

FOOLISH APPEARANCES

CORE PASSAGE: 1 SAMUEL 16:1-13

CONTEXT

We do not always value what the Lord values. This was clearly the case with Israel's first king. Saul had the physical stature and military prowess to be a great king in the eyes of the people, but he was a failure in what mattered. God's people needed a king who would follow God with a heart fully devoted to Him. Though Samuel grieved Saul's sin, God had already selected a replacement, a man after God's own heart. Israel's next king, David, would be an unlikely choice, but outward appearances do not make one faithful or righteous. For the Lord, what makes a great king is the attitude and direction of his heart.

KEY CONCEPT

God always looks at the heart over external qualities.

As you read 1 Samuel 16:1-13:

- Recognize that we must beware of looking only at exterior features in leadership.
- Remember that the Holy Spirit will equip those whom God calls.



TIMELINE

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

Saul Impatiently Offers a Sacrifice and
Loses His Dynasty (1 Samuel 13)

**SESSION STUDY: Samuel Anoints
a New King—David (1 Samuel 16)**

Samuel Challenges Israel to
Trust God Alone (1 Samuel 12)

Saul Disobeys in His Defeat of the Amalekites and
God Rejects Him as King (1 Samuel 15)

David Defeats Goliath (1 Samuel 17)

Daily Readings

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 1: 1 Samuel 16:1-3 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4: 1 Samuel 16:8-10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2: 1 Samuel 16:4-5 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5: 1 Samuel 16:11-13 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3: 1 Samuel 16:6-7 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 6: Psalm 26 |



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

PERSONAL PREPARATION

1 SAMUEL 16:1-9

HUMANS SEE WHAT IS VISIBLE, BUT THE LORD SEES THE HEART.

Highlight the verse that demonstrates how God's sight is more perceptive than human sight.

1 The LORD said to Samuel, “How long are you going to mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem because I have selected for myself a king from his sons.” **2** Samuel asked, “How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me!” The LORD answered, “Take a young cow with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’” **3** Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will let you know what you are to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate to you.”

4 Samuel did what the LORD directed and went to Bethlehem. When the elders of the town met him, they trembled and asked, “Do you come in peace?” **5** “In peace,” he replied. “I’ve come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. **6** When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and said, “Certainly the LORD’s anointed one is here before him.”

7 But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or his stature because I have rejected him. Humans do not see what the LORD sees, for humans see what is visible, but the LORD sees the heart.” **8** Jesse called Abinadab and presented him to Samuel. “The LORD hasn’t chosen this one either,” Samuel said. **9** Then Jesse presented Shammah, but Samuel said, “The LORD hasn’t chosen this one either.”

Key Concept: God always looks at the heart over external qualities.

Samuel had been mourning the consequences of Saul's poor decisions when the Lord enlisted him once again to anoint a king for Israel. This new king to replace Saul would come from the town of Bethlehem (v. 1). Samuel was concerned that Saul would hear about this and try to kill him, but the Lord took care of that. Samuel would go and make a sacrifice to the Lord and invite Jesse and his sons to the sacrifice (v. 3).

When the Lord said, "I have selected for myself a king" (v. 2), He was saying He had chosen a better king for His people. God Himself had chosen Saul as king over Israel (9:16-17), but He did so according to what the people wanted—a king like all the other nations had. While he was an impressive man, Saul's spiritual downfall revealed the shortcomings of earthly wisdom. We may want what we see, but will that be good for us? Only God knows. Therefore, in His wisdom and grace, the Lord selected a new king whose heart would follow His own and who would lead the hearts of the people to do the same (13:14).

How has God helped you to move on from mourning your past to focus on His grace for the future?

At the sacrifice, Samuel saw Eliab and assumed he was the Lord's anointed based on his outward appearance (16:6). But this was the same reason Israel was pleased with Saul as their king in the first place (9:2; 10:24). Instead, the Lord redirected Samuel's gaze to consider the person's heart, not what was outwardly visible.

