

21. A Man After My Heart

This lesson is about Samuel and therefore about David in his youth. It was Samuel who heard God say to him, “I have chosen a man after my own heart for Myself.”

And so we have this huge and compelling question in the center of our Bibles – What does that mean?

We have come to know God by knowing David more than any other person in the Bible, save Jesus. And because it is David who takes us into the mind of Jesus, we know we are like Jesus because of David.

An Enigma. David is an enigma, a huge question mark. David is the most sinful man in the Bible. David is a killer to the extent of murder.

David disregards Moses and the law without concern. David's grandpa, Obed, was one-half Moabite, one-quarter Canaanite, and only one-quarter Israelite.

David is reckless beyond measure; he is a pirate. David steals the Ark of the Covenant for himself contrary to God's clear instructions. David takes Philistines into the Holy of Holies.

And Yet –. David is a terrible husband and a worse father. And yet –

David worships God with tears his whole life. David treats God as a Person, with full recognition. David places all of his sins upon God. David will do anything to be with God, inside of God, anything, that is, except to pretend. David refuses to disrespect those whom God has anointed regardless of how much it costs him.

And God said, “This man has a heart like Mine.”

A Soul Opened Wide. Going through these lists, however, does not give us a satisfactory answer regarding this enigma that is David.

And then we realize that what sets David apart is not the facts of his life, as important and extraordinary as they are. Rather, here is a man who opens himself wide open, under the mighty hand of God, so that we might know the agony and longing in the depths of his split-open soul.

With David, God shows us the inward workings of a man, more than any other in the Bible. And then God does something beyond extraordinary through the open-book of this reckless man.

We Are Like Jesus. God takes you and me into David's thoughts and the agony of his soul and his devotion to God. In those thoughts and conversations, then, we find ourselves. David speaks to the inner thoughts of every human.

And then we discover, to our overwhelming amazement that it is not David's thoughts only into which God has taken us, but the thoughts of His own Son, and not just upon the cross, but through regular intervals of His life.

Inside of David's relentless agony and worship we find ourselves; inside of David's relentless agony and worship we find Jesus. And we know that we are just like Him.

Samuel and David. To approach the life of David, however, we must begin with Samuel. And we cannot know David and Samuel without also placing Saul into the mix. And with the story of Samuel we also find the story of the Ark of the Covenant, for the journey of that Ark is the journey of the revelation of Christ.

I have seven lessons for David, this one, "A Man after My Heart," followed by "A Man Who Believes in Me," "A Man Who Runs and Hides," "A Man at the Very Bottom," "A Man Who Steals My Ark," "A Man Who Loves My Church," and finally, "A Man Who Shows You Jesus."

Before continuing, however, let's create a timeline.

A Timeline.

Year – BC	Event
1207	Apostasy begins.
1202	Gideon drives the Midianites from the Land.
1152	Birth of Jesse.
1134	Eli becomes the judge of Israel.
1126	Birth of Samson
1115	Birth of Samuel
1114	Jephthah leads to victory.
1108	Samson starts doing his thing.
1105	Birth of Saul.
1103	God calls Samuel.
Year – BC	Event
1095	Samson becomes the judge of Israel.
1094	The Ark is taken; Eli dies.
1074	Death of Samson; Samuel becomes judge.
1065	Saul becomes king.
1063	God rejects Saul and prophesies David.
1055	Birth of David.
1050	Saul's second and complete rejection.
1030 (Reece)	Samuel anoints David.
1029	David kills Goliath.

Reserved to Myself. In this layout, three events are important to our topic, God calling Samuel, the Ark taken by the Philistines, and Saul being crowned king.

God told Elijah, years later, “I have reserved seven thousand for Myself who have not worshipped Baal.” When we look at Hannah’s story in 1 Samuel 1, we realize that God always had those among all the tribes of Israel who possessed a Spirit-knowing of God and who sought to know Him with tears.

Samuel was not committed to God because his mother gave him; his mother gave him because she knew his call.

Living in God’s Presence. But Samuel was of the tribe of Ephraim, just as Joshua was. Yet neither Samuel nor Joshua were princes of that tribe. I never thought of this before – both of them spent the years of their formation in the same place, in the Tabernacle and presence of God.

