have a heart after God.

Isn't that good news?

Many people are called man or woman of God in the Bible but **only** one person is called a "man after my own heart". That was David.

- He was a **great sinner** but he was also a **great repentor**.
- You **don't have to be perfect** to have a heart after God. You just have to be a **great repentor**.

Psalms 51:17 tells us that *"God will not reject a repentant heart,"*

David **believed** in a **forgiving God**.

Satan has conned many of you into thinking, "Because of my **past**, God can never use me. Because of my past, I'll never amount to anything great in the kingdom of God."

- You're wrong! If God can use David, He can use anybody. Don't let the devil say that to you.
- **You don't have to be perfect, you just have to repent quickly and admit it when you're wrong.**
- Whether we are a believer or not, we will find ourselves messing up sometimes.
- The key is **repentance**.

Be like David!

In *Psalms 32:5 (GN)*, David says...

"Then I confessed my sins to you; I did not conceal my wrongdoings. I decided to confess them to you, and you forgave all my sins."

God is a God that forgives us of our sins. If only we are **first** willing to **admit** them!

- Remember, you don't have to be perfect, you just have to **repent quickly** and **admit** it when you're wrong.

The good news is when God **forgives**, He **forgets**!

Isaiah 43:25 (NKJV) God says...

"I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins."

When you and I are **quick to repent**, God is also **quick to forgive** and He will remember your sins **no more**.

You can **start anew** with this **second chance** that you are now given.

- That is what the gospel is all about! A loving Father who has sent His Son to die on the cross for you and I, for the forgiveness of our sins, so that we can live our life to the fullest!

Evaluate your heart. **Compare** it to David's.

How do I **react** when I sin? Do I **deny** it? **Excuse** it? **Rationalize** it? -- Give yourself a **"1"**.

Do I **repent immediately**? -- Give yourself a **"10"**.

Do you instantly repent or let it pile up?

- God says when it comes to **sin**, a man after My own heart has a **repentant** heart.

2. **Second test: Stress**

David's response to stress was a **trusting** heart.

In Psalm 118:5-6, David says, *"In my distress I prayed to the Lord. He answered me and rescued me. He is for me. How can I be afraid?"*

Very few people had stress like David did.

- David had **constant war** with his neighboring nations.
- He had to **fight giants, run from Saul** and **hide in caves** for years.
- David also faced incredible **family problems** -- his family was a mess. He had one son rape his daughter and another son kill that brother. He had another son rebel against him and overtook the throne and took over his place and then was killed.

David faced lots of tragedy and stress in his life, but yet he never stopped **praying**, never stopped **trusting**, and **kept moving on**.

Courage is not the absence of fear; courage is moving in spite of your fear.

- This was David's attitude: "God is my rock, God is my shield, God is my fortress. When I am under stress, I trust God."

Ps. 73:26 *"My mind and my body may grow weak but **God is my strength. He is all I ever need.**"*

Everybody else was afraid to take on **Goliath**. But David wasn't.

- Everybody else said, "He's too big to kill! He's too big to hit!"
- David said, "No, he's too big to miss!"
- And David refused to wear Saul's armor. He said, "God's all I need. God is my strength."

Everybody has their dark days, down days, depression.

- Depression is **not** a sin.
- It's what you **do** with it. David wrote some of his most beautiful Psalms while he was depressed.

David said in Psalms 116:10, *"I kept on **believing** even when I said, 'I am completely crushed'...."*

Some of you need to do that.

- You're going through dark times right now. Maybe it is a financial distress, a financial debt, your loved one is stricken with cancer, your parents are getting divorced, you are failing in your studies etc.
- Well, what do you do? Keep on **believing!**
- **David** said, even when I said I'm completely crushed, I'm going under for the last time, I'm dying... in my heart I kept on believing.

Jesus says in Mark 9:23 (NKJV)

*"If you can **believe**, **all things** are possible to him who **believes.**"*

My friends! I have good news for you today!

- If you choose to have a **trusting** heart, to trust in God, **all things are possible!**
- Nothing is too difficult for God!
- There is no problem in life that is too difficult to solve.
- All you got to do is to entrust your life to God.

