

A Man After God's Own Heart
1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22
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Well, Scripture memory season is underway, and we're at the end of week one. Believe it or not, Scripture memory is not a new phenomenon. OT saints memorized God's Word and so did those of the NT. Jesus quoted and made allusion to Scripture, as did all the authors of the NT. Depending on who wrote Hebrews, there are either 8 or 9 authors. (The writers of the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke (who is also said to have written Acts) and John (who is also said to have written three letters and Revelation); thirteen letters are ascribed to Paul, two to Peter, one each to James and Jude, and one anonymous) All 27 books in the NT Canon either quote and/or make allusion to passages and stories from the OT. The New Testament does not simply express its dependence on the Old Testament by quoting it. There are 343 Old Testament quotations in the New Testament, and no fewer than 2,309 allusions and verbal parallels. The books most called upon are Psalms (79 quotations, 333 allusions), and Isaiah (66 quotations, 348 allusions). In the Book of Revelation, there are no formal quotations at all, but there are at least 620 allusions.

Paul memorized a great deal of Scripture. He studied at the feet of Gamaliel to become a Pharisee, and was considered a Pharisee of Pharisees, so he had memorized a great deal of the Old Testament. Our texts today bear witness to that. In Acts chapter 13, we read about Paul's first missionary trip. He and Barnabas are on mission in Antioch in Pisidia, where Paul is preaching. He summarizes a great deal of Israel's history in a few short verses. READ ACTS 13:16-22. Now look in the gutter of your Bible, or wherever your cross-references are located. For verse 22, you should see two passages that stand out as citations: Psalm 89:20 and 1 Samuel 13:14. How many of you have ever recited a passage, but sort of mixed two Scriptures together when you are reciting? While Paul was not "mixed up" (he was inspired of the Spirit), you are in good company. Of course Paul didn't have the benefit of chapter and verse divisions like we do, but He was inspired by the Holy Spirit to make allusion to these passages.

Perhaps the most striking piece Paul's retelling of the story in this Reader's digest, condensed style is what he chooses to include. There are number of ways that Paul could have described David. He could have used any number of titles or monikers. Ultimately Paul chose to describe David a "a man after His (God's) own heart." To Paul, the human author, who was inspired of God the Holy Spirit, the most important synopsis of David was "A man after God's own heart."

The main passage Paul refers to, of course is 1 Samuel 13:14. Here, Samuel the prophet is functioning as God's mouthpiece. This was the norm for OT prophets. The background of this passage: Saul has recently been crowned king. Israel has requested a king, but their choice was based upon his stature and Israel's covetousness of the other nations who had champion Kings. They had seen that Saul fit the bill well: he was more handsome than any other man in the land and a head taller than the rest. The Lord had granted his people their request. Saul had already led Israel in a decisive victory against Nahash and the Ammonites. Now Saul was to go to Gilgal, per Samuel's directive from the Lord. Saul was to wait for Samuel's arrival to make sacrifices. He waited the seven days it was supposed to take, but the people became afraid and antsy as the Philistines were amassing great numbers to rout them. Saul foolishly decides to make the sacrifice himself, without Samuel's priestly assistance. Saul was moved by circumstances and to rely on religious ritual to gain God's favor rather than to trust and obey the word of the Lord. Well, Samuel shows up, and is not amused. Saul tries to make excuses, tap dancing around the fact that he was clearly disobedient. Samuel tells him, beginning in verse 13: "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the Lord your God, with which he commanded you. For then the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought out *a man after his own heart*, and the Lord has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you."

This phrase, literally rendered would be awkward, but would read "a man according to the heart of Him." Samuel is prophesying that God would raise up a man in accordance with His own heart. We gain a bit more insight in the passage Pastor Larry read. He read about the story of Samuel going to anoint the king from Jesse's household in Bethlehem. When Samuel tries to discern who the Lord's anointed would be, what does God declare? "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7 ESV)

When we read about the "heart", (or any word for that matter) we apply our modern American culture's lexicon to the term. When we talk about "matters of the heart", for example, what comes to mind? (emotions...romance...Valentines Day...chick flicks?) In both the Hebrew of 1 Samuel and the Greek of Acts, the reference to "heart" carries a bit more baggage. The "heart" in these contexts is a

reference to “the locus of a person’s thoughts (mind), volition (will), emotions, and knowledge of right from wrong (conscience).

By God’s grace this morning, before we examine our hearts prior to communion, I want us to examine David’s life to see what compelled God to reference David as “a man after His own Heart”. I see four aspects of David’s “heart” that characterize David in this way:

I-David had a heart of faith.

