



Honesty with God

God Desires Truth in the Innermost Being - Psalm 51:6

David's Honesty with God

David expressed his anger with the Lord because he felt abandoned by Him:

"I say to God my Rock, why have You forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?" Psalm 42:9

At times David was very angry with others, and he expressed his anger to the Lord in terms that reveal the depth of his feelings:

"Break the teeth in their mouths, O God; tear out, O Lord, the fangs of the lions! Let them vanish like water that flows away; when they draw the bow let their arrows be blunted. Like a slug melting away as it moves along, like a stillborn child, may they not see the sun. Before your pots can feel the heat of the thorns, whether they be green or dry, the wicked will be swept away." Psalm 58:6-9

David wrote of his despair about difficult situations:

"My heart is in anguish within me... the terrors of death assail me. Fear and trembling have beset me... horror has overwhelmed me." Psalm 55:4-5

And he communicated his despair to the Lord:

"Why do You hide Your face and forget our misery and oppression? We are brought down to the dust, our bodies cling to the ground." Psalm 44:24-25

Sometimes he was confused:

"How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever? How long will you hide Your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart?" Psalm 13:1-2

Sometimes David communicated his love for the Lord:

"As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" Psalm 42:12

At times David trusted in the Lord:

"The Lord is my light and my salvation - whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life - of whom shall I be afraid? When evil men advance against me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, even then I will be confident." Psalm 27:13

At other times he was filled with praise for God:

"I will exalt You, my God the King; I will praise Your name forever and ever. Every day I will praise You and extol Your name forever and ever. Great is the Lord, and most worthy of praise; His greatness no one can fathom." Psalm 145:13

On two occasions, God called David a man after His own heart. It is interesting to note that there was not one other person that God spoke about with those descriptive words, not one! There is no one who is showcased as many times as David. Chuck Swindoll teaches us that "there has been more written about David than about any other Biblical character. Abraham has some 14 chapters dedicated to his life, and so does Joseph. Jacob has 11. Elijah has 10. But David has 66 chapters dedicated to him, which does not even include some 59 references to his life in the New Testament." And one thing for sure is that David certainly sinned more than some other people in the Bible, but they were not described as a **man after God's own heart**.

-- God said Solomon's heart was "not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David." 1 Kings 11:4

-- God said David "followed Me [God] with all his heart." 1 Kings 14:8

-- The Bible said Jeroboam's "heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his forefather had been." 1 Kings 15:3

-- The Bible says after Saul's failure, God had "sought him a man after His own heart." 1 Samuel 13:14

-- God said, "I have found David... a man after My own heart." Acts 13:22





There were people who sinned less, and God always blesses obedience, that's for sure. But also, some of the people in the Bible were "rule-followers" instead of "Ruler-followers" (meaning following "The Ruler, God"). I believe that David was a Ruler-follower and that he desired to obey God, but his obedience was motivated by love for God. You may ask how and why? After all, with all the highly emotional conversations David had with God, David clearly took note that God never left him or forsook him. David became very close to God just as a child and parent do when the child comes running to their parent, burying his sobs in the parent's chest, and the parent holds the child until he calms down. When this happens, a bond is built and when it keeps happening, a strong bond is built: a bond of deep love, trust, and approachability. (Hebrews 4:14-16) This is what I believe David had with God, and God loved their relationship.

I asked myself the question, "If David was a man after God's own heart, why was that?" I believe God spoke those words about him because as our Parent and Friend, He highly values when we come to Him without holding back, pouring out passionately and honesty from our hearts. I believe God showcased David again and again because He was teaching us, through David's example, how to be men and women after His own heart. Through David's example, seen repeatedly in God's Word, He is inviting us to partake of a deep intimacy with Him, not just a shallow walk, not just surface talking, but really pouring out throughout the day. God certainly allows many events, big and small each day, to invite us to come to Him to increase our intimacy. So, embrace, meditate and pay close attention to David's emotionally charged talks with God, as well as his time of praise and thanksgiving to God. Don't miss this important point. All of this is on display to give us the how to live in the purpose of why God our Father created us....to know Him intimately and minister out of the abundance of that passionate relationship. You can be sure you will hear those other voices trying to steer you away from this intimacy. Don't listen. They are not God's voice. But they are a test to train you to choose to only listen to His voice. "My sheep hear My voice, I know them and they follow Me." John 10:27

