

## Where's Your Heart? I Samuel 13:1-15

Scanning the newspapers and tabloids, who impresses you? Who are the people that seem larger than life, the ones we tend to admire most? Who are the people that seem to stand head and shoulders above others in their respective field whether it be business or athletics or politics or education or science? What is it about them that makes us turn our heads or give them notice?

We might look at athletes like Michael Jordan or Tom Brady or Aaron Judge and be wowed by their careers in their respective sports.

In business it might be Henry Ford, John D. Rockefeller, or Steve Jobs who are in the top 10 of greatest business leaders.

There are those in politics who may stand out in your mind as leading the field by having a positive influence whether it's for our nation, state, or local communities respectively.

Maybe there's a teacher that seems to stand out? We might tend to look at a person's stature, their creative mind, the way they always seem to dress and carry themselves or perhaps it's the success they have had in their respective field. Something about them causes us to be awed when we see their name in headlines or see them on the news.

The person we are looking at today in our Scripture passage was like that. He was an impressive specimen of humanity.

Here's a description of him from Scripture.  
**I Samuel 9:1-2 "There was a Benjamite, a man of standing, whose name was Kish son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah of Benjamin. He had a son named Saul, an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites – a head taller than any of the others."**

This tells us that Saul was from good stock. His father, Kish, was **"a man of standing."** He was well respected among the other Benjamites. He had

clout. He had status. He had a name. I imagine that when he walked by people whispered after him. People stopped to watch him. When he spoke, people listened. Maybe he was the E.F. Hutton of his time. Maybe they named a street or a school or a building after him. He was a man of high standing in the community. The Amplified also indicates that he was wealthy.

That he had good standing also means that he had a good reputation as well. He was someone people looked up to because of his character, someone who had integrity, someone who was well liked because of his reputation.

Notice, though if you will, when we come to **verse 2** that there is a distinct difference between how he is described and how his son Saul is described. On the one hand, Kish is described as a man with character. On the other hand, Saul is described as a man with characteristics. The author describes in one word what is on the inside of Kish, but he describes only the physical features of Saul, or what's on the outside.

We are told that Saul was an impressive looking young man. He had no equal among all the throngs of Israel. He had a physical stature unlike any other in the land. If he attended college, he would have been the BMOC – the Big Man on Campus. He's the guy everyone looked up to and flocked around, the guy people wanted to get in tight with, the one girls swooned over when they saw him. Maybe he had Fabio looks with chiseled muscles and a square jaw. Maybe he looked like Duane "The Rock" Johnson or Charlton Heston. That might be stretching it a bit, but what we read gives us a glance at his stature taking into consideration that the word impressive also implies he was handsome as some translations describe him. All that to say there wasn't anyone else like him. He would have made the covers of Sports Illustrated, GQ, and People magazines.

I hope you see the difference between both he and his father. In just a few words, those two verses tell us a lot about them. That leads us to our passage in **I Samuel 13**. We'll be looking at **verses 1-15**. What

it says about Saul can have direct application to us. I have only two points this morning, they are, if you will, polar opposites or different ends of the pendulum. From this passage I want to look at two different individuals. First, we'll look at Saul and consider a heart that avoids God. Then we'll jump to David, and take a look at a heart that is after God. The question at the end will be this: **who are you most like?** The heart is what makes the difference.

## I. A HEART THAT AVOIDS GOD

The opening verses tells us that the events in this chapter occurred in Saul's second year as king. He's not too far into his reign and we begin to see the true nature of his heart begin to surface. The first thing to consider, which I think is the first step in the downward slide of anyone, is that Saul's pride was looming.

### A. Saul's Pride Was Looming – vv. 1-7, 9

Wycliffe's Bible Encyclopedia defines pride as **"An attitude of self-exaltation which, in its conceit of superiority, arrogantly tramples on others and, in its independence of spirit, self-sufficiently rebels against God. The Old Testament usage of nine Hebrew words indicates the universality, nature, effects, and condemnation of pride."**

It's seen in verses like:

**Psalms 10:4** says the proud do not seek God, even going so far as to say that **"there is no God."**

**Proverbs 8:13** says that God hates pride and arrogance.

In **Proverbs 11:2** we learn that disgrace comes from pride.

