

Doctrinal Summary of
The Heart: Developing God's Heart Through Humility and Faith

In 1 Samuel 13:14, Samuel tells King Saul that God has found a replacement for him as king of Israel, finding a man after His own heart.

“But now your kingdom shall not endure. The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you.”

Samuel's statement to King Saul highlights the difference between King Saul and the next king of Israel. King Saul's heart was oriented toward himself and his own objectives. The next king of Israel would have a heart that was oriented toward God and His objectives. The phrase, “after His own heart” is translated from the Biblical Hebrew word כְּלִבְבוֹ (“ki-l-i-bah-boh”) which more literally means, “as like heart of Him” meaning that God sought out for Himself a man whose heart was one like His. Because of King Saul's failure to obey God, God sought to find a man who had a heart that held His morals, His norms and standards, and His protocols within it. That man was David according to Acts 13:22.

“After He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who will do all My will.’”

The phrase “a man after My heart” in this passage is translated from the Koine Greek phrase ἄνδρα κατὰ τὴν καρδίαν μου (“an-dra kah-tah taen kar-di-ahn mou”) which more literally means, “man according to the norms and standards of the heart of Me.” David's heart was in line with God's standards. As David grew up under the Law he aligned Himself with its teachings about morality, norms and standards, and protocols of living as an Israelite under God. His acceptance of God's instruction developed within him a belief system within that was in accordance with God's own morals, norms and standards, and protocols.

Developing God's heart within oneself requires a heart that is softened toward God and willing to receive His instruction. A soft heart is one of humility, reverence, orientation toward, and receptivity to God. It comes as a result of honoring God to be God, rather than rejecting Him as the sovereign God that He is (cf. Rom. 1:18-22). For the unbeliever this begins with accepting the gospel message and its truths regarding his sinfulness and Jesus' payment for his sin.

For the believer this continues after salvation with prioritizing the learning of God's morals, norms and standards, and protocols through the spiritual study of His Word under the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. This requires humility and reverence for God as well. As the believer humbles himself before God he places himself in the position where he is able to hear God's instruction, understand its spiritual truths, accept it as truth, and choose to rely upon it for his morality, norms and standards, and protocols.

Since the heart of man is the source of his actions, this will result in his character and conduct matching God's character and conduct. If the believer's actions do not display God's character and conduct it is because his heart is not in agreement with God's (cf. 1 Jn. 3:18-22). This is either from a lack of knowledge of God's heart or a failure to accept and rely upon (have faith upon) what knowledge of God's heart he has learned (cf. Heb. 4:2). Consequently, the believer must develop the knowledge he lacks and rely upon it or choose to rely upon that knowledge which he has already learned. This he will do if he recognizes God to be God and humbles himself before Him (cf. Prov. 1:7; James 1:21).