



Studies in the Life of David

Text

First Kings 1:1-53

Topic

David is old and is so cold as he lies in his sickbed that a nurse must be found who will lie next to him to keep him warm

Title

"I'm Warming You"

Introduction

A 2010 study by the Barna Group updates a multi-year tracking study and explores what Americans identify as their highest priority.

In the face of the current economic conditions, many Americans have become more focused on surviving and thriving. When asked to identify their highest priority in life, more Americans mention issues of health, leisure, personal comfort, and lifestyle balance than did so just a few years ago.

Fewer adults said faith is their top priority in the 2010 study compared with 2006. Even among some of the most actively involved faith groups, relatively small proportions of adults identify faith as their number one priority.

We're going to take a look at King David towards the end of his life. He's old. He's in the grip of failing health. He can't seem to get warm no matter how many covers they put on him. Lying there in his bed, shivering, we want to give him a pass as to his spiritual responsibilities. But we will see

in the text that his neglect of spiritual things catches up with him and nearly spells disaster for his kingdom.

We also will see in this story that David had incredible spiritual strength regardless the deteriorating condition of his health and was able to carry out fully his responsibilities as king once he set his mind to it.

We're going to look for ourselves in this text - to see if we are *neglecting* or *respecting* our spiritual responsibilities in the face of life's pressures and stressors.

I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 The Realities Of Everyday Living Can Influence You To Neglect Spiritual Responsibilities, and #2 The Reality Of Kingdom Living Can Influence You To Respect Spiritual Responsibilities.

#1 The Realities Of Everyday Living Can Influence You To Neglect Spiritual Responsibilities (v1-14)

My initial reaction to this text was for everybody in it to cut David some slack. I mean, after all, he's old and infirm. Could he really be expected to keep pace with his responsibilities?

The answer to that turns out to be "Yes!" as he rallies to take care of a situation he had been neglecting.

Let's see first how weak, how tired, how worn-out he was.

1 Kings 1:1 Now King David was old, advanced in years; and they put covers on him, but he could not get warm.

1 Kings 1:2 Therefore his servants said to him, "Let a young woman, a virgin, be sought for our lord the king, and let her stand before the king, and let her care for him; and let her lie in your bosom, that our lord the king may be warm."

1 Kings 1:3 So they sought for a lovely young woman throughout all the territory of Israel, and found Abishag the Shunammite, and brought her to the king.

1 Kings 1:4 The young woman was very lovely; and she cared for the king, and served him; but the king did not know her.

They searched for, and found, a 'bed warmer' for David. Now before we react, let me read you an excerpt from a 2010 article titled, *Holiday Inn location in London offers 'human bed warmer' service - a staffer to warm up your sheets.*¹

Guests who don't want to hop into a cold bed at one English hotel now have a novel way to warm up: by enlisting a staff member to do it for them.

The Holiday Inn's Kensington, London, location will offer a free five-minute "human bed warming" service throughout next week.

So what does a human bed warmer do? A hotel staffer, dressed from head-to-toe in a white, fleecy getup that looks like a cross between a footed pajama set and a snowsuit, will get into your bed upon request and move around, generating some heat between those chilly sheets.

It's akin to "having a giant hot water bottle in your bed," Holiday Inn spokesperson Jane Bednall told Sky News.

If the *Bible Knowledge Commentary* is correct,

Their decision to provide a young woman who could keep him warm by lying next to him in bed and also serve as his nurse was in harmony with medical customs of that day. Josephus, a Jewish historian, and Galen, a Greek physician, refer to this therapeutic practice which continued into the Middle Ages.

The bed warmer was apparently a common practice and the writer specifically points out there was no sexual component to Abishag's duties as David's bed warming nurse.

The real point is, *David was in pretty bad shape.* He was old and bedridden and shivering. But he still had responsibilities!

1 Kings 1:5 Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, "I will be king"; and he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him.

1 Kings 1:6 (And his father had not rebuked him at any time by saying, "Why have you done so?" He was also very good-looking. His mother had borne him after Absalom.)

¹ http://articles.nydailynews.com/2010-01-21/entertainment/17944051_1_hotel-bed-warm-bad-idea

You remember Absalom. He was the handsome son of David's who had tried to take the kingdom from his father. Adonijah was an Absalom clone in both looks and ambition.

The writer hones in on the failure of David to rebuke Adonijah at any time regarding his ambitions or actions. David had a responsibility to deal with his son's behavior but neglected to do so.

1 Kings 1:7 Then he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah and with Abiathar the priest, and they followed and helped Adonijah.

1 Kings 1:8 But Zadok the priest, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei, Rei, and the mighty men who belonged to David were not with Adonijah.

1 Kings 1:9 And Adonijah sacrificed sheep and oxen and fattened cattle by the stone of Zoheleth, which is by En Rogel; he also invited all his brothers, the king's sons, and all the men of Judah, the king's servants.

