

Introduction:

1. Almost everyone knows that King David was called “a man after God’s own heart,” [Acts 13:22](#).
 - a. But you might be surprised to know when God said that about David. Someone says, “I think it was after David had been king for several years and had proven his faithfulness to God.”
 - b. But it was actually said while Saul was still king. In fact, it was spoken to King Saul at the time when God declared his kingship a failure, [1 Samuel 13:13-14](#). God said this about David three chapters before it was announced that David was to be the next king, [1 Samuel 16:1, 11-13](#).
 - c. While David had some ups and downs in his life, it was proven that God’s choice was a good choice, and that God’s estimation of David was a fair and accurate estimation.
2. How did God know David would be a good king? It is because God can read hearts!

The Lesson:**I. God knows the hearts of all men.**

- A. This is a territory that belongs to God alone.
 1. In the great psalm of David that extols God’s perfect knowledge of man, King David appealed to God to search his heart, [Psalm 139:23-24](#). Can you imagine David appealing to another man to search his heart? A man cannot do that. That belongs to God alone.
 2. Did you know that Matthias was chosen by God to be an apostle (to replace Judas) because God (not Peter) knew what was in his heart? See [Acts 1:24](#). God knows hearts.
 3. When God sent the gospel to Gentiles, how could he be sure that Cornelius would accept the gospel? He could be sure because He knew the heart of Cornelius, [Acts 15:7-8](#). When I go to preach the gospel, I don’t know if men will accept it or not. But God knows!
 4. At the dedication of the Temple, Solomon declared that God alone knows the hearts of men, [1 Kings 8:39](#). God knows the hearts of *all* the sons of men.
 5. And don’t forget that Jesus knows the hearts of men—because He is God. That’s why the Bible says “He knew what was in man,” [John 2:23-25](#).
 6. Like God the Father, Jesus knows the very thoughts of men’s hearts, [Matthew 9:3-4](#).
 7. When Jesus pronounced judgment on the wicked people in His church at Thyatira, His judgment was correct because He knew their hearts, [Revelation 2:22-23](#).
- B. Let’s look back at the story about young David. God sent Samuel the prophet to the house of Jesse to anoint the new king, [1 Samuel 16:1](#).
 1. When Samuel arrived, he immediately saw the oldest son of Jesse, Eliab, and Samuel judged that he would be the new king over Israel, [1 Samuel 16:6](#). Samuel’s estimation was certain in his mind, even though he had received no word from the Lord about Eliab.
 2. But Samuel’s estimation was wrong. Eliab was not to be the new king, [1 Samuel 16:7](#). Once again it is demonstrated and declared that only God knows the heart.
 3. Seven sons of Jesse passed before Samuel; the Lord chose none of them, [1 Samuel 16:8-10](#). There was another son not present—David is *the one*, [1 Samuel 16:10-12](#).
 4. It wasn’t Eliab, as Samuel thought. It was none of the other brothers. It was David. This was the man that God had judged to be a man after His own heart. God knew the heart of David. God made a good choice because He knew that David would serve His purposes.
 5. What if God had gone with Samuel’s assessment, and made Eliab king. That would have been a bad choice, because Eliab had some powerful problems in his life.

II. Eliab’s Erroneous Estimation.

- A. In the very next chapter after young David is anointed to be the future king of Israel, we see serious flaws in Eliab. Chapter seventeen is the “David and Goliath” chapter.
 1. The Philistine giant Goliath taunted the army of Israel (1 Kings 17:1-11). Saul and his men greatly feared the giant. No one in Saul’s army was willing to face him.
 2. David’s three oldest brothers were part of Saul’s army (1 Samuel 17:12-14).
 3. David was sent on a mission by his father to take food to his brothers. When David arrived with the food, he talked to some of the other soldiers who were with his brothers. It was then that he learned about the matter with Goliath (1 Samuel 17:15-27).
 4. It is at this point in the story that Eliab reacts to David being at the battlefield.

