



## **Studies in the Life of David**

Text

Second Samuel 7:1-29

Topic

David wants to build a house for God  
but God sends Nathan to very frankly tell him “No”

Title

*“Nathan the Famous Frank-Talker”*

Introduction

After I graduated from UC Riverside I applied for a master’s degree program in counseling at Cal State San Bernardino. I thought I could help people navigate through life, help them with their problems. After all, I knew everything I needed to know, having earned degrees in both psychology and philosophy.

Never mind that I was a drunk, smoked pot and that my marriage was an absolute failure.

I was not accepted into the counseling program. It was pretty devastating at the time - a real setback.

Little did I know that very shortly Jesus Christ was going to be revealed to me as my Savior. By the power of His Gospel He conquered my addictions and healed my marriage. A little later on He put me into the ministry where I found myself rejecting the vain philosophies of men, like psychology, in favor of watching the Lord make disciples as His Word was taught and applied.

God said “No” to my plans in order to work in me and through me to give me the desires of my heart in a way that was consistent with the wonder of His grace and truth.

As a Christian I’ve noticed that God still sometimes says “No” to me, to what I think are my desires. It’s hard to understand at the time but sometimes “No” is the best answer.

Alan Redpath put it like this: “I think that sometimes [God] has more to teach us from His denials than from His permissions.”

David would add his “Amen!” to that comment. In our text God says “No” to David’s desire to build a Temple. It’s because God wanted to do something bigger, something greater than David’s desire to build a house. God wanted to build David a house in the sense of making him promises about his descendants.

God is going to say “No” to you a lot. You can ignore it, press-on through it, and get what you want. Or you can submit to Him and be graced with what He wants.

*I know which category I want to be in!* I’ll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 There’s A House To Be Built For God According To His Plans, and #2 There’s A Heart Being Built By God According To His Promises.

#1 There’s A House To Be Built For God  
According To His Plans

(v1-17)

Before we even look at the verses let me suggest an application for us today. There is a building being built in the age in which we live.

Ephesians 2:20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,

Ephesians 2:21 ... the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,

Ephesians 2:22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

1 Peter 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house...

The fellowship of believers we call the church is a spiritual house. God is building it and we are all co-builders.

It's up to us to use the best possible spiritual materials as we build. It is *not* up to us to decide when and how and where we will build. We must build according to God's plan. Our own desires, our own assessments of needs, must be subordinated to God's leading through the leaders He has raised-up.

I think a lot of what goes on in churches is being done by 'David's' who refused to take God's "No" for an answer.

Let's get into it.

2 Samuel 7:1 Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies all around,

2 Samuel 7:2 that the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains."

David had the right heart, the right vision, the right passion. **But he was the wrong man for the right job.** We read why in First Chronicles 22:7-9.

1 Chronicles 22:7 And David said to Solomon: "My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build a house to the name of the Lord my God;

1 Chronicles 22:8 but the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'You have shed much blood and have made great wars; you shall not build a house for My name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in My sight.

1 Chronicles 22:9 Behold, a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies all around. His name shall be Solomon, for I will give peace and quietness to Israel in his days.

By the way: This explanation came years after God initially said "No." God may or may not explain Himself to you. If He does, it's a bonus.

One thing to realize is that God *did* want a Temple on earth. But He had very specific criteria for its builder. We go wrong sometimes because we

understand things that God wants to do but refuse to acknowledge we may not be the person to do it.

G. Campbell Morgan said,

It is of the utmost importance that we should ever test our desires, even the highest and holiest of them, by His will. Work, excellent in itself, should never be undertaken, save at the express command of God. The passing of time will always vindicate the wisdom of the Divine will.

2 Samuel 7:3 Then Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you."

Nathan was a prophet, a spiritual guy. But he initially gave David the wrong advice.

**The most spiritual among us can still give wrong advice.** They might recognize your heart, your vision, your passion. It's hard to see those and then say, "You're the wrong man for the right job." It doesn't win you a lot of points with people.

2 Samuel 7:4 But it happened that night that the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying,

2 Samuel 7:5 "Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the Lord: "Would you build a house for Me to dwell in?"

2 Samuel 7:6 For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in a tent and in a tabernacle.

2 Samuel 7:7 Wherever I have moved about with all the children of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?' " "

Make no mistake. God wanted a Temple to be built. He was simply pointing out that now was not the time He wanted it built and David was not the builder He wanted to build it. It would come after David and be built by Solomon.

Here me on this. David saw a need. Then he acted to try to meet that need. God saw it very differently. He saw no immediate need for a Temple - either for Him to dwell in or for the people to worship in.

We cannot become driven by needs. When Jesus said, “The poor you will have with you always,” He certainly wasn’t giving us an excuse for telling people to go away and be warmed and filled. He was pointing out that we are always surrounded by the needs of others, either spiritually or physically, and must therefore be led by God as to which one or ones to address and as to exactly how to address them.

2 Samuel 7:8 Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel.

2 Samuel 7:9 And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth.

2 Samuel 7:10 Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously.

2 Samuel 7:11 since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also the Lord tells you that He will make you a house.

2 Samuel 7:12 "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.

2 Samuel 7:13 He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

Theologians see in these verses what is called The Davidic Covenant. God promised David and Israel that the Messiah (Jesus Christ) would come from the lineage of David and the tribe of Judah and would establish a kingdom that would endure forever. The Davidic Covenant is unconditional because God does not place any conditions of obedience upon its fulfillment. The surety of the promises made rests solely on God’s faithfulness and does not depend at all on David or Israel’s obedience.

2 Samuel 7:14 I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men.

2 Samuel 7:15 But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you.

In the midst of giving this eternal covenant God paused to talk about Solomon. He promised that even if David’s son “commit[ed] iniquity,” He would be with him throughout his reign over Israel.

