

CENTERED REFLECTIONS

2 Samuel 24
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MESSAGE NOTES

Every time you make a choice you are turning the central part of you, the part of you that chooses, into something a little different from what it was before. And taking your life as a whole, with all your innumerable choices, all your life long you are slowly turning this central thing either into a heavenly creature or into a hellish creature: either into a creature that is in harmony with God, and with other creatures, and with itself, or else into one that is in a state of war and hatred with God, and with its fellow-creatures, and with itself. To be the one kind of creature is ... joy and peace and knowledge and power. To be the other means madness, horror, idiocy, rage, impotence, and eternal loneliness. Each of us at each moment is progressing to the one state or the other. — C.S. Lewis

Aligning with the heart of God:

Test me, Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; for I have always been mindful of Your unfailing love and have lived in reliance on Your faithfulness. — Psalm 26:2 – 3

My heart says of You, "Seek His face!" Your face, Lord, I will seek. — Psalm 27:8

I have strayed like a lost sheep. Seek your servant, for I have not forgotten your commands. — Psalm 119:176

1. We never stop learning, changing, and growing.

The difference between school and life is this: In school, you're taught a lesson and then given a test. In life, you're given a test that teaches you a lesson.

*Being resilient does not restore the status quo in your life — springing back to the way it was — but, rather, what you have learned from tackling the adversity changes you for the better and helps you become more keenly aware of what is important in your life. — M. Neenan and W. Dryden, *Developing Resilience**

2. We relate to God purely on the basis of His grace, not our merits.
3. We dedicate to God the first and the best of ourselves and all we have — not the left over's.

"God is not interesting in tips ... He's looking for full commitment. He's not looking for money ... He's looking for hearts. A heart that is God-centered will be using their resources for Kingdom work with no problem. If spending money on what God says is important is a problem ... then there's a problem with one's heart.

4. We recognize God's faithfulness at every stage of our journey.
5. We come back to praise as the only attitude that makes sense.

*I meet many faithful Christians who, in spite of their faith, are deeply disappointed in how their lives have turned out. Sometimes it is simply a matter of how they experience aging, which they take to mean they no longer have a future. But often, due to circumstances or wrongful decisions and actions by others, what they had hoped to accomplish in life they did not ... Much of the distress of these good people comes from a failure to realize that their life lies before them ... the life that lies endlessly before us in the kingdom of God. — Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy**

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise — the fruit of lips that openly profess His name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. — Hebrews 13:15 – 16

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Thinking back on our series in the life of David, what are some lessons we've seen?
- Even in David's final years, he makes some crucial errors. What is his response when this is pointed out to him? As we get older, why is humility so essential?
- There's an amazing scene that takes place on Mount Moriah, the central hill in Jerusalem. Take some time to review what events took place in that very spot.
- What was significant about the fact that David wanted to pay full price for that place where the sacrifice would be made to God?
- What was the point of all those Old Testament sacrifices (Hebrews 9:12– 14)?
- In the end of David's life, he offers up a beautiful prayer in 2 Samuel 22. What lines stand out to you? What admirable character qualities of David come to light in this prayer?
- What do you feel God is impressing on you from what you've seen in the end of David's life?
- What are some practical steps you could take to keep your life more centered on God in the days to come?