- B. How good is Eliab at reading hearts? See 1 Samuel 17:28-29a. Eliab makes a number of false charges against young David because he thinks he can read hearts. He doesn't have all the facts and makes a number of blunders in what he says.
1. He asks "Why did you come here?" and then gives David no chance to answer. Eliab says he knows why David has come. But does he know it was his father who told David to go there? Blunders like these are made when people assume they can read hearts.
 2. There is also the matter of the sheep. His implication is that David is a poor shepherd, which was contrary to fact—David having saved his sheep from a lion and a bear. But Eliab's implication is "You can't even take care of a few sheep."
 3. And then there is the major mistake made by Eliab where he claims to be able to judge David's heart. He charges him with having a proud and insolent heart. The NASB uses the words "insolence and wickedness" to describe how Eliab judged David's heart.
 - a. A false charge: He charged David with being arrogant and wicked. He is a "bad man in his heart." The allegation he makes against David is absolutely wrong!
 - b. A dangerous charge: How wrong is this man! What an injustice to David who was *the Lord's anointed*. Eliab completely misjudged David. Was it a case of jealousy?
 - c. A blasphemous charge: Eliab says, "I know..." How did he know? Has he talked to David about this? Eliab has elevated himself to the place of God, believing he knows what is in another's heart! Remember that this is territory that belongs to God alone.
 - d. An evil charge: Eliab is guilty of what Paul called "evil surmising" or "evil suspicion," 1 Timothy 6:4. These are suspicions that actually grow out of the wicked motives of the suspitioner. They suspect and accuse of that which they do not know!
 - e. A troubling charge: The surmiser causes misery: Poor David says, "What have I done now?" Evidently this was something David had encountered from his brother on prior occasions; now he gets more of the same. When people are guilty of evil surmising, thinking they know the hearts of another, they often will not leave that person alone.
 4. So here we have God's servant accused of sin. Possibly the most shocking thing of all, is that David isn't a mere shepherd boy. This is the Lord's anointed who will be king over the nation. From Eliab's point of view, God could never use someone like David who had such a corrupt heart. "Someone like David should be condemned by God, not used by God."
 - a. What a lesson to be learned here. Before we pronounce judgment on another, we had better be sure that person is not right with God. How wrong Eliab was.
 - b. This is a case of the guilty accusing the innocent. Eliab had no use for his brother. Before we say we have no use for someone, we had better be sure God has no use for that person! To be at cross-purposes with God is not good!
- C. Maybe we should leave the judging of hearts up to God, and not whittle on his end of the stick!
1. When you hear gossip about others, isn't there usually judging of hearts involved?
 2. When you hear speculation about others, isn't there usually judging of hearts involved?
 3. One godly woman was judged by others as "not wanting to be a stay-at-home wife" because she worked outside the home. She worked to help her dad pay a large medical bill. It is no one else's business why she worked outside the home; but some can read hearts!
 4. One Christian was accused of "materialism and greed" because he built a large business. Never mind that he provided jobs for dozens of employees and gave liberally to the poor.
 5. One Christian man worked especially hard at being a deacon and was accused of wanting to be "the chief of deacons." How would anyone know that?
 6. One group of young Christians worked hard at evangelism, knocking on doors every week. It was said, "Who do they think they are?" Maybe they think they are Christians.
 7. Have you ever been the victim of someone judging your heart? You know it is wrong.
 8. One man I know—a man of reputation in the church—really did nothing but good in life. He helped other folks in so many ways. Yet some judged Him to be a madman. Jesus was the victim of evil judging. Remember, only God judges hearts.
- D. Our judging is limited to what we can witness and know, Matthew 7:15-20; 7:1-5; John 7:24.

Conclusion:

1. Aren't you glad that Jesus knows your heart? His estimation of you will always be right and true.
2. He makes no mistakes in judging the hearts of men who think they can judge the hearts of others.