In Conclusion: This explanation and these passages demonstrate that God, who spoke of David as a man after His own heart, wants us to be open and honest with Him about all our emotions, not just the pleasant ones. My heart has heard You say, "Come and talk with Me," and my heart responds, "Lord, I am coming!" Psalm 27:8 Again... "God desires Truth in the innermost being and in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom." Psalm 51:6 The New Living translation says, "But God, You desire honesty from the heart, so You can teach me to be wise in my inmost being." Psalm 51:6

Jeremiah's Honesty with God

Let's look at Jeremiah 20:7-16. Here we have another example that we have permission to be honest with God: Read on and see for yourself! Check out how Jeremiah changes his emotions three times in this short conversation with God. The greatest thing is that God allowed this to be in His love letter to us to show us that we have permission to be honest with Him, just like Jeremiah was! Jeremiah clearly understood the "throne of grace" His heavenly Father refers to.

Venting and complaining:

O LORD, You persuaded me, and I allowed myself to be persuaded. You are stronger than I am, and You overpowered me. Now, I am mocked by everyone in the city. Whenever I speak, the words come out in a violent outburst. "Violence and destruction!" I shout. So, these messages from the LORD have made me a household joke. And I can't stop! If I say I'll never mention the LORD or speak in His name, His word burns in my heart like a fire. It's like a fire in my bones! I am weary of holding it in! I have heard the many rumors about me. They call me "The Man Who Lives in Terror." And they say, "If you say anything, we will report it." Even my old friends are watching me, waiting for a fatal slip. "He will trap himself," they say, "and then we will get our revenge on him." Jeremiah 20:7-10

Now he's focusing on God and praising Him: But the LORD stands beside me like a great warrior. Before Him they will stumble. They cannot defeat me. They will be shamed and thoroughly humiliated. Their dishonor will never be forgotten. O LORD Almighty! You know those who are righteous, and You examine the deepest thoughts of hearts and minds. Let me see Your vengeance against them, for I have committed my cause to You. Now I will sing out my thanks to the LORD! Praise the LORD! For though I was poor and needy, He delivered me from my oppressors. Jeremiah 20:11-13

Now he's focused on himself:

Yet I curse the day I was born! May the day of my birth not be blessed. I curse the messenger who told my father, "Good news --you have a son!" Let him be destroyed like the cities of old that the LORD overthrew without mercy. Terrify him





all day long with battle shouts, for he did not kill me at birth. Oh, that I had died in my mother's womb, that her body had been my grave! Why was I ever born? My entire life has been filled with trouble, sorrow, and shame. Jeremiah 20:14-18

Does that sound familiar? As you can see, we are not alone in our humanness and our frailties and emotions... but thank You, God, You have invited us to a throne, and it's not just any throne, it is a throne of grace! You even tell us how we are invited to come to this throne... with boldness and confidence. Then, You assure us of what we will find there "Grace and mercy...to help us in our time of need!" Wow, this is the inheritance of the servants of the Lord!

Asaph's Honesty with God

Psalm 77:1-20:

I cry out to God; yes, I shout. Oh, that God would listen to me! When I was in deep trouble, I searched for the Lord. All night long I prayed, with hands lifted toward heaven, but my soul was not comforted. I think of God, and I moan, overwhelmed with longing for His help. You don't let me sleep. I am too distressed even to pray! I think of the good old days, long since ended, when my nights were filled with joyful songs.

I search my soul and ponder the difference now. Has the Lord rejected me forever? Will He never again be kind to me? Is His unfailing love gone forever? Have His promises permanently failed? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He slammed the door on His compassion? And I said, "This is my fate; the Most High has turned His hand against me."

