

RockPointe Small Groups

Judges and Kings • David: A Shepherd Slays a Giant • 1 Samuel 16:1-13; 17:1-51 •

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Main Point

God selected David as an unexpected king who showed unexpected faith in the face of a great foe.

Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Why do we tend to look at external characteristics when we evaluate people?
How might this not be the most effective way to evaluate a person?**

**When is the last time someone you were not impressed with at first ended up
making a good impression on you at a later time? What lesson did you learn?**

First impressions are easy to gain and difficult to lose. First impressions almost prevented David from becoming king of Israel.

God ordered the prophet Samuel to go to David's hometown of Bethlehem, approach the home of Jesse, and anoint the new king of Israel from among Jesse's many sons. How would the prophet recognize the new king? God would show him the man He had chosen. But it would not keep Samuel from trying to guess which one of Jesse's sons was going to be king. Samuel probably guessed based on the same factors we would use today—the person's height, strength, and beauty—in essence, his outward appearance. But Samuel was wrong, and he was pleasantly surprised at God's choice for the new king. God would use the new king, David, to do great things, beginning with the defeat of a great foe of Israel.

Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| Have a volunteer read 1 Samuel 16:1-13.

David was called because of God's sovereign choice. The new king had been chosen from a working-class family in a small town called Bethlehem. The new king was just a young man,

a shepherd, and not someone who had worked his way up to the position – he was simply chosen by God. At this time, David had no clue that his life was about to change so dramatically—he was simply carrying out his responsibilities, faithfully serving his family.

What is your initial reaction to these verses? Why was David an unexpected king?

Do you believe that God has at some point sovereignly chosen you to serve Him in some way, or do you feel more like He has passed over you? Explain.

Why do you think all of the sons of Jesse were called to stand before Samuel except for David? What does this tell us about Jesse’s thought process?

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If you were one of David’s seven brothers and not chosen to be king, what kinds of emotions might you have felt when you were passed over?

In what ways does our society advance the idea that strong or attractive people should be the leaders?

Samuel learned a valuable lesson on this day. He was sure that he knew which one of Jesse’s sons God had chosen to be king simply based on the person’s appearance and position in the family. How wrong he was! God let the prophet Samuel know that character was more important than position and beauty. Rather than for his looks, David was noticed for his excellent character.

| Have a volunteer read 1 Samuel 17:1-40.

Besides his height, what made Goliath an intimidating foe? What did Goliath’s armor reveal about himself?

At the moment we are confronted with a seemingly unwinnable situation, our natural reaction is one of fear. Sometimes we are so fearful it leads to paralysis—we know we should act, but we cannot bring ourselves to do so.

Verses 12 through 19 re-introduce us to David, whom we met in I Samuel 16 as he was anointed by God to be Israel’s next king. Several of David’s brothers had joined King Saul’s

army and went off to war. David divided his time between serving King Saul at his court and serving his aging father, Jesse, as a shepherd (I Samuel 17:15).

Until David showed up at the battle, there is no mention of God's name! King Saul and his men were too focused on themselves and their own strength. David quickly ascertained the situation and couldn't believe what he had heard the Philistine giant, Goliath, say to the army of God. David was outraged that a non-Jehovah worshipper dared to speak out against God His king.

What question did David ask aloud in verse 26? How was his response to Goliath's message different than the response of the soldiers?

Why is it important that David described the army of Saul as belonging to "the living God"? How might this have changed the men's perspective on facing Goliath?

David learned that King Saul had promised a reward to the person who fought and defeated Goliath. But for David, the real reason to fight Goliath was much more rewarding than money or fame—it was an opportunity for God's righteous name to be defended. With thousands of Israelite soldiers feeling fearful and inadequate, David drew courage from his past and trusted in God to provide a victory.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ I SAMUEL 17:41-51.

How did David honor God and call attention to Him in his speech to Goliath?

How did David act in faith in verses 40-51? For you to act in faith in a circumstance you are facing today, what would you need to do?

David knew something King Saul and his army had forgotten—that the Israelites were God's chosen people, loved and cherished by Him. As the Creator of the universe, God's unlimited power was available to His people, they only had to act in faith to appropriate it. David's confidence to face Goliath was not because of an ill-placed self-confidence. David trusted that God was fully capable of defeating the Philistine enemy.

