

## **Group Study Guide**

First Baptist Church Merritt Island

*Focusing on What God is Focusing on*

I Samuel 16:1-13

April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018

### **Main Point**

Understanding why God gives us things to do!

### **Getting Started**

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

*What is the worst job you've ever had? What made it so bad?*

*Did you enjoy telling people what you did during that time? Why or why not?*

*Do you agree that most of us find our value in what our role or career is? What kinds of things in our culture make us define ourselves that way?*

We live in a world where our value is defined by our success. Our titles, careers, or roles have become more than what we spend our time doing; we have believed the lie that these things are the definition of who we are. But God wants us to realize that we are more than just what we find on a business card. God gives us things to do for a reason, not to find identify but to serve from our identity as a redeemed follower of Christ. God defines us on a much deeper level than that. Until we expose the lie of "I am what I do," we will never be satisfied and will continue to look to achievements to tell us we are at last good enough.

### **Observation**

Have a volunteer read 1 Samuel 16:1-7.

*What is Samuel mourning at the start of this passage?*

*Why and when did God reject Saul? Read 1 Samuel 13:8-14 and 15:10-11 to aid in your discussion.*

Saul certainly looked the part of a king. No one could have had more potential and opportunity than Saul when he became king of Israel. But God looks deeper than the physical; He had selected another leader of His people, "a man after His own heart" (1 Sam. 13:8-14, NIV). God's rejection of Saul as king grieved Samuel.

*Why did Samuel initially think Eliab was the Lord's anointed? What's the irony here (see 10:23-24)?*

*What does verse 7 suggest about the qualities God counts as most important for His servants?*

Eliab evidently had the physical features of a star actor or athlete, looking every bit the part of a potential king. As Jesse's oldest son stood before him, Samuel must have compared him with the tall and impressive Saul (1 Sam. 10:23-24). Samuel, too, was believing the lie of appearance, but God reminded him that He wasn't looking at the title, the role, the looks, or the previous experience.

*What does it mean that God "looks at the heart" of the individual?*

*How does the fact that God looks at the heart counter the lie that "I am what I do"?*

*Have a volunteer read 1 Samuel 16:7-13.*

*If David was believing the lie that "I am what I do," how would he have seen himself?*

*How does God's choice of David encourage you in your current stage of life or career?*

David was an unlikely choice. He was the youngest of all the sons, the one that no one considered to be important. But the Lord looked past the outward appearance and saw the heart of a king—one who would love and follow Him. Regardless of what role you might find yourself in today, God is looking deeper. There is something much more profound than a title that defines you, just as it did David.

Have a volunteer read 1 John 3:1-3.

*Why was the love of God so amazing to John?*

*How did John encourage his readers to define themselves?*

*How is defining yourself as a child of God different than defining yourself by your job title, achievements, or accomplishments?*

God has passed down the final word through the cross and resurrection of Jesus regarding our identity. If we are Christ-followers, then we are the beloved sons and daughters of God. This is the purest expression of who we are; one that goes beyond job title or accomplishment. Furthermore, it is a definition that will never change, no matter what we do or where we go for the rest of our lives. When we know that we are the children of God, we will no longer define ourselves by anything else.

### **Application**

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

*How might truly believing that you are the son or daughter of God change the way that you view your occupation or role in life?*

*What obstacles are there in your life right now that keep you from believing this truth?*

*How can we in our group remind each other of our true source of value? That we are the children of God?*

### **Prayer**

Pray and thank God for His great love that has made you into one of His children. You are his workmanship or handwritten poem (Ephesians 2:10). Thank God that your worth and value is determined by Jesus and what Jesus did for you on the cross rather than by some external quality or your performance. Pray for the faith to believe that God's love is real and that you are truly His child.

### **Commentary**

1 Samuel 16:1-13

1 Sam. 16:1-3. Samuel had anointed Saul as king. Saul's failure hurt the prophet deeply, but he was not alone. The Lord also had grieved over Saul's conduct. The Lord confronted Samuel about his continuing distress over Saul and instructed Samuel to go to Bethlehem to the home of Jesse. Samuel's assignment was simple. He was to anoint a new king. He already had announced God's rejection of Saul. However, the prophet's inquiry reflected the inherent danger of the task. Samuel had legitimate concerns about how Saul would interpret his anointing one of Jesse's sons as king. While the prophet might have divine authority, the king had the political will and the armed power to act if he knew about Samuel's taking action to replace him. So the Lord gave Samuel a second task that would mask the primary purpose of his visit to Bethlehem.

1 Sam. 16:4-7. Perhaps the elders trembled because they interpreted Samuel's appearance as an indication a murder had occurred in the area. "Consecrate" refers to becoming ritually clean. The specific guidelines are uncertain, but they presumably involved bathing, putting on clean garments, abstaining from sexual activity, and avoiding contact with unclean objects (such as a corpse). The consecration of Jesse and his sons demonstrated Samuel's complete obedience. Samuel did not know whom the Lord had selected. Therefore, the prophet began to guess at who might be chosen. However, his faulty insight led him to the wrong conclusion. As Samuel sized up Jesse's oldest son, he felt confident this was the Lord's choice for king. Before Samuel could pour oil on Eliab's head, however, the Lord ended his silence. The Lord then explained He looks at people's hearts and not just their physical features. God's words were not what Samuel expected. Having been disappointed over Saul and having been corrected concerning Eliab, Samuel then showed where his priority was. He would listen to God's voice, look for God's choice, and advance God's purposes. External appearance does not qualify an individual to govern. The language of the Lord's rebuff linked Eliab to Saul—I have rejected him. Here, God's decision was not based on Eliab's previous behavior. Instead, it reinforced the weakness of human methodology and reminded Samuel of the vast difference between our methods and God's.

God's statement that "the LORD sees the heart" is the crux of this passage. The "heart" refers to human volition. God is much, much different from humans (see Isa. 55:8-9). His thinking and His ways are unlike those of people. His methods cannot be understood by mortal minds and are vastly superior to those of the human race. People often base decisions on visible perceptions. God's actions are based on information inaccessible to a human being. God knows and understands human volition. The message of the cross of Jesus is an example of God's methodology (1 Cor. 1:18-2:5).

1 Sam. 16:8-13. A second son was brought before Samuel. This time Jesse presented Abinadab, but God also rejected him. A third son, Shammah, was brought before Samuel. Once more, God did not select him. God rejected seven consecutive sons of Jesse. Rather than give up in frustration, Samuel sought additional information. He asked Jesse if he had any other male children. Jesse's response suggests he did not think his other son would be selected. The Hebrew word for "youngest" literally is "small, or insignificant one." The description of David as healthy is literally "reddish." It means David either had hair with a red tint or a bronze complexion. His qualification was in his "heart," and only God could evaluate that. The Lord identified Jesse's youngest son David as the new king, and Samuel obeyed God. Samuel anointed David and witnessed the Holy Spirit take control of him. The anointing took place within the family circle. To what extent was this ceremony kept secret? We do not know, but in time everyone would become aware of this new reality, even Saul. At that time the privacy of the event and the inconspicuous nature of the son being anointed combined to create little understanding of its true importance. The reference to the Spirit of the LORD taking control of David indicates that unlike Saul's, David's disposition was one of obedience. God was his primary guide in life. The Holy Spirit's control of David confirmed that Samuel had completed his God-given task. Samuel had moved on from a grievously disappointing situation. He witnessed encouraging spiritual evidence that God had used him in advancing His purpose. Having completed the assignment, Samuel returned to his home in Ramah.