

David's Secret Ambition (Ps 27:4; Ps 91:9, 14)



1. One Thing for David

Ps 27 and Ps 90-91 share the theme of the 'secret place in God' and the 'beauty of the LORD'. The key to finding the secret place in God (Ps 91:9, 14) is in the three because's: (i) decision of will; (ii) transfer of affection; (iii) intimate relationship with God by revelation.

v4 in Ps 27 is an interesting verse that is actually out of place. It is an abrupt interruption or a parenthesis. v5 naturally flows from v3. It makes perfect sense NOT to have v4 in between. What is going on? I believe the Holy Spirit interrupted David's flow of thought to show us something that is buried deep in his heart, in his DNA. David had a secret ambition that made him different from everyone else, and it pleased God so much.

2. My Health Challenge

My health challenge lasted the past 2 years from Sept 2020 to Sept 2022. It started with itchiness and a burning sensation on my skin. I was diagnosed with type II sugar diabetes with a blood sugar level of 13.2. The normal range is 4-6. The doctor had a harsh 10-year outlook on my life, which included insulin injections. I had to check for damage to kidneys (PTL, there was none). He said, 'I will help you to have a quality life till you are sixty. After that who knows.' I found it difficult to accept that I might only have good 10 years. I felt I achieved so little of what I believe God called me to do. Mia and Nathan started a brand-new dietary regime and strict policing of what I ate. I also remember Harn's prayer of faith for total healing to go on mission trips without any medication.

PTL, my latest blood test result was 5.8 without medication. This week, a quick blood test with a low dosage of medication was 5.3.

Question: What do I really want in life? Am I at peace to meet the Lord if I were to come to the end of my life's journey today? I am so grateful to the Lord for saving my soul, and there is a longing in me to be in the presence of God. I am profoundly grateful for my loving family whom I enjoy every single day of my life and the church family who prays for me. I am so blessed by God.

What about the works of my hands? Am I satisfied? I could not shake the sense of futility about what I have achieved or have yet to achieve. Life is lived forward only once. What would give me full consolation and peace without any regret if I must close the last chapter of my life? No external achievement including ministry achievement would give me that peace. Only the conviction in my heart that I have truly pursued God's heart, that I have loved Him with all my heart all my life. Nothing else will console my heart. I must know that I have invested my heart, my strength, and my time in pursuing the Lord, that I have laid hold of Him with my whole heart, and that I have put God first as the supreme joy of my life. Only then I will be satisfied.

3. Holy Ambition

- a) This was Paul's ambition. Paul saw something most people did not see. He saw the beauty of the Lord. It drips through his writings. 'Yet I indeed count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things...' (Phil 3:7-8, 'the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus' NASV) Why would anyone in their right mind suffer such a torturous journey to pursue the call of God other than for this reason?
- b) This was also David's ambition buried deep in his heart. The Holy Spirit interrupts his psalm to bare his heart for us to see. 'One thing I have desired of the LORD that I will seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple.' (Ps 27:4)

David was called to be king of Israel in a dramatic revelation by Samuel. Everybody wants to be a king. But David's heart was not set on becoming king. What David really wanted was to dwell in the house of the LORD *all the days of his life*. This was a priest's privilege. Who wants to dwell in the temple all his life over becoming a king? Many desire to enter into the house of God, so that they could extract solutions and blessings for life from God's presence. Very few actually want to dwell in the house of the Lord just to be near Him all the days of their life, and spend their life looking at God's beauty. David's heart was cut above

his peers. Saul desperately wanted to keep his kingship, but he did not care much for the nearness of God. David wanted to gaze at God all his life, he did not care for kingship.

4. The Beauty of the LORD

The ancient writers who walked very close to God, thought about God's holiness more than any other attributes of God (C.f. Jer 6:16). What is God's holiness to you? A lot of people think of God's holiness as something unpleasant or something to dread, God's displeasure against their sin. Moses and David saw God's holiness as His beauty (Ps 27:4; Ps 90:17 C.f. Rev 4:8; Is 6:3). The elders and seraphim never get tired of gazing at the beauty of God's holiness all through eternity. We too are invited to peer into God's beauty, which is the mystery of the ages! The whole heaven is singing of the Lord's indescribable beauty and the infinite worth of Jesus Christ (Rev 5:9-14). The prayers of the saints on the earth and the praise and worship of heaven (Rev 8:1-6) converge in the revelation of the glory and beauty of the Lord (Rev 11:15-19; 15:5; 19:11-16).