And the knowledge of God DID attend the Ark of the Covenant in that Tabernacle. There was always a sense of His presence there, for those who were open to Him.

At the beginning of these events, however, in 1103 BC, it says this, The word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no widespread revelation (except for those few).

Spirit Word upon Samuel. Samuel was twelve when he heard God call his name. Yet it says this – Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, nor was the word of the Lord yet revealed to him. This is why he thought it was Eli calling him.

Then, probably before Samuel was twenty, this account is given of him.

So Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of **the Lord... For the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in** Shiloh by the word of the Lord.

God's Contention with His People. This knowledge of the Word by the Spirit is given to every believer in Jesus, yet it is also rare among Christians, mostly because of the gospel of the serpent.

And so the same contention between God and Israel/Eli is His contention with His people today. Eli represents that ministry of God in the Church over the last 1900 years who have allowed the Ark of God's presence to be stolen from us.

David is the one who brings it back – a key feature of having a heart like God's. David represents us, for we would live only inside of God.

The Ascendancy of the Philistines. This is the time of the ascendancy of the Philistines. Twenty years earlier, with Jephthah, the enemy was still from the east and south, the Ammonites, etc. But during Samson's youth, the Philistines, in their cities along the coast, had become the chief distraction.

Now here's an interesting thing. Samson was judge for twenty years and his judgeship began the year prior to the Ark being taken by the Philistines, yet he did nothing.

Samson was no David. In fact, Samson was likely involved in the whole debacle of 1 Samuel 4, though he is not mentioned.

Trying to Use God. Look at this scenario, for this same debacle is repeated through all the history of Christianity and is especially prevalent among American Christians today.

The elders of Israel said, "Why has the Lord defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord from Shiloh to us, that when it comes among us it may save us from the hand of our enemies.

Instead of pausing to know God's purposes and to seek wisdom of Him, they choose to manipulate God for their own ends and make Him their partisan in worldly battle.

Trading Freedom for Politics. Then we see the opposite happening just after Samson is dead, when the Philistines invade again. This time, the Israelites turn to Samuel who turns to God, and it is God who directs the victory.

Just seven years later, however, the Israelites are moaning for a king, in order to be like all the nations around them. They imagine a king will always lead them to victory.

Samuel says, "This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you..." He goes on to describe the nature of all political government over, including the government of the US.

Christian Rebellion. It was not God's will for anyone to be king over Israel, including David. But God is like Google GPS, when you make a wrong turn, He quickly finds a way to bring you back on track.

Yet Saul is set as the contrast to David all the way through. Saul is the most important representation of Christian rebellion in the Bible, for Saul was anointed by the Spirit of God until his death.

Then we see that God's problem with Saul in 1 Samuel 13 is that he disregarded God's order and directed sacrifice himself. Yet David disregarded God's order all the time!

Why the Difference? This is an incredible puzzle, one which Jesus used to nail the Pharisees and shut them up (Luke 6). What makes David's disregard for God's order different from Saul's?

The answer to that question lies at the heart of the gospel.

It is here, then, in Saul's third year as king, that Samuel speaks the words that grab our own hearts. You (Saul) **have done foolishly... your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has** sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be commander over His people..."

After My Own Heart. Here is how Paul quoted the same line. – I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My desire (Acts 13:22).

This was seven years before David was born. – Except Samuel did not name David, Paul had thrown that in. In fact, Paul was using this contrast between Saul and David to preach the gospel.

Before David was even born, God had set David's heart to be like His own, inside of His pro-knowing. This is why David said that he existed inside of God's thoughts before his life began. (This is the topic of this entire series).

Pondering the Word. Samuel would have told David what God had spoken through him, probably when he anointed David at fourteen years of age, and David most likely thought about this statement a whole lot, all through his days.

"I am a man after God's own heart. My heart is like God's heart and God's heart is like mine."

