

## Don't Judge a Book...

*3-Year Bible Reading Plan*

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**Bible Text:** 1 Samuel 16:1-13  
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This morning, I want to encourage you to open your Bibles to the book of 1 Samuel 16. Now as you're turning to 1 Samuel 16, if you've had the privilege this week of walking alongside of us in our Bible reading program as we walk through the Scriptures typically about a chapter a day over a period of about three years, I would presume that most of you, and I don't want to presume on behalf of all of you, as you read through this week, presumed that we would spend some time in chapter 17 but we're gonna actually go to chapter 16. You say, "Well, why is that?" Because chapter 17 is probably the account of one of the most famous stories and most famous battles not only in the Bible but in all of the world. You see, chapter 17 is the story of David and Goliath, a story that resonates so much with our culture, we use it as an analogy for sporting events, for business ventures and for just the task of life. Anytime the underdog or anytime the person who we do not believe has an advantage in a situation, anytime they gain victory, we always claim that David took down Goliath. It's the story of the one who was smaller in stature but greater in faith. And the reason I want to go back into chapter 16 today is because as great as that battle is and as many times as we use it as an analogy, I want to make it personal because today each and every one of you has a giant in your life, you have a Goliath in your life. Some of you might be willing to say, "I've got a whole family of giants in my life." Well, guess what? It works with the biblical story. You see, we know that David takes that stone and puts it in the sling and puts down Goliath, but when you get to 2 Samuel, do you know it says that Goliath had four brothers just as big and just as ugly as he was, and so maybe today you don't just have one issue in life, maybe you've got a whole bunch of them.

It still applies and so as we go back into chapter 16, I want us to see who is the person, who is the man, who is the woman that God uses to take down giants, or to make it more personal, what needs to be present in your life, what needs to be a part of your life to qualify or to meet the credentials from God's perspective of taking down those giants. In 1 Samuel 16 we have what we know as the call of David. Now we've got to kind of set this up because the first verse is going to be somewhat ominous as it talks about that Saul was removed from the throne. In chapter 15, Saul, and we'll discuss this in just a moment, who was physically of much greater stature than David, had more years of wisdom and experience under his belt, forsake the crown because he was rebellious toward the Lord,

and so in chapter 16, Samuel, the priest of God, is going to be used by God to go and to anoint a new king, the one who we know as David.

Beginning the story in verse 1 of chapter 16, it says,

1 And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons. 2 And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD. 3 And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee. 4 And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?

Now I want you to push pause there for just a moment. Why would the elders be so scared of the regional pastor coming to town? I mean, this was the priest, this was the man who assisted in their religious expression? Well, back in chapter 15, Saul was disobedient because he did not take the life of Agag, the opposing king, and Samuel not only did so but did so in a very gruesome manner. So these guys are somewhat concerned, "Uh-oh, this guy's now in our town, is this is a good thing or a bad thing?"

Verse 6, or verse 5, it says,

5 And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice. 6 And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD'S anointed is before him. 7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart. 8 Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. 9 Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. 10 Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these. 11 And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither. 12 And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he. 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

Classic biblical story of the youngest of his brethren, the one who had been relegated to the lowest of tasks in the family, passing before the priest of the Lord and anointed to be the king of Israel. You know, we have a saying in our culture: don't judge a book by its cover. Oftentimes some of the greatest reads and greatest stories come with the most mundane of covers. How many of us have been disappointed by the trailer of a movie or the pictures on the front of a book to get into that story and to be highly disappointed? Such was the story of Saul. But David, short in stature, of little experience, relegated to the lowest of tasks, and yet the Lord calls him to perform the mightiest of deeds.

You have a Goliath in your life. You might have many Goliaths in your life. So how do we become David in the story? How do we become the person that God has passed by him and anoints you to be the one to sling the stone at whatever that situation may be? I think there's three quick lessons from the life of David, particularly as compared to Saul in this chapter and the first one is this: perception. I think oftentimes our perception is backwards. I think that we perceive that somehow, some way, we've got to track God down, that we're in this cosmic game of hide-and-go-seek. You remember that great children's game, right? By the way, it's funny that as we become a teenager, we revisit that game oftentimes. But the game of hide-and-seek, you spend all of your energy both mentally and physically trying to find that which is arbitrarily hiding in supposedly the most inconspicuous place possible. Let me ask you how many of us think that's how God deals with us, that he's hiding, trying to avoid us and somehow we've got to do something to get his attention, somehow we've got to be louder, be more this, be more that? You realize that that perception of God playing hide-and-seek with us, is Baal worship. You say, "Baal worship? How is that Baal worship?" Do you not remember the account between the Baal worshipers and Elijah who were calling on their god to bring down fire for the sacrifice? What did the Baal worshipers do? They got louder and they got more physical in their display hoping that their god who was hiding from them would show his face. What did Elijah do? Elijah not only took the sacrifice and doused it with water twice, he just called on the name of the Lord and instantly there was a response. You see, the reason we've got the perception backwards, if anybody's playing hide-and-seek it's not God, it's us. We're the ones relegating ourselves to the nether lands of whatever it may be to say, "O God, no." And so the game isn't him hiding, it's us.

Allow me to give you some biblical evidence. One of the most beloved chapters in all of the Bible, Luke 15, it's the story where Jesus does something he doesn't do anywhere else in his ministry, he tells three parables in a row: there's the story of the lost sheep, the story of the lost coin, and the story of what we know as the prodigal son, that classic account. Not only do we have these descriptions of lost and found but we have imagery being used, that when we get to the son who is prodigal at best, there's a picture of him as representing humanity and his earthly father representing our heavenly Father. You know the story, a young man comes to his dad and says, "I want what I want and I want it now. I want to sow my wild oats without consequences." So he takes the money. He goes into the world and according to the Bible, and he experiences riotous living until the money runs out. Then his friends run away and here's a young Jewish man feeding the swine in the mud, the complete opposite of what he desired.

