

**Life of David:  
Making My Seeking of God  
Personal Like David Did  
Psalm 18**

David was a man who loved the Lord, and the Lord loved him.

God named His own Son, “the Son of David” (Mat. 1:1), that in itself, is amazing. The Son of God called the “son of” an angry man, the son of a murderer, the son of a liar, the son of an adulterer, and so on? That is what a Son of David means. But God is a God of forgiveness, new beginnings, and grace. That is what makes David such a compelling figure in the Scriptures: David broke all Ten of the Commandments, and God loved David, called him the man after His own heart, and named Jesus the Son of David.

God is the One who loves, seeks, forgives, and saves.  
David is a prime example of a loved, sought, forgiven, and saved man.

Thus in the summary of David’s life, captured by Psalm 18, God’s Word reveals to us two powerful truths: David loved the Lord with all his heart; and David sought the Lord through all his life. First, look again at Psalm 18’s outline of David:

**SEEKING GOD  
ALL THROUGH LIFE**

Remember the divisions of this amazing Psalm?

- v. 1-3 God was the greatest attraction of David’s life;
- v. 4-6 David was often in desperate condition;
- v. 7-15 God’s Power was awesome to David;
- v. 16-24 It is God alone who can rescue us;
- v. 25-29 God is just in all He does;
- v. 30-36 God reveals Himself to those who Trust Him;
- v. 37-45 God Has conquered all our enemies;
- v. 46-50 God is Worthy of our Life-Long Praise.

David very personally expressed his lifelong seeking of the Lord when he used “my ...” nine times in Psalm 18:1-2:

I will love You, O LORD, **my strength**. The LORD is **my rock** and **my fortress** and **my deliverer**; **my God, my strength**, in whom I will trust; **my shield** and the horn [means “power”] of **my salvation, my stronghold**.

**David Made Scripture  
Personal**

David took truth about God and held it close, not at arm’s length. Just the habit of going from God is, to My God is, makes all the difference: then, three thousand years ago, and now!

If we examine David's expressions about God as—"my strength," "my rock," "my fortress," "my deliverer," "my God, my strength," "my shield," and "my salvation, my stronghold"—we find they **are a set of seven metaphors to describe God:**

- The first three as He aided **David in the military times** as his "strength," "shield," and "horn."
- The last four are **David in the years on-the-run** where he so deeply found that only God could be the "rock," "fortress," "deliverer," and "stronghold" for David.

After telling the Lord in verse 1 that he loved Him so much he wanted to "hugging-ly" embrace Him, David exhausted the Hebrew language in the next forty-nine verses in an attempt to explain all that God had been to him throughout his life.

### **Finding the Lord As MY Rock**

But most of those expressions surrounded the way David related to God as his "Rock":

- The LORD is **my rock** and my fortress and my deliverer (v. 2a);
- My God, **my strength** (Heb. Lit. "rock"), in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold (v. 2b).
- For who is God, except the LORD? And who is **a rock**, except our God? (v. 31).
- The LORD lives! Blessed be **my Rock!** Let the God of my salvation be exalted (v. 46).

A rock that is strong, unmoving, shading, sheltering, and always we see that as David's picture of God in his heart and mind, after all those trials.

By calling the Lord his "Rock," David drew upon his knowledge of the desert where the fragile life of plants and animals was often clustered in areas of shade around the rocks. He was acknowledging that he had only made it through the dangerous deserts of his life by the shadow of God as his Rock of Protection and Shade.

As he fled from enemies like Saul and Absalom, God became David's Rock of Refuge—a Rock-solid foundation beneath him when everything else in his life was unstable.

Now let's look back on David's life to see what God saw in His servant.

### **A Panorama of David's Life Through Thirty-One of His Psalms**

What we see is David's remarkable habit of looking for the Lord wherever he was. For in the midst of a hard, stressful, constantly demanding life of unending struggles, David made regular, long-term investments in seeking God.

Such a long obedience in seeking God means—that many of David's discoveries about the Lord's faithfulness were made in times of acute loneliness, as recorded in the thirty-one psalms written during these life stages: his growing years, struggling years, strong years, and waning years. His inspired testimony in each of these stages captured how to overcome loneliness in every facet of life.

### **Loneliness Means God can Become**

## **Closer than Anything or Anyone Else**

Loneliness in all its many forms has but one purpose: since God made us for Himself, He longs to satisfy and complete us by using our righteous responses in loneliness to draw us closer and closer to Him. That is where “obedience in seeking the Lord” comes in—and David gracefully modeled this for us.

