

Read 1 Samuel 16-17. When Samuel arrived at Jesse's house to anoint Israel's next king, even this seasoned prophet made a familiar mistake. Samuel naturally assumed that the tallest, strongest, and most impressive would surely be the Lord's choice. But God interrupted his thinking: "...man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." At that very moment, the one whom God had chosen was not attending the family ceremony. Instead, David was quietly doing the work of protecting and providing for the flock. Long before he wore a crown, he was already developing the shepherd-heart of a king.

Scripture does not teach that appearance is undesirable, rather, it teaches that appearance is never God's first criterion. David, after all, was handsome. Beauty, strength, talent, and ability are all gifts from God, but they cannot substitute for a heart devoted to Him. When Samuel anointed David, the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him, strengthening and equipping him for the work God had prepared. At the same time, the Spirit left Saul. It might be helpful to note here that under the Old Covenant, the Spirit came upon individuals to empower them for particular tasks. Under the New Covenant, those who belong to Christ receive the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit, who remains with them as He sanctifies them day by day. Christians need not live in constant fear that every stumble drives the Spirit away. Rather, we walk in repentance and assurance, trusting God's promise that "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9).

The difference between Saul and David becomes unmistakable in the next chapter. Both men had been anointed king before they actually wore the crown. Yet after his anointing, Saul shrank back in fear, even hiding among the baggage (10:22). David, however, left the baggage he was carrying and rushed forward when no one else would (17:22). While Israel trembled before Goliath, David trembled with a greater concern: the honor of the living God. He did not see an unbeatable giant; he saw an enemy defying the Lord. David's courage was not rooted in youthful confidence or military skill, but in a heart that had learned to trust God while faithfully tending sheep. The quiet faithfulness of yesterday prepared him for the public victory of today.

God still works in much the same way. He is less concerned with impressing the world than with forming hearts that trust Him completely. He often prepares His servants in ordinary places long before He entrusts them with greater responsibilities. Like David, we have been called to represent our King in a world that often mocks His name. Rather than shrinking back in fear, may we step forward in faith, confident that the God who calls us will also strengthen us by His Spirit to accomplish the work He has given us to do.

Prayerfully consider the following this week: Am I more concerned with outward appearances (my own or others') than with cultivating a heart that pleases God? How is God using the ordinary responsibilities in my life today to prepare me for greater opportunities to serve Him tomorrow? Where is God calling me to step forward in bold faith to defend His truth, honor His name, or serve His people rather than shrinking back in fear?

Weekly Memory Verse:

"The Lord who saved me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear, He will save me from the hand of this Philistine."

1 Samuel 17:37

Weekly Affirmation:

THE BATTLE IS THE LORD'S!

JULY 2026 GROWTH GOALS

- ☐ Read the Book of 1 Samuel
- ☐ Watch the Bible Project video on 1 Samuel (*available on the website*).
- ☐ Memorize one of the weekly memory verses.
- ☐ Consider each week a new way of intentionally using your resources (*money, mind, skills, etc.*) to another's benefit.