1 Kings 1:10 But he did not invite Nathan the prophet, Benaiah, the mighty men, or Solomon his brother.

Adonijah was acting as if David had appointed him his heir and successor. It threatened the stability, maybe even the very existence, of the kingdom of Israel.

1 Kings 1:11 So Nathan spoke to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, saying, "Have you not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith has become king, and David our lord does not know it?"

1 Kings 1:12 Come, please, let me now give you advice, that you may save your own life and the life of your son Solomon.

1 Kings 1:13 Go immediately to King David and say to him, 'Did you not, my lord, O king, swear to your maidservant, saying, "Assuredly your son Solomon shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne"? Why then has Adonijah become king?'

1 Kings 1:14 Then, while you are still talking there with the king, I also will come in after you and confirm your words."

Didn't they realize David was old and infirm? Didn't they know he was bedridden and shivering? Cut him some slack!

No, **don't** cut him any slack!! No matter his condition, they expected David to respect his spiritual responsibilities.

What I'm calling 'the realities of life' always exert a powerful influence upon you to think you can neglect certain spiritual responsibilities. You're busy... You're overwhelmed... You're sick... You're at a crossroads in your life... You've just experienced some powerful stressor. The list could go on-and-on.

Rather than neglecting your spiritual responsibilities, in those 'realities of life' is when you can see most clearly that spiritual things must be your top priority.

We've seen in our studies that David exhibited a pattern of neglecting the disciplining of his boys. It almost cost him the kingdom once and now it was happening again.

Is there something you have been neglecting? Some spiritual responsibility? If your answer is, "Yes," then God is revealing it to you so you can deal with it right now, right where you're at, regardless the realities of your life that may be influencing you to feel comfortable neglecting it.

#2 The Reality Of Kingdom Living Can Influence You To Respect Spiritual Responsibilities (v15-53)

God didn't heal David or get him up out of bed even. No, right from his sickbed, while shivering, with his teeth chattering, David took care of spiritual business. In his weakness God proved Himself so strong.

1 Kings 1:15 So Bathsheba went into the chamber to the king. (Now the king was very old, and Abishag the Shunammite was serving the king.)

1 Kings 1:16 And Bathsheba bowed and did homage to the king. Then the king said, "What is your wish?"

1 Kings 1:17 Then she said to him, "My lord, you swore by the Lord your God to your maidservant, saying, 'Assuredly Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne.'

1 Kings 1:18 So now, look! Adonijah has become king; and now, my lord the king, you do not know about it.

1 Kings 1:19 He has sacrificed oxen and fattened cattle and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the sons of the king, Abiathar the priest, and Joab the commander of the army; but Solomon your servant he has not invited.

1 Kings 1:20 And as for you, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel are on you, that you should tell them who will sit on the throne of my lord the king after him.

1 Kings 1:21 Otherwise it will happen, when my lord the king rests with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon will be counted as offenders."

Bathsheba treated David as if he was seated on his throne. It almost seems selfish, as if she's ignoring his condition and putting undo pressure on him just to have her son promoted.

If that's my reaction, I'm missing the point entirely. David was still the king. Regardless his physical condition God had not released him from his serving. If anything, being so close to dying, to stepping into the kingdom of Heaven as it were, **David ought to have been more focused on spiritual responsibilities than ever!**

1 Kings 1:22 And just then, while she was still talking with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in.

1 Kings 1:23 So they told the king, saying, "Here is Nathan the prophet." And when he came in before the king, he bowed down before the king with his face to the ground.

1 Kings 1:24 And Nathan said, "My lord, O king, have you said, 'Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne'?"

1 Kings 1:25 For he has gone down today, and has sacrificed oxen and fattened cattle and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the king's sons, and the commanders of the army, and Abiathar the priest; and look! They are eating and drinking before him; and they say, 'Long live King Adonijah!'

1 Kings 1:26 But he has not invited me - me your servant - nor Zadok the priest, nor Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, nor your servant Solomon.

1 Kings 1:27 Has this thing been done by my lord the king, and you have not told your servant who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?"

Nathan called David out for not having "told... who should sit on the throne" after his death. He ignored David's physical *disabilities* and held him accountable for his spiritual *responsibilities* as king.

This was a sort of 'snap out of it' moment for David. How would he respond? Would he ask Abishag to lie down in bed because all this stress was making him cold? Or would he act like the king everyone knew he still was?

1 Kings 1:28 Then King David answered and said, "Call Bathsheba to me." So she came into the king's presence and stood before the king.

1 Kings 1:29 And the king took an oath and said, "As the Lord lives, who has redeemed my life from every distress,

1 Kings 1:30 just as I swore to you by the Lord God of Israel, saying, 'Assuredly Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he shall sit on my throne in my place,' so I certainly will do this day."

