

# Call of David

*April 14, 2024*

## Lesson Summary

### **Main Passages**

1 Samuel 16:1-13

### **Session Outline**

1. God's Plan (1 Samuel 16:1-5)
2. Different Perspective (1 Samuel 16:6-10)
3. The Heart of the Matter (1 Samuel 16:11-13)

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### **Theological Theme**

When God called David, He sent Samuel to anoint the next king of Israel. Samuel learned that God's ways are very different than ours.

### **Call to Action**

God's ways are not man's ways. We need to stop pretending and performing and trust that what God desires most is our heart.



## Leader Guide

# Call of David

### Introduction

The movie *Rudy* is about an average guy who was raised a Notre Dame football fan. His life goal was to play football for the Fighting Irish, but he didn't have the size, strength, skills, or the grades to get a chance on the team. Finding a way to be around the team, Rudy kept working, striving, and suffering. He finally made it onto the practice squad and eventually earned the promise that he could dress out for a game before graduating.

But the coach was fired, and the new coach took one look at Rudy's physical appearance and scoffed at the thought of allowing him to dress out ever. This iconic film is a picture of what happens when the heart of a person is judged more than his appearance. Rudy lived, practiced, and played with so much heart and love for the Irish that his bigger, talented, and physically gifted teammates offered to let Rudy take their place on the sidelines of the last game.<sup>1</sup> In many instances, a person's heart matters more than outward appearance. Today, we will see how important this is to God and that He always sees beyond what we can.

- ❓ What are some other examples of a person being chosen for appearance over their heart or character?
- ❓ Why is this a convenient and sometimes natural way for all of us to assess others? How does this compare with the way God judges?


### Session Summary

The prophet Samuel was brokenhearted that King Saul had turned away from the Lord and was leading in an ungodly manner. Samuel mourned the spiritual decline of Saul until the Lord instructed him to go and anoint the next king of Israel from a specific family in Bethlehem.

Samuel surveyed Jesse of Bethlehem's sons as God instructed but did not get the Lord's approval to anoint any of them. When David, the youngest and least physically impressive son, was brought before Samuel, he knew David was the one God had chosen. Although people prioritize how a person looks on the outside, God is more concerned about the inside. The heart matters most to God.


## 1. God's Plan (1 Samuel 16:1-5)

Samuel spoke to the people of Israel on behalf of God and when king Saul turned to ungodly ways, it grieved Samuel's heart. As Samuel was mourning, the Lord let him know that it was time to do something about the situation. God assigned Samuel to anoint the next king who would follow Saul. Although it may have seemed that God's plans were falling apart, the reality is the Lord knew this was going to happen when Israel insisted on having a king, and He had a plan in place. Human failure is never the end of God's plans. He is in control, and He is never caught off guard.

-  How does it encourage you to know God knows what's happening and already has plans for your life even when you may fail?

What occurred next was not happenstance. God's cares about every aspect of our lives just as He cared about the next king of Israel. Samuel was given a tall task of identifying the next king, but the Lord had already identified His chosen king, so Samuel's primary task was to listen to the Lord. The next king would be one of Jesse's sons.

Samuel's task brought about excitement but also fear. Saul was still king and would not respond favorably to the idea of another king to replace him. Saul had been warned of the consequences of his ungodly choices but ignored them and did his own thing repeatedly. Samuel was aware of Saul's depravity at this point and knew he could be killed if word got out. Samuel had a choice to obey the Lord or be overcome by his fears.


-  Where do you struggle to obey the Lord's plans, even if you know what needs to be done?

God assured Samuel that He would guide Samuel and show him the next steps to take. God spelled out the details of how the anointing would take place so that all Samuel needed to do was trust and obey. All believers will face the choice of whether to take the safe and comfortable route or trust the Lord and obey what He calls them to do. Just as Samuel had an honest conversation with the Lord and shared his fears, we can do the same. Our Lord welcomes our honesty and can more than handle our fears.

