

BIG WORD: 1 Samuel
Homework for Chapters 16-17
Discussion Dates: 11 April 2012 (in house)
and 12 April 2012 (online)

DAY ONE: Overview

PRAY for the Holy Spirit to clear your mind so that you may focus on God's Word without distractions or preconceptions. Ask Him to help you discern only what He wants for you in this reading and for this day.

READ: 1 Samuel 16-17.

If possible, read both chapters in one sitting. Make notes of any details that stick out to you, questions that rise and/or personal insights God gives you while you read.

DAY TWO: The Beginning of the End

These two chapters are the beginning of the end for Israel's first monarch. The remainder of 1 Samuel details the decline of Saul (the people's king) and the rise of David (God's king).

READ 1 Samuel 15: 34—16:1.

At the end of chapter 15 we see a permanent rift between King Saul and Samuel, the prophet. Chapter 16 opens to find Samuel still mourning that relationship. We don't know how much time had passed, but we do know that the word "mourn" used here (16:1) does not indicate a simple emotional let-down. Rather, it is a specific verb used to describe mourning over a death. Samuel was going through something heavy.

There is a time for everything (Eccl. 3:1—8). In these verse God made clear that Samuel's time of mourning was over. It had become time for action.

Samuel was very vocal about his disapproval of an earthly monarch (chapters 8 and 12), so why do you think he took the collapse of this system so hard? Why did Saul's decisions and the consequences thereof affect Samuel so personally?

READ 1 Samuel 15:22-23 and 16:1.

Both of these passages state God's rejection of Saul as king. What was the reason (or reasons) Saul was rejected?

Clearly the type of reign Saul offered was not what God wanted. What DID God want in an earthly king?

DAY THREE: A Second Secret Anointing

Saul received a private anointing before a public coronation. It appears the second king will have a similar introduction.

READ 1 Samuel 16:1—13.

What instructions does God give Samuel for how to find the next king? What should he seek?

What did Samuel find in Bethlehem?

Throughout this account, we recognize a familiar companion: fear. Samuel fears Saul (even though the two of them aren't speaking and Samuel clearly has God on his side) and the elders fear Samuel (even though he's no longer in charge because they now have a king). We cannot invalidate their fear; it is what it is. But there seems to be a fine line between a cause for fear and a lack of trust.

A popular saying goes something like this: "Don't tell God how big your mountain is; tell the mountain how big your God is."

This is what I mean by that fine line between trust and fear. One perspective looks at the opposition while the other looks at the Power that is with you.

Think of a time when you've been fearful. How could a shift in perspective change your attitude in that situation?

Could it change your situation, circumstances or course of action? If so, how?

How does one make the switch from fear to trust?

DAY FOUR: Calming the Spirits

The transition from Saul to David wasn't just of Samuel's proclamations and a sprinkling of oil. According to 16:13-14, the Spirit of the LORD moved as well.

In these verses, who had the Spirit of the LORD?

How was that manifested?

Another spirit is mentioned as well. Read verses 15-16 and 23 of chapter 16. Describe the situation here.

It seems counter-character for God to send an evil spirit, but this is not the first time we've seen this. Read Judges 9:23-24. What similarities can you identify between these two accounts?

READ 1 Samuel 16:17—23.

Saul's attendants counsel him to seek a "spirit tamer" who can sooth the king when he comes under attack. A musician seems the logical choice. This leads to Saul's first encounter with David.

What were David's credentials?

How did Saul respond to David?

Prior to this, David had already been anointed by Samuel. If he trusted God and the words of Samuel, David knew that he would one day be king. What might he have thought or anticipated upon being summoned to the palace?

Saul didn't have to wait too long between his private anointing and his public coronation. David, however, had to wait several years. Not only was there a long span between appointments, but David had to face the current king, sit closely under his service, all while keeping his secret and waiting his turn on the throne. Oh, and we haven't even reached the assassination attempts yet!

How would you respond in that situation?

READ Psalm 131.

This Psalm, written by David, attests to his humility and the focus of his heart. Is there anything we can apply to our own lives based on his perspective?

DAY FIVE: Facing the Giant

READ 1 Samuel 17:4—11.

Describe the situation in your own words.

