

FOOLISH PRIDE

CORE PASSAGE: 1 SAMUEL 16:14-23

CONTEXT

From the smallest tribe of Israel, Saul was anointed as Israel's first king. But Saul quickly succumbed to pride through disobedience against God, and his kingship was torn from him and given to another, to a man after God's own heart. The Holy Spirit that had come upon Saul for his role as king also left him and came upon David, whom the Lord anointed as His new king. Yet the transition of power from one king to the next would not be immediate, and David soon found himself in the surprising position of serving the king he would one day replace on the throne.

KEY CONCEPT

The call of God is a call to humility.

As you read 1 Samuel 16:14-23:

- Reflect upon the fact that the Lord is holy, good, and sovereign, and even the wicked serve His holy will.
- Consider that David waited humbly and patiently on the Lord to fulfill His will in His timing.



TIMELINE

Samuel Anoints Saul as Israel's
First King (1 Samuel 9-10)

Samuel Anoints a New King—David
(1 Samuel 16:1-13)

David Defeats Goliath
(1 Samuel 17)

Saul Disobeys and God Rejects Him as King
(1 Samuel 13-15)

SESSION STUDY: David Enters Saul's Service
(1 Samuel 16:14-23)

Daily Readings

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 1: 1 Samuel 16:14-15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4: 1 Samuel 16:20-22 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2: 1 Samuel 16:16-17 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5: 1 Samuel 16:23 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3: 1 Samuel 16:18-19 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 6: Psalm 63 |



Scan this QR code
to access this session's
Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

1 SAMUEL 16:14-17

PRIDE SEPARATES PEOPLE FROM THE LORD.

Circle "Spirit" and underline every use of "spirit" in the passage below.

14 Now the Spirit of the LORD had left Saul, and an evil spirit sent from the LORD began to torment him, **15** so Saul's servants said to him, "You see that an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. **16** Let our lord command your servants here in your presence to look for someone who knows how to play the lyre. Whenever the evil spirit from God comes on you, that person can play the lyre, and you will feel better." **17** Then Saul commanded his servants, "Find me someone who plays well and bring him to me."

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Because of Saul's disobedience, the Lord rejected Saul as king and took His Holy Spirit from him. But because of the perfect work of King Jesus as the atoning sacrifice for our sins, believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit, and He will never leave them (Ephesians 1:13-14).

The Holy Spirit has appeared many times in the chapters surrounding Saul and David, and here He appears again. The Spirit had enabled Saul to lead and was with him throughout his kingship until the Lord finally rejected him as king for his disobedience. As punishment, the Lord took the Holy Spirit from Saul. This is the same “Spirit of the Lord” who was with David from the day Samuel anointed him (1 Samuel 16:13). The Spirit is very active in the lives of God’s people, often working in ways we do not see or understand.

What is your understanding of the person and work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers, the church, and the world?

At this point in Saul’s reign, the people closest to Saul began to take notice that he had a problem. They determined that Saul was suffering at the hands of an evil spirit. We must recognize the difference between the Spirit of the Lord and an evil spirit sent from the Lord. The former is the Holy Spirit, who shares in the fullness of deity as God, being the Third Person of the Trinity. The latter is a spirit of judgment bound by the authority of the one true God. The Lord is holy and good and sovereign, and even wicked people and spirits serve His holy will.

We should take note of Saul’s response to his torment. He listened to the advice of his servants in searching out a man who could play the lyre, but he did not turn to the Lord to ask for help. Instead, he searched for human solutions to a spiritual problem. This should illustrate for us that spiritual problems require spiritual solutions.

While our battles with temptation and sin do not correspond perfectly with Saul’s situation in this text—the Lord tests people but He does not tempt anyone (James 1:13-15)—we can see Saul’s lack of turning to the Lord as evidence of the condition of his heart. Where we turn to when we struggle often tells us about the condition of our heart. Sinful pride will keep us from the Lord, but humility will have us turn to Him for reconciliation and help.

What are some ways believers are meant to resist and fight against the pride that would separate us from the Lord?



PERSONAL PREPARATION

1 SAMUEL 16:18-23

THE LORD CALLS HIS PEOPLE TO HUMILITY AND SERVICE TO HIS WILL.

Highlight the words used to describe David in this passage.

18 One of the young men answered, “I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the lyre. He is also a valiant man, a warrior, eloquent, handsome, and the LORD is with him.” **19** Then Saul dispatched messengers to Jesse and said, “Send me your son David, who is with the sheep.” **20** So Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a wineskin, and one young goat and sent them by his son David to Saul. **21** When David came to Saul and entered his service, Saul loved him very much, and David became his armor-bearer. **22** Then Saul sent word to Jesse: “Let David remain in my service, for he has found favor with me.” **23** Whenever the spirit from God came on Saul, David would pick up his lyre and play, and Saul would then be relieved, feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE SOCIAL ORDER: Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends, Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

In a providential turn of events, Saul was informed that David, with his musical talent, might be able to alleviate Saul's spiritual struggle. Saul and his servants were unaware that Samuel had anointed David as the next king, but Saul's servants had noticed that God was with David. The Lord had anointed David with His Holy Spirit and then sent him to serve Saul, first as an armor-bearer and musician and later as a valiant soldier. This was no coincidence. We should not be surprised that David was moved by the Lord into a position to grow into his calling. Just as we see God's providential hand working in David's life, as God's people, we too can trust that God is working in our lives.

While Saul sought David for his talent of playing the lyre to remove his spiritual torment, he unknowingly ushered the next king into his court. This would be the beginning of a tumultuous relationship between Saul and David. Saul, who at first welcomed and loved David, would soon grow to despise his existence and try to kill him multiple times. David, who loved Saul, patiently and faithfully served him in an increasingly hostile environment until he at last had to flee to preserve his own life. Even then, God would be with David and accomplish His plan for David's life.

What are some ways you can use your talents and skills to serve others in an environment that is increasingly hostile to God and His plans?

As readers of this narrative, we are meant to be shocked by David's humility in this situation. David had the anointing as king; he had the anointing of the Holy Spirit—the throne belonged to him by a declaration of the Lord. But next we find David serving the tormented outgoing king. Instead of a violent coup, David waited humbly and patiently on the Lord to fulfill His will in His timing. Rather than being self-seeking, David trusted the Lord's wisdom and did not set himself against Saul.

We may be in situations where we must wait for the Lord to act. As we wait, we must continually seek the Lord and remain faithful to His Word. The Lord will uphold His people who trust Him and wait on Him.

When have you had to wait on the Lord to act, and how did you maintain trust in Him through that season?



PRIDE VS. HUMILITY

Read 1 Samuel 16:14-23 and contrast Saul's prideful behavior with David's humility.

SAUL'S PRIDE

DAVID'S HUMILITY

What warnings does this passage raise about the failure to follow God's instructions for our lives?
By contrast, what are the blessings associated with following Christ?



Key Concept: The call of God is a call to humility.



HEAD

How have you seen God's providential hand working throughout your life?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read Psalm 63. Then pray through the psalm expressing your desire for the Lord and asking for His help to grow this desire in you (vv. 1-5). Pray to follow close to Him even when this requires patience for His will to be done (vv. 6-11).



HEART

How are you tempted to pridefully reject the commands and care of the Lord, and how can you embrace humility of heart to submit to God in these areas?

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HANDS

What activities can encourage you to remain faithful as you wait on the Lord?