One of the most beloved Bible stories of all times illustrates the great faith of David as a young man. You know the story, the Philistines are amassed for battle against Israel in the valley of Elah. The Philistines have raised up a champion named Goliath, a giant of a man over 9.5 feet tall. This particular type of warfare is referred to as “single combat,” namely, a fight between representatives of the warring factions intended to avoid a more general engagement. The logic behind such contests was grounded in the belief that battles were ultimately decided by God or the gods; thus, the champion representing the more powerful deity would triumph. A **champion** in biblical, ancient Near Eastern, and **Homeric** literature is a man who steps out to fight between the two battle lines. “When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.”(1 Samuel 17:11 ESV) Saul was shaking in his boots. He should have been the one to take up against Goliath. Instead he offers anyone who would face Goliath riches and his daughter’s hand in marriage. As you know, David comes forward to meet the challenge when no one else would saying, “who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? (17:26). David demonstrates great faith when he declares (v.37) “The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” And we know the rest of the story. David slays the giant with a single rock hurled from his sling. David was a young man with a heart of faith.

After David had been anointed by Samuel to be king one day, was he immediately crowned king? By no means! For years, David was forced into exile in the wilderness to escape a jealous Saul. David had a bounty on his head and was constantly hunted by Saul’s army of thousands! David could easily have defected from the region completely and renounced God’s anointing under the extreme duress and pressure. Instead, David stood on the promises of God. He suffered through much; disappointment after disappointment, trusting that some day, God

would put him on the throne. Listen to David in Psalm 57 (READ). David, a man after God's own heart, had a heart of faith.

II-David had a heart of obedience

Go back to our key verse in Acts 13:22. It reads "And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, ***who will do all my will.***'" (Acts 13:22 ESV) God declared David not only a man after His own heart, but explained what that looked like practically: one who would "***do all my will***", one with a heart of obedience.

What is obedience? One Bible encyclopedia calls obedience "Act or instance of submitting to the restraint or command of an authority; compliance with the demands or requests of someone or something over us. The general words for obedience in both Hebrew and Greek refer to hearing or hearkening to a superior authority. Another major Greek word includes the idea of submission to authority in the sense of arranging or ordering oneself under someone in a place of command. David heard from God often! He hearkened unto the ultimate authority; he submitted to God and ordered his life after God's call.

To have an obedient heart we must get to know *the heart of God*. How did David do this? If obedience is hearing and hearkening to a superior authority, we need look no farther than the Psalms to see how David was a model of obedience.

"I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.""
(Psalms 40:8 ESV)

"Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name. I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever."
(Psalms 86:11–12 ESV)

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."
(Psalms 119:105 ESV)

In other words, David was conversant with God. He spent time in prayer, and got to know God through reading, meditating, and memorizing God's Word (Psalm 119:10-16).

However David didn't merely read, memorize, and meditate on God's Word. He obeyed God's Word.

I think of the parents who must leave town on a business trip. The parents entrust their two teenagers with the house while they are away. Mom and dad leave behind a list of rules, expectations, and chores. A week later, upon the parents' return, they notice that the lawn hasn't been mowed, the trashcan is overflowing, and loud music is coming from the front room. As the parents enter the home, the teens excitedly recite mom and dad's list of rules, expectations, and chores verbatim and then begin sharing how blessed they were in reading, meditating, and memorizing the list. Do you see the absurdity here? James tells us that we are to be not only hearers of the Word, but Doers! David was a hearer, but as a man after God's own heart, with a heart of obedience, he was also a doer.

III-David had a humble heart.

One of my favorite Psalms is the eighth one. READ Psalm 8 (specifically vv 3-4). David recognizes his place in the universe. He exalts God, recognizing that in the scope of the vast universe, it is remarkable that God would even acknowledge mankind. He cries out to his Lord in a prayer of exaltation, humbling himself in the sight of the Lord.

Moments ago, we visited David's victory over Goliath. What a great accomplishment. There wasn't a man in the land that had the boldness to face that giant. If there were ever an event that had the potential to puff someone up it was this one! Yet David remained humble. He served in Saul's court, making music for him; comforting him when a harmful spirit plagued him.

As David grew a bit older, Saul began to recognize David's military mind; his potential as a warrior. He sets David over the men of war. David fares so well in battle that the women begin singing that well-known Hebrew ditty: "Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands." David has women celebrating his exploits in the streets, comparing his success to the King. How difficult it would have been to remain humble at that point. But despite all of this, David remained humble.

As you know, Saul is not amused by this obnoxious rhyme. He enters into a royal pouting session, saying "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands, and what more can he have but the kingdom?" From this time on, Saul tries to take David out. He throws spears at him (missing) and

continues to seek for David's life from that time forward. David could easily have turned Saul's own spear on him, but resolved that he would not harm "the Lord's anointed." What humility. He had won the hearts and minds of the people, but instead of taking matters into his own hands, he remained humble and waited on the Lord.