In **Proverbs 16:5**, the arrogant are an abomination of the Lord.

From **Proverbs 16:18** we learn that pride goes before destruction.

**Isaiah 2:11-12** tells us how God's judgment will be on the proud.

**Obadiah 3** says that pride deceives the heart.

In **Malachi 4:1** we read that the proud are like stubble.

The arrogant person feels no need for God. Theirs is a self-centered arrogance of independence apart from God. It was pride that led to the downfall and expulsion of Lucifer from heaven after his prideful boast of wanting to ascend above God.

It was pride that led to the sin of Adam and Eve who were deceived by Satan into believing they could become like God.

It was the prideful assertion of Nebuchadnezzar boasting about the kingdom he believed he had built by himself instead of heeding Daniel's advice of humbling himself in recognition that all he had had come from God.

We can read through the chronicles of the kings of both Judah and Israel and see that pride was at the root of their downfall.

Wycliffe's then describes how pride is used in the New Testament which tells us the nature and operation of pride. One word is translated boastful and refers to pretension and arrogance of the boaster. This person boasts about things even though he knows he cannot keep his word but does so for his own benefit. **"It describes the man who ignores the sovereignty of God by attempting to control his own present life in an effort to shape his own future."**

The second word speaks to being proud and overbearing in our thoughts in a way that exalts self above everyone else. He doesn't do this in outward actions so much as it's an overarching attitude of the heart. He **"makes an altar to himself in himself and worships himself there."** This is the guy who thinks he's better than everyone else and sings the song "I think I love me."

The third word is one that is seen as both rude and injurious in actions. It's the kind of pride that makes a person act with violence against God and man. When it's against God, it's evident when he forgets that he is the created and not the creator. He believes he is the master of his fate and the captain

of his own destiny. This person exalts himself above God and worships himself.

When this kind of pride is exhibited toward others, this person allows his passions to rule in such a way that he becomes injurious toward others.

Scripture teaches that pride was the sin of Satan. Pride deceives the heart, hardens the mind, is an abomination of God, and is something He will judge.

Notice from our passage the pride of Saul and if we were to look at the rest of his life we will see how pride fueled his hatred for David and his unwillingness to seek God to direct his reign. Unfortunately, what we begin to see unfolding in this chapter is the true character of Saul.

Tony Evans summarizes it this way: **“It didn’t take long for Saul’s personal and spiritual defects to manifest themselves; to his own destruction and Israel’s detriment.”**

Now let me just pause there for a moment and say that we all have flaws of one kind or another. There isn’t one of us that is perfect. **The question is what are we going to do about them? Are we going to admit them and run to the Lord for help or are we going to be too proud to acknowledge our shortfalls and pridefully do what we think is best?**

Follow with me in **verses 2-7** and **verse 9**.

It’s here that Saul decides he needs a standing army. Three thousand are selected. Two thousand are to be under his command and headquartered in Michmash which was north of Jerusalem. The remaining one thousand were under the leadership of his son Johnathan and stationed at Gibeah. By this time, Johnathan had already proven himself as a capable military leader. These were the elite fighters of Israel, the ones who had distinguished themselves against the Ammonites. They now became the army, those serving as active duty, always at the ready. Everyone else was sent home. They were what we might call the army reserves or the National Guard. When there was a war, they would be called up to fight, but they could stay home and tend animals,

farm and take care of families.

