

After God's Own Heart
1 Samuel 13:14

Jonathan, the bold and faithful son of Saul, has seized initiative to strike a threatening Philistine force along the border of Israel. (1 Samuel 13:3) The invading response of the Philistines leaves the Israelites trembling with fear, looking to their King and Captain to deliver them. (1 Samuel 13:6-7) Here, Saul has an opportunity to lead. To lead with trust, poise, and resolve. He begins well, but upon the fading of patience, he falls back to convenience and pragmatism. He forces the issue, and offers unauthorized sacrifice to secure the aid of the LORD in the coming battle. (1 Samuel 13:9-12) Samuel arrives just as Saul drifts into expediency, announcing that now the kingdom would be given to another whom the Lord would appoint. "The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart." (1 Samuel 13:14). Why would the kingdom transfer to another? "Because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."

What is it to go after the heart of God? To pursue the heart of God is to pray, "Thy will be done." It is to seek conformity to the will of the Lord. To trust Him with what He has decreed, revealed, and commanded. "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children, that we may do all the words of this law." (Deuteronomy 29:29) "For this is the will of God, your sanctification." (1 Thessalonians 4:3) What did our Lord Jesus do to secure the redemption of His Bride? Did He not submit to the will of God, crying out, "I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart"? (Psalm 40:8) So then, *to pursue the heart of God is to seek that His will be done.*

That His will be done under pressure. Just as Moses at the Red Sea, Gideon with his 300, and our Lord Jesus in Gethsemane, we cast ourselves upon the Lord, who is willing to defend and preserve. The gravity of the burden and malice of the enemy are what humble us to the dust and orient our trust to His arm alone. The furnace is where obedience is learned. Hills present not hinderance, but opportunity. We seek to do His will precisely where the slope is steepest. "When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie, my grace all sufficient shall be your supply."

That His will be done with endurance. Waiting upon the Lord, looking up to Him who will provide according to His promise and grace. Looking out, pressing on with patience, resisting haste, choosing faithful plodding as we look unto Jesus. Endurance is the heroic, quiet, often wearied persistence of faith. Heroism strikes in the moment, but it also patiently endures with willingness to wait. We submit to His commandments, keep our vows, and wait upon the Lord, who created time itself.

That His will be done from a heart of trust. Trusting that His command is right, and that He will provide. Augustine prayed, "Command what you will, and grant what you command." (Confessions, Book 10) Can you trust Him with your own will? That if He has spoken, He will equip the heart to "make a joyful duty our sacrifice of praise"? Can you yield your consent? Oh, to think, we can cease peering around corners! We can simply trust that He who lovingly laid our path around those bends will give whatever is needed! Trust that your Father knows your needs,

freeing you to seek His kingdom and righteousness this very hour, unencumbered with restless worry for the morrow! Oh, remember His deliverances! Remember His mercies! Seek “by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” (Romans 12:1) How worthy He is! No matter the hour! “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” (Proverbs 3:5-6) This is the faith that molds heroes. Principle, not pragmatism. Conviction, not expediency.

And how such faith leads to Life! How its neglect brings decay! There are indeed blessings for enduring, trusting His revealed will! “Whoever does the will of God abides forever.” (1 John 2:17) Neither David, Hezekiah, John the Baptist, nor the Apostle Paul could claim flawless aligning with the commandments of God. But despite the clearest evidence of sin, are these not men whose hearts had been made new? Who sought and received pardon? With newly created and pardoned hearts, does the love of Christ not move us (2 Corinthians 5:14) to delight in His Law (Romans 7:22), to express our love for Christ through love for His commandments (John 14:15), and does such practiced love not birth the sweetest, purest joys? “And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.” (Hebrews 6:15) “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” (1 Corinthians 2:9) Yes! Is this not why we press on, yielding to the One who knows best, who will secure that promised day? “High King of Heaven, the victory won!”

Whatever the season, hour, or need, may we be found pursuing the heart of God. And all done in union with Christ, for the glory of Christ, in the way of Christ. His grace cures our disordered wills. Look to Him, not to self. Look to Christ, the man who delighted to do the will of God, whose heart beat and bled with love for the Law of God, who thus secured the victory, crown, and glory for Himself, and for His own.