

LifeWay Family Bible Series for Jan. 4: God chooses the unlikely and equips them well_122203

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✘ *1 Samuel 16:1-13*

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Bill was a stutterer. All through his childhood and youth, he was the victim of unkind taunts from his peers. Prolonged speech therapy had helped, but he still stuttered and often could not complete a sentence.

But he was a devoted Christian. One Sunday morning at the close of the worship hour, Bill came forward and spoke to his pastor. The congregation was stunned when the pastor reported that Bill was convinced God was calling him to preach. Many asked, "How could Bill ever preach with his stuttering problem?" The pastor asked the congregation to pray for Bill as he followed God's leadership in his life.

After Bill finished high school, college and was about to enter seminary, he

asked his pastor if he could preach on a Sunday evening. When Bill stood to deliver the sermon, the congregation again was stunned, but this time because of the miracle they witnessed. Bill did not stutter, but spoke with confidence and conviction. Many wept, and everyone learned a valuable lesson. Those whom God calls to serve him, he equips for the task.

The anointer learns obedience

How much time had elapsed between the end of chapter 15 and the beginning of chapter 16 is not certain. King Saul had disobeyed God's command through Samuel to totally destroy the Amalekites and everything that belonged to them (15:2-3). Because Saul spared Agag, the Amalekite king, and took spoils of the best of the cattle, God rejected him as king over Israel.



Samuel was still mourning because of what had happened to Saul, in spite of the fact God “was grieved that he had made Saul king over Israel” (15:35). Samuel was reprovved for his mourning for Saul, since God had rejected him as king over Israel. God instructed Samuel to take a horn of oil and go to Bethlehem, where he would anoint one of the sons of Jesse to be the next king of Israel.

Samuel hesitated to follow the Lord's instructions because he was afraid Saul would find out and kill him. We are often slow to follow God's leadership because of fear, forgetting that God has promised to be with us and to empower us to do his will.

Furthermore, the choice of one of Jesse's sons would not be up to Samuel, for God had already chosen him. God also told Samuel there would be a secondary reason for his journey to Bethlehem. He must be prepared to sacrifice a heifer. This ceremony would be for a select few, which would

include Jesse, his sons and the elders of Bethlehem. God assured Samuel he would show him what to do. The elders of Bethlehem trembled when they saw Samuel coming, for he was held in high regard as God's spokesman. They also may have heard the recent news that Samuel had executed Agag, king of the Amalekites, whom Saul had spared.

Outward appearances are deceptive

Samuel likely still was nervous about what he was going to do, realizing his action would be an act of treason should Saul learn about it. He was anxious to get on with his assignment, and he saw Eliab, Jesse's eldest son, and was impressed with the tall, handsome young man. He was ready to anoint Eliab, when God reminded him that he did not look on the outward appearance of a person, but on the heart.

Samuel learned something we must all understand. What we see in a person is not necessarily what God sees. Abinadab and Shammah, the second and third sons of Jesse, were also impressive young men, but by this time Samuel had learned his lesson. He relied on God's impressions in his heart, and not on his own assessments. In all, seven sons of Jesse were interviewed by Samuel, and none received God's approval.

The wonder of God's surprises

By this time, Samuel may have been a bit confused. He was convinced God had chosen one of Jesse's sons to be Israel's next king. So, probably with a tone of desperation in his voice, he asked Jesse if these seven were indeed all of his sons.

Possibly with some reluctance, Jesse admitted the youngest son was in the fields, tending the sheep. "Youngest" also means "smallest" in Hebrew. Because of his youth, David likely was small in stature—quite different from

Eliab, whose height had impressed Samuel. Kings often were described as shepherds in Israel and in other countries in the ancient Near East. David's role as a shepherd may have been a prophetic indication of his coming position as the shepherd of God's people, Israel.

At Samuel's request, David was brought in from the fields. He was a handsome, striking young man. The Lord immediately commanded Samuel to anoint David as Israel's next king. David's name appears here for the first time in the books of Samuel. Two significant things happened—he was anointed in the presence of his brothers, who were witnesses of God's choice, and “the Spirit of the Lord” came upon him “in power” (v. 13).

Question for discussion

Can you think of a time when God used someone in a remarkable way whom you would never have chosen for the task?

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