

**Crossroads Daily Guide**  
**Week of June 19, 2016**  
**A Man After God's Own Heart**



**Sunday, June 19, 2016**

*Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; God's the one who will keep you on track.*

**Reflection:** These words are some of the simplest but most profound of the Bible. Our lives are complex and there are few easy answers to the questions which arise, but this simple and beautiful scripture encourages us to trust something bigger than ourselves, our intellect, our own understanding. It encourages us to reach out for help and not try to figure out everything on our own. We are reminded to listen for God's voice speaking into our lives in every possible way, wherever we go, whatever we do, and to trust that ultimately, God's holy wisdom will keep us on track. Read these verses several times today. If you only memorize one scripture, this is a good one, and it is good way to begin our reflections for the coming week. May God speak to you through these words, through your everyday experiences and through everyone you meet.

**Breath Prayer:** Inhale: *I trust my heart...* Exhale: *to the heart of God.*

**Monday June 20, 2016**

*Acts 13:22 When Saul was removed as king, God made David their king. In God's testimony about him God said, "I have found David, son of Jesse, to be a man after my heart..."*

**Reflection:** The story of King David's life is one of our most beloved Bible stories. It covers the whole range from childhood through the end of his life. Like each of us, David was a complex character. His life was filled with both shadow and light. He wrestled with his own weaknesses and failures and at times seems to be far from what we would see as a godly person. Yet God identified him as a 'man after his own heart'. David was able to authentically admit his own weaknesses with honesty and humility. He was vulnerable in expressing his need for God and for help. How difficult is it for you to be open and vulnerable about your struggles and failures? Is there someone in your life with whom you can be completely vulnerable knowing you will not be judged?

**Breath Prayer:** Inhale: *God, shape my heart...* Exhale: *to be like yours.*

**Tuesday June 21, 2016**

*Psalms 51: 16-17 (Paraphrased in The Message) Going through the motions doesn't please you (God), a flawless performance is nothing to you. I learned God-worship when my pride was shattered. Heart shattered lives ready for love don't for a moment escape God's notice.*

**Reflection:** Through his own painful experiences David learned about the kind of heart that was pleasing to God - a heart that was shattered and ready for love. That when life seems perfect it can be difficult to acknowledge our need for God's love. Statistics tell us that we live in the wealthiest and happiest county in America, but if we are honest, we know that life is far from perfect here. We face the same human struggles, temptations and stresses as people anywhere. We are vulnerable to unrealistic expectations, exhaustion, and the depression and frustration that accompany the many demands of our lives. David's realization is great news for us. Going through the motions and striving for perfection do not impress God. When our hearts are

broken, open and vulnerable, we are most receptive to the incredible love of God. What stresses and lofty expectations cause you to feel frustrated or inadequate? How difficult is it to believe that your vulnerability rather than your strength allow God to work most fully in your life?

**Breath Prayer:** Inhale: *My open heart...* Exhale: *is my gift to God.*

### **Wednesday June 22, 2016**

*Psalm 51:3, 10 Because I know my wrongdoings, my sin is always right in front of me...Create a clean heart for me, God; put a new, faithful spirit deep inside me!*

**Reflection:** David knew he had God's light inside him, but at the same time he was not shy about owning up to his own dark and shadowy places. He wasn't afraid to name that without God's compassion and forgiveness those dark places could take him to devastating places. Humbly he cried out to God, over and over, openly confessing his need for God's help and forgiveness.

It is difficult to have to confess that we have failed. It is painful to admit that we have hurt others. It is natural to want to hide from our darkest places but until we can look at them clearly, and bring them humbly into the light of God's great compassion, they continue to hold power over us. They can continue to hurt us and those we love.

It takes courage and wisdom to own up to our failures. When we do, the ever-shining light of God's love is always there to bathe them in grace and forgiveness. Take a few moments to look inside your own heart. Are there things you are carrying that cause you to feel shame and regret? Can you imagine humbly speaking those things to God and allow the unconditional love of God to bring peace where there was pain?

