



## David's Family: The Lord finds a Man after His Own Heart (1 Sam 16)

*Notes: Week Eight*

### 1 Samuel 16 (HCSB)

#### Samuel Anoints David

**16** The LORD said to Samuel, “How long are you going to mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem because I have selected a king from his sons.”

<sup>2</sup> Samuel asked, “How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me!”

The LORD answered, “Take a young cow with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’” <sup>3</sup> Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will let you know what you are to do. You are to anoint for Me the one I indicate to you.”

<sup>4</sup> Samuel did what the LORD directed and went to Bethlehem. When the elders of the town met him, they trembled<sup>[a]</sup> and asked, “Do<sup>[b]</sup> you come in peace?”

<sup>5</sup> “In peace,” he replied. “I’ve come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.”<sup>[c]</sup> Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. <sup>6</sup> When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and said, “Certainly the LORD’s anointed one is here before Him.”

<sup>7</sup> But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or his stature, because I have rejected him. Man does not see what the LORD sees,<sup>[d]</sup> for man sees what is visible,<sup>[e]</sup> but the LORD sees the heart.”

<sup>8</sup> Jesse called Abinadab and presented him to Samuel. “The LORD hasn’t chosen this one either,” Samuel said. <sup>9</sup> Then Jesse presented Shammah, but Samuel said, “The LORD hasn’t chosen this one either.” <sup>10</sup> After Jesse presented seven of his sons to him, Samuel told Jesse, “The LORD hasn’t chosen any of these.”<sup>11</sup> Samuel asked him, “Are these all the sons you have?”

“There is still the youngest,” he answered, “but right now he’s tending the sheep.” Samuel told Jesse, “Send for him. We won’t sit down to eat until he gets here.” <sup>12</sup> So Jesse sent for him. He had beautiful eyes and a healthy,<sup>[f]</sup> handsome appearance.

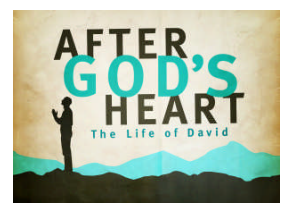
Then the LORD said, “Anoint him, for he is the one.” <sup>13</sup> So Samuel took the horn of oil, anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the Spirit of the LORD took control of David from that day forward. Then Samuel set out and went to Ramah.

#### David in Saul’s Court

<sup>14</sup> Now the Spirit of the LORD had left Saul, and an evil spirit sent from the LORD began to torment him, <sup>15</sup> so Saul’s servants said to him, “You see that an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. <sup>16</sup> Let our lord command your servants here in your presence to look for someone who knows how to play the lyre. Whenever the evil spirit from God troubles you, that person can play the lyre, and you will feel better.”

<sup>17</sup> Then Saul commanded his servants, “Find me someone who plays well and bring him to me.”

<sup>18</sup> One of the young men answered, “I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the lyre. He is also a valiant man, a warrior, eloquent, handsome, and the LORD is with him.”



<sup>19</sup> Then Saul dispatched messengers to Jesse and said, “Send me your son David, who is with the sheep.” <sup>20</sup> So Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a skin of wine, and one young goat and sent them by his son David to Saul. <sup>21</sup> When David came to Saul and entered his service, Saul admired him greatly, and David became his armor-bearer. <sup>22</sup> Then Saul sent word to Jesse: “Let David remain in my service, for I am pleased with him.” <sup>23</sup> Whenever the spirit from God troubled Saul, David would pick up his lyre and play, and Saul would then be relieved, feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.

**Footnotes:**

- a. [1 Samuel 16:4](#) LXX reads *were astonished*
- b. [1 Samuel 16:4](#) DSS, LXX read *Seer, do*
- c. [1 Samuel 16:5](#) LXX reads *and rejoice with me today*
- d. [1 Samuel 16:7](#) LXX reads *God does not see as a man sees*
- e. [1 Samuel 16:7](#) Lit *what is of the eyes*
- f. [1 Samuel 16:12](#) Or *ruddy*

## Holman Christian Standard Bible - *Study Bible*<sup>1</sup>

### 1 Samuel 16

**16:1** How much time had passed since the end of chapter 15 is unknown. At any rate, God wanted to move ahead with His plan. The command Fill your horn with oil meant God had someone in mind for Samuel to anoint as king. Jesse appears here for the first time in the book. His connection with Bethlehem is spelled out in the book of Ruth ([Ru 4:17,22](#)).