As we’ve just seen, he lived a hard, stressful, constantly demanding life filled with enemies, and that led to intense loneliness. But David refused to allow bitterness to fester. Rather than focus on his problems, he chose to seek the Lord by responding righteously in his struggles, ever yearning to draw nearer to his God.

The more the Lord satisfied David’s deep desire for intimacy with Him, the more David’s love for Him abounded until it blossomed into the “hugging, embracing love” of a man after God’s own heart!

You will see such growth in this panorama of David’s life through key verses from the psalms he likely penned in each stage. For the greatest blessing, I encourage you to meditate on these verses by relating them to what was going on in David’s life at the time. Then, as the Lord leads, ask Him to help you apply needed truths to your own life.

### **Part One: The Psalms from David’s Early Life at Home.**

David suffered intense loneliness in his growing years—

**David wrote 3 Psalms about when he was Overlooked, ignored, & Disliked by his family** (1 Samuel 16-18).

- **So God became the focus of David’s “Peer-Pressure” instead of any others. Psalm 19:** Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer (v. 14).
- **So David learned that God could Satisfy his Longings. Psalm 23:** The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want (v. 1).
- **David made his relationship with the Lord: HIS. Psalm 132:** Let us go into His tabernacle; let us worship at His footstool. ... And let Your saints shout for joy (vv. 7, 9).

### **Part Two: The Psalms from David’s Young Adult Life when he moved out of his parents house.**

David suffered intense loneliness in his struggling years—

**David wrote 3 Psalms about when he faced family conflict and danger as he fled from King Saul’s wrath** (1 Sam. 19:11-18; 20:35-42).

**David resolved to not quit when life was hard. Psalm 11:** In the LORD I put my trust; how can you say to my soul, “Flee as a bird to your mountain”? (v. 1).

**David found strength in the Lord when he was weak. Psalm 59:** To You, O my Strength, I will sing praises; for God is my defense, my God of mercy (v. 17).

**David found that the Lord could uphold him, even through the emotional**

**earthquakes of life. Psalm 64:** The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and trust in Him. And all the upright in heart shall glory (v. 10).

**David wrote a Psalm about when he lost his job and was separated from his family, when he fled to Ahimelech the priest (1 Sam. 21:1-9).**

**David sought the Lord even with no job, no food, no home, no security. Psalm 52:** I will praise You forever; and in the presence of Your saints I will wait on Your name, for it is good (v. 9).

**David wrote 2 Psalms about moving to a new location under duress and facing multiple trials at Gath (1 Sam. 21:10-12 and 13-15).**

**David learned faith over fear. Psalm 56:** Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), in God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me? (vv. 3-4).

**David magnified the Lord instead of his troubles. Psalm 34:** I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; the humble shall hear of it and be glad. Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together (vv. 1-3).

**David wrote 5 Psalms about when he felt abandoned as he fled Gath, but grew in the Lord Living & Working with troubled men in Adullam's Cave (1 Sam. 22:1-4).**

**David sought God even when he felt God abandoned him. Psalm 13:** How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? ... I have trusted in Your mercy; my heart shall rejoice in Your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, because He has dealt bountifully with me (vv. 1, 5-6).

**David allowed the Lord to pull him out of the pits. Psalm 40:** I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps (vv. 1-2).

**David allowed the Lord to lift and focus his emotions upwards instead of downwards. Psalm 57:** My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and give praise. ... For Your mercy reaches unto the heavens, and Your truth unto the clouds. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let Your glory be above all the earth (vv. 7, 10-11).

**David wanted the Lord magnified in every era of his life. Psalm 70:** Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; and let those who love Your salvation say continually, "Let God be magnified!" (v. 4).

**David found only God could liberate him from times of depression. Psalm 142:** Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Your name; the righteous shall surround me, for You shall deal bountifully with me" (v. 7).

**David wrote a Psalm about when he faced constant insecurities and huge**

**responsibilities as he and his men hid from King Saul in the forest of Hereth** (1 Sam. 22:5; 23:1-14).

**David trusted in the Lord, even when everyone else deserted him. Psalm 17:** I have called upon You, for You will hear me, O God; incline Your ear to me, and hear my speech. Show Your marvelous lovingkindness by Your right hand, O You who save those who trust in You from those who rise up against them (vv. 6-7).

