

Man, I Really Messed Up Bad

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2 Samuel 6:12-16

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Okay, let's just get this out in the open. King David made a mistake, and because of this, a man lost his life. When trying to bring the Ark into Jerusalem, David failed to treat God with holiness and reverence. And knowing David's integrity, I imagine he spent many a sleepless night because of the death of Uzzah. The scriptures say David became angry with God. Okay, maybe he was angry that God demanded reverence. Maybe he was angry that he had made a mistake. Or maybe it was both.

Have you ever found yourself angry with God? Have you ever been hurt because God did not make sure things went well? You needed God to be there for you, and He wasn't. Or worse, things happen in your life and you are absolutely convinced that God is out to destroy you. Well, His discipline can sometimes be very, very difficult to endure. And sometimes it can seem that He IS trying to destroy you. If that's how you feel, then I believe you need to see how David responded to God's discipline.

¹² Then King David was told, "The Lord has blessed Obed-edom's household and everything he has because of the Ark of God." So David went there and brought the Ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the City of David with a great celebration. ¹³ After the men who were carrying the Ark of the Lord had gone six steps, David sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. ¹⁴ And David danced before the Lord with all his might, wearing a priestly garment. ¹⁵ So David and all the people of Israel brought up the Ark of the Lord with shouts of joy and the blowing of rams' horns.¹ (2 Samuel 6:12-15)

Think about this. God, in front of all Israel, disciplines David. But instead of harboring his anger or stewing on his bitterness, David allows himself to be disciplined, and then comes back to God with a whole new attitude. He has a healthy respect and greater reverence for who God is. And David, it seems, is a bit more humble. He confessed to the other leaders, *"We failed to ask God how to move*

¹Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

it properly" (1 Chronicles 15:13). He offered a sacrifice at the beginning of the journey and at the end. And he made sure the priests were properly prepared for the task of carrying the Ark. It appears that the longer they carried the Ark the more joyful they became. So by the time they get to Jerusalem, they're dancing and twirling with glee. Why? I suspect it's because they realized God was never against them in the first place. He was not out to destroy them, but to show them where they needed to grow.

I respect David. He didn't let the Lord's discipline make him bitter or Sad. However, contrast his reaction to that of Michal (me·kawl).

*¹⁶ But as the Ark of the Lord entered the City of David, Michal, the daughter of Saul, looked down from her window. When she saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, she was filled with contempt for him.*² (2 Samuel 6:16) What brought this on? I suspect it was because she harbored bitterness and anger against God's discipline in her own life. And so, when other's rejoiced, she could only find disgust and contempt.

Michal was David's first wife. When David killed Goliath, Saul gave her to David. She seemed to love David back then (1 Samuel 18:27-28). She even helped David escape from being killed by her father (1 Samuel 19:13). But this is where things go down hill. With David in hiding, Saul makes her marry a man named Palti (1 Samuel 25:44) who loved her deeply. When Saul was killed, David demanded her back, and returning to David's household, she found that she had to compete with at least six other women for David's attention. You can almost hear Michal crying out to God, "This isn't the life I wanted! Why are you making me endure this misery?" Perhaps she blamed God for everything bad that had happened in her life. And she became bitter and critical.

I'm not sure what Michal must have thought, but I do know what I've heard from people today. They take a look at their lives and figure that God is against them. They lament that nothing good seems to come their way. They harbor bitterness and anger toward God because of what they have had to endure. And they fail to realize that God is probably just trying to get their attention.

²Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

David didn't see Uzzah's death as God's rejection, but an example of God's love. See, I think he valued his relationship with God. I think it was very, very important to David that he honored God. And when God revealed that things were not right, he took steps to get his life in line with what God expected. And because of David's desire to please God with his life, I think David and the other people traveling with him learned just how valuable they were to God. No wonder they began twirling and dancing as the Ark traveled into the city of Jerusalem. No wonder there was much rejoicing. Sure, the lesson was painful. But by golly, God had given them a second chance.

Listen to the words Jesus spoke to Peter one night. *"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."*³ (Luke 22:31-32) What occurs to me is that God must have granted Satan this permission. And Jesus must have planned to use this experience to teach Peter a lesson that he apparently could not learn any other way.

Like David, Peter accepted this lesson from God, and we find him running to the Lord once again, this time in an early morning encounter on a Galilean beach. Seeing the Lord upon the shore, Peter jumps from the boat and wades through the water just to be close to his Savior. And I imagine Peter wonders if his shabby performance back in Jerusalem might be enough to cause his expulsion from among the disciples. But instead of rejection, Peter hears "Feed my sheep". I can only image the joy that must have filled his heart knowing that the Lord's discipline was meant to help him grow, not to destroy.

We are told, *"For the Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes each one He accepts as his child."*⁴ (Hebrews 12:6) Herein lies an irony. Sometimes in our failures our Lord transforms us into what we apparently could not have become otherwise. Under this grace we become different people. We are softened; we are sensitized; we are humbled. And when this happens, we find our joy deepening, for we know that through these things, the Lord has demonstrated His love.

³*New American Standard Bible : 1995 update.* 1995 (Lk 22:31-32). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

⁴Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation.* Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.