But then I recall all You have done, O Lord; I remember Your wonderful deeds of long ago. They are constantly in my thoughts. I cannot stop thinking about Your mighty works. O God, Your ways are holy. Is there any god as mighty as You? You are the God of great wonders! You demonstrate Your awesome power among the nations. By Your strong arm, You redeemed Your people, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph. When the Red Sea saw You, O God, its waters looked and trembled! The sea quaked to its very depths. The clouds poured down rain; the thunder rumbled in the sky. Your arrows of lightning flashed. Your thunder roared from the whirlwind; the lightning lit up the world! The earth trembled and shook. Your road led through the sea, Your pathway through the mighty waters, a pathway no one knew was there! You led Your people along that road like a flock of sheep, with Moses and Aaron as their shepherds.

Moses' Honesty with God

Numbers 11:10-17:

Moses heard all the families standing in front of their tents weeping, and the LORD became extremely angry. Moses was also very aggravated. And Moses said to the LORD, "Why are you treating me, Your servant, so miserably? What did I do to deserve the burden of a people like this? Are they my children? Am I their father? Is that why You have told me to carry them in my arms -like a nurse carries a baby -to the land You swore to give their ancestors? Where am I supposed to get meat for all these people? They keep complaining and saying, "Give us meat!" I can't carry all these people by myself! The load is far too heavy! I'd rather You killed me than treat me like this. Please spare me this misery!" Then the Lord said to Moses, "summon before Me seventy of the leaders of Israel. Bring them to the Tabernacle to stand there with you. I will come down and talk to you there. I will take some of the Spirit that is upon you, and I will put the Spirit upon them also. They will bear the burden of the people along with you, so you will not have to carry it alone."

Jesus' Honesty with God

Once again, you will see how in Matthew 26 that God is permitting us to be honest with Him. Look at Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. As you read, you will notice how honest He was with God, asking Him, "take this cup of suffering" from Him. And note in verse 44 below, He asked Him three separate times! Talk about honesty with God about how Jesus was feeling! Do you know what that would have meant? That we would not be in Heaven! But the rest of the story of course, is that He said, "Not My will but Your will be done." So, we see that complete honesty from the heart leads to HUMILITY ("not my will") which leads to SURRENDER ("Your will")!

Matthew 26:36-44 NLT:

"Then Jesus brought them to an olive grove called Gethsemane, and He said, 'Sit here while I go on ahead to pray.' He took Peter and Zebedee's two sons, James and John, and He began to be filled with anguish and deep distress. He told them, 'My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and watch with Me.' He went on a little farther and fell face down on the ground, praying, 'My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from Me. (HONESTY) Yet I want Your will (HUMILITY), not Mine (SURRENDER).' Then He returned to the disciples and found them asleep. He said to Peter, 'Couldn't you stay awake and watch with Me even one hour? Keep alert and pray.'





Otherwise, temptation will overpower you. For though the spirit is willing enough, the body is weak! Again, He left them and prayed, 'My Father! If this cup cannot be taken away until I drink it, Your will be done.' He returned to them again and found them sleeping, for they just couldn't keep their eyes open. So, He went back to pray a third time, saying the same things again."

Jesus asked God three times to take this cup from Him. I, too, have permission to return as often as needed. Jesus wasn't embarrassed to ask God to take away something that would give the whole world eternal life... because that is how He felt at the moment. But after He dumped that out to God, He surrendered, and humility followed. Notice that in this case, apparently once was not enough. That tells me that once may not be enough for us either.

Matthew 26:45-46: "Then He came to the disciples and said, 'Still sleeping? Still resting? Look, the time has come. I, the Son of Man, am betrayed into the hands of sinners. Up, let's be going. See, My betrayer is here!'"

There is always a purpose to our pain. When we do things our way, the pleasure comes first, and the pain comes later. When we do it God's way, the pain comes first, and the pleasure comes later. Ask Jesus; He knew this well. We will share in His sufferings. He has set an example for us here in the Garden of Gethsemane. Honesty, humility, surrender—each repeated 3 times! Then, Jesus even "dumped" again and shared His heart when He was on the cross: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Matthew 27:46

And remember that earlier, right after the Garden of Gethsemane, when we saw Jesus pouring His heart out to God... He encounters many challenges that follow. We know that He dumped His emotions out to God first in the Garden before those events occurred, which left Him ready to respond the way He did to the disciples and to Pilate.

