

# Total Incline

of the

# Heart



## Studies in the life of David

Text

First Samuel 16:1-13

Topic

God sends Samuel to Bethlehem to show him the son of Jesse he would anoint as the future king of Israel

Title

*"Show Me the Monarch"*

### Introduction

Whatever you might think about it, *American Idol* is a cultural phenomena. This year an estimated 100,000 people showed-up at the various venues around the country hoping to audition. When it's all over, only one of them will remain.

They are searching for one person, one in a hundred thousand, who has the right combination of talent, appearance, presence, creativity, charisma, and something intangible that they simply call "it" - whatever "it" is.

God had sent his prophet, Samuel, on a search. He was to seek out and anoint the next king of Israel. Out of all the hundreds of thousands of eligible men he would find the one. It would be David, the son of Jesse the Bethlehemite.

What was the criteria? Was it talent, appearance, presence, creativity, or charisma? Not really, though bear in mind that David had all those qualities in abundance.

There was an intangible, the “it” factor, when it came to God’s choice. In David’s case, it is spelled out for us in a couple of places in the Bible.

- Speaking of David, Samuel said to the reigning king, Saul, in First Samuel 13:14, “The Lord has sought for Himself **a man after His own heart...**”
- In the New Testament, in Acts 13:22, the apostle Paul further described the “it” factor by saying, “... [God] raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I HAVE FOUND DAVID THE SON OF JESSE, **A MAN AFTER MY OWN HEART, WHO WILL DO ALL MY WILL.**' ”

**That** is what David had that set him apart to be used by God.

Now here’s the thing. Though David was the one, **any one of us** can be a man or a woman “after [God’s] own heart who will do all [His] will.” God presents David not to *exclude* anyone but as an *example* for everyone.

The first example we glean from the life of David focuses on Samuel’s choice of David rather than his oldest brother, Eliab. It is about the choices we make as followers of Jesus Christ. Our choices are to be made more on what we don’t see, what we can’t see, than on what we can and do see with our eyes.

How is that possible? By listening. I’ll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 How Many Eliab’s Have You Chosen By Looking Without Listening?, and #2 How Many David’s Will You Choose By Listening After Looking?

#1 How Many Eliab’s Have You Chosen  
By Looking Without Listening?

(v1-6)

Israel had fallen on hard times:

- The people of Israel, wanting to be like other nations, had desired a king. After warning the people of what having a king would mean, Samuel anointed a Benjamite named Saul, who was crowned in Mizpah (10:17-25).
- Saul enjoyed initial success, defeating the Ammonites in battle (chapter 11). But then he made a series of spiritual blunders: (1) he presumptuously offered a sacrifice (chapter 13), (2) he made a foolish vow at the expense of his son Jonathan (chapter 14), and (3) he disobeyed the Lord's direct command (chapter 15).
- As a result of Saul's disobedience, God chose another to take Saul's place.

It was time for Samuel to be shown the next monarch.

1 Samuel 16:1 Now the Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons."

I don't blame Samuel for being sorrowful. In fact, we ought to commend him. Saul had gone wrong by his own refusal to do the will of God. Samuel mourned for him as we ought to mourn any who fall away from the Lord or who are far from Him.

Pouring oil from a horn over the head of an individual was the outward sign of God's selection. Perhaps Samuel ought to have already, by faith, filled his horn with oil. There *was* a man; he *would* be anointed; **better be ready!**

Readiness is difficult for us. Why be 'ready' when day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, even decade after decade, the proverbial 'nothing' happens?

**Because you won't be ready when something does happen!**

God gave His prophet scant information. A city, Bethlehem, and a family, Jesse's. One of that man's sons was the man after God's own heart to do His will.

Why not tell him which son? As we'll see, withholding David's name gave the Lord an opportunity to teach His prophet, and us, a precious spiritual lesson.

1 Samuel 16:2 And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me." But the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.'"  
1 Samuel 16:3 Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; you shall anoint for Me the one I name to you."

It's often suggested that this was fear on the part of Samuel. Perhaps. I rather see it as faithfulness. God had not yet removed Saul, so it would be awkward to anoint a successor, to say the least. Samuel wanted to know God's strategy for dealing with Saul. If God was not ready to remove Saul, what would keep him from wanting to interfere with Samuel - even kill him?

The strategy, God's strategy, was to keep the anointing hidden and secret for quite some time to come. Why?

- For one thing, though David was God's choice, **a lot of work still remained to prepare David.**
- For another, many of the greatest lessons to be learned from the life of David are drawn from his years of being a hunted fugitive. God waited so David could be more of an example to all of us.

The Lord told Samuel to go and lead the people in Bethlehem in a worship service. Afterward he would meet privately with the family of Jesse and anoint one of his sons.

When in doubt about God's strategy, *worship!* It's a great place to listen to God, to get further information from God. God promised Samuel that after worship He would show him the son who would be king.

1 Samuel 16:4 So Samuel did what the Lord said, and went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, "Do you come peaceably?"  
1 Samuel 16:5 And he said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice.

The “elders trembled.” We need leaders who tremble at the authority of God’s Word. We need to be a people who tremble at the authority of those God raises up. Not in a weird way, but in a biblical way. In a way that our hearts are pre-submitted to do the will of God once it is revealed to us.

The worship service ended. Samuel was alone with the family of Jesse.

1 Samuel 16:6 So it was, when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him!"

Eliab was the eldest son. That fact alone carried a lot of weight in Hebrew tribal culture. Everything in his experience and in his sanctified wisdom pointed Samuel to Eliab.

