

DAVID — WHAT DOES “A MAN AFTER GOD’S OWN HEART” ACTUALLY MEAN?

People of the Bible Study Companion

Use this beside the full study. Read the passages first. Write what the text says before deciding what the familiar phrase means.

1. Before You Begin

When you hear “a man after God’s own heart,” what definition immediately comes to mind?

2. Start Where the Phrase Starts

Read 1 Samuel 13:8–14. The phrase appears before David is introduced by name.

What has Saul done? What does Samuel say will happen to Saul’s dynasty?

What does the passage explicitly say about the man Yehovah has sought?

3. Do Not Merge Every “Heart” Verse

Read 1 Samuel 16:1–13 and Psalm 78:70–72.

What does 1 Samuel 16:7 contrast?

What qualities does Psalm 78 connect with David’s shepherding?

4. Follow David Before the Throne

Read 1 Samuel 17; 24; 26; 25:21–35.

Scene	What David does	What it reveals / questions it raises
Goliath		
David spares Saul — cave		
Abigail stops bloodshed		
David spares Saul — camp		

5. Covenant and Promise

Read 2 Samuel 7:8–29.

What does David want to build? What does Yehovah promise to build?

Which parts of the promise depend on Yehovah's faithfulness rather than David's perfection?

6. Read 2 Samuel 11 Without Sanitizing It

List the actions the narrative attributes directly to David.

What authority does David possess over messengers, soldiers, Bathsheba, and Uriah?

What does the narrator say Yehovah thought of what David had done?

7. Nathan's Confrontation

Read 2 Samuel 12:1–15 and Psalm 51.

What wrongs does Nathan explicitly name?

What does David confess? What consequences remain?

In Psalm 51, what does David ask Yehovah to change in him?

8. Saul and David — Test the Shortcut

Read 1 Samuel 15:24–31 and 2 Samuel 12:13. Both men say “I have sinned.”

Why is “David repented; Saul never did” too simple as an explanation of the difference between them?

9. Later Assessment

Read 1 Kings 11:4–6; 15:3–5 and Acts 13:20–23.

How does Kings use David as a benchmark for later kings?

What does Acts add to the “after My heart” language?

10. TEXT / INFERENCE

TEXT — write what Scripture says	INFERENCE — write what must still be argued
1 Samuel 13:14	
1 Samuel 16:7	
2 Samuel 11–12	
1 Kings 15:5	
Acts 13:22	

11. Your Conclusion

Based on the whole story, what do you now think “a man after God’s own heart” means?

What does David’s story teach about grace, leadership accountability, repentance, and consequence?

12. Coffee Break Reflection

Which version of David have you tended to remember most—the hero, the sinner, the worshiper, the king, the father, or the repentant man? What changes when you keep the whole person in view?

Passages to Revisit

1 Samuel 13:8–14 • 1 Samuel 16–17 • 1 Samuel 24–26 • 2 Samuel 7 • 2 Samuel 11–12 • 2 Samuel 13–18 • 2 Samuel 24 • 1 Kings 11:4–6 • 1 Kings 15:3–5 • Psalm 51 • Psalm 78:70–72 • Acts 13:20–23