At 100 years old, **Abraham** was 'crushed' because he did not have an heir. Humanly speaking, it was impossible for him and his wife, Sarah, who was 90 years old to have a child.

- But yet, Abraham chose to keep on believing.
- The Bible tells us that he did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but he believed in God, that what He had promised, He was also able to perform.
- In the end, Abraham had his breakthrough, his son, Isaac.
- All things are possible to him who **believes**.

When you are going through dark times...

- Have a trusting heart, keep on believing!
- Stir yourself up once again to fight your Goliath!
- Run the race, fight the good fight.
- Your Isaac, your breakthrough is coming!

Have you ever developed a **photograph**?

- Well, photos develop in the dark through a process of very strong acid. If the acid isn't strong enough the picture doesn't come out clear.
- Some of you are going through dark times right now.
- You're going through a process of acid. It is eating you up!
- But God is developing you.
- A **beautiful picture** is going to come out! Keep on **believing**.

To make your life count, how you respond to the three tests count:

- When you **sin**, have a **repentant** heart.
- When you're under **stress**, have a **trusting** heart.

Evaluate yourself on this one. What is my response to stress? Do I have an anxious heart or a doubtful heart? Give yourself a "1". Or a trusting heart?

3. Third test: Service

David's response to service was a **servant's** heart.

God tells us what He thinks about David in Acts 13:22 "*David does everything I ask him to do.*"

Could God say that about you?

- David did **everything** God asked him to do.
- He was **willing** to do whatever God wanted him to do. In fact, David's desire was always, "I want to do God's will more than anything else."
- He had a servant's heart.

There are **two** main **characteristics** of a servant's heart:

a) A servant loves God wholeheartedly

Psalms 119:10 *"With all my heart I try to serve you."*

- David served God with **zeal** and enthusiasm.
- He did it because it was a joy not a duty.
- He wanted to serve the Lord.

Because David is **whole-hearted**, he refused to be **sidetracked by less important things**.

Psalms 119:37 *"Keep me from paying attention to what is worthless."*

David was **focused**.

- He wanted to serve God because that was what was going to **count**, not all the other stuff in life.
- David said, I'm going to make my life count, "Keep me from paying attention to what is worthless."
- The truth is not everything is going to **count forever**. Money, a nice dress, a good massage and facial, getting the top score for a computer game is not going to last forever. You can't take them with you to the grave. People will not remember all these about you, because these things do not last.
- So, what is going to last, what really counts? The Bible tells us that **God loves us with an everlasting love**. Our relationship with God counts because it is going to last forever!

What are you pursuing in life today?

- Some things are **not necessarily wrong**, they're just **not necessary**.
- Some things are going to last for a **moment**, but not **forever**.
- Pursue something that **lasts** and do it wholeheartedly!
- Get rid of **trivial pursuit** in your life and make your life count.

A person who loves God wholeheartedly is a man/woman who is after God's own heart.

David served God **wholeheartedly**. He was **focused** in his service.

Evaluate yourself here. How do I serve God? Not at all? Give yourself a "1". Half-heartedly or whole heartedly? Grudgingly or gratefully?

b) A servant loves people fervently

David's **love for God** translated into **love for God's people** as well. This even included his enemies.

Despite King Saul's furious attempts to murder David, David still **loved, honored and respected** Saul.

- There were **two** instances when David was given an opportunity to kill Saul, but he did not.

- In fact, when Saul was later killed by his enemies, David mourned for his death and got many of his men to do likewise. He also took care of Saul's family which included Saul's children and grandchildren,
- We see this in 2 Samuel 9, when David spoke to Saul's grandson, Mephibosheth, "Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness, and will restore you all the land of Saul your grandfather; and you shall eat bread at my table continually."
- Wow, how many of you will do that? Saul made David's life a living hell, pursuing him, finding all ways and means to kill him, but yet, look at David's attitude...
- He **loved** and **took care** of Saul's family after Saul died, **providing** for them, **serving** them. He did **not** bear a grudge against Saul but **loved his family just like how God loved him.**

My friends, if you want to make your life count, you got to **serve** and **love** others.