We often are impressed by the external qualities of others and forget that God cares more about character than competency. The world is impressed with the outward appearance (stature, money, fame, etc.), but believers should remember that what is in the heart matters most.

What are some ways we demonstrate that we value external qualities instead of the internal qualities in others?

CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus proclaimed the importance of the heart, saying that the pure of heart will see God (Matthew 5:8), the heart is revealed by what is treasured (6:21), and that what comes out of the mouth comes from the heart (15:18). Our hearts are either turned toward God or away from God.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

1 SAMUEL 16:10-13

GOD'S CHOOSING MAY LOOK DIFFERENT THAN WHAT WE EXPECT.

Circle all the adjectives (descriptive words) related to David in this text.

10 After Jesse presented seven of his sons to him, Samuel told Jesse, "The LORD hasn't chosen any of these." **11** Samuel asked him, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," he answered, "but right now he's tending the sheep." Samuel told Jesse, "Send for him. We won't sit down to eat until he gets here." **12** So Jesse sent for him. He had beautiful eyes and a healthy, handsome appearance. Then the LORD said, "Anoint him, for he is the one." **13** So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully on David from that day forward. Then Samuel set out and went to Ramah.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: The Spirit empowers and indwells believers, intercedes on their behalf, and equips them with special gifts for the service of God's kingdom.

Key Concept: God always looks at the heart over external qualities.

Throughout Scripture, God works in ways we might not expect. When Samuel selected Saul, his impressive outward appearance put him at the top of the list for potential leaders. Now, as Samuel looked at the lineup of Jesse's oldest sons, the Lord made it clear that none of them would be the next king. That Jesse did not initially include his youngest, David, might tell us that even Jesse didn't think David would be chosen. However, God had other plans. We should not be surprised when God works in surprising ways or through surprising people. God's thoughts and ways are higher than ours (Isaiah 55:8-9).

How has God worked in a surprising way or through a surprising person in your life?

A heart after God's own is the preeminent qualification for leadership and service for God's purposes. While our talents, skills, and competencies are gifts of God, they do not make us fit to serve God. The condition of our heart before God as we serve is of utmost importance. We may be tempted to value charisma in leadership, but without character, charisma will only go so far. We must remember to value what God values—a heart faithful to Him above all else.

In David's anointing, we see the truth that the Holy Spirit will equip those whom God calls. David was a shepherd boy and the youngest son of Jesse, certainly the unlikely choice for king. Yet God still chose him to serve as the next king over Israel.

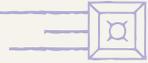
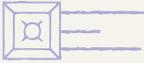
VOICES FROM THE CHURCH

"The Spirit occasionally came on Samson and Saul, to perform specific leadership tasks. The Spirit was with David 'from that day on', enabling him to rule as God's anointed king."¹

—Tim Chester

God may call us to serve in ways that are unexpected. However, if God has positioned and called us to serve, then He will provide everything we need to serve faithfully through the Holy Spirit, whom He has given to us. We must remember to rely on the Spirit's empowering presence in our lives to provide what we need to honor God with our service.

What gifts has the Lord given you that you can use to serve Him?



APPEARANCES

Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13 and discuss the difference between our human perspective and God's perspective of whom God will use for ministry.

HUMAN PERSPECTIVE

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

What does this passage teach about making assumptions regarding God's plan based on what we see?
What are some ways we can be more attentive to God's perspective for our lives?



Key Concept: God always looks at the heart over external qualities.



HEAD

What qualities are necessary in a person to be able to follow the will of God in a given situation?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read and pray through Psalm 26. Pray for integrity before the Lord (v. 1), a heart to follow God's heart and ways (v. 3), and a conviction to avoid sin and its temptations so you can boldly proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ (vv. 4-7).



HEART

What sins might you be harboring in your heart that are undermining your service to God?

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HANDS

How will you use your spiritual gifts from God to build His kingdom?

