



1 Samuel 8:7-8

(7) And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. (8) According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.

1 Samuel 8:19-20

(19) Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; (20) That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

King James Version

This circumstance highlights Israel's insatiable curiosity for variety that continuously revealed their badly divided mind toward God, leading them astray. They did not want a king in Israel like God wanted. God indeed would give them a king; the book of Deuteronomy lays out rules regarding that (see [Deuteronomy 17:14-20](#)). God had nothing against the nation having a king, but He wanted that king to be a man who was subject to Him. This was the only real stipulation.

But they did not want a king like *God* wanted; they wanted a kind of king like other nations had. This is why God says that they had rejected Him. In rejecting the kind of king God wanted them to have, they were also rejecting God. This fits into the pattern they had followed from the beginning of their relationship with God, which is why He mentions what He does in verse 8.

God provided mankind with this natural curiosity. However, by nature, it is undisciplined, so it needs to be wisely managed. It is here that the underlying problem between God and man lies: We have a powerful tendency not to believe Him, and thus we will not willingly listen to His counsel, creating division. This strong need for variety, mixed with prideful stubbornness, keeps telling us that we know better than He does. Therefore, humanly we are often driven to ignore Him and His wise principles.

Despite our age, we are frequently like children—particularly like teenagers. Those in their teen years begin to think that they know more than their parents, and rebellion and hardness of heart begin to come to the fore. They start believing that their parents are awfully dumb, or not really with it, not aware of what is going on. It is almost as if they think parents have no brains.

In I Samuel 8, Israel believes that the solution to their national and personal problems is to have a despotic king like the other nations, a monarch who would rule with iron-fisted control. They apparently never stop to think that the real problem resides in each one of them, because *they* have divided themselves from Him. As the beginning of the chapter relates, Samuel's sons had separated themselves from Samuel, and the Israelites are just like Samuel's sons, having separated themselves from Samuel and from God.

All of us have divided minds to some degree. Some have quipped that this is why all of us are insane to some measure. By way of contrast, God's mind is totally undivided. This points out why Paul writes in [II Timothy 1:7](#): "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of [love](#) and of a sound mind." We need to be less like these Israelites and more like God.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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