We read in **verse 3** that Johnathan attacked a Philistine outpost at Geba not very far into Philistine territory. Now it also says that the Philistines heard about it. It didn’t take the Capital long to get the news. Here is where we see Saul’s pride begin to loom. He also heard about the attack by Johnathan. His response was to blow a trumpet throughout all Israel to proclaim the victory. In a sense, we might say that Saul was tooting his own horn here. Notice what it says in **verse 4: “So all Israel heard the news: ‘Saul has attacked the Philistine outpost, and now Israel has become a stench to the Philistines.’ And the people were summoned to join Saul at Gilgal.”**

Johnathan made the attack, but Saul took the credit.

I was watching an episode of the Flintstone’s last week. Barney made an invention that could fly. Fred thought it was a bunch of baloney until he saw the contraption work, then he took all the credit.

A person filled with pride grabs the spotlight from others, but when something goes wrong, pride blames everyone else. Filled with pride, Saul claimed the victory that belonged to his son. As king, he wanted others to look at him favorably.

Notice something else that can happen when you have pride. After hearing about the defeat at Geba, the Philistines got their army together. They amassed 3,000 chariots, 6 thousand charioteers (one driver and one soldier to fight), and soldiers as numerous as the sand. All that to say, their army appeared to be without number. It was huge. They set up camp at Micmash. Remember that’s where Saul had set up his 2,000 soldiers. Two thousand vs. an inestimable force.

When Saul’s soldiers saw the extent of the enemy, our text tells us they ran for the hills. Some hid in caves, some hid in the bushes, some hid in rocky crevices, some hid in pits and cisterns. Some even deserted the whole thing and crossed the Jordan River to escape the coming battle.

**Where do we find Saul? Verse 7** says he was in

Gilgal. We read about that place last week. It was where Joshua and the Israelites camped after they crossed the Jordan River. When the army saw how vastly outnumbered they were, they became afraid, their whole body quaked in fear.

Let's look at another passage with a similar situation, but an entirely different approach and outcome.

## **II Chronicles 20:1-13, 15-17, 20**

Let me pick out a few key passages.

**V. 3 “Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. The people of Judah came together to seek help from the Lord...”**

**V. 12 “We have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.”**

**V. 15 “Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God’s.”**

**V. 17 “Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you.”**

**V. 20 “Have faith in the Lord your God and you will be upheld.”**

Do you see the difference between how Saul and his army responded vs. Jehoshaphat and his army?

Pride says look at self, but the result is fear on the part of those who were following Saul. On the other hand, in humility Jehoshaphat said, look to the Lord, put your trust in Him.

Pride says I can in my own strength.

Humility says I can't so I'm going to look to God.

Pride results in fear.

Humility results in faith.

**What overwhelming odds are you facing right now that you want to try and conquer in your own pride?**

Let it go and give it to God. Trust Him. Seek Him. Watch Him deliver.

We see one more evidence of Saul's pride. It's found in **verse 9**. He assumed the responsibility of offering the burnt sacrifice. According to the law in **Leviticus 6:8-13**, that was a task reserved only for the priests. Yet in his pride, he said, “I'm the king, I can do what I want.” He put himself above the law.

Saul didn't learn his lesson when he found himself in a similar situation just two chapters later.

## **I Samuel 15:22-23**

Pride was the beginning of his downfall. It was looming. Pride also leads to something else that we see about Saul's character. Again, it's something we see in the heart that avoids God.

## **B. Saul's Patience Was Lacking – vv. 8-10**

Pride makes us impatient. It doesn't like having to wait on others. Patience is primarily a New Testament word and found only three times in the Old Testament. We read in **Ecclesiastes 7:8** that **“patience is better than pride.”**

Its basic meaning is one of endurance and is at times translated as long-suffering. Early church father Chrysostom describes patience as the man who is fully able to revenge himself but refuses to do so. William Barclay describes it as **“the quality which keeps a man on his feet with his face to the winds.”** Job had this kind of patient endurance in trials.

Another definition refers to a person who is gentle, yielding, reasonable and peacemaking. The person with this kind of patience does not insist on his rights.

Samuel had instructed Saul to go to Gilgal and wait for him there. After the allotted seven days had passed, the soldiers began to leave, so he took it upon himself to sacrifice the burnt offering because Samuel hadn't shown up at the designated time. Samuel showed up just when Saul finished.