"God desires Truth in the innermost being and in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom." (Psalm 51:6 NASB)

Pray Without Ceasing

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Did you ever wonder how that is even a possibility? I always wondered to myself, how do you really do that? Well, hopefully after realizing that we have permission to honestly dump all our emotions to God and disinfect (don't worry, you can't infect God like you can infect your flesh), you'll understand that pouring your emotions out is all a part of praying without ceasing. When you stop having conversations with yourself and instead have them with God... can you only imagine how much you will be talking to God now instead of yourself? You will be praying all the time! Praying without ceasing! Get it? Talk with Him instead of talking to yourself. God has not asked you to stop talking, but to just change your audience to Him! Again, can you only imagine how much you will be talking to Him now? Telling God how you feel, dumping it all out and then taking the next step, praying for your offenders or circumstances. So there you have it: Pray without ceasing!

"Therefore let us draw near with confidence (boldness) to the Throne of Grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need." Hebrews 4:16

Remember, if you are not running to Him, you are running away from Him, right into the arms of the liar, opening yourself up to even more of a mess. That Throne of Grace looks pretty good right about now!





Billy the Bully

It was a lovely spring day, and Mom had all the windows open as well as the unlocked, screened-in door. Her little boy Johnny wanted to go out to play before dinner... to play with Billy... the neighborhood bully. Mom was hesitant because of Billy's reputation, but she allowed little Johnny to play, under one condition: that he would play in front of the kitchen window so she could see him while she was cooking dinner. Well, it didn't take long for Billy the Bully to get right to his old tricks. Before he caught mom's eye, Billy had gone over and picked up a big cinder block and threw it on little Johnny's foot. In great pain and agony, Johnny limped to the unlocked, screened-in kitchen door, knocked, and asked his mom if it'd be okay for him to come in. He had something he needed to talk to her about. Of course, she said yes, and Johnny, who was bleeding, proceeded to very calmly unfold what had just happened with Billy the Bully. He did this with astonishingly very little emotion!

Ok, wait a minute, you've got to be kidding me... this is not real, honest, or normal, and does not portray a deep, abiding, or approachable relationship between Johnny and his mom. In this scenario, it doesn't seem like little Johnny feels like mom is very approachable or that he can just be himself with her.

So now let's consider what really happens. It would go something like this: After the event with Billy the Bully, Johnny bursts into the kitchen, bleeding, sobbing, angry, and in pain. Loudly and with great expression, he tells his mom exactly how he feels about what Billy the Bully did to him! He even goes so far as to say that he really hates Billy, while Mom is holding Johnny in her arms, and he is sobbing uncontrollably. Now, is Johnny's mother correcting the details of his meltdown? Of course not! She listens to him, comforts him, and holds him securely. Perhaps at a later time, she might give her son some suggestions on how to handle a crisis like this. Johnny knows his mom, and he feels safe and trusts her completely with his meltdown. He knows from experience that his mom will not be judgmental, as he freely pours out from his wounded heart.

I think many of us come to God formally, like perhaps He's not entirely approachable, just as Johnny came to his mom in the first scenario—as if God doesn't know 100% how we are feeling! I am sure we all would agree how unnatural it was in this story for Johnny to ask his Mom's permission to come in and talk to her after being tormented by Billy the Bully! My Bible says in Hebrews 4:15-16, "We do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore, let us draw near with confidence and come boldly to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." This is God's voice, God's very words, God's invitation, and it is genuine and authentic! We can freely and realistically pour it out to the Lover of our souls, no matter how big or small our emotions are. Countless people in the Bible did just that and modeled for us how to go to God authentically! Check it out! (Psalm 58:6-9) He is and always will be approachable. Nothing you can say to God will shock Him or push Him away. Thank you, Jesus, for making that possible and cleansing us so we could freely come before You, our Holy God. God does not desire a formal relationship with us. We wouldn't like that either with someone very dear to our hearts. Let's delight His amazing heart for us and be real in His presence!

