

DAVID WHO TRIED TO GET GOD To Change His Mind

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David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth ... And it came to pass on the seventh day that the child died (2 Sam. 12:16, 18).

It has been said that God always answers prayer. but sometimes He says no. Most people understand that fact, however. when sincere prayer does not obtain the desired result, disappointment and doubt often overwhelm the soul. Yet, even when the Lord says no. that constitutes an answer, although it be negative. Perhaps one of the outstanding examples of this truth is found in the experience of David. He prayed day and night and continued without food for a week, but God refused to grant his petition. The king was bitterly disappointed, but when his child died, the nation knew the Almighty had refused to grant the royal request. Nevertheless, every cloud has its silver lining, and there is reason to believe that when David ultimately reviewed the situation, he was compelled to admit (in the poet's words).

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.

Proposition 1 ... God's Glory Is Greater than Man's Gladness

David was devastated. His love for Bathsheba, the adoration of the child she had borne, and his disturbed conscience were creating a situation with which he could not cope. He was ashamed of his conduct, and the condemnation expressed by the prophet had deepened his anguish. It was inconceivable that he had murdered one of his friends to satisfy his own lust. Perhaps the king for the first time had seen himself.

He remembered the day when he first saw the beautiful Bathsheba and permitted illicit desires to exist within his soul. He resembled Esau who sold his birthright for a bowl of carnal desire. His sin had been unveiled, and every person in the land was aware of his disgraceful behavior. He, who was a devoted follower of the Lord, had disgraced his calling and dishonored God. He asked himself, "How could I have been such a fool?" In

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spite of all his conniving. Bathsheba had carried her child, and the helplessness of the baby captivated David's soul. He probably asked. "Why should this little boy suffer for my sin?" and day after day asked the Lord to be merciful. Nathan the prophet had pronounced judgment. saying:

Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house: because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. . . . Because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child that is born unto thee shall surely die (2 Sam. 12:10-14).

David not only murdered a man and stole his wife: he had brought dishonor upon the name of the Lord. His conduct had offended many critical people. The statement regarding giving

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an occasion unto the enemies of the Lord was very explicit.
There is truth in the lines

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall:
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses
And all the king's men
Couldn't put Humpty Dumpty
Together again.

Unfortunately when an ordinary citizen commits an offense, onlookers shrug their shoulders, but when a prominent servant of God is guilty of a similar offense, everybody condemns him as a hypocrite. If David's crime had only affected himself and his wife, the deed might not have been publicized. Their sinful behavior was as a boulder falling into a pool: repercussions were widespread. Perhaps David considered God's treatment to be harsh and wondered if the Lord were oblivious to human suffering. The baby had become desperately ill, but the king's prayer was ineffective. Was the Lord blind, deaf, and merciless? Perhaps David failed to realize that God was also hurting. but the principles of righteousness had been violated, and people were watching. Had the king's petition been granted. it might have encouraged other people to sacrifice honor on an altar of selfishness.

Moses committed one error, but because of the indiscretion was not permitted to enter Canaan. Throughout history when Hebrew mothers told the story of the great patriarch, when hearts and eyes were filled with wonder, they always concluded by saying, "But Moses was not allowed to enter this land because he disobeyed God." Thus was the nation taught the value of obedience. Similarly. when the subjects of David saw how the Lord dealt with their leader, a warning was written on their consciences. God's glory is more important than anything else in existence, and that might have been one of the reasons why Jesus said. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

Proposition 2 ... God's Grace Is Greater than Man `s Guilt

And David said unto Nathan. I have sinned against the LORD.
And Nathan said unto David. The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die (2 Sam. 12:13).

David had no excuse for his behavior; no argument could justify his conduct. He was guilty and deserved any judgment which the Almighty might decree. Yet it was strange that the Lord put away David's sin even before it was confessed. The grace of God is beyond comprehension; happy is the person who becomes its recipient. Nevertheless it did not free the king from condemnation.

Thus saith the Lord. Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and 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. For thou didst it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun (2 Sam. 12:11-12).

The apparent leniency of God's mercy was mystifying, for David's repentance could not resurrect his victim. Other men guilty of a similar crime would have been executed. Why should a king be treated differently from an ordinary citizen? How could Jehovah be selective in administering justice? Paul might have said: "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20).

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He might also have explained how this unpleasant experience

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unveiled David's true self. The king prayed: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me" (Ps, 51:1-3). Jeremiah would have agreed with the apostle, for he said: "It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness" (Lam. 3:22-23). It must be difficult for God to reject a penitent soul, for He delights in being merciful, Micah was correct when he wrote: "Who is a God like unto thee that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy" (Mic. 7:18). Every sincere soul would agree with the prophet's statement: "It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed" for "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

Proposition 3... God's Gift Is Greater than Man's Grief
And David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the LORD loved him (2 Sam. 12:24).

Bathsbeba's eyes had become stars reflecting the pleasure of God. A night of remorse and grief had been followed by a glorious dawn. A baby boy lay in the arms of his adoring mother, and probably the hosts of heaven were rejoicing. David had been spared at least from death; his wife's heart was tilled with gratitude, for in some wonderful way, God's anger had been appeased.

It is difficult to decide how much time elapsed between the death of Bathsheba's first child and the birth of Solomon, A casual reading of 2 Samuel 12:24 might suggest she conceived her new baby soon after the death of the first, but other Scriptures suggest another possibility. The Pulpit Bible states she might have had other children before the arrival of Solomon. It is thought that the delay provided David with an opportunity to demonstrate the sincerity of his repentance, Many years later it was written:

And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build a house unto the name of the LORD my God:

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But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build a house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight. Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest: and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days (I Chron. 22:7-9).

The fact that God instructed David long before the birth of Solomon seems to provide convincing evidence that the king had survived what might be termed a period of probation. This may be debatable, but some facts remain irrefutable.

The Extent of God's Grace

God will pardon any sincere suppliant. "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20).

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A welcome is given by Jesus
To all who will come to His feet,
And a welcome given by Jesus
Is wondrously full and complete.
There's never a man who has wandered
Past the reach of His wonderful love,
And never a man who has fallen
Too low for the mansions above.

The Entreaty of God's Grace

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa, 1:18), It is better and wiser to kneel at God's feet than to run away and hide.

The Encouragement of God's Grace

When David was overwhelmed by guilt, when his future seemed to be in great danger, and there was no escape from his turmoil, God found a way to solve his problems, He sent a baby to restore David's happiness (see Ps. 51:12), If the mercy of God is so boundless, there is hope for all of us!

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