Despite his legitimate concerns, Samuel obeyed the Lord. Samuel told the leaders in Bethlehem that he came to offer sacrifices and proceeded to follow God's instruction. Samuel invited Jesse and his sons to join him at the sacrifice. Everything happened as God ordained and told Samuel it would be. We can always trust God, even when we face real concerns.


### A Dangerous Task

Samuel's task was simple yet dangerous. As Israel's kingmaker and most esteemed servant of the Lord, Samuel's actions were of great interest to Saul. If Samuel were to make an unexpected journey, especially one to a location outside of his normal judicial circuit, it would likely be reported to the king. Saul would then certainly view Samuel's actions for what they were—a threat to Saul's own claim to the throne.


-  Application: What is God instructing you to do that you need to obey and trust Him in currently?

## 2. Different Perspective (1 Samuel 16:6-10)

As Samuel began the process of selecting from Jesse's sons, he looked for who appeared the most kingly. That is what most people would do in this situation, but none of the sons was the right one. Samuel was using his physical eyes and human standards to determine which son might be the one. When he saw the eldest and observed that he was a tall, good-looking man, Samuel assumed he found the one who would be anointed.

-  What is an area of life you are most likely to make a decision based on how someone or something looks outwardly? Why can this be a problem?


But God corrected Samuel. Samuel was drifting toward the same way of thinking that led Israel to choose Saul as their first king. Saul had the impressive appearance of a leader, but this was not most important. In Samuel's case, Eliab, the eldest son of Jesse, might have looked the part but he was not the right man because he was not chosen by the Lord. Outward appearances do not define people or determine their value in the Lord's economy.

-  How have you felt rejected because of a lack of outward skills or appeal? How does this reminder that the Lord judges much differently than people encourage you?

God cares more about people's hearts than the way they look. Unlike God, we do not have the ability to determine the heart of a person. This makes it even more tempting to make decisions based on what we can see. Instead, we should seek the Lord and follow His directions every step. Christ can ask the Holy Spirit to lead us, even though we are unable to discern the complete truth about others.


God wants us to pursue His way of thinking and stay focused on His perspective instead of following our natural inclinations. Judging according to our own sight and thoughts is not always wise. We should be intentional about resisting the flesh and surrendering to the Holy Spirit. We can only do this as we abide with the Lord and continually seek His guidance.

Jesse's other sons also came before Samuel but none of them was the one God had chosen. Although any one of these sons looked the part and were perfect potential kings according to the world's eyes, none of them lined up with God's plans. It was time for Israel to see the difference between a king picked by God and a king picked by the people.


-  Application: How can you be more intentional about looking at others with God's perspective instead of according to your own thoughts and judgments?

### 3. The Heart of the Matter (1 Samuel 16:11-13)

Samuel heard from the Lord that one of Jesse's sons was the next king but then God refused each of the seven that were present. In response, Samuel acted with spiritual confidence when he could have doubted or questioned the Lord. Asking if there were any more sons they had yet to meet, Samuel revealed his faith in the direction of God.

-  What are some other ways Samuel could have responded in this seeming predicament? How did Samuel show he was no longer judging by human standards but seeking God's guidance?

Finally, David was brought forward. David was out tending sheep and had not been invited to the sacrificial feast. David was only brought at Samuel's insistence. This is another reminder that God doesn't judge by outward appearances but often chooses the unlikely or ordinary to do extraordinary things. The Lord delights in using unlikely people so that He receives the glory over people.

-  When have you seen or experienced God using an unlikely person to accomplish great things for the kingdom? When has He used you in an unexpected way?

A good shepherd takes care of the sheep and protects them from harm. He learns his sheep and they know his voice. Many of the characteristics of a good shepherd would translate in David's life to his being a good leader. His ordinary experiences would be used by the Lord to develop him into a good and godly king.

