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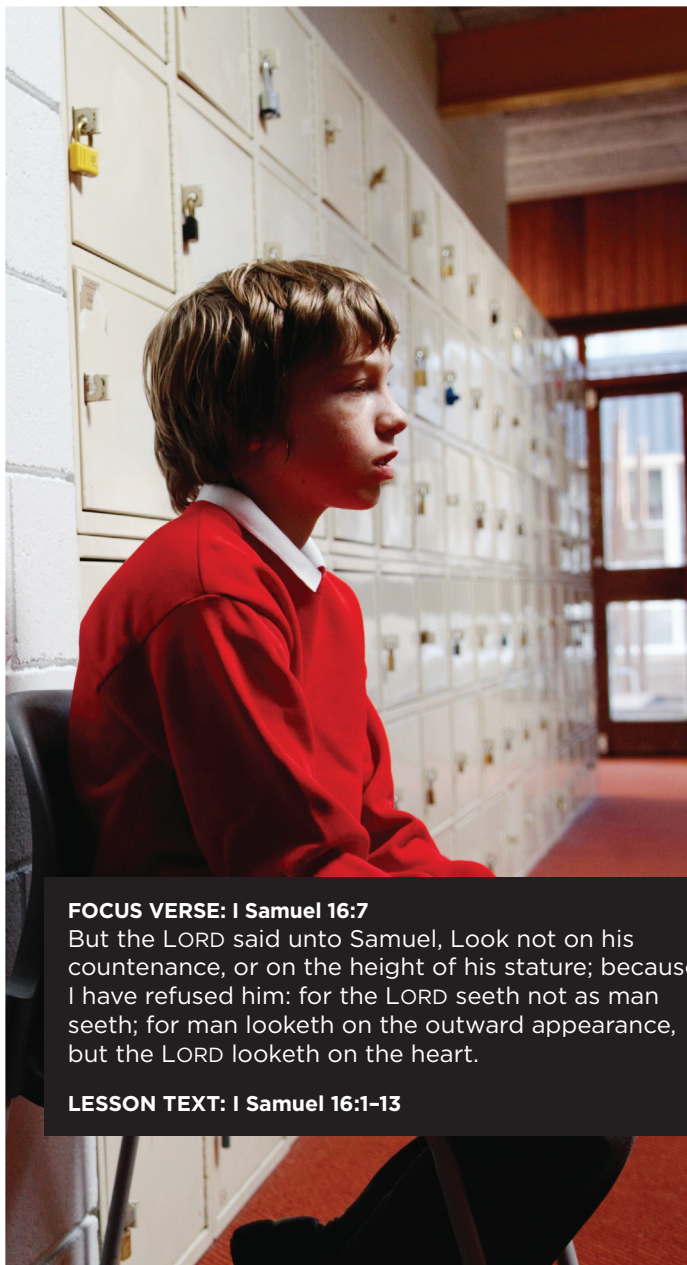
THE UNEXPECTED AND OVERLOOKED

TRUTH ABOUT GOD

God uses those the world overlooks.

TRUTH FOR MY LIFE

I will trust God when He works in unexpected ways.



FOCUS VERSE: I Samuel 16:7

But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

LESSON TEXT: I Samuel 16:1-13



BIBLICAL OVERVIEW

Lesson Text: I Samuel 16:1-13

The previous chapter (I Samuel 15) ended on an ominous note: after Saul's disobedience in regard to the Amalekites, Samuel never saw Saul again. Samuel mourned over Saul's disobedience, and the LORD "regretted" making Saul king (I Samuel 15:35, ESV). However, chapter 16 begins with hope. In the middle of Samuel's grief, God told Samuel to fill a horn of oil to go and anoint one of Jesse's sons as king. God's rejection of Saul did not mean God did not have a plan; despite Saul's rebellion, God was still in control and had a plan to care for His people. Even today, we do well to remember that God is still on the throne of Heaven and should be on the throne of our hearts, no matter who sits on any earthly thrones.

David's anointing is an important landmark in Israelite history. David would eventually be heralded as the best king Israel ever experienced, but his origins were anything but royal. David was relegated to fieldwork while his brothers were paraded in front of the prophet Samuel as potential future kings of Israel. David was not the tallest or handsomest; he was an afterthought in the minds of his own family. Even Samuel was enraptured by David's kingly looking brothers. God had to remind the prophet not to consider the individual's external appearance. God was attracted to David's heart, which made David more qualified to lead than any physical attributes.

