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1 Samuel 16

“Seasons of Preparation”

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As we make our way through 1 Samuel, we now come to a pivotal time in the history of the nation of Israel: the transition from the first king to the second king, at least in terms of God’s selection. King Saul had disobeyed God on more than one occasion, so God chose to replace him with David. This didn’t happen immediately, because we know that David did not succeed Saul for another 15 to 20 years, but while he waited for the Lord to reveal his perfect timing, the Lord was preparing him to be king.

In this study, we’ll learn more about what it means to keep our heart right with God, relying on the Lord instead of our family background (good or bad), being faithful in the place the Lord has us, and learning to serve others in Jesus’ name.

Historical Background

1. David’s life can be divided into three “seasons”: shepherd, warrior, and king.
2. He is the most mentioned person in the Bible, with the equivalent of 66 chapters being devoted to him, including 59 references in the New Testament.
3. In Hebrew, his name means, “beloved.”
4. He was the youngest of eight sons, born circa 1040BC in Bethlehem, which is located approximately five miles from Jerusalem.
5. His father’s name was Jesse, and his mother, who is hardly mentioned in the Bible, is unnamed.

6. He was handsome, fine in appearance (fair skinned), and had a ruddy (red) complexion or hair color, and he may have been blue-eyed, which is not uncommon even in Israel today.
7. He was a gifted musician, a brave warrior, and he spoke well.
 - a. **1 Samuel 16:18** – *“One of the servants answered, ‘I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the harp. He is a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is a fine-looking man. And the Lord is with him.’ ”*
 - b. **1 Samuel 17:34-35** – *“But David said to Saul, ‘Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it.’ ”*
8. He was anointed to be the king of Israel when he was about 10 to 15 years old, he assumed the throne when he was about 30, and he reigned 40 years until his death at 70 years of age.
9. He was from the tribe of Judah, which made him an ancestor of Jesus Christ, according to the genealogy of Jesus in **Matthew 1**.
10. On the day he was anointed by Samuel, it would have been a day like every other day in David’s life up to that point, only this day was not like any other day, because he was visited by the prophet Samuel, who poured olive oil over his head and anointed him to be the next king of Israel!
11. David was about to find out that God had other plans for his life.
12. God instructed Samuel, who was in Ramah, about 10 miles south of Bethlehem, to go and meet with Jesse.
 - a. **1 Samuel 16:1b** – *“Fill your horn¹ with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.”*
13. When Samuel arrived the whole town was stirred up, because they recognized him as the prophet Samuel, and the reason is that typically, when a prophet showed up, it generally wasn’t to share good news!
 - a. **1 Samuel 16:4-5** – *“Samuel did what the Lord said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, ‘Do you come in peace?’ Samuel replied, ‘Yes, in peace; I have*

¹ The hollow horn of an ox or bull was filled with oil and capped off. In the Old Testament, the anointing oil was performed as a rite of inauguration for three primary offices of the Jewish nation: prophets, priests, and kings. The oil was symbolic of the Holy Spirit being poured out upon the person who was consecrated for a particular calling.

come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.’ Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.”

14. Jesse brought seven of his eight sons, from the oldest to the youngest, before Samuel, who was waiting to hear from the Lord as to which one he was to anoint as the new king.
 - a. Samuel had no idea who this would be because God had not given him a name, so he had to discern God’s choice as he looked at each one.
15. Eliab was the oldest, and he was apparently tall and good-looking, because Samuel must have thought to himself, “Surely the Lord’s anointed stands here before the Lord.”
 - a. **1 Samuel 16:7a** - *“But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him.’”*
16. Abinadab was next in line, but Samuel rejected him, too.
 - a. **1 Samuel 16:8** - *“Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, ‘The Lord has not chosen this one either.’”*
17. Shammah was third in line, but once again, Samuel said discerned that the Lord had not chosen him.
 - a. **1 Samuel 16:9** - *“Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, ‘Nor has the Lord chosen this one.’”*
18. **1 Samuel 16:10-11** - *“Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, ‘The Lord has not chosen these.’ So he asked Jesse, ‘Are these all the sons you have?’ ‘There is still the youngest,’ Jesse answered, ‘but he is tending the sheep.’ Samuel said, ‘Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.’”*
19. God sovereignly chose David to be the king of Israel, and his was a unique and specific calling that ultimately formed the Messianic line from Jesus would emerge.
20. Until he actually became king, David was in a season of preparation under the hand of God, who would groom, refine, and mature him, as well as:
 - a. Teach him how to respect authority so that he would be a respected leader.
 - b. Teach him how to persevere when times are tough.
 - c. Teach him how to handle popularity and animosity from others.
 - d. Teach him how to follow and how to lead.
 - e. Teach him how to deal with loneliness and fear.

- f. Teach him how to be patient and wait for God's timing.
21. Like David, we all go through seasons of preparation and waiting, and there are times between where we are now and where we want to be – or more specifically, where God wants us to be – and it's important that we learn several principles from the early life of David.

Keep Your Heart Right With God

22. What set David apart from his brothers and everyone else in Israel was his heart.
23. **1 Samuel 16:7** – *“The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”*
24. What qualified David to be king was not the external, but the internal.
25. It certainly wasn't his experience, because he had none, and it wasn't his qualifications as a shepherd boy or his maturity (he was only about 15 years old) or the average family he came from or even his boyish good looks – it was his heart!
26. What is meant by the heart is your thoughts and motives, the inward and private you, or the you when no one is looking.
27. **Mark 7:21–22** – *“For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.”*
28. **Proverbs 4:23** – *“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”*
29. “Reputation is who others think you are, but character is who you are when no one else is looking.” – Anonymous
30. God is looking to promote, bless, and use people of character and integrity.
31. It's true that people can go a long way on talent, but to get beyond that to where God wants us to be, it takes the right heart, because having a right heart is what he honors and rewards, and that's what he looks for.
32. It's the heart that either qualifies us or disqualifies us for God's purposes.