We are told David had a pleasant appearance even if it wasn't to the point that people assumed he was a kingly type of leader. Much of the oversight could be attributed to his young age. David was the youngest son, which made him the least obvious choice to be king. God's choosing David as the future king direct from the sheep fields is a reminder that we do not have to quit our jobs or be famous and important to be people after God's own heart. The heart of the matter is who we are on the inside. Samuel anointed David with oil as God instructed. Without a parade, party, or big announcement, the next king was anointed. The oil Samuel used was an outward demonstration of what took place inwardly for David. The Holy Spirit came upon David as God's chosen leader. David would be God's king, after God's own heart, empowered by God's Spirit.

- Application: Where do you need to be empowered by God's Spirit to live for Him right now? How will you seek Him for this?

## Conclusion

The account of Samuel's identifying and anointing David as future king has major implications in God's place of redemption and application for our lives today. Those who feel overlooked and marginalized should be encouraged that God sees them and knows right where they are. The Lord cares about our lives and has good plans for His people. He continually invites us to join the work He is doing all around us. God loves to use the unlikely to accomplish His plans so that He receives His due glory.

In a world that thrives on image and status, God makes it clear that what is on the inside is more important than how a person looks on the outside. David was chosen over his seven more physically impressive brothers because of his heart. Every one of us should seek to evaluate the condition of our own heart and be intentional about developing our inner spiritual person more than what people see on the outside. We do this as we seek God and His ways and are daily empowered by His Spirit.

- How have you been guilty of judging by the outward appearance? How can you seek God's perspective instead?
- What is God calling you to do currently and how will you trust Him in faith?
- How can you seek a gospel conversation with others by sharing this account about David?

## Prayer of Response

*Praise the Lord for using ordinary people to do extraordinary things. Offer yourself as a vessel to do whatever God has planned for you. Ask Him to help you see other people from His perspective and not your own.*

## Memory Verse

*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." - 1 Samuel 16:7*

## Additional Resources

- *Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel* by J.D. Greear
- *Be Successful* by Warren Wiersbe
- *1 and 2 Samuel* by Philips Long

## References

1. *Rudy*, directed by David Anspaugh (1993; Culver City, CA: TriStar Pictures, 1994), VHS.
2. Bryan E. Beyers, "1 Samuel," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 434–435.

## Disciples Multiplying Disciples





# Historical Context of 1 Samuel

## Purpose

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel describe Israel's transition from a loosely organized tribal league under God (a theocracy) to centralized leadership under a king who answered to God (a monarchy). Samuel's life and ministry greatly shaped this period of restructuring as he consistently pointed people back to God.

## Author

Early tradition suggests 1 and 2 Samuel were originally one book. Some scholars believe Samuel was largely responsible for the material up to 1 Samuel 25, and that the prophets Nathan and Gad gave significant input to the rest (based on 1Ch 29:29). This proposal, however, must remain speculative because the books name no authors. First Samuel 27:6 suggests the book was not completed until perhaps a few generations after the division of the kingdom around 930 BC. This verse states that Achish gave the town of Ziklag to David. The writer goes on to say that, at the time he was writing, Ziklag still belonged to the kings of Judah. The reference to "kings of Judah" places the writing of 1 and 2 Samuel well after the kingdom divided.

## Setting

After Israel's conquest of the land during the days of Joshua, Israel entered a time of apostasy. The book of Judges describes recurrences of a cycle with predictable phases. First, the people sinned against the Lord and fell into idolatry. Second, the Lord raised up an adversary to afflict them and turn them back to him. Third, the people cried out to the Lord in repentance. Fourth, the Lord brought deliverance for them through a judge whom he raised up. The famous verse in the book of Judges, "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did whatever seemed right to him" (Jdg 21:25), aptly describes the period. The book of 1 Samuel picks up the historical record toward the end of those stormy days.

## Special Features

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel highlight a significant transition time in Israel's history. As 1 Samuel begins, Israel is a loosely organized tribal league living under poor spiritual leadership. God's plan for his people nonetheless continued as he raised up Samuel to guide Israel's transition from a theocracy to a monarchy. Saul's kingship constitutes the remainder of 1 Samuel, while David's kingship is largely the focus of 2 Samuel.

## Extended 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.<sup>2</sup>