2 Samuel 7:16 And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever." ' ' "

The covenant is summarized by the words “house,” promising a dynasty in the lineage of David; “kingdom,” referring to a people who are governed by a king; “throne,” emphasizing the authority of the king’s rule; and “forever,” emphasizing the eternal and unconditional nature of this promise to David and Israel.

It doesn’t mean there would be an unbroken succession of kings on the throne, or that Israel would never be scattered from her homeland. It means that there will be a kingdom and one of David’s heirs will be the king.

2 Samuel 7:17 According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.

It’s pretty easy to be the Nathan of verse three. It’s not so easy to be the Nathan of verse seventeen.

From pulpits you often hear messages meant to encourage you to get up out of the pew and serve. That’s important. But sometimes Christians need to be told “No.” You’re the wrong person, it’s the wrong time, it’s not God’s leading.

When that happens, how will you respond? Let’s see how David responded.

#2 There’s A Heart Being Built By God  
According To His Promises  
(v18-29)

I was drawn to something precious in verse twenty-seven:

2 Samuel 7:27 For You, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, have revealed this to Your servant, saying, 'I will build you a house.' Therefore Your servant has found it in his heart to pray this prayer to You.

If Nathan hadn't courageously spoken to David, or if David had stubbornly pressed forward, God would not have been able to reveal this beautiful, this marvelous, this intimate promise to him. David would have built a Temple. Everyone would have rejoiced. But they would have collectively missed God's best and, individually, David would have missed-out on something wonderful taking place in his heart, in his walk with God.

David said he **“found** it in his heart to pray this prayer.” He uses language that indicates a search for something hidden. Because God said “No,” David went looking for God. **He wouldn't even have been looking for this kind of intimacy had God not said “No.”**

God's “No's” are precious. They are *not* setbacks but rather are stepping stones to intimacy.

2 Samuel 7:18 Then King David went in and sat before the Lord; and he said: "Who am I, O Lord God? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far?

2 Samuel 7:19 And yet this was a small thing in Your sight, O Lord God; and You have also spoken of Your servant's house for a great while to come. Is this the manner of man, O Lord God?

No, this was not the “manner of man.” Man would say “Go for it!” “Build!” The idea that God may say “No” to our well-intentioned plans rarely enters the mind of man.

The typical church building project is a good example. First, it's usually assumed God wants a church to build. Once begun, the project must be completed at just about any cost. Sometimes techniques are employed to raise the funding that are less than godly. In the end something is built but nothing had been found out about God.

2 Samuel 7:20 Now what more can David say to You? For You, Lord God, know Your servant.

2 Samuel 7:21 For Your word's sake, and according to Your own heart, You have done all these great things, to make Your servant know them.

David said, “What more can David say to You?” He refers to himself in the third person. He was looking at his life, at himself, from outside of it as if to

acknowledge that God was at work building it. God was building “David,” the “David” who, when completed, would be so much like Jesus Christ.

He that has begun a good work in **you** is working to complete it. You are predestined to be conformed into the image of Jesus. You are being changed from glory-to-glory.

In you there is a heart being built by God. It’s the heart you really want; it’s just that building it sometimes requires things that seem contrary to our immediate wishes.

2 Samuel 7:22 Therefore You are great, O Lord God. For there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

Let’s say you have need of some type of service in your home - a repair of some kind. Do you care about who it is that comes to your home? Especially if you need to give him access when you’re not going to be there? *Sure you do!*

Then why do we invite all kinds of things to come in to our hearts and take up residence there when Jesus is all we need?

Do you think there is anything or anybody in the world that can build your heart with more skill, with more care, than the Lord, Jesus Christ?

2 Samuel 7:23 And who is like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people, to make for Himself a name - and to do for Yourself great and awesome deeds for Your land - before Your people whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, the nations, and their gods?

2 Samuel 7:24 For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, Lord, have become their God.

David understood that God had made unconditional promises to Abraham, and now to him, about the “forever” nature of Israel. God is at work right now fulfilling those promises and we are a generation privileged to watch them unfold.



2 Samuel 7:25 "Now, O Lord God, the word which You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house, establish it forever and do as You have said.  
2 Samuel 7:26 So let Your name be magnified forever, saying, 'The Lord of hosts is the God over Israel.' And let the house of Your servant David be established before You.  
2 Samuel 7:27 For You, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, have revealed this to Your servant, saying, 'I will build you a house.' Therefore Your servant has found it in his heart to pray this prayer to You.  
2 Samuel 7:28 "And now, O Lord God, You are God, and Your words are true, and You have promised this goodness to Your servant.  
2 Samuel 7:29 Now therefore, let it please You to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue before You forever; for You, O Lord God, have spoken it, and with Your blessing let the house of Your servant be blessed forever."

I would be the first to admit that this kind of rejoicing is not my reaction when God says "No." It ought to be because we know that God's thoughts towards us are "thoughts of peace, not of evil, to give [us] an expected end" (Jeremiah 29:11).

You might argue and say, "Well, of course David rejoiced at God's 'No' because look at all God promised to do for him!"

Do you really want to compare what God promised David with **all** that God has promised to us? *It is truly incomparable!*

John fourteen alone is greater than God's promise to build David a house.

John 14:1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.  
John 14:2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.  
John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

Yes, there are exhortations to get up and get to work. We're told to stir-up the gift or gifts that God has given us and serve one another and share with others the Good News about Jesus.

There are also times when our best intentions must be set aside because God says "No."

Those are more than character building times. They build intimacy with God because we go looking for something and when we find it in our hearts, we're amazed at His grace, mercy, forgiveness and love.