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Is there a situation in your life that you have allowed to overwhelm you? Confess that to the Lord and ask Him to go before you in battle and fight for you.

How have you taken credit for past victories? Do you need to admit to God that you have been too self-sufficient while not acknowledging that it has been Him all along who has given you success?

What past experiences of God's faithfulness do you need to remind yourself of when facing your next Goliath?

Pray

Thank God that He loves to show Himself strong to those whose hearts are completely His. Ask the Lord to give you courage and strength to face life's difficult situations for His glory.

Commentary

| 1 Samuel 16:1-13

16:1 How much time had passed since the end of chap. 15 is unknown. At any rate, God wanted to move ahead with his plan. The command, fill your horn with oil, meant God had someone in mind for Samuel to anoint as king. Jesse appears here for the first time in the book. His connection with Bethlehem is spelled out in the book of Ruth (Ru 4:17,22).

16:2 Samuel had told Saul that God had rejected his kingship and had chosen another to lead Israel. Consequently, Samuel's travels would be of great interest to Saul. Samuel feared Saul would consider it treason if he anointed another man as king. A young cow might be sacrificed in a region where an unsolved murder had occurred (Dt 21:1-9). It is also possible that bringing a sacrifice to the LORD merely provided a pretext for Samuel to hide the primary purpose of his journey.

16:3 The presence of Jesse was crucial since one of his sons was to succeed Saul.

16:4 The trembling of the elders of the town may indicate they feared Saul's wrath if they gave support to Samuel.

16:5 Consecrate means to set oneself apart to God. It involved entering into ritual cleanness. No set "consecration checklist" appears in Scripture, though bathing, putting on clean garments, avoiding contact with a dead body, and suspension of sexual relations are mentioned in various consecration contexts. He consecrated Jesse and his sons probably means Samuel oversaw their consecration at their home.

16:6 Jesse's son Eliab later served in Saul's army (17:13,28); he apparently looked like kingly material to Samuel.

16:7 Saul also had appearance and stature, but he had proved unworthy.

16:8-9 Jesse's sons Abinadab and Shammah also served in Saul's army (17:13).

16:10-11 The task of tending the sheep often fell to the youngest. In Bedouin cultures, such work was often the task of young girls (Gn 29:9), but David's sister Zeruah (1Ch 2:16) is not mentioned in the narrative.

16:12 The Hebrew word behind healthy is related to the word for "red" and may describe either David's reddish-toned hair or skin. Beautiful eyes and a . . . handsome appearance might help a king's credibility, but ultimately God looks at the heart.

16:13 Despite God's choice of David through Samuel, apparently at least Eliab doubted David's heart (17:28). It is also possible that Samuel did not reveal to David's brothers the mission to which God was calling David. The Spirit of the Lord came powerfully on David just as he had done with Saul earlier (10:6,10; 11:6), empowering David for God's service. Samuel's route from Bethlehem to Ramah would have normally taken him directly past or through Gibeah.

| 1 Samuel 17:1-51

The Philistines were at war with Saul. Their greatest champion, Goliath (who stood over nine feet tall) taunted the Israelites for their cowardice. In ancient times it was common for champions of opposing armies to face off in a personal duel. No Hebrew had the courage to face Goliath.

Jesse's older sons were in the battle lines, and Jesse sent David to the field with provisions. David heard the defiant words of Goliath and was zealous to defend the name of the Lord by challenging the giant to combat. With the weapons of a lowly shepherd but armed with the power of God, he killed Goliath, and the Philistines scattered in defeat.

The stunning victory caused Saul to inquire of Abner, the captain of Israel's army, about the lineage of David. Since David was already in the service of Saul, the inquiry of Saul and his address to David seem out of place. Some scholars have suggested that the two accounts of David's introduction to Saul come from separate sources. This conclusion is reasonable, but this does not mean that the stories are two garbled accounts of the same event. Since Saul would reward David with his daughter in marriage, David's lineage became particularly important. Saul, therefore, investigated David's background anew.