

“ The greatest factor in determining human wellbeing is the need to be known and be valued by self and by important others. ” – Psychology Today

People want to be known. Social media can be filled with competitions for the most friends or followers, the most likes, comments, clicks or views. We want people to see what we are doing. In society today, there is an obvious desire to be known.

### **1. In Times of Trouble**

King David, the man who wrote Psalm 139, was a man that knew he was known – in the good times, and in the bad. We first meet David in 1 Samuel 16 - Samuel has spoken against Israel's current king, Saul, and is looking for the next king. When Samuel arrives, Jesse's youngest son, David, is still tending the sheep. Maybe he was forgotten, maybe he was considered unworthy, too insignificant to meet Samuel. The Prophet checks Jesse's seven other sons, who all look the part, yet God is looking for something different and rejects them (**1 Sam 16:7**).

It is what God sees that counts. God chose David – and God has chosen His followers (see **Jn 15:16 & Eph 1:4-5**). Not on the basis of anything we have done, but by God's grace. Don't look down or discredit yourself because of what other people may have said, or thought of you. God knows what you struggle with, what family baggage you carry around with you, yet He still chose you. He has called you to fulfil His purposes.

**Have you ever felt too forgotten/rejected/unworthy/insignificant to be used by God?**

**What criteria do we set (for ourselves, and for others), that prevent us following God's purposes?**

If anyone had a right to get upset that things weren't going quick enough it was David. He was the anointed King and yet he was stuck playing a lyre, sent back to tend his father's sheep and wasn't even invited to the battle which he went on to win. However, we read no hint of resentment. In fact, his faith and trust in his God is stronger than ever. He didn't do this for fame or prestige but to honour the God he worshipped.

God knows how to prepare us for what he has called us to do. How many of us feel God has spoken to us about x, y, z, and we just want get going straight away. People want to jump straight into something and get frustrated if there is a waiting season or a growing season, or preparation time. God is in control of the timing of the things He is faithful to bring to pass.

**Have you ever been frustrated between the tension of feeling God saying something but not seeing it happen yet?**

**How did you respond in the times of waiting, growing or preparing?**

David's reputation grew, and Saul became threatened – and over the next two chapters (**1 Sam 18 & 19**) tries to kill David, or have him killed, a total of twelve times. David flees, ends up hiding in a cave. Rather than hunting down an army, David hides – and the discontented of Israel gather with him. Even with perfect opportunity to kill Saul, David proves his obedience to God, and just cuts a corner off Saul's robe. David remained faithful to God, and avoided the 'quick-fix' comfort to end his troubles – and found his comfort in God.

Years later, David and his men are now successful warriors. When returning to their base at Ziklag, they are met with complete destruction, and they turn on their leader. David didn't act out of rage, or from the threat of death. He called the priest and consulted God. His response was worship, by calling on God. David lived for an audience of One.

**What are your sources of comfort? What can you be tempted to lean on when things are tough?**

**Read Jn 16:33, Rom 8:28 & 2 Cor 4:17-18. How can we get better prepared to turn to God first, rather than the quick fix?**

### **2. In Times of Success**

Saul dies in the battlefield, David leads Israel, and captures Jerusalem – a military victory promised 300 years before. Rather than revelling in the glory, David was sober minded and honoured God. David honours God by returning the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. Rather than seeking the praise for himself, David celebrated God – to the point of indignity of dancing in just an ephod - knowing that his successes are only possible by God.

We have been chosen to worship God - to live for His glory alone. Yet how many of us are more concerned with what others think, than what God thinks. Rather than living for God, we are worry about appearances, because we want to be known and loved and accepted, and we fear people would think we are just a bit weird. We hold onto the blessings that God has given, rather than using them to worship Him.

**How often do you give God credit for your success? How can we be tempted to believe in our own strengths?**

**How can our worship (expression/giving/serving etc...) be affected how we want others to see us?**

### **3. In Times of Failure**

David was a successful King, but he wasn't perfect and fell into temptation, sleeping with a married woman. He plotted and schemed to cover it up, and had her husband killed in battle. Despite knowing God was with him, despite having experience God working through him in great victories, despite his zeal and passion for God, David fell.

No one is immune to the deceptions of sin and the temptations of the enemy. The more we step out in 'success' the more the enemy is going to want to trip us up, take us out, get us to focus on our sin, and our weakness. We need to do everything we can to stand, to employ the full army of God listed in Ephesians 6. Sometimes we will fail, sometimes we fall, but God wants to bring us back into the light.

**How do we respond to failure and sin? How can we keep each other walking in the goodness God has called us to?**