

# THE KEY TO GREATNESS

“*Made me great*” II Samuel 22:36

## THE GREATNESS OF DAVID

In Scripture, the word great, or the idea of greatness is frequently bestowed upon David. Examples abound, including:

- His battle with Goliath – This was the initial exploit that brought him to the nation's attention. In its aftermath, Saul's son Jonathan said of David's defeat of Goliath, “*the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel*” (I Samuel 19:5).
- His battles with the Philistines – David's victories over the Philistines were described as great slaughters in the winner take all warfare of those days – 1 Samuel 19:8, 23:5.
- Saul acknowledged his greatness – Saul, David's predecessor as king, who spent years trying to kill David out of jealousy, said of David, “*thou shalt... do great things*” (I Samuel 26:25).

Saul's prediction proved prescient. After being crowned king, “*David went on, and grew great*” (II Samuel 5:1-10). He had a great:

- Name – II Samuel 7:9
- Legacy – God promised the continuation of his house for a great while to come – II Samuel 7:19

## A GREAT FAILURE

Of course, everything he did wasn't great in a positive direction. His failure concerning Bathsheba and Uriah, according to Nathan the prophet, gave “*great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme*” (II Samuel 11:1-12:14). It also brought great sadness to David in his later years.

## THE SECRET TO HIS GREATNESS

David was also a noted musician. His skillful playing first brought him into palace court life (I Samuel 16:17-23). According to Samuel, David was also handsome and easy on the eye (1 Samuel 16:12), but others could play and were attractive. What was different about David? Or rather, what did he credit his rise from the sheep pen to the throne to? In II Samuel 22 and the nearly identical Psalm 18, David expresses his thoughts on his journey after reaching the pinnacle. In it, he does several things, including praising God for:

- Delivering him from his enemies– II Samuel 22:1, 4
- All He had been to him – II Samuel 22:2-4
- Hearing his cries for help – II Samuel 22:4, 7

But he said something in II Samuel 22:36 that directly answered why David is great. That verse says, “*Thy gentleness hath made me great.*” David knew that no matter his pleasant appearance, musical ability, excellent battlefield abilities, and any other trait or gift, he did not merit inhabiting the place God had brought him to. He recognized that without God dealing gently with him, in all his human frailties, he would not have reached the level of greatness he did. That's a universal truth. Our hopes depend on God dealing gently with us. Thank God He does.