**16:2** Samuel had told Saul that God had rejected his kingship and had chosen another to lead Israel. Consequently, Samuel's travels would be of great interest to Saul. Samuel feared Saul would consider it treason if Samuel anointed another man as king. A young cow might be sacrificed in a region where an unsolved murder had occurred ([Dt 21:1-9](#)). It is also possible that bringing a sacrifice to the LORD merely provided a pretext for Samuel to hide the primary purpose of his journey.

**16:3** The presence of Jesse was crucial since one of his sons was to succeed Saul.

**16:4** The trembling of the elders of the town may indicate they feared Saul's wrath if they gave support to Samuel.

**16:5** Consecrate means to set oneself apart to God. It involved entering into ritual cleanness. No set "consecration checklist" appears in Scripture, though bathing, putting on clean garments, avoiding contact with a dead body, and suspension of sexual relations are mentioned in various consecration contexts. He consecrated Jesse and his sons probably means Samuel oversaw their consecration at their home.

**16:6** Jesse's son Eliab later served in Saul's army ([17:13,28](#)); he apparently looked like kingly material.

**16:7** Saul also had appearance and stature, but he had proved unworthy.

**16:8-9** Jesse's sons Abinadab and Shammah also served in Saul's army ([17:13](#)).

**16:11** The task of tending the sheep often fell to the youngest. In Bedouin cultures, such work was often the task of young girls ([Gen 29:9](#)), but David's sister Zeruah ([1Ch 2:16](#)) is not mentioned in the narrative.

**16:12** The Hebrew word behind healthy is related to the word for "red" and may describe either David's reddish-toned hair or skin. Beautiful eyes and a... handsome appearance might help a king's credibility, but ultimately God looks at the heart.

**16:13** Despite God's choice of David through Samuel, apparently at least Eliab doubted David's heart ([17:28](#)). It is also possible that Samuel did not reveal to David's brothers the mission to which God was calling David. The Spirit of the Lord took control of David just as He had done with Saul earlier ([10:6,10](#); [11:6](#)), empowering David for God's service. Samuel's route from Bethlehem to Ramah would have normally taken him directly past or through Gibeah.

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1. Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., *HCSB Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "1 Samuel 16".

**16:14** The theological difficulty of the expression evil spirit... from the LORD may be resolved in one of two ways. God may have intended the evil spirit as redemptive—designed to turn Saul to repentance. Or God may have intended the evil spirit as His instrument of judgment against the rebellious king. God is completely righteous, hates evil, and never does anything unjust, yet He makes use of demons (against their evil intention) to accomplish His good purposes (cp. [Job 1:6-12](#)).

**16:18** One of the young men of Saul's court apparently knew David well, because he described several good qualities beyond David's musical skill. Warrior may be anticipatory (suggesting David seemed to have the qualities that would make a good warrior) since it does not seem that at this stage of life David was accustomed to fighting in battle ([17:14-15](#)). The LORD is with him describes David's spiritual qualifications, which would prove important as the drama unfolded.

**16:20** The items donkey... bread... wine, and goat were either Jesse's gift to Saul or a contribution to David's sustenance in the royal court. No biblical evidence indicates when Saul initiated a national tax system for providing the palace's needs, but such taxes are assumed in [17:25](#).

**16:21** David became King Saul's armor-bearer, a position that would keep him closer to Saul, who admired (lit "loved") him greatly.

**16:23** Being close to Saul also meant David could pick up his lyre quickly and play if the king felt troubled. Meanwhile, God was continuing to prepare David for the day he would become king.

## English Standard Version - *Study Bible*<sup>2</sup> 1 Samuel 16

**16:1-31:13** *The Story of Saul and David.* Now that Saul has been completely disqualified as king, David is introduced as his successor, and God trains David, through suffering, to lead his people.