David's seven brothers were all paraded in front of Samuel, and Samuel replied each time that the LORD had not chosen that young man. Samuel's submission to God's will provided an important example of following God's direction when choosing leaders. The leaders God wants to appoint over us might not be the most obvious by human reasoning, so we must be in tune with God's Spirit to make sure we are following His will.

After David was identified, Samuel drenched him with the anointing oil. Even though David would not become king for many more years, the Spirit of God came on David as soon as he was anointed. Sometimes the fulfillment of God's prophecies and promises do not come to pass for many years. However, God's Word is no less valid if what He says comes to pass immediately or after a long period of time. God's Spirit sustained David in the interim, just as His Holy Spirit still sustains us today during life's waiting periods.

DESPITE SAUL'S REBELLION, GOD WAS STILL IN CONTROL AND HAD A PLAN TO CARE FOR HIS PEOPLE.

DAY 1

I Samuel 16:1-2a

¹ And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons. ² And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me.

Biblical Insight

Samuel mourned for Saul failing to live up to his potential. Samuel had anointed Saul to be king over Israel (I Samuel 10:1), just as Samuel would now anoint David. However, Samuel's mourning was matched by fear because he saw how evil Saul had become.

These two verses demonstrate the importance of recognizing God's sovereignty over our own emotions. Samuel felt grief and fear, but God saw past Samuel's present emotions and looked forward to the future king of Israel. We also must learn to trust God's guidance over our own temporary feelings.

Daily Devotion

The flamboyant and brash General George Armstrong Custer was ordered to locate the encampment of Sioux Native Americans in the Bighorn Mountains and trap them until reinforcements arrived, but Custer decided to ignore orders. Confident in his well-trained troops and armed with the latest weapons, General Custer and his troops engaged the Sioux and Cheyenne on June 25, 1876. Immediately, three thousand Sioux warriors led by Crazy Horse descended upon Custer's regiment. Within hours, General Custer and his entire seventh cavalry were dead.

Custer's Last Stand is a reminder of the high price of pride. Because of General Custer's prideful disobedience, his entire regiment died. Because of King Saul's prideful disobedience, his entire nation suffered.

Likewise, our prideful disobedience to God and His Word also leads to suffering. Our families and those we lead cannot afford for us to live in prideful disobedience to God.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 2

I Samuel 16:2b-5

² And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD. ³ And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee. ⁴ And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Beth-lehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably? ⁵ And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

Biblical Insight

Interestingly, God Himself suggested Samuel go to Bethlehem under the guise of making an animal sacrifice. While this act was not direct deception, God likely made this allowance because of Samuel's trepidation. Animal sacrifices were typically associated with the Levitical priesthood, but in Samuel's era it was common for prophets to make and bless sacrifices among the people. We see Samuel making and blessing sacrifices in I Samuel 9:12-13 (when Saul first encountered Samuel), 10:8 (after Saul was anointed and Samuel promised to meet him at Gilgal), and 13:8-12 (where Saul famously did not wait for Samuel and offered sacrifices himself).

Daily Devotion

On May 10, 1869, a single word telegram to newspapers—"DONE!"—resulted in a storm of headlines, brass bands heralding a heroic feat, and bells ringing out across the United States. Railroad tycoon Leland Stanford slammed the ceremonial golden spike at Promontory Point, creating the country's first transcontinental railroad, the Pacific Railway.

While the Pacific Railway is known as the first transcontinental line, it failed in its purpose. Because the tracks were exposed to blizzards and located in desolate territory, the Pacific Railway was not conducive for freight, passengers, or tourists. The second transcontinental line, the Santa Fe Railway, accomplished what the Pacific Railway could not. Because of the Santa Fe, the West experienced a "boom" in population, commerce, and innovation even though the railway never received the same accolades as its failed predecessor.

If you feel overlooked or less because you do not receive the same acknowledgement as others, don't be discouraged. Success is based on fulfilling the will of God and living your purpose, not on acknowledgements.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 3

I Samuel 16:6–10

⁶ And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD's anointed is before him. ⁷ But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart. ⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. ⁹ Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. ¹⁰ Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these.