**Breath Prayer:** Inhale: *Create in me...* Exhale: *a clean heart Lord*

### **Thursday June 23, 2016**

*Psalm 109: 24-26 My knees are weak from fasting, and I am skin and bones. I am a joke to people everywhere; when they see me, they shake their heads in scorn. Help me, O Lord my God!*

**Reflection:** Have you ever felt like David in these verses? He cried out to God in a state of pure misery. Once respected and loved by his community, he has now fallen so far that he is scorned and ridiculed. People shake their heads in disgust and he says he has become a joke. The beauty in his situation is that having reached bottom, he cries out to God for help. "Help me God!" These are some of the most powerful, life-changing words we can ever speak. Why is it so hard for us to ask for help? From God, from each other? We are taught that it is good to be self-reliant, independent, strong, not needing help from anyone. But when we are down and suffering in dark places, the wisest words we can ever speak are, "Help me, please." Once we speak those words we open a window through which help can come in many forms. God's love can reach us through the work of the spirit and through the incarnate presence of others who will be happy to offer help. Take a few moments to reflect on some area of your life where you might need help, but are resistant to asking for help. Ask God to help you be strong enough to admit your need and allow help to flow through your life.

**Breath Prayer:** Inhale: *God...* Exhale: *help me!*

### **Friday June 24, 2016**

*1 Samuel 20:1 David now fled from Naoith in Ramah and found Jonathan. "What have I done?" he exclaimed. "What is my crime? How have I offended your father?"*

**Reflection:** King Saul was David's mentor and King and Jonathan was King Saul's son, David's best friend. When David knew that Saul was angry with him he went straight to Jonathan, someone he trusted completely, to ask what he had done wrong, and how he might have given offense. It takes a lot of humility and sincerity to ask for that kind of accountability. Instead of leading with a string of excuses or declarations of his innocence. In the New Testament in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus had something to say about the kind of humility that seeks accountability. Eugene Peterson paraphrases Jesus' words from Matthew 5:8 like this: "You're blessed when you get your inside world—your mind and heart—put right. Then you can see God in the outside world".

Asking someone else to speak into our lives with honesty and love is a real challenge. It takes a lot of trust for two people to feel safe enough in their relationship to share what might seem like criticism. But, without that kind of accountability it is often hard for us to see areas where we need growth. It takes a humble heart to ask for help from a trusted peer in order to live a life that aligns with God's heart. Is there some relationship in your life where you experience that level of trust? How might you take steps to be invite such a relationship into your life?

**Breath Prayer:** Inhale: *Search me, God...* Exhale: *know my thoughts.*

### **Saturday June 25, 2016**

*Psalm 54: 1-3 Come with great power, O God, and rescue me! Defend me with your might. Listen to my prayer, O God. Pay attention to my plea. For strangers are attacking me; violent people are trying to kill me...*

**Reflection:** David was a strong man, and a strong leader, a proven warrior in battles. Still, he was not afraid to admit his fears. He had enemies. People even wanted to kill him and he ran for his life. But he was wise enough to cry out to God and not rely on his own successes as a warrior to save him. He knew he needed help beyond his own strength. He cried out to God over and over again for help, and strength, and character and godly wisdom that would help him to triumph over his situation. He knew his limitations and he was man enough to admit his fears and ask God to help him face up to those fears.

Has there ever been a time when you experienced real fear? Maybe you didn't fear for your life or physical safety, but fear of losing a job, not meeting financial responsibilities, fear of falling short as a parent or disappointing a spouse can be just as debilitating. When faced with these fears do you tend to go it alone, believing that is what is expected of you? If so, can you imagine asking God to help you move beyond the need to appear strong and fearless, and see the act of admitting your fears and asking for help as the true act of courage and strength?

**Breath Prayer:** Inhale: *God of power...* Exhale: *help me admit my weakness.*