

Volume 09, Issue 10: Fortitude in Relationships

A few mornings ago, one of the plans I was using for Bible study brought a new awakening of the significance of fortitude in relationships, that it takes being confident in where you stand with someone to recover well from a mess. In one incident, King David messed up big time, and when God confronted him through His prophet, he repented wholeheartedly, but he wasn't left crushed and detached from God.

In the 51st chapter of the book of Psalms, we see that David's was gravely remorseful for his sin. I have read this portion of scripture several times before and used it for my own repentance and worship sessions, but this time around something different came to the fore of my mind as I read it. What impressed me in this study is that David didn't turn God's confrontation into self-condemnation. Rather, he used it to repent and move on with God.

You see, when our mess is found out, it's possible for us to pronounce ourselves unworthy of the relationship we have created a mess in and stay away, especially when it's a big mess. Even after being extended forgiveness for the mess, we can refuse to forgive ourselves and deny ourselves the privilege of continuing to enjoy the relationship.

David didn't pull himself away from God after the confrontation. He instead acknowledged his mess and asked God to wipe his slate clean there and then, so that he could continue enjoying his relationship with Him. He prayed, *"Soak me in your laundry and I'll come out clean, scrub me and I'll have a snow-white life. Tune me in to foot-tapping songs, set these once-broken bones to dancing. Don't look too close for blemishes, give me a clean bill of health. God, make a fresh start in me, shape a Genesis week from the chaos of my life. Don't throw me out with the trash or fail to breathe holiness in me. Bring me back from gray exile, put fresh wind in my sails! Give me a job teaching rebels your ways so the lost can find their way home. Commute my death sentence, God, my salvation God, and I'll sing anthems to your life-giving ways. Unbutton my lips, dear God; I'll let loose with your praise."*

Psalm 51:7-15 MSG

I believe David's response could have been different if he hadn't built a strong relationship with God prior to this incident. If it weren't for the many years from his youth drawing near to God while tending his father's sheep, pouring out his heart to God through the songs he composed

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and the music he played on his harp, and consequently walking in step with God all through his life up to the point of his big mess, he could have felt unworthy after his mess. David was a worshipper at heart. We know of how once he danced before the Lord until his clothes fell off. The Psalms of David are full of tellings of his close relationships with God. We can therefore say that David was close enough to God to know the greatness of His steadfast love and mercies.

Because of the fortitude he had in his relationship with God, David didn't banish himself from the presence of God after his mess. Rather he said, *"God, make a fresh start in me, put fresh wind in my sails. Commute my death sentence then I'll sing anthems to your life-giving ways. I'll let loose with your praise"* . In other words, David was saying, *"God forgive me, make me clean again and restore me back to yourself so I can go back to praising you, just like I did before. I have messed up God, revive my spirit so I can enjoy being in your presence again, as well as teach others who mess up like me your ways, so they too can find their way back to you."*

That had to take the strength of a strong relationship with God that David had built over time. Without that, he could have banished himself from ever experiencing the joys of being in God's presence again. We must have that kind of fortitude in our relationships with God and people, so that when we mess up, we have the courage and confidence to pursue forgiveness and restoration.

For His Glory,

Lillian Chebosi