Saul devised a better plan. He thought "I'll give him one of my daughters and send him out against the Philistines." He first tries to pawn off his oldest, Merab, David, with his humble heart, said, "who am I, and who are my relatives, my father's clan in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?" Merab is married off to another man, so Saul offers David his daughter Michal. How does David respond? "Does it seem to you a little thing to become the king's son-in-law since I am a poor man and have no reputation?" Saul responds to this by waiving a bride price, except he tells David all you have to do is harvest 100 Philistine foreskins. David graciously accepts and harvests 200, not out of pride, but out of humility.

As Saul chases David in the wilderness with his thousands, the Spirit of the Lord is upon David. In 1 Samuel 24, Saul gets some intelligence that David is at EnGedi and plans to take him out at this oasis. Upon arrival, Saul "cover's his feet" in one of the caves. David slips in like a Hebrew ninja and cuts off a corner of Saul's robe. Now David's men felt like it was high time for David to take Saul out (peer pressure!!!) They said "Here is the day of which the Lord said to you, 'Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.'" David had to persuade them otherwise: "I will not put out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD's anointed." David left it up to the LORD God almighty! "May the LORD judge between me and you, may the LORD avenge me against you, but my hand shall not be against you." (1 Sam 24:12)

Virtually the same thing happens two chapters later in the wilderness of Ziph. David goes into Saul's encampment at night in among the resting army. David once again employs his Hebrew ninja skills (and the indispensable ingredient of God's favor) and finds Saul's tent (next to their commander, Abner). He swipes Saul's spear and water jar (which were right next to him). Again, David's men (specifically Abishai) try to compel him to put an end to Saul right then and there. David responds in the same way again, "As the LORD lives, the LORD will strike him, or his day will come to die, or he will go down into battle and perish. The LORD forbid that I should put out my hand against the LORD's anointed."

We could look at a number of other examples; David's longsuffering with Nabal, with Shimei, with Absalom, even with Adonijah.

David has opportunity to exact vengeance on a number of people who virtually spit in his face. But in humility, David respected life and authority, letting the Lord go before him. In this way, David displayed not only a heart of faith, not only a heart of obedience, but also a heart of humility as a man after God's own heart.

IV-David had a repentant heart (Psalms 32, 51; 2 Samuel 12)

To this point, I have delivered something of a eulogy for David, including all of his good and respectable qualities. You may be thinking to yourself, "Okay Will, David was not all that and a bag of chips." He sinned grievously, and by the way: how can David be "a man after God's own heart" with all of that baggage anyway? Guilty as charged. I have presented David's sunny side thus far.

You all know about David's most famous sin, one of the most scandalous stories of the OT. While David was "chillin'" in the rear with the gear while his men were at war, his eyes began to wander while he is on the roof of his palace. He sees beautiful Bathsheba bathing on another rooftop in the neighborhood. He then finds out who she is (the wife of Uriah the Hittite...one of David's mighty men) and summons her to his quarters. To make a long story short, David sleeps with her and impregnates her. To cover his tracks, David has Uriah come home and take leave from the battlefield to "update" him on how things are going and tells him to "wash his feet" (a euphemism for go home, clean up and come together with your wife). David's plan fails. This faithful soldier instead sleeps at the door of the King's palace, mentioning that he was not going to enjoy the luxuries of home while the Ark of the Covenant was out in tents and his brothers in arms were on bivouac. David gets desperate and makes sure Uriah drinks enough to get drunk; hoping that Uriah would go home and be with his wife and potentially cover David's transgression. Faithful Uriah foiled David's plans again. David then decides to send Uriah back with a letter to Joab, the commander to have Uriah put on the front lines, then pull back, effectively murdering Uriah. After a period of mourning, Bathsheba weds David and they have their love child. According to Scripture "this displeased the Lord".

In this incident, David was not faithful (he was unfaithful), he was not obedient (but disobedient), and he was not humble (but prideful). How then can Paul look back in hindsight and reference David as "a man after God's own heart"?

A bold prophet named Nathan confronted David using a powerful parable of a poor man who was wronged by a rich man. The rich man took of the poor man's sole

lamb that he adored to feed a traveler, though the rich man had more than enough in his own flock. David was incensed at this injustice and demanded four-fold retribution from the rich man. At David's statement of judgment, Nathan declared: "you are the man." David had run from his sin long enough. God used Nathan to reveal his iniquity...and David confessed: "I have sinned against the Lord". (2 Sam 12:13)

Two beloved Psalms record what I would consider David's most redeeming quality. After David had sinned, he repented: Read Psalm 51 & 32.

Side by side, the sins of David and the sins of Saul are not too different. But at the end of the day, these men had different hearts. Saul had an unfaithful, rebellious, prideful, and unrepentant heart. David had a faithful, obedient, humble, repentant heart. Where is your heart today?

I exhort you to pray along with me: "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!"
(Psalms 139:23-24 ESV)