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## **Finding Our Way Back**

### **PSALM 30:1-12**

#### **Introduction**

1. Pride is a dangerous weapon which Satan uses against God's people.
  - a. In Proverbs 29:23, Solomon said, "A man's pride will bring him low . . ."
  - b. In Proverbs 16:18, he declared, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling."
2. The question is what do we do when we stumble, when we are brought low and destroyed by our pride? How do we come back?
3. In Psalm 30, David shares with us the difficult lesson he learned as a result of his pride, and how he found his way back.
4. The title at the beginning of this psalm states, "a song at the dedication of the House."
5. While we do not know the occasion around which David wrote this psalm, it has been suggested that it is a reference to the dedication of the Temple site by David.
6. In 2 Samuel 24 and 1 Chronicles 21 we find the events which led up to David's purchase of the site upon which the Temple would later be built and his dedication of that site.
7. According to the account in 1 Chronicles 21:1, "Satan . . . moved David to number Israel."
8. David told Joab, the commander of his forces, to number all the fighting men in Israel.
9. Joab tried to discourage David, but David's order stood.

10. Joab numbered all of the men of fighting age except for the tribes of Levi and Benjamin, then reported back to David.

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11. This prideful act on the part of David displeased God and he sent Gad the seer to David with three possible punishments from which he must choose one:

- a. Three years of famine.
- b. Three months to be swept away before your foes, while the sword of your enemies overtakes you.
- c. Three days of the sword of the Lord, even pestilence in the land, and the angel of the Lord destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.

12. David could not choose. He put himself in God's hands.

13. God sent an angel throughout Israel destroying the men of Israel.

14. When the angel reached Jerusalem, 70,000 had already been put to death.

15. The Lord told the angel to stay his hand, and the angel was "standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite" (v. 15).

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16. David prayed to the Lord and said, "Is it not I who commanded to count the people? Indeed, I am the one who has sinned and done very wickedly, but these sheep, what have they done? O Lord my God, please let Your hand be against me and my father's household, but not against Your people that they should be plagued." (1 Chronicles 21:17)

17. David purchased the threshing floor from Ornan, built an altar there, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings to the Lord (v. 26).

18. The Lord then "commanded the angel, and he put his sword back in his sheath" (v. 27).

19. These events seem to best fit the psalm before us, so let's look at the psalm of thanksgiving in which David praises God for His rescue in David's life.

**Slide 4****A. DAVID'S RESOLVE TO GLORIFY GOD (VV. 1-3)**

"I will extol You, O Lord, for You have lifted me up,  
And have not let my enemies rejoice over me.

O Lord my God,

I cried to You for help, and You healed me.

O Lord, You have brought up my soul from Sheol;

You have kept me alive, that I would not go down to the pit."

(Psalm 30:1-3)

1. David begins this psalm by praising God for two reasons:
  - a. He thought he was about to perish when God "lifted [him] up."
    - 1) God saved David from what he thought was certain death.
    - 2) The verb used is the same for drawing water out of a well.
  - b. God prevented David's enemies from being able to rejoice over him.
    - 1) If this psalm was written following the events which we have just laid out, then David thought of how much his enemies would have gloated over his mishap had the plague continued to claim more lives, possibly even his own.
2. In verse 2, David vividly remembered how he turned to God in prayer and how God responded to him.
3. He was very much aware (verse 3) of just how serious his situation had become.
4. Because so many had already died, and because David knew he was the one responsible, he believed his fate was sealed — he saw himself at the point of death.

"O Lord, You have brought up my soul from Sheol;

You have kept me alive, that I would not go down to the pit."

5. But, as we can see in 1 Chronicles 21:15, 27, God caused the avenging angel

to cease, thus bringing up David's soul from Sheol (death).

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## **B. HIS EXHORTATION FOR GODLY MEN TO JOIN HIM IN HIS PRAISE (VV. 4-5)**

“Sing praise to the Lord, you His godly ones,  
And give thanks to His holy name.  
For His anger is but for a moment,  
His favor is for a lifetime;  
Weeping may last for the night,  
But a shout of joy comes in the morning.”

(Psalm 30:4–5)

1. Not only did David seek to praise God, he wanted other “saints” (“godly ones,” NASB95) to join him.
2. The praise to which David invites us involves giving “thanks to His [God’s] holy name (lit. “remembrance”)” — they were to thank God for all that He is and all He had done.
3. David understood that his ordeal was discipline from God.
4. This “anger” of God, David realized was only for “a moment.”
5. The “weeping” which accompanied it lasted only “for the night.”

“For a brief moment I forsook you . . . In an outburst of anger I hid My face from you for a moment” (Isaiah 54:7a, 8a).

6. But the morning sunrise brought with it “a shout of joy.”
7. God’s favor lasts a lifetime, enduring forever.

“But with great compassion I will gather you . . . with everlasting lovingkindness I will have compassion on you,” says the Lord your Redeemer” (Isaiah 54:7b, 8b).