I have never thought of this before, but Psalm 139 proves me right. – O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all **my ways. ...You have... laid Your hand upon me.**

Word inside the HUMAN! If David was anything like me, then he would have placed this word, "My heart is like God's heart," spoken to him by Samuel, at the forefront of his thoughts all the days of his life and magnified it in his knowing.

And every believer in Jesus ought to do the same, for Christ Jesus lives inside our hearts through faith, the very Heart and Word of God.

This is cool, because this is the opening for me to insert something that I have been seeing from the Lord and that I want to write about – a lot. And that is the role of bringing the word God speaks into our humanity. Yet I have space here only to mention it.

What Do You “See”? I have been deficient in not continuing to emphasize the meaning of John 7:38 for us in our practical experience. – He who believes into me, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

Most will say, “Since I don’t see rivers of Spirit impacting my world, this line does not apply to me.” Some even say, “Since you don’t see these rivers, that means you don’t really believe in Jesus.”

David had every outward human reason to be convinced that his heart and God’s heart were NOT the same, that God had NOT told him the truth. Yet he refused, and he applied that word as the puzzle of his entire life.

The Lord Sees the Heart. But here is the other word that came to David through Samuel. This was God speaking to Samuel, but David knew these words. In fact, this was his older brothers’ contention with him, just as with Joseph.

“Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.

A Very Human Jesus. Spirit and Word are always together, and as we have seen, David called himself by this Spirit Word all his life, though it puzzled him deeply, because his humanity did not always “look like” it “should.”

For that reason, as we can see, so much of David’s wrestling with God over the years was at this conflict between what God had told him about himself and his apparent outward human appearance.

And this, then, is why David knew God inside his very human soul and thus was able to take us into the chaotic thought of a very human and troubled Jesus hanging upon the cross.

God CAUSES Your Humanity. And I have never known this about David until I wrote it just now, but I know that it is true. I know it is true because this is my own experience with God since Jesus showed me that I lived only inside of Him.

When I am angry with my kids, when I am frightened by hard religious foreheads, when I feel far away from God, I say to myself what God says about us. Rivers of Spirit are ALWAYS flowing out from me, bringing LIFE into my world BECAUSE I believe in Jesus.

Never, never, never place yourself outside of God, but always place God as the only Cause of ALL your humanity.

Reading for Next Time. The next lesson is “A Man Who Believes in Me.” We will be applying chronology to this study of David, but only partly. In this next lesson, we will look across David’s whole life, starting with his confrontation with Goliath, to understand his confidence in “God with me.”

I won’t know which chapters I will have you read until after I have completed the next lesson. Start with 1 Samuel 17, and then I will let you know the rest before the next time.

“The Lord, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.”

Let's Pray Together. This time, our prayer is to call God's people into the knowledge of their full union with God through Jesus.

The first issue is always what do you do with the word God speaks? There are two options only – “Let it be to me.” Or “What does it mean?” becoming “How do I do it?” “Let it be to me” acknowledges God as Word having already become our HUMANITY. This is David.

“Father, Your people do not know You, for they do not know the entrance of Your Word into their hearts, word that has already become them. They do not know that Jesus already shares all form with them.

As with David. “Father, as You did with Jesus and with David, so we offer ourselves to You that You might be the same with us for the sake of Your people, millions of believers across the earth.

“Father, we invite Your people into our hearts upon the Blood of Jesus, that they might know Your Word inside our very human souls. Father, we set forth our own souls for the sake of Your Church.

“And Father, as we open ourselves to Your own Heart planted inside of us, we know that Our Holy Spirit is going forth from Uus with that same energeia of life, an energeia that encompasses the whole earth calling each dear heart to know ‘Let it be to me.’ – Let it be so; it is so.”

Prayer for a Property. – I also want us to pray together for that piece of property that God would give us and anoint as our “land” for a Community of Christ. –

“And Father, we know that Your people also need a visible expression of the revelation of Christ. For that reason, Father, as a local church together and as Jesus instructed us, we ask You for that land You have appointed for a first community of Christ here in the US, that it would be released to become ours.

“We ask for the provision of funds and the flow of Your abundance that we might begin a Community of Jesus as Your own heartthrob in the earth. We believe we have received, and we give thanks in Jesus.”