### The Fall of Saul and the Rise of David in 1 Samuel

Saul	David
Holy Spirit removed; evil spirit given ( <a href="#">16:14-23</a> )	Anointed with Holy Spirit ( <a href="#">16:1-13</a> )
Jealous and treacherous ( <a href="#">ch. 18</a> )	Faithful friend ( <a href="#">ch. 20</a> )
Attempts to kill David ( <a href="#">ch. 19</a> )	Protects Saul's life (chs. 24; 26)
Failed holy warrior ( <a href="#">ch. 15</a> )	Mighty holy warrior ( <a href="#">ch. 17</a> )
Kingdom torn away ( <a href="#">13:13-14</a> ; <a href="#">15:11</a> , <a href="#">26</a> )	Kingdom promised forever ( <a href="#">2 Sam. 7:1-17</a> )

**16:1-23** *Introduction of David.* In chs. 13 and 15, Saul was told that he and his dynasty had been rejected and that the kingdom had been given to a neighbor, a man after the Lord's heart (cf. [13:14](#); [15:28](#)). It is now revealed that this neighbor is a son of Jesse of Bethlehem—but his name is not stated until the middle of [ch. 16](#). In the second half of the chapter, the Lord uses the words of one of Saul's attendants to bring David to court. The Lord is with David, while his Spirit has left Saul and has been replaced by a spirit that does harm and turns him against David.

2. Lane T. Dennis, ed., *ESV Study Bible, The: English Standard Version*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "1 Samuel 16".

**16:1-13** *Anointing of David.* God indicates to Samuel that of all the sons of Jesse, David, the least likely, is his choice. After David's anointing (which is done with a limited audience), the Spirit of God empowers him for service.

**16:1** Jesse was a descendant of Perez, son of Judah and Tamar ([Gen. 38:29](#)), and a grandson of Ruth and Boaz ([Ruth 4:18-22](#)). Bethlehem is in Judah, about 10 miles (16 km) from Ramah.

**16:2** and say, **"I have come to sacrifice to the LORD."** This was a true but incomplete statement of the reasons for Samuel to come to Bethlehem (see [v. 1](#)), and yet the Lord told him to say it, so it should not be considered morally wrong. It seems that telling part of what one knows to be true, in order to conceal other information, is morally right in some situations, particularly adversarial situations such as this one. Moreover, the Lord had the right to hide his intentions from Saul, who had proved himself faithless.

**16:5** **Consecrate yourselves.** They would probably wash themselves and perhaps also wash their clothes ([Ex. 19:10](#); [Num. 8:21](#); [11:18](#)). As in [1 Sam. 9:22](#), the feast seems to have a selective guest list.

**16:7** **man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.** Outward appearance cannot predict whether someone will faithfully obey the Lord, for a person's actions flow from his heart (cf. [2 Chron. 16:9](#); [Ps. 51:10](#); [Prov. 4:23](#); [Mark 7:21-23](#); [Luke 6:45](#); [1 Thess. 2:4](#)). The "heart" in Scripture refers to a person's inward moral and spiritual life, including the emotions, will, and reason.

**16:8-9** **And he said.** It is not clear whether the Lord is speaking to Samuel or Samuel is speaking to Jesse.

**16:10** **seven of his sons.** Was David the seventh son or the eighth? David is listed as "seventh" in [1 Chron. 2:15](#), but this may represent a "telescoping" of a genealogy to give David the number of perfection (see notes on [1 Chron. 2:9-17](#); [Matt. 1:17](#)). Other interpreters suggest that David may have had an additional brother who died childless and was omitted from the genealogy in [1 Chronicles 2](#) ([1 Sam. 17:12](#) also says that Jesse had eight sons).

**16:13** David's name is mentioned here for the first time. **the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward.** See note on [10:6](#). The narrator does not say who among those present knew what the anointing was for.

**16:14-23** *David at Saul's Court.* Saul and David become acquainted when David begins serving Saul. As the story develops, David will become Saul's most successful servant.

**16:14** **The Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul** as soon as the Lord's Spirit came upon David to anoint him for kingship (see [v. 13](#)). This statement is not relevant to the issue of whether people can lose their salvation; it is not describing the Holy Spirit's role in individual regeneration in a NT sense. Rather, in light of [v. 13](#), it should be seen as being about gaining or losing the Spirit's empowering for the role of king (see [10:1](#), [6](#), [10](#); [11:6](#); [16:13](#); and perhaps [Ps. 51:11](#)). From this point to the end of his life, Saul will continually make futile attempts to govern without the empowering of the Holy Spirit. A **harmful spirit** sent by the Lord **tormented** Saul as a form of judgment for his sin of turning against the Lord ([1 Sam. 15:22-29](#)). Though God himself never does evil, he sometimes sends evil agents to accomplish his purposes (such as the Babylonians coming to punish Israel, cf. [Jer. 20:4-6](#); or sinful people crucifying Christ, cf. notes on [Gen. 50:18-21](#); [Mark 14:21](#); [Acts 2:23](#); [4:27](#); [4:28](#); see also [1 Kings 22:20-23](#)).