One day the revelation of Jesus' beauty will cause all the nations of the earth to be consumed with fiery zeal and desire for the LORD. The nations of the earth will even wail for the lifetimes they have wasted seeking after worthless things rather than the most beautiful Son of God. *'I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the LORD' (Hag 2:7-9, Cf. Jesus, the joy of man's desiring - Bach).*

During this Wednesday worship meeting, I felt drunk in the Spirit, and I heard this phrase in my spirit, *'Jesus Christ is the greatest mystery of incomparable beauty yet to be revealed. But who among the sons of men are wise enough to seek His beauty, even among the redeemed?'* Who on this earth is gripped by this holy ambition to know God, even among His own people? Pay attention to the kind of prayer prayed in Rev 4-5 which I call 'prayer on the eternal ground'. There are five prayers listed there worthy of deep study. All of them centre around (i) the beauty of the Lord; (ii) and worth of the Lamb. They do not centre on our needs although they are important. The prayers of earth and heaven intersect at this point – this is eternal reality. After this convergence, Jesus takes the scroll and opens the seals. It takes the revelation of the Lord's beauty to pray these prayers that reach beyond obsessing about our needs only. Only the wisest of the earth invest their lives in costly ways to search it out.

5. Enquire in His Temple

There are TWO different words for 'seek' in Hebrew.

- (i) To 'inquire' (darash) for an answer, eg. response to a certain calamity for solution (Gen 22:22)
- (ii) To 'seek' (baqash) someone's heart (mercy/favour) for intimacy (cf. Ps 27:4, 8)

David's entire life is earmarked by him enquiring the LORD for specific counsel and direction in times of great need. However, the bulk of David's prayer and praise also go beyond his problems. What fuelled David's heart to burn for the Lord? It was His beauty and glory. Ps 27:4 is primarily David's heart cry for greater intimacy with God. *How did David start this unique spiritual journey?* v8 provides insight. While David was looking after a handful of sheep on the hills of Bethlehem as a teenager, the Holy Spirit whispered to him, *'Seek My face.'* (not just His hands). Then David's heart responded to God: *'My heart said to You, Your face, LORD, I will seek!'* This was the secret of David's spiritual formation that led to the 'One Thing Prayer' of Ps 27:4.

Have you heard God whisper to you, *'Seek My Face'*? That voice of the Spirit is the very invitation extended to David received as a young man of ~17 (cf. Is 55:3-4). God's desire and aim are to make you a man or a woman after God's own heart (1 Sam 13:14, cf. Acts 13:22).

6. Joy Centre

Developing the 'joy centre' early in a child's brain is very important for healthy social and emotional development. Children process information, thoughts, and feelings through this joy centre (the right orbital prefrontal cortex). This helps them form a sense of attachment, belonging, and identity, which equips them to endure pressures in life. Children are meant to be enjoyed by their parents, to be held, be looked upon with adoring eyes, tickled, and shown delightful affection. When children know they are deeply loved and enjoyed, they respond with a smile, giggle, and laughter, and they become playful. And their 'joy centre' is formed early

in life. Those with a strong joy centre are better equipped to take on hardships in life, and they stay positive through it all. Those who do not have a strong joy centre struggle harder to process adversities in life.

David formed a healthy spiritual joy-centre by beholding the beauty of the Lord – God’s holiness. *‘In Your presence is fullness of joy. At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.’ (Ps 16:11)*. We Christians need to form a healthy joy centre in God. When our joy centre in the Lord is not well-formed, faith becomes an inconvenience and a weekly duty rather than the fiery desire and longing of our hearts for Him.

The first danger sign for a Christian is spiritual boredom. It is the first sign of a backslidden heart. It is proof that he has lost connection with God, who is altogether beautiful. This is why the LORD says he who has found the secret place in God has ‘set his affection on God’ (Ps 91:14). Sooner or later, we end up where we set our affection. Over time, what you set your affection on, overcomes your will. This is why Jesus told us to abide in His love. (John 15:9-11, Cf. John 17, Eph 1:17-18)