1 Kings 1:31 Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the earth, and paid homage to the king, and said, "Let my lord King David live forever!"

1 Kings 1:32 And King David said, "Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada." So they came before the king.

1 Kings 1:33 The king also said to them, "Take with you the servants of your lord, and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, and take him down to Gihon.

1 Kings 1:34 There let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel; and blow the horn, and say, 'Long live King Solomon!'

1 Kings 1:35 Then you shall come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne, and he shall be king in my place. For I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and Judah."

1 Kings 1:36 Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king and said, "Amen! May the Lord God of my lord the king say so too.

1 Kings 1:37 As the Lord has been with my lord the king, even so may He be with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord King David."

Wow. The minute David determined to face the situation the Lord gave him wisdom and empowering to do so.

Our age and infirmities can be debilitating. The stressors in our lives can knock the wind out of us. But we can, in God's strength, rise to the occasion and complete our spiritual responsibilities.

Neglect is not an option.

1 Kings 1:38 So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the Cherethites, and the Pelethites went down and had Solomon ride on King David's mule, and took him to Gihon.

1 Kings 1:39 Then Zadok the priest took a horn of oil from the tabernacle and anointed Solomon. And they blew the horn, and all the people said, "Long live King Solomon!"

1 Kings 1:40 And all the people went up after him; and the people played the flutes and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth seemed to split with their sound.

1 Kings 1:41 Now Adonijah and all the guests who were with him heard it as they finished eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the horn, he said, "Why is the city in such a noisy uproar?"

1 Kings 1:42 While he was still speaking, there came Jonathan, the son of Abiathar the priest. And Adonijah said to him, "Come in, for you are a prominent man, and bring good news."

1 Kings 1:43 Then Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, "No! Our lord King David has made Solomon king."

1 Kings 1:44 The king has sent with him Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the Cherethites, and the Pelethites; and they have made him ride on the king's mule.

1 Kings 1:45 So Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king at Gihon; and they have gone up from there rejoicing, so that the city is in an uproar. This is the noise that you have heard.

1 Kings 1:46 Also Solomon sits on the throne of the kingdom.

1 Kings 1:47 And moreover the king's servants have gone to bless our lord King David, saying, 'May God make the name of Solomon better than your name, and may He make his throne greater than your throne.' Then the king bowed himself on the bed.

1 Kings 1:48 Also the king said thus, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who has given one to sit on my throne this day, while my eyes see it!'

1 Kings 1:49 So all the guests who were with Adonijah were afraid, and arose, and each one went his way.

I like the notation in verse forty-seven, “**then** the king bowed himself on the bed.” When? After he’d taken care of his spiritual business.

Let’s put it this way. He didn’t need rest so he could be more spiritual. **He needed to be spiritual and then he could rest.**

The joys of eternal life, and the empowering from it, overruled the so-called ‘realities of life’ and David did what he was gifted and called upon to do. Age, infirmity, shivering - none of it was of any consequence when you factored God back into the equation.

Are you feeling weak, stressed, overwhelmed? From one point of view, you **are** weak, stressed, and overwhelmed. You always will be! What you’re going through is real. But it’s not the only reality, and it’s not the ‘real’ reality. Eternity is more real and rather than shrink away from your gifts and callings, in your weaknesses God wants to show Himself strong on your behalf.

1 Kings 1:50 Now Adonijah was afraid of Solomon; so he arose, and went and took hold of the horns of the altar.

1 Kings 1:51 And it was told Solomon, saying, "Indeed Adonijah is afraid of King Solomon; for look, he has taken hold of the horns of the altar, saying, 'Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.' "

1 Kings 1:52 Then Solomon said, "If he proves himself a worthy man, not one hair of him shall fall to the earth; but if wickedness is found in him, he shall die."

1 Kings 1:53 So King Solomon sent them to bring him down from the altar. And he came and fell down before King Solomon; and Solomon said to him, "Go to your house."

The symbolism of taking hold of the altar's horns seems to have meant that as God had been gracious to man, as seen in accepting man's offerings to atone for his sins, so one man should be gracious to another man who had offended him.

David's **neglect**, over a long period of time, brought him and the entire kingdom of Israel to the brink of a disaster.

David's **respect** for his spiritual responsibilities quickly righted things.

Something the apostle Paul wrote is a good commentary on this episode in the life of David.

2 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

2 Corinthians 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

2 Corinthians 4:18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Your "outward man is perishing." This encompasses all the kinds of things we've seen in David, e.g., age and infirmity. But Paul goes even further and mentioned "affliction." He had in mind persecutions and sufferings on account of your serving the Lord.

Through it all he said we ought to understand that our "inward man" is growing and being strengthened as we are becoming more-and-more Christlike according to the will and the plan of God.

Look to what you can yet accomplish for the kingdom of God despite the 'realities of life' because your real life is eternal, in the Heavens.