We don't really see this much anymore.

- So often we're **lukewarm**. We say, "Get somebody else to do it. Let somebody else serve there; I don't have the time."
- When something needs to be done, a common reaction will be: "What are you looking at me for? I'm not your servant!" That's an attitude of life for many people.
- They are a **servant to nobody, much less God**. They're too independent.

David had a servant's heart.

- Jesus said if you want to be **great** you must be the servant of all. Greatness comes through service.
- You'll never be great until you **learn to be a servant**, serve other people.

That's what having LYL The Service is all about, that's what make church different!

- Because we are all part of a **great spiritual family, serving** one another, with our **talents** and gifts.
- Everyone of us need one another.
- This is a spiritual family. We give and serve one another.
- If you have a gift in **music**, be part of the music band, be a backup vocalist, be like Rachel, sing a song to encourage everyone of us.
- Arthur, Ivan, Yirong etc can **dance**, so they choose to serve by putting up a dance item for all of us. It was not easy, they took many hours to practice, practice, practice! You can choose to serve others by being an usher, security personnel, arrange chairs etc. There are so many things we can do!
- I am so proud of Evangeline. Going all the way to Sri Lanka to help the poor and the needy, regardless of the hot weather and the smell of death. That's really servanthood!

Evaluate yourself here. How do I serve others? Not at all? Give yourself a "1". Half-heartedly or whole heartedly? Grudgingly or gratefully?

CONCLUSION

It amazes me that these **three qualities** are the very qualities that most people **overlook** when they are looking for a great person. They don't look for **humility, a repentant heart, a servant heart**.

- But yet, these qualities which most people overlook in seeking greatness are the exact same qualities that God looks for when He says, "That's a great person! That's a person after My own heart. That's a person who has got it together!"
- God is **still looking** for people with **great hearts**.

2 Chronicles 16:9 (GN)

"For the eyes of the Lord search back and forth across the whole earth looking for people whose hearts are perfect toward Him so He can show His great power in helping them."

God is **looking** for people to use.

- He is looking for people to bless.
- He's doing a **heart search** and when He finds somebody with the right heart, He blesses them.

If God did an **X-ray** on your heart what would it reveal?

- A **repentant heart?** **or**
- "It wasn't really my fault... it was somebody else's fault... It's not that bad... Everybody is doing it!" **or**
- "No, God, it was wrong. I'm sorry and I'm changing it!" A repentant heart.

Would it reveal a **trusting heart** or an **anxious heart?**

- "God, I'm **trusting** You in the situation. I do not know where the money is coming from, how my miracle will happen but I'm going to trust You in the situation. I don't know but I'm going to trust You."

When it comes to service, would it reveal a **servant's heart?**

- "Lord, help me to not be too preoccupied with things that are worthless, that don't matter. Help me to make my life count."
- **Or a selfish heart**, "Let somebody else do it... I don't have time to help... I'm too busy"

Some of you think God just called you to be a **mediocre** Christian.

- That's not true.
- God doesn't want you to just be average.
- The Bible says that God is looking for people to use, He's looking for people to bless, people who will be great for God.
- It all starts with a commitment. It's a commitment that says, "God, I'm not perfect but more than anything else, I want to have a heart after You. My number one desire -- before making a million bucks, before getting on the cover of *a* magazine or newspapers, anything -- is to have a heart for You." That's the kind of person God uses.

One of my **life verses** is Acts 13:36 "*For when David had served God's purpose in his generation, he died.*"

- It's so simple. David served God's purpose in his generation and then he died.
- He **served God's purpose**, the **eternal**. He did it in **his generation, the timely**.
- He served **the Timeless** in a **timely way**.
- He served God's purpose in his generation and then when he was finished, he died, went on to be with the Lord, in heaven.

When you die, my deepest prayer is that people will be able to say that about you.

- You served God's purpose in your generation and then you died.
- I hope people can say that about me -- that I served God's purpose in my generation and then I died.