**David wrote 2 Psalms about when he was betrayed by men he trusted—not only the men of Keilah, but also others from Judah the Ziphites** (1 Sam. 23:15-29; 1 Sam. 24).

**David found out that only God can deliver us. Psalm 54:** I will freely sacrifice to You; I will praise Your name, O LORD, for it is good. For He has delivered me out of all trouble; and my eye has seen its desire upon my enemies (vv. 6-7).

**David asked God to vindicate him, rather than take matters into his own hands. Psalms 35-36:** Let them not rejoice over me who are wrongfully my enemies; nor let them wink with the eye who hate me without a cause. ... How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings (35:19; 36:7).

**David wrote a Psalm about when he was wronged in a business deal but God delivered him from anger against Nabal “the fool”** (1 Sam. 25).

**David found God was far better at getting even than he was. Psalm 53:** There they are in great fear where no fear was, for God has scattered the bones of him who encamps against you; You have put them to shame, because God has despised them (v. 5).

**David wrote 2 Psalms about when he suddenly lost his family, friends, and finances in the raid on Ziklag** (1 Sam. 30).

**David found God his safest investment for life. Psalm 16:** I have set the LORD always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved (v. 8).

**David found that when he was weak, God is always strong. Psalm 39:** “LORD, make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am. ... Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor. ... And now, Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in You” (vv. 4, 5, 7).

### **Part Three: The Psalms from David’s Strong Years as King.**

David suffered intense loneliness in his strong years—

**David wrote 2 Psalms about when He was tempted and failed miserably during the time he sinned with Bathsheba** (2 Sam. 11:27-12:14).

**David found out that what he sowed, he also had to reap. Psalm 38:** ... I am ready to fall, and my sorrow is continually before me. For I will declare my iniquity; I will be in anguish over my sin. ... Do not forsake me, O LORD; O my God, be not far from

me! Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation! (vv. 17-18, 21-22).

**David learned that to whom much is forgiven, the same loves much. Psalm 32:** Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. ... Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him. Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous; and shout for joy, all you upright in heart! (vv. 1, 10-11).

**David wrote a Psalm about when he was painfully chastised and then restored (2 Sam. 12).**

**David learned all sin is ultimately against God. Psalm 51:** For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight—that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge. ... Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. ... The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise (vv. 3-4, 10, 17).

**David wrote 3 Psalms about how he had to face the inevitable consequences of his sin, but when attacked, slandered, and abused, he still sang of his confidence in the Lord (2 Sam. 15:13-16:14).**

**David's emotions rested in the protection of the Lord. Psalm 3:** But You, O LORD, are a shield for me, my glory and the One who lifts up my head. I cried to the LORD with my voice, and He heard me from His holy hill. Selah (vv. 3-4).

**David could still rejoice even in deeply stressful times. Psalm 63:** O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You ....v. 3-5 Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You. Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul shall be satisfied ... and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips (vv. 1, 3-5).

**David experienced the confidence in trials that only God can give. Psalm 31:** In You, O LORD, I put my trust; let me never be ashamed; deliver me in Your righteousness. ... v. 3 For You are my rock and my fortress; therefore, for Your name's sake, lead me and guide me ....v.5 Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O LORD God of truth. ...v.23-24 Oh, love the LORD, all you His saints! For the LORD preserves the faithful, and fully repays the proud person. Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all you who hope in the LORD (vv. 1, 3, 5, 23-24).

#### **Part Four: The Psalms from David's Waning Years.**

David suffered intense loneliness in his waning years—

**David wrote 2 Psalms about when He had to come to terms with old age and impending death, but his humble obedience led to joy as he used his last years for God's glory (2 Sam. 22-23; 1 Kings 1-2).**

**David learned to never stop talking about God's goodness. Psalm 71:** v. 3 Be my strong refuge, for You are my rock and my fortress. v. 17-19 O God, You have taught me from my youth; and to this day I declare Your wondrous works. Now also when I am

old and gray headed, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come. v. 24 My tongue also shall talk of Your righteousness all the day long ... (vv. 3, 17-19, 24).

**David put into words his life-long desire for God. Psalm 18:** v. 1-2 I will love You, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. ... v. 46 The LORD lives! Blessed be my Rock! Let the God of my salvation be exalted (vv. 1-2; 46).

