
Strength in Times of Trouble

How A Man After God's Heart Managed His Many Troubles

1 Samuel 30:6

What's the first thing you do in time of trouble? Run? Cry? Panic? Curse? Fall apart? Get depressed? Such responses are quite common, even among Christians. Everyone has problems, but not everyone deals with them in ways that honor God.

One person in the Bible who had more than his share of troubles was King David of Israel. King Saul pursued him. He barely escaped two assassination attempts. He spent a lot of time hiding in the desert. His entire family was kidnapped by an enemy army on one occasion. His friends turned against him and were ready to kill him. He suffered shame when he himself committed adultery and ordered a murder. His son raped his daughter. Another son murdered yet another son. His son Absalom led a revolt against him and was himself killed, causing David untold grief. Beyond being a man after God's own heart, he was also a man of many problems! Yet somehow, he managed to survive them all. How did he do it?

At the time described by our text, David was living in Ziklag. He fled there from Saul and aligned himself with the Philistines. The Philistines were preparing for battle with King Saul. David and his men had gone to join these enemies of Israel. But the Philistines didn't fully trust David, so they sent him back to Ziklag.

What David Did in Times of Trouble

1. Read 1 Samuel 30:1-6. Describe the various troubles that were suddenly on David's mind.

- The town was...
- His belongings were...
- His family was...

- The people were at first...
- Then the people were...

2. Were these problems spread out over days or months or did they hit all at once? Why would this matter?

3. What did David do in the face of this disaster? How is this different than what most people do?

How Did David Strengthen Himself in the Lord?

In times of trouble, David often composed Psalms. Probably composed at night and at odd moments, these were either memorized or written down and preserved. They were most often addressed to God Himself. Can you think of any benefits this practice might have provided for him?

- While pursued by Saul, he wrote Psalm 59. Read verses 1-4.
- While imprisoned in Gath, he wrote Psalm 56. Read verses 1-2.
- While fleeing from Absalom, he wrote Psalm 3. Read verses 1-2.
- While hiding in the Wilderness of Judah, he wrote Psalm 63.

4. Read Psalm 56:3-4, 9-11. Where did David place his trust? How did he deal with his fears?

5. Read Psalm 59:16-17. What was David determined to continue doing?

6. Read Psalm 63, David overcame his loneliness by:

- Verses 1-2:
- Verses 3-5:
- Verses 6-7:

7. How would these things strengthen David?

Dealing With Our Problems Today

8. What are some of the more serious problems we face today that cause us to respond poorly?

9. Do you think it is more common to integrate praise, prayer, and trust into these kinds of problems or to forget God altogether? Why is it this way?

10. Read Jeremiah 17:5-8. How does God feel about people who leave him out of their lives and resort to their own devices?

11. Read Isaiah 30:1-2. Israel took refuge in a foreign country rather than turn to God for help. How does God feel about those who don't include Him in their plans in time of crisis? How does he feel when we resort to other sources of strength instead of Him? How might this apply today?

12. Read Isaiah 30:3; 31:1-3. God promised to frustrate their plans because they resorted to other sources of strength instead of Him. How might this apply to us today?

13. Read James 4:8. What does God promise to do if we will draw near to Him in time of trouble?

14. Read 1 Peter 5:6-7. What does God want us to do? How can we do this?

If we leave God out of the picture in solving problems, He may:

- Leave us to deal with them on our own.
- Frustrate our efforts to solve our problems independent of His help.

15. What plans do I need to make, if any, to respond in a more godly way to my next crisis?