

Distress, Debt and Discontent

By

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“David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father’s household heard about it, they went down to him there. All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him. About four hundred men were with him.” 1 Samuel 22:1-2

If you read last week’s devotional, “Crushed,” you heard me talk about the ultimate place of abiding, when you allow yourself to be crushed for God into a sweet wine which can be poured out for others. This week, I came across the passage above, which really caught my attention, and it seemed to be a continuation of last week’s thought. David was on the run, fearing for his life, as King Saul’s jealousy and anger burned against him. He was hiding in caves and very afraid. I have a Bible which arranges all the verses in chronological order, and it is interesting as it places many of David’s psalms in the midst of these days of fear. It makes sense when you read his words, as he cries out to God for relief from his enemies.

David had been chosen by God, anointed by Samuel and set apart to be the next king. He had defeated Goliath, garnering favor with Saul and with all the people. He had a place in the palace, and life seemed perfect. Then, overnight, he is an outcast and a loner. So, who does God send to help him? First, his family comes to see him. Thank God for our families. They are usually the ones who are there for us, especially during difficult times. When all others fade away, our families come through with that unconditional love.

The next verse is what really spoke to me. God sent David a group of men who were *in distress, in debt or discontented*. It says 400 of such men came to David and gathered around him. We know that God loved David and had great plans for him. It was through the line of David that our dear Savior would come. So, I would think God would want to send David the best army available to help him in this hour of need. Instead, it seems as if he sent David a bunch of needy men. Does this make any sense?

It does if you know a little bit about how God operates. In Tulsa, we have a weekly gathering of men called, The Anchor. We were inspired by our Journey brothers in Orange County and Bakersfield who have weekly gatherings of men. We wanted a place where men could come each week for Praise, Encouragement and

Prayer. We have done this for two years now, and I have noticed something. There are a lot of needy men out there, ME INCLUDED! I have seen how so many men, from week to week, are burdened by life. It could be financial strain, job pressure, marital difficulty, wayward children, church conflict...the list goes on and on. Men, especially Christian men, are in the middle of a battle. And it seems the more the men are being used by God, the more the battle intensifies. At the end of The Anchor, we tell the men to get into groups of 2 or 3 to pray for one another. I tell them that if they are burdened, they need to let another man help carry their burden in prayer. I tell them if they are doing great, it is their job to carry someone else's burden and lighten their load.

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

Galatians 6:2

It seems that men who have experienced some heartache in life are the ones who get it. They have been broken and humbled and are not so enamored with themselves. Perhaps, all those worldly things they once put their faith in have let them down, and they are ready to put their faith in God. They have a newfound empathy for their fellow man, no longer judging or comparing themselves to others. Their eyes are now open to the needs around them for they realize how much God has helped them, and they want to pay it forward.

These were the kind of men our Lord sent to David's side. These were the kind of men that could be trusted and who would fight valiantly. As a matter of fact, some of these men became "Mighty Men," according to the account at the end of David's life in 2 Samuel 23. Out of this lot of ragtag, needy men, God did a mighty work. They were honored in scripture as God made sure their names and their feats were recorded forever.

So, I ask you today...are you in Distress, in Debt or Discontent with your life? If so, you are a perfect candidate to become a mighty man of God. Go to the Son of David, our Lord Jesus Christ and gather with Him. He'll tell you what to do next.