Gracestoration Update

"Restoring People in God's Grace and Making Disciplers"

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A Man After God's Own Heart…

God declared, *"I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will"* (Acts 13:22 NKJ). Have you ever questioned, "Why did God call David a man after His own heart?"

The temptation would be to study David's life and develop a list of "self-help" things that David did that pleased God. The end result would be an impressive litany of Christian works and attitudes.

However, this character study would have to ignore most if not all of David's works and attitudes that are not very commendable. An example was David's relationship with Bathsheba as recorded in 2 Samuel 11:1ff.

Most of the biographies of famous Christian leaders, missionaries and workers leave out much of their unchristian works and attitudes. They focus on the very commendable and spiritual things for them to be our example of how we should live, even as they did.

This practice of writing about individuals honoring their Christian lives and successes, and not including their failures, is consistent with God's grace who has chosen not to bring to remembrance our sins since He paid for them all with His shed blood on the cross -- all of it past, present and future. He then chose not to remember them ever again. Praise His glorious name!

In our everyday lives we choose not to talk about our failures and sins. One of the main reasons why is that we want others to think well of us and not poorly. This is particularly evident at funerals. The eulogy and testimonies regarding the deceased are always positive and never negative regardless of the actual life lived.

The Christian's Old Nature is driven and motivated by pride and self-preservation. Should we become aware of some sin or failure of ours, whether expressed outwardly or inwardly, we are quick to defend ourselves with excuses and rationalizations. Yet we are often aware of the failures of others and take pride that we are better than they are.

However, most Christians desire to live a life that is pleasing to God in spite of their many failures to do so. This desire is evidenced by all the self-help books, seminars, workshops, support groups and conferences that focus on Christian living. The majority of these rely on the individual's ability to incorporate these Christian living skills into their daily lives by their own natural abilities.

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Afterwards, there is a surge of new resolve and energy like turning over a new leaf or in making a New Year's resolution. However, the usual result is that one soon falls back into the old ways of living. This is because we are trying to improve our old nature which God said was nailed to the cross. *"For if we have become united with* Him *in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be* in the likeness *of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with* Him, *in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we*

would no longer be slaves to sin, for he who has died is freed from sin" (Rom. 6:5-7).

The Christian's New Nature is dependent upon the indwelling Holy Spirit that Jesus promised, *"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; ...I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you"* (Jn. 14:16,18). *"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose* it *to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you"* (Jn. 16:13-15).

The Apostle Paul encourages us to allow the Holy Spirit to direct our steps -- not our flesh or old nature, *"It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery... For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh... But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please"* (Gal. 5: 1, 13, 16-17).

David Received the Holy Spirit when the prophet Samuel anointed him king of Israel in the place of the disobedient King Saul. David was a teenager at the time tending his father's flock of sheep. He had a sinful old nature like every other human.

When David was anointed king he was given the Holy Spirit by God, *"Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward"* (1 Sam. 16:13).



However, David, a man like us with God's Holy Spirit upon him, often did not always live a godly life. He made fleshly choices dependent upon his whims, natural wisdom and desires, but experienced God's forgiving grace much like we do.

However, what set him apart as a **man after God's own heart** was:

1. His desire to please God by seeking Him to direct his path in life, *"You will make known to me the **path of life**; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever"* (Ps. 16:11).
2. When God pointed out his sin, he confessed it and did not try to justify it, *"Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when speak and blameless when You judge"* (Ps. 51:4).

As with David, being **A Man After God's Own Heart** is God's desire for each Christian.

Discipled to Discipler

I have had the pleasure of knowing Bob Bingham for over 40 years. We met when I was young; he and my parents were good friends in the Philippines. Over the years Bob has grown to be a friend, counselor, advisor, pastor and most of all a discipler to me. His relationship with Christ was one I could see in all he did -- it was just part of his being. This led me to continue to spend time with him when I could. For many years it was a short visit or maybe a half a day together.

A few years ago it became more of a weekly event that allowed me to see how my relationship with Christ had room to grow.

While it is very exciting to be discipled and enjoy the growing relationship with Christ, I have found something that is even more exciting -- becoming a discipler! God has allowed me to encounter men and women that desire a closer walk with Christ, and were looking for someone to help them see the way.

One person in particular was a friend. Not even knowing whether he was a believer or not, I was pleased when the discussion of Christianity came up in our conversations. It was not long before the issue of our relationship with Christ was the primary topic of discussion. He was encouraged in his own spiritual growth. To me the joy is knowing that Christ was pleased to work through me and draw my friend closer to Himself. **Discipling -- the joy that only Christ can bring to us.**

(By a CUPbearer's Board Member)