The Philistines, namely Goliath, proposed a "winner takes all" gamble. The Israelites, once again forgetting their God and all He has done for them in the

past, responded with fear and trembling. According to 17:16, this went on for 40 days.

Why didn't the Philistines just attack the weak, spineless army of Saul? Why do you think they continued to send their champion instead of girding themselves and charging?

We know from previous chapters that Saul was a physical specimen among Israel. He was taller and stronger than anyone else. He was the king! Yet, he didn't take this battle upon himself. Instead, he tried to motivate his men, or at least one of them, to accept Goliath's challenge.

What inspirational tactics did King Saul employ?

What was David's response when he arrived at the camp and discovered the situation?

In whom did the Philistines place their trust?

In whom did Saul and the Israelite army place their trust?

In whom did David trust?

Who won the battle?

Again we see fear vs. trust. The Philistines didn't fear the Israelites because they had placed their trust in something stronger than Saul's men. David didn't fear Goliath because he had placed his trust in something stronger than the Philistines' champion.

What giants are you facing this week?

How do they compare to our God?

READ the following passages.

- Romans 8:31
- Ephesians 3:20-21
- Psalm 118:6
- Isaiah 41:10
- 1 John 4:4

What has God promised us upon which we may courageously stand?

DAY SIX: Who is this guy?

At the time of the battle against the Philistines, David had been Saul's "spirit tamer" for a while. In fact, the king had even arranged for David to leave his family indefinitely and remain in royal service.

Yet after the battle, as recorded toward the end of chapter 17, neither King Saul nor his trusted advisor, Abner, knew who David is. How can that be?

Let's take a closer look at the various factors that define David. Read through the bulleted passages to get a fuller vision of this boy soon-to-be king.

Hometown:

- 1 Samuel 16:1, 4, 18
- 1 Samuel 17:12, 58

David was from Bethlehem, a town about six miles outside of Jerusalem. Bethlehem literally means "house of bread." Bethlehem became known as "City of David," but it played a part in several biblical accounts. Rachel, the favored wife of Jacob and mother of Joseph died there (Genesis 35:16—20). Ruth met her husband, Boaz, and gave birth to Obed there (Ruth 4:13—22). Obed, raised in Bethlehem, was Naomi's son of redemption and David's grandfather (Matthew 1:3-6). Most notoriously, Bethlehem was the birthplace of the Messiah (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:6).

Family:

- 1 Samuel 16:8—11
- 1 Samuel 17:12—15
- 1 Chronicles 2:13—17

David was the eighth son in a large, prominent family. The discrepancy between Samuel and 1 Chronicles (in which David is listed as the sixth son) suggests that one son, perhaps the one never named, died before David assumed the throne.

As the youngest son, David was allotted a much smaller portion of inheritance and respect. We can see this by the way his father completely neglects his presence during Samuel's visit and the response his brother provides upon the battlefield (1 Samuel 17:28—30).

Appearance:

- 1 Samuel 16:12

Across Bible versions you'll find David described in a plethora of, quite literally, glowing terms – bright-eyed, good-looking, tan, fair, handsome, sparkling, FINE. Most older translations declare him “ruddy,” a word directly linked to the nickname of Esau. This has led many to conclude that David was redheaded. We don't know for sure what he looked like. What we do know is that the man turned heads. His appearance was striking enough for God to include mention of it in Scripture.

What part could David's outward features have played in building his inner character?

Occupation:

- 1 Samuel 16:18
- 1 Samuel 17:15

David may have been a shepherd by profession, but his reputation exceeded that role. What other occupations were attributed to him?

How, do you think, all of these components – hometown, birth order, looks, job and hobbies – may have shaped David into a good king? A man after God's own heart?

What in your life is shaping you? Is it for the better?

DAY SEVEN: The Heart of David

This is just the beginning of David's account in Scripture. As we continue to learn about him and his life, we will see directly into his heart. David was passionate and uninhibited in his praise and worship of God. He was devoted to truth and justice. He was stubborn and tender, raw and honest. He wasn't perfect, for sure, but there are many attributes of his heart that we could cheerfully apply to our own.

What do we learn about David's heart from this introduction?

Consider his relationships with his parents, his siblings and his king. Reflect upon his unwavering faith in God, his investigative nature, curiosity and creativity.

What do you have in common with him?

Which of his characteristics would you like to grow in yourself?