



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

“The Lord Looks at the Heart”

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1 SAMUEL 16:7

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WHAT MAKES A GOOD LEADER?

This is certainly an important question here in the capitol. Most look for particular skills, backgrounds and accomplishments. Some consider appearance and demeanor. Others will say that character is vital to good leadership.

We find in 1 Samuel and the account of David's rise to become the King of Israel a vivid description of what makes a good leader. We have the negative example of King Saul, the first king, an impressive man who was marked by self-reliance and rebellion. Then we have David, a young man who was marked by faith and obedience. Let us look at the examples of these two men in order to learn what makes a good leader.

SAUL: AN IMPRESSIVE MAN

In our last study we saw Israel's dire need for a good leader. The spiritual condition of the people had fallen to an extreme low, with the Book of Judges describing how **“...There was no king in Israel, and everyone did that which is right in his own eyes”** (Judges 21:25). There was a great failure of the priesthood borne out by the sin of Eli's sons (1 Samuel 2:22). Samuel, who had been the prophet and great leader of Israel for many years saw his sons turn aside after dishonest gain to take bribes and pervert justice (1 Sam. 8:3)

So the people came to Samuel and demanded, **“...Appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations”** (1 Sam. 8:5). In doing so the people of Israel were rejecting God's leadership over them (8:7). Samuel sternly warned the people what having a king would mean, yet they insisted, so Saul was selected to be the first king of Israel.

Saul was quite an impressive candidate for King. He was a **“choice and handsome man, and there was not a more**

handsome person than he among the sons of Israel; from his shoulders and up he was taller than any of the people” (1 Samuel 9:2). Even Samuel was impressed: **“Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen? Surely there is no one like him among all the people.”** So all the people shouted and said, **“Long live the king!”** (1 Samuel 10:24).

Saul was an impressive man but his character was marked by pride, self-reliance, and rebellion and disobedience against God. (1 Sam. 13; 15). As a result, God rejected Saul and his line from remaining king over Israel.

DAVID: AN IMPRESSED MAN

Since Saul was rejected as king, God told Samuel to anoint another as next king of Israel (1 Sam. 16). He was to select one from the family of Jesse in Bethlehem, a man who had eight sons. As the oldest, Eliab was brought forth, Samuel thought, **“Surely this is the Lord's anointed”** (16:6). However, God had something different in mind:

*... The LORD said to Samuel, **“Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”** 1 Samuel 16:7*

In what must have seemed almost comical, Jesse paraded six other sons before Samuel. Each time Samuel replied, **“The Lord has not chosen this one either”**. After the seventh, Samuel asked if these were all Jesse's sons. Jesse replied **“there remains the youngest, and he is tending the sheep”**. When David was brought before Samuel, God said **“Arise, anoint him; for this is he”**. As the youngest and the keeper of the sheep, Jesse had not even considered David worthy of meeting with the prophet Samuel. Samuel was a prophet, a wise and godly man but even he was tempted to look at the outward things – the strength and outward bearing that most folks would say makes for a good leader. David was the one God had chosen to be the next king of Israel.

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS / ELECTED OFFICIALS: **THURSDAYS, 12:00 NOON**, TREASURER'S CONFERENCE ROOM (EB 54)

LOBBYISTS / STAFF: **TUESDAYS, 12:00 NOON**, TREASURER'S CONFERENCE ROOM (EB 54)

The Lord Looks at the Heart

What was it that God saw in David's heart? If Saul was an impressive man, David was an impressed man.¹ He was impressed by God and his life was marked by faith and great dependence upon Him. He was not taken up with himself or with what others thought of him. He was a man marked by and dominated by his regard for the Lord. **He was impressed with God.** He lived his life in awe of the Lord and in great confidence in him.²

THE LORD LOOKS AT THE HEART

“...Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” What an important reminder of what really matters as you serve here in the capitol. People will look at the outward qualities of appearance, accomplishments, and success. Around the statehouse we look with respect at positions of leadership and authority. Most will first consider the outward labels of party and ideology. **But the Lord looks at the heart!**

These words may be both a solemn and encouraging truth to anyone who will stop for moment to think about them. It is solemn for each of us who will take but a moment of self-reflection to recognize the sinfulness of our hearts. While outwardly we may well be seen as good people and upstanding citizens, we know too well our pride and selfishness. We know the anger in our hearts, which Jesus said is as bad as murder (Matt. 5:22). We know the lust in our hearts, which Jesus said is as bad as adultery (Matt. 5:27).

It is encouraging to know, that though God looks at our hearts and sees the sinfulness there, we can have forgiveness of all this sin through what Christ has done for us. When we repent and trust Christ, then God looks at our hearts and sees ***faith***. He sees Christ's righteousness which has been given to us. He sees the heart of one who is impressed with God and wants to follow Him. Regardless if you are a great leader in worldly terms, this is the most important issue you will ever face here in the capitol!

Paul gives us a great New Testament commentary on this Old Testament story:

26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27 but God has

chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, 29 so that no man may boast before God. 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31 so that, just as it is written, “LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD.” 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

A PICTURE OF JESUS CHRIST

This part of King David's story is a wonderful picture of the King of Kings, Jesus Christ. Just as David was from Bethlehem, it was prophesied that Jesus would come from this small town (Micah 5:2; John 7:42). Just as David was neglected and esteemed so lowly, Isaiah 53 describes how the coming Savior would have **“...No *stately* form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. 3 He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.”** (Isaiah 53:2-3) Isaiah goes on to describe how Christ would be **pierced through for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities** and how **all our iniquity would fall on Him**. Yes, God looks at our hearts. That is why He sent His Son to suffer and die for our sin! This should lead us to pray with David:

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalm 139 23-24

**MANY IN POLITICS DESIRE TO IMPRESS YOU WITH THEMSELVES.
GREAT LEADERS WILL LEAVE YOU IMPRESSED WITH THEIR GOD!**

¹ Dever, Mark. *The Message of the Old Testament*. Crossway Books. 2006. Kindle Version. p. 255

² Ibid.