

# LOOK

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Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

**Main Idea:** We can trust that God sees our hearts and actions and still wants to use us.

**Head Change:** To know God sees our hearts and our actions.

**Heart Change:** To feel loved and supported by God to do whatever he has planned for us.

**Life Change:** To examine our hearts and actions and choose to follow God where he leads us.

## OPEN

**When have you felt left out (maybe in grade school or while playing sports)? What emotions did you experience from being left out?**

Many of us can relate to the kid on the playground who was picked last for a kickball game. Even if you weren't that kid, you still can understand the sting of feeling less than your peers. Unfortunately, many Christians can struggle with feeling unwanted by others and forgotten by God. Due to their past failures and present shortcomings, Christians can doubt their worth. But God has a different perspective on what makes us capable of doing effective kingdom work.

## VIEW

Before viewing the stream, here are a few important things to look for in Pastor Watson's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.

**How should we handle experiences from our past that made us feel unwanted?**

**What is the difference between how God sees us and how people see us?**

**In what ways can we observe a person's heart by their actions?**

## REVIEW

Pastor Watson began the session by discussing the insecurity many believers feel in their relationship with God because of their family background or past experiences. **In what ways do you relate to feeling inferior or having low self-esteem? What have you done to handle those feelings?**

David's story in the Bible illustrates God's habit of choosing the most unlikely people to fulfill his purposes. In 1 Samuel 16, David was the smallest and least impressive-looking son among seven brothers. However, when the prophet Samuel came looking for God's choice for the next king of Israel, God chose David. Read 1 Samuel 16:1–13.

**What are some details from 1 Samuel 16 that demonstrate that David was an unlikely choice to be king?**

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Pastor Watson reminded us that nothing about your past disqualifies you from being chosen by God. He encouraged us by saying, “God does have something to give [you], even with what you’ve been through and gone through in your life.” **In what ways has your past experiences or family background affected your walk with God?**

**How has God’s Word healed your past hurts and helped you grow closer to him?**

**In what ways has God’s Word improved the way you feel about yourself?**

God has chosen all his children for kingdom work. He has given all of us something to do in this life according to his purposes. **When have you felt that God uniquely chose you for a task or job?**

God does not qualify people for his work based on the world’s standards. God sees people for what truly matters—our hearts. Pastor Watson said we should be confident in who we are and in the tasks God has given us because God is watching us. **What difference does it make in your relationship with God to know that he is paying attention to your heart and actions?**

God chose David because of David’s heart while everyone else looked at David’s outer appearance. **In what ways can knowing that God sees our hearts be intimidating? Encouraging?**

In the Bible, putting on clothing or armor is often a metaphor for righteous living. Pastor Watson said, “You always know the heart by how a person presents themselves.” **How can we balance the idea that God looks primarily at our hearts with Pastor Watson’s claim that God cares about our outward behavior?**

The way we act indicates our readiness to participate in God’s purposes. **What are some ways we can reflect an unfaithful heart through our actions?**

God cares about how we act because we represent him to the world. But Christians can often put on a “cultural outfit” when God calls them to kingdom work, acting more like the world than like Jesus. **What are some examples of “cultural clothes” that you need to take off in order to do what God has called you to do?**

Pastor Watson said God has invited all of us to attend his “purpose party” so that we can join God in his work in the world. God wants us at his banquet. But we must be ready to follow him when he calls. **What could it look like for you to be ready to participate in what Pastor Watson calls God’s “purpose party”?**

## **BIBLE EXPLORATION**

This lesson is all about how God always sees what’s going on in our hearts. But sometimes we try to hide from God. We can get angry, become jealous, or hold on to pride that we know displeases him and attempt to hide from him. The Bible has a lot to say about purifying our hearts to nurture our relationship with God.

Read Jeremiah 17:9–10.

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When the Bible discusses the heart, it usually is not using it as a medical term for the muscle that pumps blood throughout your body. Instead, the heart is the seat of your emotions and desires and an indicator of the state of your soul. Jeremiah plainly states why we should not trust our hearts in verse 9. **What stands out to you about Jeremiah's warning concerning the nature of the human heart?**

**In what ways has your heart been deceitful?**

In verse 10, God declares that he examines our hearts. **How do God's words in this verse relate to what Pastor Watson said about how God sees us differently than people do?**

Since God sees our hearts, it is impossible to hide the true intentions of our actions from him. **Why is it dangerous to appear to do righteous deeds without cultivating a heart to serve God?**

**When have you noticed that your heart and actions did not align? How did God use that situation to grow your relationship with him?**

**What are some practical ways you can examine yourself to determine if your righteous living is sincere?**

Our hearts matter. But so do our actions. God cares about both—he's interested in completely transforming our inner selves as well as our outward actions. So what does it look like to act in a way that pleases God?

Read Matthew 22:1–14.

Before the parable begins, Jesus states that he is about to describe what the “kingdom of heaven like.” **After reading the parable, how would you describe the kingdom of heaven?**

This parable tells the story of a king and his banquet. The king is furious when all his elected guests dismiss his invitation. In verses 9–10, he declares that the first invitees were no longer worthy to come, and then he opens the invitation to anyone his servants could find. **In what ways does the open invitation at the end of the parable illustrate God's heart for all people?**

The king's open invitation reflects Jesus's invitation to us—he wants us to be a part of his kingdom. **What difference does it make in your faith to know God has invited you into his kingdom?**

The king then comes into the banquet to meet the new guests and notices that a man in the wedding hall was not wearing a wedding garment. The man without wedding clothes had no explanation for his attire, and the king responded by arresting him and throwing him out of the banquet. **What does the king's response to the poorly dressed man teach us about the importance of our actions?**

God's kingdom is open to everyone. But, as we've seen in this session, God wants both our hearts and our actions to reflect him. Our inner transformation should spill over into how we live. **When have you seen God work in your heart in a way that affected your actions?**

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God wants to see hearts and actions align, which happens when we wholeheartedly obey him. This parable illustrates how we should be ready to accept God's invitation to do his kingdom work—to obey him when he prompts us. **What can keep you from being ready to obey God?**

**What's one area of your life where you struggle to obey God? How would you describe the attitude of your heart in this area?**

**What could it look like to join in God's kingdom work and obey him in this area of your life this week?**

## **LAST WORD**

Our actions may speak louder than our words, but both our actions and words reveal what's in our hearts. Pastor Watson challenged us to recognize that God sees our hearts and the truth about our intentions. God knows us completely, and he desires to transform us from the inside out so that our hearts match our actions.

The good news is God invites us into his kingdom work regardless of what we look like or our background. To fully embrace God's purpose for us, we must be ready to obey when he calls. When our hearts and actions align, we can experience the life God has for us.

## **DEEPER WALK**

**Read:** Reflect on the nature and importance of your heart by reading Jeremiah 17:9 and Proverbs 3:5–6; 4:23.

**Pray:** Pray that God's view of you will become more important than how people see you. Ask God to show you any areas of your life where you are unprepared to embrace the next phase of your faith journey.

**Evaluate:** Take inventory of your heart and actions this week. Are your motivations godly? Do your actions reflect Christ? Consider talking to and praying with a trusted friend about what you discover.