Because of Jesus, we have free, uninterrupted, unending access to our King, no matter how loud our sobs are! He is approachable! Be yourself with Him. It's okay, you know. He'll be waiting for you. He's always waiting for you and longing for you to talk to Him just as you are! "My heart has heard You say, 'Come and talk with Me', and my heart responds, Lord, I am coming." Psalm 27:8



“Cry out to God without Holding Back” (Psalm 77:1)

What happens if you eat food that is spoiled? You can get food poisoning! Your body has a natural remedy for that, which leads you right to the bathroom to “throw it all up.” Clearly, you don’t feel good on your way to the bathroom. You don’t feel good while you are throwing up. You wouldn’t even consider stopping midstream until you got all that poison out. When all the poison is out, there is always a huge sigh of relief! And then you don’t examine what is in the toilet bowl—you flush!

In the same way, when we listen and engage in things that we hear that are not from God, we also get “poisoned.” If we engage with that voice and don’t “Father filter” what we are hearing, it will affect us—spiritually, mentally, and yes, even physically. In the same way, when you get “infected” with those poisonous thoughts, the need is great to get rid of them. Just like when we physically throw up, we must go to God and pour out what’s on our mind, and we must stay there until it is all out. We don’t stop throwing up midstream. We don’t stop pouring out to God until it is all out and there is a sigh of relief resulting in life and peace. Romans 8:6 “If the sinful nature controls your mind, there is death, but if the Holy Spirit controls your mind, there is life and peace.” Once that sigh of relief comes, you know that your “temple,” where the Holy Spirit resides, has been cleansed! You see, while you are talking or typing or writing it all out to God, the Holy Spirit is following right behind, clearing the temple. Once your struggles, your hurt, your words are all written out, delete them. Don’t reread it, or you will be infected all over again. Now the fullness of the Spirit in you can flow, forgiveness is the result, and you are ready to pray for those circumstances or those people that you were talking to God about—praying in the “power of the Spirit” with “the mind of Christ.”

Meeting Your King at the Keyboard

Have you ever been so mad or so hurt that you feel like you are going to explode inside? What am I to do with all that emotion? The Bible says, “If your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he’s thirsty, give him a drink,” or “Don’t be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Now, really, let’s be honest. Who in the world wants to do that when you are in that emotional state of hurt, anger, or disappointment? So, what are we to do? How do I transition from that emotional mess to obeying what the Word of God says? Well, first of all, God invites me to “cry out to Him without holding back” (Ps 77:1). And let me tell you some good news: that “without holding back part,” He means it! I can’t infect Him—although if I talk to you instead of God, I run the risk of infecting you with my “venting.” So, what is the solution? “Meet your King at the keyboard!” Yes, open a blank page on your computer and let it all out to your Heavenly Father. Type until you get it all out. It’s incredible. While you are typing with complete honesty and vulnerability, you can physically feel the Holy Spirit clearing your temple and healing your emotions and washing out your sin. You start to soften because, as you get it all out, it is less of you and more of Him. “You must decrease, He must increase” (John 3:30). You will be amazed, because forgiveness is the result of the Spirit clearing your temple. You will also find yourself asking God to “search you” to “see if there be any hurtful way in you.” Amazing! All this is the result of getting it out to God. After it is all out, be sure to delete it from your computer. Then you are ready to pray in the power of the Spirit with the mind of Christ for the very things that you were bothered by. Now you become a solution to the problem instead of a problem to the problem! How’s that for being about the work of God’s Kingdom and walking in Freedom? Instead of living like a victim, you are a victor!

Also, if you prefer writing in your journal, you can cry out to God in this way too. Just be sure to tear it up.

The Scriptures say, “Don’t be like a dog that returns to his vomit.” In the same way, if you reread what you have typed or written, you will get infected all over again. Trust me; I’ve done it. That is why you delete what you wrote or throw it away. It’s all been forgiven by God, and He’s delighted that you have come to talk to Him in complete honesty. I hope you will try this! It will save you hours of having conversations with yourself, rehearsing conversations in your mind with the other person, and leaving you a very miserable person. Don’t believe that persuasive voice that wants you to do anything but go to God with it all in complete abandon. I dare you to try this. I promise you, you will be hooked! Going to God like this will become a regular part of your walk with God, your “go to” when the going gets tough!¹²³