Notice something else about the person who has pride. When they get caught with their hands in the proverbial cookie jar, instead of admitting they were wrong they blame someone else. As a matter of fact, Saul believed he had done the right thing. When

rebuked, Saul began to lay blame elsewhere. Saul blamed Samuel for being late as to the reason he took it upon himself to make the sacrifice. Saul blamed the scattering soldiers as to why he did what he did. The proud person takes no personal responsibility and blames others.

In his pride, Adam blamed Eve. “It wasn’t me; it was this woman you gave me.”

In her pride, Eve blamed the serpent. “It wasn’t me; it was this serpent.”

Saul said “Don’t blame me. If you had shown up on time this would have never happened.”

“It’s not my fault. If the army hadn’t started packing up and heading home, this would have never happened.”

If we begin to put the blame on others, we have a prideful heart because we don’t want to take the rap for doing something wrong. Pride will not take responsibility.

Again from the pen of Tony Evans who writes: “He was an impatient and impulsive person who made bad decisions under pressure and then tried to justify himself instead of admitting his wrongs.”

Warren Wiersbe adds that “Without faith and patience, we can’t receive what the Lord promises and unbelief and impatience are marks of spiritual immaturity. Until we learn to trust God and wait on His timing, we can’t learn the other lessons He wants to teach us, nor can we receive the blessings He’s planned for us.”

It doesn’t matter how good looking or skillful you are. Without a heart that is right with God, we won’t get anywhere. Pride justified his disobedience and made him believe that his actions were somehow pious.

One last thing we see about a heart that avoids God. Saul’s perspective was lagging.

### C. Saul’s Perspective was Lagging – vv. 11-15

Pride skews your vision, your thoughts, your reasoning, your perspective, and your decisions.

“I saw the men scattering.”

“I saw you didn’t come at the prescribed time.”

“I thought they were all going to leave.”

“I saw the vast enemy army.”

“I thought they were going to attack before the blessing.”

“I don’t have the Lord’s favor.”

“I felt compelled.” “I forced myself.” “I didn’t want to, but I had to do something.”

Saul’s wrong perspective was due to an “I” problem. It was all about him. His “I” problem led to disobedience. His disobedience resulted in God’s judgment, the throne would end with him. Now lest you think that God is being a bit too hard on Saul, let me say that Saul’s pride didn’t begin here. Instead, his pride was revealed here. It was already something that was festering in his heart and only reared its ugly head in this moment. It showed what was really in his heart.

**Proverbs 4:23 “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.”**

**Luke 6:45 “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart, brings forth that which is good. An evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart, brings forth that which is evil. For of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.”**

In other words, pride was already there. The circumstances only revealed it.

**Do your actions reveal a heart of pride?** We can hide it for only so long and then the true nature of our heart will come out. Such a heart filled with pride, is a heart that avoids God. Samuel said that his kingdom would end, and that God was looking for a man after His own heart. While not named, we know that this is David. He is described later as a man after God’s own heart.

## II. A HEART THAT IS AFTER GOD

Let’s look at seven characteristics of David that made him God’s choice, a person described as a man after God’s own heart. Let me just say, as we all well know about David, that he was not perfect, but even when he sinned, Scripture reflects a heart

that sought God, a heart that pointed to God.

### A. David Had a Heart of Faith in God

There is no clearer example of his utter trust in God than when he faced Goliath. It wasn't in arrogance that he faced the giant, but in absolute faith in God.

**I Samuel 17:36-37, 45-47**

Absolute trust in God removes any semblance of pride, because it recognizes that it is all about Him. **Hebrews 11:6** reminds us that our faith pleases God and I have to believe that as he faced this towering giant, he knew his victory didn't come from his own skill but from the hand of God in whom he trusted without reservation. For 40 days Goliath had taunted the army of Israel and they all feared, because their faith was in themselves rather than in God. David showed them what a heart of faith looks like.