**David wrote his final 2 Psalms about Gracefully Heading Toward Home as he learned to cling to the only One who could satisfy and complete him—Christ.** (1 Kings 2)

**David saw Heaven as Home and the Good Shepherd who would take him there. Psalm 23:** v. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

**David knew only God could safely keep him, so into His Hands he. Psalm 116:** v. 3-4 The pains of death surrounded me, And the pangs of Sheol laid hold of me; I found trouble and sorrow. <sup>4</sup> Then I called upon the name of the LORD: “O LORD, I implore You, deliver my soul!”

David’s incredible heart for the Lord continually gushed up rivers of worship even from the parched ground of difficult days! In every stage of life God empowered David to turn his fears into opportunities of trusting the Lord David loved, more and more.

Why not join in the worship David wrote by turning to a hymn that is reflective of David’s words in Psalm 18: Rock of Ages Hymn # 204



## APPENDIX:

David's testimony reminds me of the great hymn "Rock of Ages." In England, around the year 1763, while Ben Franklin was busily flying kites in thunderstorms here in America, a young pastor by the name of Augustus Toplady (1740-1778) was traveling home when a violent thunderstorm struck. Here is the popular recounting of the birth of that wonderful song:

LIGHTNING briefly illuminated the primitive, rock-hewn landscape of Burrington Combe in Somerset. It was followed by a deep growl of thunder, and then rain lashed mercilessly down, pouring bubbling streamlets down the craggy sides of primeval cliffs which rise up some 250ft. to the Mendip Heights on one side, and into Cheddar Gorge on the other.

The curate of Blagdon, a nearby village, had been travelling along the road near the cliffs when the storm struck and dashed into a cave for shelter. He had been fortunate to find this hiding-place so quickly, and while waiting for the storm to pass he began to muse on the idea of the "rock of faith" being a shelter from the "storms of life."

The words for a hymn began to form in his mind but, according to the legend that still persists, he had no paper in his pocket to write down the words. Looking down he saw a playing card, considered a sinful thing by the young cleric. Nevertheless, he picked it up and began to write one of the world's best-loved hymns which was first published in the Gospel Magazine in 1775, some 12 years after Toplady wrote it.<sup>1</sup>

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in thee;  
Let the water and the blood,  
From thy riven side which flowed,  
Be of sin the double cure,  
Cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r.

Not the labour of my hands  
Can fulfil thy law's demands;  
Could my zeal no respite know,  
Could my tears for ever flow,  
All for sin could not atone;  
Thou must save, and thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to thy Cross I cling;  
Naked, come to thee for dress;  
Helpless, look to thee for grace;  
Foul, I to the fountain fly;  
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,  
When my eyelids close in death,  
When I soar through tracts unknown,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ensignmessage.com/archives/rockofages.html>

See thee on thy judgement throne;  
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in thee.

So then, when you meet Jesus in prayer and the Word, make it personal. Never cease to tell Him: “Thank you for being—my Salvation, my Cleansing, my Redeemer, and my Rock of Ages!”

And so God’s servant—this unique man after God’s own heart—in his very last recorded words launched his psalm of praise with this wholehearted declaration of devotion: I will love You, O LORD, my strength.

I pray that you will long, like David, for—

## **MORE LOVE, O CHRIST!**

The Shema,<sup>2</sup> the Jewish confession of faith, begins with:

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall **love the LORD** your God **with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength**” (Deuteronomy 6:4-5).

As the king of God’s people, David would have had his own copy of these verses as a result of hand-copying the Pentateuch,<sup>3</sup> which he was also commanded to read “... **all the days of his life**, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful **to observe all the words** of this law and these statutes ...” (Deuteronomy 17:19).

David’s passion for God’s Word and deep desire to love Him with all his heart, soul, and strength was the fruit of embracing God through a long obedience in seeking the Lord. But were it not for David’s life being covered with God’s grace, none of this would have been possible. We must never forget that his greatness was ultimately of God—not of himself (2 Corinthians 4:6-7 NIV). As John MacArthur has pointed out:

... Only divine grace can enable our hearts to love God in the first place. Scripture clearly teaches this. ... So unless God Himself draws us to Christ, we would never love Him on our own (John 6:65). “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

The apostle Paul prayed for the Philippians, “And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight” (Philippians 1:9). So it is certainly appropriate to pray that God would deepen and enrich our love for Christ, for only He can do it.<sup>4</sup>

Elizabeth Prentiss, the hymn-writer of “More Love to Thee, O Christ,” earnestly prayed for the empowerment to love Christ more and more—no matter the cost! For she, like David, craved intimacy with the Lord, as her words clearly reveal:

More love to thee, O Christ, more love to thee!