And this is where we pause to make our first point. Look, but always listen before you choose. To Samuel’s credit he did not act upon his own experience or wisdom. He waited.

If you want to talk about a spiritual man, a man who ought to be able to make spiritual decisions, Samuel would be high on your list. Left to himself, though, he would have made the wrong decision, a terrible decision. All his years of walking with the Lord, all his victories, all his maturity, and he still needed to listen for the immediate Word of the Lord.

**I can only wonder how many Eliab’s litter my walk with Jesus!**

What choices are you facing? Think in terms of the ‘big’ ones: career, college, marriage, job change, where to live, what church to attend.

**None of those choices can be made on the outward appearance.**

That’s not to say the outward appearance is to always be rejected, or that it makes no difference. At the end of our text we’ll see that David is described in glowing terms as far as his outward appearance.

No, the teaching here is that we cannot make our choices with **only** the outward appearance. We must listen for the Lord.

Don’t fret the many Eliab’s already on your spiritual resume. Start today to cultivate listening until God reveals His choice to you.

## #2 How Many David's Will You Choose By Listening After Looking? (v7-13)

We'll talk about how to listen at the end of or study. For now let's see the result of Samuel's listening.

1 Samuel 16:7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

We look on the outward appearance. Even if we try to factor for intangibles, by digging deeper, by doing background checking, we can't see the "heart" of the matter. We still need to hear from the Lord.

1 Samuel 16:8 So Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one."

1 Samuel 16:9 Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one."

1 Samuel 16:10 Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen these."

To Samuel it might seem God was being difficult but in reality Jesse was being disobedient. All of his sons were required to be there but one had been excluded.

Jesse had taken it upon himself to interpret the clear Word of God through his own biases. He didn't think the youngest son needed to be there, of he didn't want David to be there.

We may be listening, but we will not hear from God if we hold to our biases. Let me put it this way: Has it been some time since you've heard from God? Maybe it's because you've already made your decisions, because of your biases, before you ask of Him.

To Samuel's credit, he refused to act even when it seemed as though there was no other option.

Next comes a bit of common sense. God had sent him to the house of Jesse to anoint one of his sons. *It must therefore be that one of his sons was missing!*

1 Samuel 16:11 And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all the young men here?" Then he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here."

Who watched the sheep now that David was summoned? From this we understand that David was excluded on purpose.

Why would he be excluded? I suggest that his passion for the things of God embarrassed the rest of them. We see exactly this in about a chapter, when David will embarrass Eliab and all Israel's army when he is confounded that no one will go out against Goliath in the name of the Lord.

You see, **David thought everyone could be a 'David.'**

1 Samuel 16:12 So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!"

Notice that in the midst of teaching Samuel that He looks upon the heart, the Lord nevertheless gave a good report about David's outward appearance. Outward appearance *is* important! Our example to others is important. The way we dress, modestly, is important. Our words, speaking as the oracles of God, are important. They are not enough but they are important.

1 Samuel 16:13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

The outward sign of anointing was accompanied by the inward experience of the Holy Spirit coming upon David "from that day forward."

The Holy Spirit is God, the third Person of the trinity. He is often described as "coming upon" individuals in the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit's coming upon saved men in the Old Testament was not always a permanent

experience. Though the men upon whom He came remained saved, He is sometimes described as being removed from them:

- Samson is one on whom the Spirit came only at certain times.
- In the case of Saul, the Spirit that was given was also taken from him when the kingdom was taken away.

These men did not lose their salvation; the Spirit being taken meant that they forfeited their testimony and the power to serve God.

In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit permanently indwells you from the moment you believe on Jesus Christ for eternal life. You'll want to keep this difference in mind as we see the Spirit in operation in the lives of these Old Testament men. Otherwise you'll form incorrect conclusions about how the Spirit operates today.

Samuel listened. He only chose **after** he heard from the Lord. The Lord 'spoke' to him, probably by an inaudible voice, or by some other impression upon his heart.

A lot of people, the majority even, think God still speaks. A recent study by the Barna Group revealed that 38% of Americans are "completely certain" that Jesus speaks to them in ways that are personal and relevant to their circumstances. An additional 21% said they are "somewhat certain" that He does so, while 10% contend that Jesus speaks to them but they were not as sure about that communication. Eight percent did not know if Jesus Christ speaks to them.

In total, less than one-quarter of all adults (23%) stated that Jesus does *not* speak to them.

Having said that, **I'm not so sure that the majority of people are really listening.** Too many choices seem to be made based on the outward appearance. People's choices default to the higher-paying job, the prettier wife, the more handsome husband, the better climate, the bigger house, the more comfortable situation overall. Choices are made on yellow pads



by listing the 'pros' and 'cons.' The tendency is to choose the easier, secular path over the more difficult, spiritual path.

In short, though people claim to be in communication with God, they will almost invariably choose Eliab over David.

How do you listen to hear so you can make spiritual choices? Pray. Fast. Give to the work of the Lord. Read the Word every day. Determine that you are going to find your life by losing it for the Lord. Get involved in your church.

In other words, **be a disciple.**

Then, and only then, seek godly counsel. There *is* wisdom in a multitude of counselors, but first and foremost the Lord is your Wonderful Counselor. When you do seek counsel from men, be sure they are men who have themselves chosen 'David's' over 'Eliab's.'

God will direct you if you are willing to wait!

And he'll always direct you to choose a 'David.'