### B. David Had a Heart of Obedience to God

**Psalm 27:14** “Wait for the Lord; Be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the Lord.”

**Psalm 37:7** “Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of Him who prospers in the way, because of the man who carries out wicked schemes.”

**Psalm 37:34** “Wait for the Lord and keep His way, and He will exalt you to inherit the land; When the wicked are cut off, you will see it.”

**Psalm 39:7** “And now, Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in You.”

**Psalm 130:5** “I wait for the Lord, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope.”

Waiting implies obedience. Obedience comes from your trust in the person on whom you are waiting. Waiting means you trust God to do what He says without your running ahead of Him.

### C. David Had a Heart of Love for God

Read through the Psalms and you see the evidence

of His love for God's Word. He took seriously the admonition in **Deuteronomy 6:5** to love God with his whole being: heart, soul, and strength. In **Psalm 1:2**, he found his delight to be in the Word of God. In **Psalm 119:9, 11** he found that a love for God's Word would keep his way pure and kept him from sin. In **Psalm 119:105** he understood a love for God's Word help to guard his steps and guide his paths. He loved God's Word and meditated on it even during the night.

**Psalm 119:47-48** “For I delight in Your commands because I love them. I lift up my hands to Your commands, which I love, and I meditate on Your decrees.”

**Psalm 119:97** “Oh, how I love Your law! I meditate on it all day long.”

If we love God and are in His Word, it will be our guide to removing pride.

### D. David Had a Heart of Humility Before God

The expression of David's humility is evident in the confession of his adulterous affair with Bathsheba found in **Psalm 51**. It is there that he humbles himself before God and asks forgiveness of the Lord. His humility is summed up in **verse 17** “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.”

### E. David Had a Heart of Integrity Before God

We see this in both **Psalm 51** and **Psalm 139** where he invites the Lord to search his heart and reveal any sinful way in him so that he can walk in a right way with the Lord. Even though there were times when he sinned, like the murder of Uriah, the adultery with Bathsheba or the counting of Israel's population, he acknowledged his sin and repented so that he could be right with God. He tried to do what pleased the Lord. He admitted his wrong and took full responsibility for his actions without casting blame.

### F. David Had a Heart That Sought God

**Psalm 34:4** “I sought the Lord, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears.

**Psalm 119:2-3 “Blessed are they who keep His statutes and seek Him with all their heart. They do nothing wrong; they walk in His ways.”**

**Psalm 63:1 “O God, You are my God, earnestly I seek You; my soul thirsts for You, my body longs for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.”**

David considered his soul a desert in need of water and found God to be the source of life-giving refreshment he needed. Throughout the Psalms we see time and again when David was fearful, running, attacked, discouraged, and joyful that it was the Lord he pursued to deliver him.

### **G. David Had a Heart of Worship for God**

David so longed to have a permanent resting place for the Ark of the Covenant and when he was finally able to bring it to Jerusalem even though it was still housed in a tent, he was overcome with joy and scripture tells us he danced mightily before the Lord. He didn't care what other people thought.

**II Samuel 6:14** says he danced with all his might. His worship was uninhibited. His wife Michal was incensed at his lack of dignity, thinking it was not something the king should display. David's heart openly and jubilantly worshipped God.

**Psalm 51:15 “O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare Your praise.”**

**Psalm 32:11 “Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous ones; and shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart.”**

**Psalm 100:1-2, 4 “Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs...Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name.”**

I asked a question at the beginning for you to ponder. Between Saul and David, when it comes to your heart, who are you most like. GotQuestions sums up David heart this way: **“David was a man after God's own heart because he demonstrated his faith and was committed to following the Lord. Yes,**

**his faith was tested on a grand scale, and he failed at times. But after his sin he sought and received the Lord's forgiveness. In the final analysis, David loved God's Law and sought to follow it exactly.”**

**Would God consider us people who seek after His heart or would He find pride?**