

CCC THE KIND OF HEART GOD HONORS

Father's Day 2009

Our culture is obsessed with appearance. You rarely see ugly people on magazine covers, or even average people, for that matter. You only see these beautiful, bodacious hunks and babes on covers. I can't wait for *People Magazine* to come out with "The 25 Ugliest People in America list" but, it isn't going to happen.

We bestow money and power and fame on people just because they have good bone structure or a six pack on their abs. Why would anyone want to have a six pack when you could have a keg? A keg beats a six pack any day!

I was wondering. If you were going to be on a magazine cover what cover would you most likely be on? *National Inquirer?* *Super Hero comic book?*

Now in saying that I want to share with you that... beauty does not guarantee happiness. Look at me! I've had my unhappy moments. Okay enough with the laughs...

The truth is none of us choose our DNA, you didn't get to choose the way you look. It was predetermined. Your parents' DNA got together and here you are. You can take what you have and get it nipped and tuck and bumped and grind it and fold it and press it and spray other colors on but guess what... It's still you... you're still you. And you really can't do a whole lot about your appearance.
(PAUSE)

But you can do a lot about your character and that's far more important than looks any time. Today being Father's Day... we're going to look at "The Kind of Heart that God Honors".

The first king of Israel was a real stud, his name was Saul.

This guy was tall, tanned, terrific. He was a ladies' man.

People would look at this guy and say, "This guy is stunning!" He really was a model in terms of appearance.

But that's about all Saul had going for him was how he looked. Because what happened was he had a character breakdown. He had some major character defects and flaws in his life. So God said, "It takes more than good looks to be a leader."

So God sent Samuel who was the prophet of Israel at that time out to find a replacement for King Saul. Samuel went to a guy's house named Jesse who had eight sons. Jesse

brings in the top seven. He leaves the baby, the runt of the pack, out in the field. These guys were also really good looking guys. As Jesse parades these seven sons in front of the prophet Samuel, Samuel keeps going, He ain't the one... He ain't the one..." They were all good looking guys but they weren't what God was looking for.

So the prophet Samuel says to Jesse, "Don't you have any other sons?" And Jesse goes, "Oh, yes! I forgot one." How would you like to be the forgotten son? "He's out in the field." And he brings in the youngest, the runt of the family, David. Samuel takes one look at David and says, "This is the guy!"

God had told Samuel not to look at appearance. 1 Samuel 16 *"The Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height [talking about these other brothers of David] for I have rejected them. The Lord*

doesn't look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance. But the Lord looks at the heart.'"

What in the world made David so special? Out of all the men in Israel, God finds a young shepherd boy, the youngest in the family and says, yeah the world may see you as the runt of the pack but "You're the guy I want to lead this nation." Why did God choose to bless and honor David above all the other men in this nation?

God's word, the bible tells us it was the "heart". God took a look at David's character and when He looked at David's heart, He smiled. In fact, the Bible tells us in Acts 13 *"After removing Saul God made David their king and He testified concerning him: 'I have found David a man after My own heart.'"* What does that mean? God testified for David.

If God were to testify for you, if God were called as a character reference for you in a court, what would He say about your heart? If God were to explain to other people what your heart was like what would God say about your heart?

Evidently God saw some things in David that He didn't see in other people. We're going to look at those today – the four heart qualities that you must develop in your heart if you want God's blessing on your life. If you want God to honor and bless your work, your family, your life – man or woman – you need to build these four qualities in your heart.

1. God honors those with a heart for the word.

David deeply loved God's word, the Bible. In fact, he wrote many psalms but it. His most famous one is Psalm 119 which by the way is the longest chapter in the Bible.

It's all about the value of God's word, the Bible. In Psalm 119 David says this, *"How I delight in Your word. I love and honor Your commands. I meditate on Your principles. I think about them all day long."* Circle the five verbs in those verses. Delight, honor, love, meditate and think about Your word. That's what it means to have a heart for the word.

Why did David love God's word so much? There are several reasons.

David loved God. And you cannot love God without loving this book, God's word. Because this is the only way you're going to know what God's like. You don't know anything about God except through His word. So if you're going to love God, you're going to have to learn to love His word.

If you're going to love God, if you're going to have a heart for God, you have to have a heart for His word. You want to know it and obey it and read it and study it and meditate and memorize it. All these things.

One of the reasons David was able to love God's word is because he kept an appetite for it by not filling his mind with other trashy things. Have you ever been at a buffet where you fill up on stuff at the beginning of the buffet and you get down to the good stuff and you don't have any room left? You lose your appetite because you've already eaten so much or taken so much.

What happens is you fill your mind with junk food, talk radio, television, movies, novels, sports, newspapers, magazines, etc. And then you wonder, Why don't I ever have a desire to read the Bible? It's because you're filling

your mind with things you don't believe. You don't believe everything you read in the newspaper but you read it anyway. Some of you live vicariously through your favorite football team or race car driver..., you get up in the morning and the first thing you do is read or listen to is the bad news Morning show before you read the good news. So tell me the logic of that!