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<sup>2</sup> See Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

<sup>3</sup> The Pentateuch is the first five books of the Bible; a king of Israel was required to write a copy for himself and study it regularly (Deuteronomy 18-20).

<sup>4</sup> Joni Eareckson Tada et al., *When Morning Gilds the Skies* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2002) p. 81.

Hear thou the prayer I make on bended knee;  
This is my earnest plea, more love, O Christ, to thee,  
More love to thee, more love to thee!

Once earthly joy I craved, sought peace and rest;  
Now thee alone I seek; give what is best:  
This all my prayer shall be, more love, O Christ, to thee,  
More love to thee, more love to thee!

Let sorrow do its work, send grief and pain;  
Sweet are thy messengers, sweet their refrain,  
When they can sing with me, more love, O Christ, to thee  
More love to thee, more love to thee!

Then shall my latest breath whisper thy praise;  
This be the parting cry my heart shall raise,  
This still its prayer shall be, more love, O Christ, to thee,  
More love to thee, more love to thee!

Knowing the background behind the writing of that song makes her prayer even more precious—and challenging! John MacArthur continued:

Elizabeth Prentiss ... wrote this hymn during a time of deep grief after two of her children died in infancy very close together. Her “earnest plea” in the midst of such overwhelming trials was not that the trials would be removed or that the pain would be eliminated, but that patience would have its perfect work: “that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything” (James 1:4). That is the heart-cry of true faith.

Stanza 2 is a beautiful testimony that describes how trials refine the believer’s perspective: “Once earthly joy I craved.” ... But this is not a mere earthly joy. Earthly joys are always temporary and transient. ... The testimony of the hymn-writer is that Christ Himself is a blessing vast superior to any earthly joy, and that is where the sorrowful heart finally learns to find its true joy: “Now thee alone I seek.”

... This hymn poetically echoes the message of James 1: “Sweet are thy messengers.” Remember, the “messengers” the hymn-writer has in mind are “sorrow,” “grief,” and “pain.” Again, these are in no way “sweet” in and of themselves. But when their effects on our hearts actually increase our love and our longing for Christ, the final result is unspeakably sweet.

... The closing stanza looks forward to the end of life, realizing that a prayer like this hymn is never fully answered this side of heaven. No matter how deep and rich our love for Christ grows in this life, we will always feel the need for deeper, more perfect love. And that will be true until the moment when we see Him face to face and are made perfect (1 John 3:2). Then even our love for our glorious Savior will finally be perfect, and the prayer of this hymn will at last be answered in full.<sup>5</sup>

Until then, we, too, should earnestly plea: “More love, O Christ, to Thee.” But we must depend upon

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 81-82

the ... God who works in [us] both to will and to do for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13) to work this “hugging, embracing love” for Christ in us! For only God can satisfy to the very core of our existence and being!

David was as human as anyone can get because he reflected every vice and virtue. He struggled with fear, depression, and lust—yet he sang with abandon, worshiped with a passion, and meditated into the very Throne Room of God. How was the latter possible?

The God-of-New-Beginnings is an exhaustless supply of satisfaction; He is a well that never runs dry, a spring that always wells up with fresh and life-giving waters. Every desire, even the deepest, can be completely satisfied by Him! In light of all that David has modeled for us throughout the Scriptures, could there ever be a greater or more worthy desire than to embrace God through a long obedience in seeking the Lord? No—a thousand times no!

That was David’s 3,000-year-old spiritual secret of success in serving God’s purposes in his own generation! And by God’s grace it can be yours and mine as well!

**My Closing Prayer for You:** Father in heaven, from the depth of our beings, from the center of all we are, we want to be found worthy when we stand before You face-to-face; we want to be there clothed in Your righteousness. We don't know when You are going to come or call us home. It could be that the days written in Your Book may end for us even this week. We therefore pray that we would live a life that is true and right—for You, Lord Jesus. We pray that You, Holy Spirit, will put Your finger into our hearts and point out any untoppled idols, unforsaken sins, and unrestrained areas of flesh in our lives. Lord, when you come or call for us, we don't want to be found living, talking, acting, or doing any of those things which displease You. May we make such choices while we're thinking about getting ready to stand before You with all the redeemed, with all the angelic hosts, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." We love You, Lord! Captivate our hearts so that we, like David, will cry out with all that is within us: **I will love You, O LORD, my strength. The LORD lives! Blessed be my Rock! Let the God of my salvation be exalted!** In the blessed Name of Jesus. Amen.