

## Chapter One

# THE MEASURE OF A MAN

*Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.*

*Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*

*For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.*

*Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.*

*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

*Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*

*Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

*Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.*

*Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.*

*Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.*

*Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.*

*Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.*

*Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.*

*Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.*

*O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.*

*For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.*

*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*

*Psalm 51:1-17*

I have a question I would like to ponder with you. What makes a man? It seems that we are living in times when the manliness of men is being downgraded. I see some men that look like women really. So what do you think really makes a man a man?

**THE MEASURE OF A MAN.** Some people think that if they grow tall and have a forty-six inch chest and a thirty-six inch waist and have large bulging muscles that that makes a man. They want to stand tall. They want to be husky. They want to impress people by their size. But the measure of a man is not so much how tall he stands but how low he kneels.

David had fallen into deep sin as recorded in II Samuel 11 and 12. His manhood was not measured when he sat upon his throne in kingly glory. No, but when he knelt before God in humble confession of his sin. Any man's measure is determined by what he will do when he is faced with his own deep need. Not how high he may reach but how low he may kneel.

Let me point out to you that every man's measurement is determined by his **RESPONSES** when he is on his knees before God.

### I. He Pleads for Mercy.

David pled for mercy. He said, "Have mercy upon me, O God..." There is no other place to stand. There is no other place, in fact, to kneel before God. We must kneel at the point of mercy for the Psalmist in another place said, "If thou shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who should stand?" You see none of us can measure ourselves big enough to say that we do not need to kneel for mercy.

There is in fact no other talking point because the broken law means death to the offender. The Prophet Ezekiel many years ago said, "The soul that sinneth it shall die..." And were it not for the

mercy of God nobody would be surviving. So that first response for the measurement of a man is determined by how he kneels before God and pleads His mercy.

You know, my friend, if you could see God's holiness as it really is—the burning holiness of God—you would kneel before Him right now and ask Him for mercy. You would pray the prayer of David the king and say, “Have mercy, have mercy, upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness and according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out by transgressions.” My friend, it doesn't make any difference who you are or where you are, I'll measure you by how you kneel before God and plead His mercy.

The second response of David which measures a man was how

## II. He Consents to Truth.

Again there is no other place to stand. Falsehood is as quick-sand and what an abundance of hypocrisy and falsehood there is in our world today. It affords us no footing. There is nothing solid in that area. One line of the hymn by Charles Wesley puts it this way: “Firm as a rock Thy truth must stand.” Notice in verse 6—“Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.”

Men everywhere turn away from the truth. Take for example the creation of the universe. The Bible tells us, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Do all men accept this truth? No, my friend, they don't.

Most science books, most history books, most geography books, when they touch on the origin of all things refer to the theory of evolution—the development of all things from some bubble. There is no reference to the great Biblical statement, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

In fact, some commentaries of the Holy Scriptures also deny the truth. The writers take the view that what the Bible says is only the ideas of the people of the times.

But the measure of a man is determined by how he responds to the truth of God. I want to praise God that there are men in science, history, theology who do accept the truth of God! Are you one who

readily accepts that truth?

God Himself is truth you see. Therefore He desires truth in those who are made after His image and according to His likeness. Paul said, “Let God be true and every man a liar.” When we measure ourselves with God we find ourselves coming way short. Yes, if we could comprehend the absolute truth of God we would soon shrink to size. We could not stand before God for He is absolutely true.

Again, the measure of a man is comprehended when

### III. He Asks for Pardon.

Notice in verse 7 the symbolism and the imagery of this language, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” He is covered with the filth of his own deeds. He has nothing that is adequate to cleanse himself. There is no way that he can rid himself of the filth of his own actions. He cries out to God and asks for pardon, asks that God would cleanse Him. There is no other place, there is no other way. No, the Scriptures say if we say we have never sinned we make God a liar. So you can’t say that. You must come like David.

The prophet Isaiah said, “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; we do all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away.” Isaiah 64:6.

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all, Isaiah 53:6. The Apostle Paul said, “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” Romans 3:23. There is no other place to stand; to kneel.

Here is the measure of a man who was willing to come to God and ask for pardon because there was nothing else indeed which he could do. He was forced to face up with his own deep need. And he came. Came in the right way and asked God to cleanse him.

My friend, if we could comprehend the need for God’s pardon—how many times we have transgressed against the Lord; how many times we have side-stepped his commandment; come short of His glory. We would then see how small we are. The measure of a man is determined by how he asks for pardon.

And, finally, the measure of a man is determined by how

#### IV. He Believes for Assurance.

David believed for assurance. Again where else can you go? But listen to Him. “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise,” verse 17. Or take verse 16—“For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.”

Whatever might be brought would still be inadequate unless God accepted it. And God accepts one sacrifice. What is it? The sacrifice of His own Son, even Jesus Christ on Calvary’s cross. It seems as though the Psalmist David somehow looked forward and saw it. He said he couldn’t bring any sacrifices that would be enough. All he could bring was his own broken spirit and his contrite heart. That he was willing to bring.

It was his only talking point. It was all he could do. I’ll bring myself I’ll cast myself upon God. He will accept me. Yes, He will accept me.

A.M. Toplady 200 years ago wrote these words:

“Nothing in my hands I bring,  
Simply to thy cross I cling;  
Naked, come to thee for dress;  
Helpless, look to thee for grace;  
Foul, I to the fountain fly;  
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.”

Oh, if we could comprehend the full blessing of assurance of true belief we would see how small we are. My friend, the measure of a man is determined how he responds to God when he is on his knees. It is not how tall he stands in his own eyes but how low he will kneel and bow before God and ponder his own need. He will find his true size. He will plead for mercy. He will consent to truth. He will ask pardon. He will believe for assurance.

Now, my friend, I don’t know how you look upon yourself. Just keep this in mind. Whether you are a man or woman, boy or girl, your measure is determined by how you kneel before God. Remember that.

Our Heavenly Father, we bless Thy Name and praise Thee for Thy goodness, for Thy love. Yes, for Thy mercy and Thy pardon. We ask in Jesus' Name that Thou wilt look upon us in our need, forgive our sins. Be merciful unto us, cleanse us by the precious blood of Christ. We ask in His Name, Amen.

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*This is a sample of “When You Pray” from [heraldsofhope.org](http://heraldsofhope.org).*