



Scotts Hill Baptist Church

AFTER GOD'S HEART • MAN'S PLANS ; GOD'S PROVIDENCE • 1 SAM. 13:8-14 • 9/6/2026

MAIN POINT

God sovereignly works through the plans and choices of people to accomplish His purposes, and He calls us to pursue Him with a heart marked by wholehearted devotion, repentance, integrity, dependence, and worship.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

When you make plans for your life, how comfortable are you when those plans don't go the way you expected?

Have you ever looked back on a situation and realized that God was working through circumstances you didn't understand at the time?

What do you think is the difference between someone who is simply interested in God and someone whose heart genuinely belongs to God?

The story of Saul and David reminds us that God's purposes are bigger than man's plans. Saul was the people's choice, but God was preparing David to be His chosen king. While David was far from perfect, his heart was oriented toward God. Ultimately, David points us forward to Jesus—the perfect King whose heart was completely devoted to His Father.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 SAMUEL 8:4-7.

Why did Israel want a king?

What does God say their request revealed about their hearts?

Israel wanted to be like the surrounding nations, even though God Himself was already their King. God allowed them to have what they wanted, but His sovereignty was not threatened. Even through Israel's misguided desires, God continued working out His redemptive purposes.

What are some ways we can be tempted to want God's gifts more than God Himself?

How can we recognize when we are trying to make our own plans rather than trusting God's purposes?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 SAMUEL 13:8-14.

What reasons did Saul give for offering the sacrifice himself?

What do Saul's actions reveal about his heart?

Saul's problem was deeper than one bad decision. When circumstances became difficult, he stopped waiting on God and took matters into his own hands. His excuses revealed a heart that trusted in his own wisdom and strength rather than God's command.

When are you most tempted to take control rather than wait on God?

What does trusting God's providence look like when His timing doesn't match ours?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 SAMUEL 13:14 AND ACTS 13:22.

What does it mean to be a person "after God's own heart"?

How could David be described this way even though he was far from perfect?

David's defining characteristic was not perfection but the direction of his heart. He pursued God, confessed his sin, depended on God's strength, walked in integrity, and worshiped Him. When David sinned, he did not excuse his sin—he acknowledged it and sought to return to God.

Which of these characteristics most needs to grow in your life right now?

What is the difference between making excuses for sin and responding to sin with repentance?

David ultimately points us toward Jesus, the perfect King. Jesus perfectly embodied wholehearted devotion, humility, integrity, dependence upon the Father, and worship. Where David was an imperfect example, Christ is the perfect one.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Which part of David's pursuit of God do you most desire to grow in: devotion, repentance, integrity, dependence, or worship?

Where are you currently tempted to trust your own plans or strength instead of God's providence?

Is there an area where you need to stop making excuses and honestly confess and repent before God?

What would wholehearted devotion to God look like in your everyday life this week?

How can you intentionally cultivate greater dependence upon God rather than self-sufficiency?

How does knowing that Jesus is the perfect King change the way you respond when you fail?

PRAYER

Close in prayer, thanking God that He is sovereignly working through the plans and choices of His people to accomplish His good purposes. Ask Him to give us hearts like David's—hearts that are wholly devoted to Him, quick to repent, committed to integrity, dependent upon His strength, and passionate in worship. Thank God that our hope does not rest in our own perfection but in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. Pray that our lives would increasingly reflect the heart of our King.

COMMENTARY

1 SAMUEL 8:4-7

Israel's desire for a king revealed their rejection of God's unique rule over them. They wanted to be like the nations around them rather than trust God as their King. Yet their rejection did not derail God's sovereign plan. God continued to work through their choices to accomplish His purposes.

1 SAMUEL 13:8-14

Saul's decision to offer the burnt offering demonstrated his unwillingness to wait for God's appointed timing and authority. His explanations focused on circumstances and practicality rather than obedience. Samuel identified the deeper issue: Saul had not kept the command of the Lord. His failure revealed a self-sufficient heart.

1 SAMUEL 13:14; ACTS 13:22

God's choice of David was based not on external appearance or human qualifications but on his heart. Acts 13:22 describes David as a man after God's heart who would do God's will. David was imperfect and committed serious sins, but he demonstrated a pattern of repentance and a genuine desire to pursue God.

THE PERSON AFTER GOD'S HEART

The sermon identifies five characteristics of a person after God's heart:

Wholehearted devotion — pursuing God above everything else.

Repentance and humility — acknowledging sin rather than making excuses.

Integrity — seeking to live consistently according to God's ways.

Dependence on God's strength — trusting God rather than relying on self.

Passionate worship — delighting in God and giving Him praise.

David imperfectly demonstrated these qualities, while Jesus perfectly embodied them. David therefore serves as a picture pointing forward to the greater King, Jesus Christ. Our pursuit of God does not earn our righteousness; we stand before God through the perfect righteousness of Christ.