

**LIVES THAT REMIND US ABOUT GOD - Meeting Yourself In The Sacred Text - Part eight - Sunday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024**  
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**DAVID - THE INGREDIENTS OF GREATNESS**

- 1) **INSIGNIFICANT BEGINNINGS - 1 Samuel 16:1-13** - "The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." [2] And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me." And the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.' [3] And invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do. And you shall anoint for me him whom I declare to you." [4] Samuel did what the Lord commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, "Do you come peaceably?" [5] And he said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." And he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. [6] When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him." [7] But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." [8] Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." [9] Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." [10] And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen these." [11] Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here. [12] And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him, for this is he." [13] Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah."

David's call to becoming the greatest king in Israel's history began much like two children's baseball team captains alternately picking their teams from a line up of ragamuffin players. And David was picked **last**. You would not have picked him to be the future king of Israel. In fact, **he wasn't very high on Samuel's list either**. Samuel was much more inclined to pick somebody **older** and **more impressive in stature**(see 16:6). He had somebody else already lined up before David was even considered.

In everyone's mind, David was the baby of the family - really only fit to keep the sheep while the older brothers did the important things of life. **They didn't even think it important for David to be at the meeting to choose a king!** He was an afterthought.

Because of this, the first thing God does is remind Samuel not to judge greatness by **outward appearance** (1 Samuel 16:7). We know this in **theory**. Yet we fight the spiritual battle of constantly **making place** for ourselves in so many ways. We tend to work harder at developing **skills** than **character**. There are **image** consultants. Not **integrity** consultants.

We are such **outwardly motivated creatures**. Then and now, the qualities God looks for are **inward**. Character and purity of heart and affections is the **hard-drive** of godliness. And apparently those qualities are also **rare**. **God didn't see what he was looking for in seven individuals in sequence**. So what did He see in David?

## 2) THE QUALITIES OF DAVID:

- a) ***He had the courage to perform his duty faithfully against great obstacles - 1 Samuel 17:34-37 - "But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, [35] I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him. [36] Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God." [37] And David said, "The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with you!"***

David wasn't consciously grooming himself to take over as king when he defended his flock of sheep from attack. You can't form character authentically when you're looking for a promotion as a result of it.

Character is always formed and revealed by what you are when no one else is looking. Nobody would have seen if David chose to **abandon** the sheep when danger came. Who would have **blamed** him for backing down from a lion? He could have chosen a much easier way out. But he didn't. And **faithfulness always brings its own reward**. This principle is picked up again by Jesus in the **parable of the talents** (see **Matthew 25:14-23**).

The lesson is especially nailed down in **verses 21 and 23** - "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.....[23] His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'" The capacity of the heart for fruitfulness toward God is **only expanded by the application of faithfulness in smaller things earlier on**. Remember, you can't just **pray** yourself into faithfulness. You **serve** your way into it.

- b) **He allowed the experiences of the past to build faith for the future - 1 Samuel 17:34-37** (same text as previous point). Because God had been with him in the past, He would be with him in the future. **David had a great zeal for the honor and glory of God**. He **reckoned** God into his circumstances. He counted on God to honor that commitment.

This is a very important point. To David, the great tragedy wasn't just that the Philistines were embarrassing the Israelites. It was that they were blaspheming the name of God! His defeat of Goliath wasn't a publicity stunt. He was blessed **by** God because his genuine desire was the glory **of** God, not his own. David could not sit by and listen to that. And take note that this taunting of the Israelite's God had been going on **for 40 days!** - **1 Samuel 17:16** - "**For forty days the Philistine came forward and took his stand, morning and evening.**" And nobody was doing anything about it! **David felt it was high time to act.**

- c) ***He was a man in the habit of honestly relating all of life to God in prayer.*** This can be seen most clearly in the Psalms. Joy, anger, fear, doubt, faith and confusion are all related to the Heavenly Father in heartfelt prayer.

**Psalms 37** is an example of this. David faced the very hard issue of ***responding properly to the apparent success of wicked people.*** David wrote these words while hiding for his life while Saul hunted him down like wild game. Later on, his own son, Absalom, was trying to steal the loyalty of the people away from king David. How do you keep your heart pure and holy - free from hatred and revenge during circumstances like that? David knew how to relate even these difficult events to God in trustful prayer. He rooted all of the temporary questions and problems in the framework of eternity.

David was able to do this because he resisted the tendency to act merely on *human impulse*. He had learned to *regulate his reflex reactions by what he had come to know of the greatness and character of God*. And this can't be done without prolonged times alone, waiting in His presence.

- d) ***He had a keen sense of accountability before God - Psalm 51:1-4 - "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. [2] Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! [3] For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. [4] Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment."***

He could hold on to *leadership* and yet still admit his sins without justifying them. That is a rare combination indeed. He was a king who remained humble. Not many can hold positions of great power and wealth and influence and still acknowledge their weaknesses and remember where their strength comes from.

Notice **Psalm 51:16-17** - “**For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. [17] The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**” There's a sense in which David was way ahead of his time. He understood that outward religious practice, while important, couldn't be used as a cover for a perverse heart.

We all know David wasn't perfect. But he was still a “***man after God's own heart***” because there was no ***bluff*** in him. He was the real deal. Jesus, who knew ***we*** weren't perfect either, revealed the same secret in **Matthew 5:8** - “**Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.**”