David prayed this prayer, "*Keep me from looking at worthless things. Let me live by Your word.*" So let me ask you? What worthless things are ruining your appetite for God's word? Maybe you need to take a break from it, so you have a little bit more desire to read the Bible – God's word.

Another benefit was that David knew the value of God's word. One of the benefits of God's word is it's a great tool against temptation. Psalm 119:11 "*I have*

hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You." Circle "hidden". He says when I hide God's word in my heart it keeps me from sinning. Why? Because when you're tempted, when the devil says, "Why don't you get impatient here? Why don't you lie here? Why don't you get angry here? Why don't you lust here? Why don't you be egotistical here? Why don't you think only of yourself here?" you can say, "But the Bible says..." The greatest antidote to temptation is to be able to quote the word.

There's only one way you can hide the word of God in your heart. You've got to memorize it. You say, "I can't memorize anything!" I've got ADD. Anybody can memorize if you're interested. I know guys who can quote history from their favorite team or drive back to the 1940s

and then say, “I can’t memorize.” I know teenagers who can give you the top lyrics of the top 20 songs but they can’t memorize. You memorize what you care about. The only way you can really hide God’s word in your heart is to just say, “That’s a good verse. I should know that one and memorize it.”

Dads, it’s Fathers Day. If you want to be a godly man, if you want to be a godly father, you have to develop a heart for God’s word.

2. God honors those with heart for service.

Those who have a heart to serve. Hundreds of years after David died listen to what was written about him in the Bible in Acts 13:36 “*David served God’s purpose in his generation.*” Can you imagine a better epitaph than that? Bill served God’s purpose for his life. Can you think of anything better to be put on your tombstone, that you used

your life to accomplish God’s purposes to make difference in this world for accomplishing God’s purposes.

If you want to accomplish God’s purpose there’s a word that has to be a part of our life. Circle it in this verse. The word “serve.” You cannot accomplish God’s purpose in your life without serving. That is how His purpose is accomplished.

That’s exactly what David did. No matter what he was asked to do, he did it for God. He served his father as a shepherd out in the field. He served in the army in some very difficult battles. He served King Saul who for part of the time as he was serving him, King Saul was trying to kill David. He was throwing spears at him. You think you have a tough job situation! David kept serving in the midst of that difficult job situation.

Because God saw him faithfully serving, beginning in the little things, God honored him. Psalm 119:33 *“Just tell me what to do and I will do it, Lord.”* Servants say yes.

That’s what makes you a willing servant is you say yes.

See if you give yourself enough time you can always find a reason not to serve... But, if you’re a servant you don’t say no. You don’t say, “I’ll get back to you later on that. I’ll think about that for awhile.” You just say, Yes. And David’s willing service was in his life in spite of the fact that there were many, many injustices and difficulties in his life. He served in the midst of difficulties in life.

Not only did David serve but he also taught his son how to serve. 1 Chronicle 28:9 *“Solomon, my son [David’s son] get to know well your father’s God and serve Him with a whole heart and an eager mind.”* This is Father’s Day and it’s a great day to celebrate what it means

to be a dad. We should celebrate being a dad. But it’s also a great time to evaluate. To think, How am I doing as a dad?

As I read about David and his serving, one of the questions is, Dads, how are we doing in teaching our kids to serve?

This important quality you have to have in your life to accomplish God’s purposes. Dads are you modeling service with our example or just your talk? The best way to teach, to lead, to service is not to talk about it like I’m doing right now. But to do it...

The third quality that God looks for in a heart when He wants to bless someone is generosity. He looks for a heart for the word which David had. He looks for a heart for service which David had. And He looks for a generous heart.

3. God honors those with a generous heart.

You may be unaware of this but the most generous man in the Bible was David. Nobody even comes close to this man's generosity. His greatest desire was to build a house of worship, to build a temple for God. God told him "No, I'm not going to let you build it. I am going to let your son build it but not you." Even though David would never see the building and never get to enjoy it, he gave his entire personal wealth to build the temple he would never see.

We have that story in 1 Chronicles 29 where he announces to the people his gift and then challenges others. He says, *"Because of my love for God's temple, I have given 115 tons of gold and 265 tons of silver. [That's his entire personal wealth.] Now, who else is willing to give a generous offering to the Lord?"* God looked at this guy

and says, "This man has a heart like Mine. He is an extravagant, generous, over the top giver," which is what God is.

Why does God bless generous people? Why does God look for people with a generous heart to honor, to use and to bless? A couple reasons:

1. Your giving reveals the condition of your heart. I don't care what you say your heart is like, your giving really reveals what it's like. Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6 *"Your heart will be wherever your treasure is."* Whenever I put my treasure that's where I'm going to put my heart.

You've heard me say many, many times that God doesn't need your money. In fact, all He wants is what it represents – your heart. In fact, it's not even your money in the first place. It's God's. It wasn't yours before you

were born. It won't be yours after you die. God just loans you His money while you're here on earth, while He put you here. And when you die He's going to give it to somebody else and loan it to them for a while. When they die He'll loan it to somebody else. So you really don't own anything. You just get to use it while you're alive.