Biblical Insight

Samuel's experience with Saul undoubtedly informed his expectation of what the next king of Israel would look like. First Samuel 9:2 describes Saul as the tallest and most handsome man in all of Israel. Perhaps Samuel presumed the next king would look similar, which is why Jesse's son Eliab immediately caught Samuel's eye. This presumption prompted God to gently remind Samuel not to look at physical appearance or stature because God was primarily interested in what was in the heart. After all, the content of Saul's heart was ultimately what led to his downfall. However, the content of David's heart was what kept him right in God's sight.

Daily Devotion

An old saying is "you cannot judge a book by its cover." While the saying sounds nice in theory, how many of us practice it?

In 2015, a new game called Judgey was created to find out what happened when readers judged books by their covers. Players were shown ten book covers in a row and asked to rate each book out of five stars. After clicking "Judge," your rating was shown in comparison to the Goodreads rating given to the book by people who read the book.

Since the game was not a scientific study, one control not accounted for was the influence of popularity. Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* was rated high even with a generic book cover. Nevertheless, a common theme emerged from the game's results—most books received a worse cover judgment than the Goodreads' ratings.

People who took the time to read the book had a different perspective than those who judged the book by its cover. The same is true with people. Many times, when we take the time to get to know someone, we realize appearances and first impressions are not always accurate.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 4

I Samuel 16:11-12

¹¹ And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither. ¹² And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.

Biblical Insight

The fact that Jesse didn't even think to call David in from the field indicates what they thought about him. Verses 3-5 suggest the gathering was completely impromptu. Obviously some time had passed for Jesse to be notified and to have gathered his sons together. It might seem as though it was necessary for someone to keep working during the family gathering, but David's work was not so necessary that he couldn't be called away at a moment's notice. David must have been close enough that Samuel wouldn't allow those present to even sit until David arrived.

Daily Devotion

On Thursday, December 17, 1903, in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, Orville and Wilbur Wright flew an airplane for fifty-nine seconds. They made history, but people did not notice them. The newspaper from the Wrights' hometown of Dayton, Ohio, did not report their historic feat. Only the *Norfolk Virginia-Pilot* and the *New York Tribune* recorded the first flight in the sports section.

The subdued reaction was largely due to disbelief. Shortly before the Wright brothers' first sustained flight of a powered, heavier-than-air aircraft, a noted professor published an article packed with diagrams and charts proving that humans could never fly. Other noted professionals who believed in aviation thought that flight for longer periods of time was impossible with cargo. Virtually no one believed that planes could carry passengers.

Because of the lack of belief, the Wright brothers struggled finding investors. The United States decided to invest in 1907 after the British government became interested in the Wright brothers.

Disbelief hinders possibility.

If we are not careful, we can allow others' disbelief in us and God's plans for our lives to hinder our faith, obedience, and future. Listen to the voice of God and trust Him.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 5

I Samuel 16:13

¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

Biblical Insight

The language of David's anointing parallels Saul's anointing in I Samuel 10:1 with a couple exceptions. Samuel only used a "vial" of oil on Saul but a "horn" on David, indicating a higher quantity. Saul's anointing was private with just Samuel and Saul present, but David was anointed "in the midst of his brethren." However, just like the Holy Spirit "rushed" upon Saul after his anointing (I Samuel 10:6, 10; 11:6, ESV), the Holy Spirit also "rushed" upon David. David gladly embraced the same Holy Spirit Saul rejected, and the Holy Spirit left Saul at the same time He came upon David.

Daily Devotion

Tombstones always tell a story. Some are funny, some are serious, and some are enlightening. At Greenlawn Cemetery in Plattsburg, Missouri, a tombstone reads, "President of the United States for One Day." The tombstone belongs to Senator David Rice Atchison.

On March 4, 1849, Senator Atchison was the president pro tempore of the Senate the day President James K. Polk's term expired at noon. It was also the day before Zachary Taylor was sworn into office. Since President Polk's vice president resigned a few days earlier, Senator Atchison was the only person legally allowed to exercise the powers of the presidency. According to the law, the president pro tempore automatically became the president when the presidency and vice-presidency were vacant.

Atchison's story is a reminder that significant events can happen in just one day. We see this fact throughout Scripture. One day David became an anointed king, Mary became the mother of Jesus, Lazarus could live again, and a man was delivered from a legion of demons.

One day things will change in your situation. Do not give up.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*