**16:16-18** David was already **skillful in playing the lyre**, but **a man of valor, a man of war** probably refers to his ability and not his experience (cf. [17:13](#), [33](#)); perhaps some knew of how he single-handedly defeated both lions and bears (cf. [17:36](#)). **The LORD is with him** is a continual theme in David's story ([17:37](#); [18:12](#); [20:13](#); [2 Sam. 5:10](#); [7:3](#), [9](#); see also [Gen. 21:22](#); [26:3](#); [28:15](#); [31:3](#); [39:2](#); [Ex. 3:12](#)).

**16:20 donkey laden.** Some scholars think this was a specific amount, similar to the Assyrian unit "donkey," which was about 80-160 liters, or 2 1/2 to 5 bushels.

**16:21** An **armor-bearer** was a close personal attendant. Both Jonathan's armor-bearer ([14:1](#)) and Saul's ([31:4-5](#)) had a close relationship with their masters.

**16:22** As was his custom (see [14:52](#)), Saul attached the valiant David to himself.

**16:23 and the harmful spirit departed from him.** David is referred to as "the sweet psalmist of Israel" ([2 Sam. 23:1](#)) and as the author of several songs ([2 Sam. 1:17-27](#); [22:1-51](#); [1 Chron. 16:7-36](#); see also [Amos 6:5](#)) and many psalms. He is also credited with establishing the temple musicians ([1 Chron. 6:31](#)). The music that David habitually played in Saul's presence was not merely beautiful, but music of worship to the Lord, causing Saul to be refreshed and the harmful spirit to flee (cf. [2 Chron. 5:13-14](#)).

## NLT Life Application Study Bible<sup>3</sup>

### 1 Samuel 16

**16:5** Samuel performed the purification rite for Jesse and his sons to prepare them to come before God in worship or to offer a sacrifice. For more on this ceremony, see [Genesis 35:2](#); [Exodus 19:10, 14](#); and the note on [Joshua 3:5](#).

**16:7** Saul was tall and handsome; he was an impressive-looking man. Samuel may have been trying to find someone who looked like Saul to be Israel's next king, but God warned him against judging by appearance alone. When people judge by outward appearance, they may overlook quality individuals who lack the particular physical qualities society currently admires. Appearance doesn't reveal what people are really like or what their true value is.

Fortunately, God judges by faith and character, not appearances. And because only God can see on the inside, only he can accurately judge people. Most people spend hours each week maintaining their outward appearance; they should do even more to develop their inner character. While everyone can see your face, only you and God know what your heart really looks like. What steps are you taking to improve your heart's attitude?

**16:13** David was anointed king, but it was done in secret; he was not publicly anointed until much later ([2 Samuel 2:4](#); [5:3](#)). Saul was still legally the king, but God was preparing David for his future responsibilities. The anointing oil poured over David's head stood for holiness. It was used to set people or objects apart for God's service. Each king and high priest of Israel was anointed with oil. This commissioned him as God's representative to the nation. Although God rejected Saul's kingship by not allowing any of his descendants to sit on Israel's throne, Saul himself remained in his position until his death.

**16:14** What was this tormenting spirit the Lord sent? Perhaps Saul was simply depressed. Or perhaps the Holy Spirit had left Saul, and God allowed an evil spirit (a demon) to torment him as judgment for his disobedience (this would demonstrate God's power over the spirit world—[1 Kings 22:19-23](#)). Either way, Saul was driven to insanity, which led him to attempt to murder David.

**16:15, 16** Harps were popular musical instruments in Saul's day, and their music is still known for its soothing qualities. The simplest harps were merely two pieces of wood fastened at right angles to each other. The strings were stretched across the wood to give the harp a triangular shape. Simple strings could be made of twisted grasses, but better strings were made of dried animal intestine. Harps could have up to 40 strings and were louder than the smaller three- or four-stringed instruments called lyres. David, known for his shepherding skills and bravery, was also an accomplished harpist and musician, who would eventually write many of the psalms found in the Bible.