Testimony: Cicely

2. But God says you cannot have a heart for God and not give. Why? Because God is love. And that's the other reason why God wants us to be generous. You are most like God when you're generous. Because God is a generous, extravagant giver. *"God so loved the world that He gave..."*

God is love and you can give without loving but you cannot love without giving. It's impossible. So if you're going to learn to be a lover, if you're going to learn to be

loving, if you're going to learn to be like God, you must learn how to be generous. Not stingy, not miserly, not selfish. But extravagantly generous with what God has entrusted to you. It reveals your heart.

You've also heard me say many times that there are more promises in the Bible about giving than any other subject. God makes more promises about generosity that He does anything else. Why? Because He wants you to learn to be like Him. So He says, "Let's play a little game. You give and I'll give and let's see who can out give the other one."

One of the promises is Deuteronomy 15 *"Give freely and spontaneously. Don't have a stingy heart. The way you handle matters like this triggers God's blessing in everything you do, in all your work and ventures."* Circle

“everything” and “all”. If you want God’s blessing in everything you do, if you want God’s blessing in all your work and if you want God’s blessing in all your ventures God lays it out right there. What triggers God’s blessing? Generosity. Giving freely and spontaneously. God wants you to learn to trust Him.

One of the greatest lessons Edna-Wynne and I have learned in our 40 years of marriage is that you cannot out give God. And over and over again we have modeled this for our children and taught our children to be extravagant, generous givers. Why, because they’ve seen God’s blessing in our lives. Three different times in our marriage God told us to totally give our savings away. We’ve done it three times and watched God take care of it time after time.

Learn to be generous.

The Bible says in Proverbs 11 “*A generous man will prosper.*” If you never learn to be generous you’re only going to hurt yourself and you’re only going to hurt your relationships.

With that phrase said of David “*He was a man after God’s own heart,*” you would think that he was perfect man. You would think that he was some kind of a saint. He was far from that. He had major, major flaws in his life. Many of you have read the story in the Bible of his sin of adultery with Bathsheba and the fact that he tried to cover up that sin by having her husband murdered. Adultery and murder – you can’t stoop much lower than that can you. He sinned greatly. But here is what you need to know... He also repented greatly. Why does God say,

“He was a man after My own heart”? Because he had a humble heart.

4. God honors those with a humble heart.

Proverbs 29:33 *“Arrogance will bring your downfall but if you are humble you will be respected.”* The arrogance that says, I’m perfect, I know it all. The arrogance that says, I have to try to pretend I’m perfect, to act like I have no flaws in my life. David had none of that in his life. He was very honest when he blew it. You can read in the Bible in Psalms 51 one of the most honest, public confessions that you’ll read anywhere. In fact, in Psalm 51:17 it says, *“My sacrifice is a humble Spirit, O God. You will not reject a humble and repentant heart.”*

God doesn’t reject us when we come to Him with a humble heart. All of us have sinned. We’ve all done things in our lives that we wish we’d never done, that we

hope no one ever finds out about. God is not so interested in the fact that we have sinned because He knows we’ve all sinned. He’s more interested in your response to that sin. What you do about it. Do you just sort of blow it off and pretend it’s not there. Do you minimize it? Or do you have a broken heart about it. And do you take that broken heart to God.

I would say to some of you here today, you look at yourself and say, “A person after God’s heart... a person God honors. I could never be that kind of person. I have blown it in such a great way in my life with the things that I’ve done. You don’t know what I’ve done.” I want to say to you today that I hope that Fathers Day 2009 would be the day that you remember that your Father in heaven loves you more than you could possibly imagine, that He has a love for you no matter what you’ve done, no matter where

you've done it, no matter who you've done it with. God didn't choose David because he was blameless. He chose David because of the attitude of his heart.

God says *"I will refresh the humble. I will give new courage to those of repentant hearts."* Isaiah 57:15

There's not a person in this room – not one of us – that **can't** have a heart for God. Will you have the courage to call out to Him today and say to Him, "God, will You help me to change?"

Do you have the kind of heart that God can bless? I want you to join me this summer to do some work on our hearts. I'm going to be working on these four qualities and I hope you'll join me. Do you have the courage that it takes to be the kind of person that God honors? It starts with admitting what you're not. "God, I haven't had a heart for Your word. I've filled my mind with so many other things

that I just haven't had a hunger for Your word. I haven't been serving. I've been thinking of myself. I haven't been generous. I've really been stingy. I need to humble myself to You today." If so pray this pray in your heart.

Prayer: Jesus, you know I'm not perfect. But I really, sincerely want my heart to be right. I want to live the kind of life that You can bless. I want to have a heart for Your word. I want to get to know it and live it and hide it in my heart. I want to have a genuine heart of service. Help me to make time for others. To serve. I want a generous heart so I can be like You. Today I humbly ask for Your help. I admit that I need a change of heart. I want a heart like Yours." If you've never opened your life to Jesus Christ say, "Jesus Christ, come into my heart and my life. Make Yourself real to me. In Your name I pray. Amen."