Your Family Origin Doesn't Determine God's Plans And Purposes In Your Life

33. If you've come from a good family, that doesn't determine God's plans and purpose for you, so don't rest on it.
34. If you've come from a bad family, that doesn't determine God's plans and purposes for you, so don't be limited by it.
35. It is God who charts the course for our lives, and that fact is evident in David's life, because he came from a typically dysfunctional family.
 - a. Every family is dysfunctional in some way, and that may vary to one degree or another, but someone has said, "Normal is only a setting on your clothes dryer!"
36. David came from a "messed up" family.
 - a. His father didn't even think enough of David to invite him to meet Samuel as a member of the "parade of potential candidates."
 - i. He basically said, "No, David, you need to just stay out in the fields and tend the sheep."
 - ii. "It's remarkable, isn't it, how Jesse reveals two very common mistakes parents make. Number one, he didn't have an equal appreciation for all his children. And number two, he failed to cultivate a mutual self-respect among them. Jesse saw his youngest as nothing more than the one who tended sheep." - Pastor Chuck Swindoll
 - b. The most revealing thing about David's family comes out in what David wrote in the Psalms: His brothers rejected him and his parents forsook him.
 - i. [Psalm 69:7-8](#) - *"For I endure scorn for your sake, and shame covers my face. I am a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my own mother's sons."*
 - ii. [Psalm 27:10](#) - *"Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me."*
37. [1 Samuel 16:12b-13](#) - *"Then the Lord said, 'Rise and anoint him; he is the one.' So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah."*
38. When Samuel left, David went back to tending sheep while he waited for God's timing to be installed as king.

The Immediate Thing Is Not Always The Ultimate Thing
Be Faithful Where God Has You

39. In [1 Samuel 16:14–23](#), we read the account of Saul being tormented by an evil spirit from the Lord.
- a. This evil spirit is *from* God, not *of* God.
 - b. God doesn't create evil spirits.
 - i. What this means is that he allowed an evil spirit to torment Saul because Saul had made himself vulnerable to the works of darkness due to his disobedience.
 - ii. Only God knows how many demonic spirits want to torment us, but God holds them at bay, so to speak.
 - c. The only thing that would bring relief to Saul was music.
 - i. Music can have a wonderful effect on soothing us emotionally and spiritually.
 - ii. Today, there is an entire field called "music therapy," which can have many wonderful and therapeutic benefits.
 - d. The musician that was recommended to Saul was none other than David!
 - e. Saul had no idea that David had been anointed as king to replace him, so he sent for David.
 - i. David was in Bethlehem, which is only about five miles from Jerusalem.
 - f. Jesse, David's father, had a donkey loaded up with gifts for Saul, and he sent David on his way.
 - i. We also read that David divided his time between serving Saul in Jerusalem and tending his father's sheep in Bethlehem.
 - g. God strategically placed David in Saul's court for the sole purpose of teaching David to serve the one that he would ultimately replace!
 - h. [1 Samuel 16:21–22](#) - *"David came to Saul and entered his service. Saul liked him very much, and David became one of his armor-bearers. Then Saul sent word to Jesse, saying, 'Allow David to remain in my service, for I am pleased with him.'"*

Learn To Serve

40. Serving doesn't come naturally to most people, so we do need to learn to serve, because being served is what comes naturally.
41. Serving others is a constant theme in the Bible and Jesus has set the standard as our example.
- a. One example of Jesus' servant attitude is found in [John 13](#), when Jesus washed the disciples' feet.

42. In the Bible, serving is second only to loving others.
43. [Matthew 20:25-28](#) - *"Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'"*
44. You can't be ready to lead until you first learn to serve.
45. [Galatians 5:13](#) - *".... serve one another in love."*
46. There is something about serving that prepares us and equips us for God's good purpose.
47. If you are in a season of preparation, don't rush it just wait on the Lord!

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [1 Samuel 16](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. How can we know that our heart is right with God?
 - a. Read and discuss [Mark 7:21-22](#) and [1 Samuel 16:7](#).
4. What are some of the ways you follow [Proverbs 4:23](#), and *"guard your heart"*?
5. Read and discuss the quote Pastor Gary shared regarding reputation and character. (See #30 above)
6. In what ways has the Lord promoted, blessed, or used you because he found you to be a person of character and integrity?
7. Allow the people in your group to share their "background story."
8. Have you ever felt like your family background (good or bad) was the determining factor for God's plan and his purposes in your life?

9. In what ways have you discovered that in his sovereignty, God overrides the fact that you've come from a messed up or a normal family?
10. Read and discuss [1 Samuel 16:14-23](#), and focus on the how Saul considered the immediate things as the ultimate things.
11. How has the Lord blessed you, as you've been faithful to his calling in the job, neighborhood, church, etc., in which he placed you?
12. What are some of the ways you've demonstrated patience when you've been in seasons of preparation?
 - a. Review and discuss the ways the Lord ministered to David during the 15 to 20 years he was in a season of preparation to be the next king of Israel. (See #21 above)
13. Read and discuss [Galatians 5:13](#).
 - a. How would you rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the highest) when it comes to serving others in your marriage, your family, your church, your community, etc.?
14. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: seek a right relationship with the Lord and keep their heart right; allow the ministry of the Holy Spirit to take place in their lives during seasons of preparation; learn to serve others in Jesus' name.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).