**16:19-21** When Saul asked David to be in his service, he obviously did not know that David had been secretly anointed king ([16:12](#)). Saul's invitation presented an excellent opportunity for the young man and future king to gain firsthand information about leading a nation ("David went back and forth so he could help his father with the sheep in Bethlehem," [17:15](#)).

Sometimes our plans—even the ones we think God has approved—have to be put on hold indefinitely. Like David, we can use this waiting time profitably. We can choose to learn and grow in our present circumstances, whatever they may be.

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3. *Life Application Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 435-36.

## Life Essentials Study Bible<sup>4</sup>

### A Principle to Live By: Determining Heart Attitudes

from [1 Samuel 16:1-13](#)

**When we select leaders, we are to use biblical criteria that measure internal Christlike qualities.**

The Lord made it clear to Samuel that physical features can be very deceiving in terms of what a person is really like on the inside. God alone, of course, can see directly into our hearts. He also knows how easy it is for all of us to be misled by outward appearances. So in the New Testament we have objective criteria by which we can evaluate what a person is like in his soul and spirit.

God began setting the standards in the Old Testament, when Moses needed to select leaders who could help him lead the children of Israel through the wilderness. They were to be “able men, God-fearing, trustworthy, and hating bribes” ([Ex 18:21](#)). These criteria became much more specific in Paul’s pastoral letters. For example, he wrote,

*For an overseer, as God’s administrator, must be blameless, not arrogant, not hot-tempered, not addicted to wine, not a bully, not greedy for money, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, righteous, holy, self-controlled. ([Tit 1:7-8](#))*

#### Reflection and Response

*How do the criteria for selecting spiritual leaders in the church in Paul’s letters to Timothy ([1Tm 3:1-13](#)) and Titus ([Tit 1:5-9](#)) help us evaluate a person’s heart attitude?*

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4. Gene Getz, *Life Essentials Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2011), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 369-370.



## A Principle to Live By: **Security in Christ**

from 1 Samuel 16:14-23

**Though God will discipline us when we persistently sin,  
we are to take comfort in the fact that it is for our own good  
and we are secure in His eternal love.**

There are various views regarding the evil spirit that tormented Saul ([v. 14](#)). Was this a satanic emissary that God allowed to oppress him? Since God is ultimately in control, even over evil and Satan himself, this is possible.

On the other hand, was this a reference to the depression or anxiety that overwhelms us when we are burdened with guilt? The Hebrew word for “evil” can refer to discontent, calamity, or disaster. And rather than being an outside evil force, such as a demon, the “spirit” could have been a psychological condition within Saul resulting directly from God’s discipline. So the Lord could have caused Saul to be tormented by an inner sense of distress and anxiety.

Whatever position we take, one thing is certain: Saul brought this condition on himself! It began when he deliberately rebelled against God. Once God’s Spirit left him, he deteriorated in his relationship both with his heavenly Father and with people. He could have thrown himself upon God’s mercy to deliver him from his miserable state, but he chose to try to solve the problem in his own strength.

As born-again Christians living under the new covenant, the Holy Spirit will never leave us. Writing to the Ephesians, Paul assured them and all of us that we are not only saved by His grace through faith, but we have been “sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,” and “He is the down payment of our inheritance, for the redemption of the possession, to the praise of His glory” ([Eph 1:13-14](#)).

However, this does not mean we will not be disciplined when we deliberately and consistently walk out of God’s will. The author of Hebrews reminds us, “the Lord disciplines the one He loves and punishes every son He receives” ([Heb 12:6](#)). When God disciplines us it is ultimately for our own good. However, we will inevitably experience negative feelings that lead to psychological and spiritual distress. Thankfully, we can confess our sins, repent, and be restored to fellowship with God ([1Jn 1:9](#)).

Even so, not all negative feelings result from God’s discipline. Abusive activities beyond our control may cause psychological problems. We may have physical and emotional stress that can create chemical imbalances that lead to depression. We may be victims of natural disasters. In all these situations, we are to take Paul’s words seriously:

*Don’t worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. ([Php 4:6-7](#))*

### **Reflection and Response**

*Why is it important to differentiate between emotional distress that results from God’s discipline and negative feelings that result from causes beyond our control?*