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**C. DAVID'S ACCOUNT OF HIS DELIVERANCE (vv. 6-10)**

“Now as for me, I said in my prosperity,

“I will never be moved.”

O Lord, by Your favor You have made my mountain to stand strong;

You hid Your face, I was dismayed.

To You, O Lord, I called,

And to the Lord I made supplication:

“What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the pit?

Will the dust praise You? Will it declare Your faithfulness?

“Hear, O Lord, and be gracious to me;

O Lord, be my helper.””

(Psalm 30:6–10)

1. David takes us back and lets us see how his prosperity led to his prideful thinking.
2. He began to feel self-sufficient, trusting in his prosperity rather in God.
3. He deceived himself into thinking, “I will never be moved” (v. 6b).
4. David failed to realize that it was God who “by [His] favor” had blessed David and “made [his] mountain (kingdom) to stand strong” (v. 7a).
5. David appears to have ordered the census at this time in his life.
6. As a result, God “hid [His] face” from David. No longer did God’s face shine upon His servant so as to bring peace.
7. Instead, David was now experiencing the painful discipline of God.
8. He realized just how frail and weak He truly was — He became “dismayed” (v. 7b).
9. Feeling the utter helplessness of his situation, David “cried out” (NKJV) to the Lord, who was His only hope — “to the Lord [he] made supplication” (v. 8b).

10. David's supplication, his plea for mercy, takes the form of a rhetorical question which he asks three ways:
  - a. "What profit is there in my blood (death), if I go down to the pit?" (v. 9a). — "How will my death benefit your cause?"
  - b. "Will the dust praise you?" (v. 9b) — "I will not be able to praise you from the grave will I?"
  - c. "Will it declare your faithfulness?" (v. 9c) — "If I die, how can I tell others of how faithful you have been to me?"
11. David abandoned all confidence in himself and asked God to "be gracious" to him to help him.
12. This was a cry of repentance. It was the only way that divine discipline could be removed.
13. David knew that only God could help him.
  - ❑ Each of us will experience hardship and pain at some point in our lives. When this happens and God brings us through it, how will we respond? David encourages us to express our gratitude to the Lord.

**Slide 7****D. A SUMMARY OF HIS EXPERIENCE AND THE ACCOMPANYING PRAISE (VV. 11-12)**

"You have turned for me my mourning into dancing;  
 You have loosed my sackcloth and girded me with gladness,  
 That my soul may sing praise to You and not be silent.  
 O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You forever."

(Psalm 30:11-12)

1. David looked back at how God answered his prayers.
2. He describes the transformation in his life in two ways:
  - a. "You have turned . . . my mourning into dancing" (v. 11a).
    - 1) His tears had been turned to laughter.

- 2) His happiness was expressed in joyous dancing.
- b. “You have loosed (removed) my sackcloth and girded me with gladness” (v. 11b).
  - 1) If we go back to 1 Chronicles 21:16, we see that David and the elders were actually wearing “sackcloth” at the time when they saw the angel of the Lord hovering over the city.
    - a) Sackcloth was generally made from goat’s hair and was worn next to the skin.
    - b) It looked like a sack with holes for the head and arms.
    - c) People generally wore sackcloth as an indication of mourning and as a demonstration of sorrow for sin.
  - 2) Figuratively speaking, God was the one who loosened the belt which held David’s garments of mourning, removed them and replaced them with garments of “gladness.”
    - ❑ We can only imagine the joy David must have felt when the angel put his sword back in its sheath (1 Chronicles 21:27). How many innocent lives had been lost because of David’s prideful act? How many people are hurt because of our own pride and arrogance?

“And see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way” (Psalm 139:24).
3. As a result David’s soul could now rejoice in God.
  - a. No longer would he live solely for His own pursuits.
  - b. Now he would . . .
    - 1) “Sing praise to [God] and not be silent”
    - 2) “Give thanks to God forever”

## **Conclusion**

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1. In Hebrews 12:4-11, the writer summarizes the principles we may learn from David's experience:
  - a. Hebrews 12:6 reminds us that "the Lord disciplines the one He loves" (ESV).
  - b. Later in verse 10, the writer lets us know that God "disciplines us for our good, so that we may share in His holiness."
  - c. Though discipline may seem sorrowful for the moment, it later yields "the peaceful fruit of righteousness" (Hebrews 12:11).
2. In each of our lives as Christians, there are times when we fail to listen to God, we choose not to obey His commands.
3. It is during this time that He uses His discipline to turn our hearts back to him in obedient faith.
4. If you have ever experienced the discipline of God, stop and thank Him for loving you enough to bring you back to Himself.
5. If you are experiencing the discipline at this point in your life, stop what you are doing that ignores God in your life, repent and come back to Him.
6. Remember, "His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime" (Psalm 30:5).