

# Living the Story

## A Study through Scripture

### Introduction:

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Our story begins today with the start of another transfer of leadership. Although God told Samuel to tell the people of Israel that their desire for a king would not end well, there is still a sense of shock in seeing how bad it actually was. This king that the people just knew would lead them to a place of prominence and prestige instead ends up rejected by God for his disobedience. Samuel is tasked once again to go and anoint the next leader of Israel.

I wonder what Samuel was thinking as he set off for Bethlehem. Did he have doubts about what was to come? Did he think that his service was just being wasted because, as God had pointed out, the king would lead the people in a direction they did not want to go? Did he hold out hopes that this would finally be the one they had been looking for?

Based on the section of text we are reading today, I do know that Samuel was still looking for a king that looked the part. Much like had been the case for Saul, Samuel was keeping his eye open for someone head and shoulders above the rest.

The lesson from today's text, I believe is obvious: we need to look at people in the way God does and see where their heart is. The problem is that knowing the answer and *living* the answer are not the same thing.

### Summary of the Text:

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It is interesting to me that Samuel mourned as much as he did for Saul. I would have thought that Samuel knew what was coming and when it did, he would have simply been affirmed his correct assessment. I think the rejection of Saul by God would have led Samuel to also reject Saul and be ready to move on to whoever was next. This is not the case, according to 1 Samuel 15.35-16.1.

We at times forget that anointing a new king could be a risky endeavor, especially when the former king was actually still the reigning king. Even though we have mentally moved on to the next king, the reality is that the current king must first finish his reign before the new king can ascend the throne. Interestingly enough, David has several opportunities to "speed up" that process, if you will, but refuses to do anything to harm Saul, "God's anointed" as he will call him. Even when David hears of Saul's death, instead of rejoicing that his nemesis (and person pursuing his life) is dead, David laments (2 Samuel 1).

I am not sure I envision the arrival of Samuel into Bethlehem as a moment to fear the safety of the town. Samuel must have wielded a bigger stick than we are aware of.

We are not told of Eliab's appearance or anything about him specifically. Reading between the lines, it would appear that much like Saul, he was tall and strong. He "looked" like a king should look and Samuel obviously assumes that he would make a fine king. The fact that Eliab was the first-born must also play into the initial selection of him as the potential king.

1 Samuel 16.7 is our key verse and one that we should probably memorize: "The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. The Lord looks at the heart." The thing I am going to try to bring out in the discussion questions is: What if we looked and saw people like God saw them? How would our treatment of them change? How would our relationship with them change? How would we value them differently?

### LESSON #11

**Date:** 11/18/2012

**Text:** 1 Samuel 16.1-7

**The Story:** Chapter 11

**The Big Picture:** They say first impressions are often the lasting impressions, but how often does someone's heart create the first impression we see? How can we see with God's eyes, rather than our own eyes?

**Materials Needed:** Blank sheet of paper to draw on, Pencil or pen.

*Preparing for the Group Time:*

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We often assume that we grow out of some of the prejudices we may have had as a child. I grew up in an era where Izod shirts and Girbaud jeans were all the rage. You could not really be cool, much less hang out with the “cool” people unless you wore at least one, if not both, of these precious articles of clothing. I can remember the conflicts I had with my mom over her lack of understanding and refusal to allow me to be part of the “in” crowd. I could not see past those clothes. If I did not have them, I was nothing and everyone who knew me knew it.

Boy, am I glad that I no longer judge people by their clothes. Well, at least I would hope I do not, but if I am really honest, there are many times I categorize people by their clothes or possessions or size of their house or neighborhood or occupation or, well, the list goes on and on.

Spend some time before our lesson this week thinking through the ways you may be looking at the outward appearance of people rather than looking at their heart. This, by the way, can be both inclusive and exclusive. We accept certain people because they fit our standard of “acceptable,” and we reject people because they are, well, awkward to be around.

Think specifically about your group. How do they fit in your set of criteria? Spend some time in prayer this week that you will see each and every one of your group members only as God seems them.

**Living the Story**  
Lesson #11  
Text: 1 Samuel 16.1-7

*Lesson Outline:*

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We are going to have a slightly different icebreaker this week. Give everyone a blank piece of paper and a pencil or something to write with. Then, ask everyone in your group to draw themselves. Allow everyone a few minutes to complete this and then have everyone show his or her pictures.

Read 1 Samuel 16.1-7.

Go through the discussion questions.

Go back and have people alter their pictures (or redo them), asking them to draw themselves based on what God sees. Spend some time talking about how they would draw something different than their original picture. What would be different and why?

*Discussion Questions:*

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Why do you think Samuel mourned the fact that God had rejected Saul as king? Why wouldn't he have just accepted this and moved on, focusing on the next leader of Israel?

What characteristics do you think Eliab had that made Samuel assume he would be the next king?

How do you think Eliab and Jesse felt when David was anointed as the next king?

What does it mean for someone to "look at the heart" like God does? How can we even see someone's heart?

How does our refusal to look at the heart of other's around us lead us to marginalize and perhaps even oppress others?

How does our looking at someone's heart alter the way we treat him or her? Can you think of any specific examples that you are aware of in which someone was treated differently after their heart was revealed?

What are some specific ways you and the members of this group can do a better job this week of looking at people's hearts instead of what humans look at?

*For the Children:*

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I would be very interested in seeing how your children draw their humankind/God's view pictures. I hope and pray that how they see themselves is very much as God sees them, but we all know that as we grow older, we tend to look at ourselves through the eyes of others. We miss that which God sees often times.

As you go through this exercise with your children, take this as a moment to say a blessing for each of your children as they share their picture. I know that we do this often, but I am not sure we do it often enough. If a child in your group does not see themselves through God's eyes, provide that vision for them. Affirm the ways they bless those people around them and tell them you are thankful for the way they live out a life of Godliness even as a child.

*Living the Story:*

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I asked a question about the ways our refusal to see someone else's heart leads to oppression and marginalization. What I have in mind is the way we treat people we come in contact with at restaurants and stores. I think at times we

are guilty of placing this human running the cash register or waiting our table as simply a cog in the commercial exchange that is happening. Their job is not to have feelings or struggles. They are tasked only with making sure my tea is refilled at proper intervals. When we treat them this way, we have de-humanized them.

Your assignment this week, especially during a week in which we celebrate those things for which we are thankful, is to recognize the heart of everyone with whom you have contact. What are they struggling with? What are their joys and heartaches? How can you be a blessing to them and lift their spirits, versus simply ignoring them for your own good? Is there anything for which you could be in prayer for this person? Have you asked them?

*Prayer Time:*

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Because this week is Thanksgiving, you may want to use your prayer time as an opportunity to let everyone say a prayer of thanksgiving for the ways they have been blessed. This can be during a “close-your-eyes-and-bow” prayer time, or you may want to open with a prayer, then conversationally with one another go around the circle sharing those thanksgivings.

*What's Next:*

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Next week we will look at the Psalms, which are attached to the story of David in 2 Samuel 11-24 or *The Story* chapter 12. While there are some specific psalms mentioned in *The Story*, we may look at some psalms beyond those listed.