It's kind of like playing hide-and-seek. You say, "What do you mean, hide-and-seek?" If you've ever played hide-and-seek and if you can remember back to as a child when you played, the best place to hide was usually the least desired place. Case in point, at least in the home that I grew up in, the place that was best when my friends and I would play a game such as this was the dirty clothes hamper. Why? Because I knew the house better than anybody else and it looked like any other cabinet, the only problem on the inside it was cold, dark and nasty, to say the least. That's exactly what the prodigal son did, didn't he? He went to that dirty clothes hamper of life where it was dark, cold, and stinky.

Finally he had enough of it. He said, "Maybe, maybe my dad will take me as his servant. I won't even qualify as a son." The Bible says he came to his senses, got out of the dirty clothes hamper and walked back into the living room. What he found there not only shocked him but shocks us, does it not? The dad provided the fatted cow, that's great for dinner. The dad provided a robe to wear and a ring to put on his finger as a part of the family. But the part of the story that gets me every time is this, that when he got out of the mud pit, or in my context when he got out of the dirty clothes, the dad was looking for him. Now much like the story of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, when the Lord said, "Where are you?" he knew exactly where they were. The picture we get in Luke 15 is that the Lord is sitting on the edge of his throne just desiring and waiting for us to come home. Why is that so important? Because in 1 Samuel 16, the Lord was actively desiring and wanting to anoint somebody, he was ready to commission the giant-killer. You see, our perception is that somehow God was hiding from us. No, no, we were hiding from him.

You know, the book of 2 Chronicles 16:9, a very famous passage that's tucked in that book of names and genealogies, it says, "The eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout all the earth to see whose heart is directed toward him." You see, right now you've got some giants in life and the Lord's looking to say, "Who's gonna slay those giants?" Do you know who the "who" is? It's you. He has called you just like David to slay those giants but in order to do so, we've got to have a proper perspective. You see, in verse 7 of chapter 16, it says, "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." Then you get to verse 12 and it talks about this goodly countenance. Allow me to kind of unpack that for just a moment. According to the book of Numbers 14, a young man was not considered officially a man able to serve in the military as his brothers until he was at least age 20. So that description of him is that he was a young man, a young teenager in our context, possibly had not gone the full length of what we would call puberty, probably did not have the completeness of facial hair available to him. In other words, he was a young man with a lack of experience as far as the world was concerned, but here's the perspective: the world, man looks on the outside but God looks on the inside.

Saul was literally head and shoulders above David. He was a massive man of great physical prowess with an incredible reputation for victory. He was from humanity's

perspective, the most qualified candidate to take down Goliath but what was he doing? He was sitting in his chambers trembling at the thought. This is the same man that when they wanted to commission him to be the king was hiding from Samuel because even though everybody else wanted him, his confidence didn't near match his size. So you've got one man who is huge and massive and got a history of victory, you've got another one who is small, young and inexperienced. So why is it that David was the one who got to take down Goliath rather than Saul?

Go back to chapter 15. I want us to see the inward characteristics of Saul versus the inward characteristics of David. As I mentioned in the beginning, Saul had won a great victory. The enemy had been captured. The only problem was the Lord commanded him not to capture them but to eliminate them and not to salvage the animals for sacrifice but to have them put down as well. What did Saul do? He salvaged the life of the king as well as the animals and he did so – and this is what's important – with the best of intentions because he comes, he offers a sacrifice to the Lord. Samuel who shows up a little bit late says, "What do I smell?" And he says, "Oh, you smell the beautiful smell of a sacrifice." What did Samuel say? "I hear the bleating in my ears. This is not of God."

When you get to verse 23 of chapter 15, it says, "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king." Now upon the first reading it seems a little harsh, does it not? Witchcraft and idolatry. Now those are two words that we never want to have used to describe ourselves. Witchcraft is calling upon those powers of darkness to do your bidding. Witchcraft is getting in the midst of darkness and destruction to hopefully gain favor. Idolatry is setting up that system or that structure or that item that takes all of our time and our attention and our resources. If someone came up to you today and said, "Hey, we've taken a vote and we think that you're an idolater," you would not consider it a compliment no matter what your spiritual level would be.

Witchcraft, idolatry, they're seen as despicable in our eyes but notice what the Lord equates them to: rebellion and stubbornness. Funny coming from a culture that produced a movie "Rebel with a cause," we champion rebellion and at times we award stubbornness and yet here the Lord says, "No, no, rebellion and stubbornness is as witchcraft and idolatry." Saul did everything right on the outside but everything was wrong on the inside. You say, "Well, how was he rebellious?" Because God said not to do it and he did, and he rationalized it. Here's the problem with rebellion: we justify it. We justify rebellion and say, "Well, it's got to get done. It should get done. Samuel's not here, they're here, I'll just take care of business." You know, it's interesting that if you were called to be a priest in the Old Testament you could not be a king, if you're called to be a king, you couldn't be a priest. Those are the two roles that just couldn't be synonymous.

So he stepped outside of the word of God and we are in rebellion anytime we say, "But that's a new day. It's a new culture. This is how we do it now. I don't care how they did it in the Bible times." Congratulations, you're a practicing person of witchcraft. When you say, "I don't care what the Bible says, our culture has deemed this appropriate," you are

practicing witchcraft. Got real quiet, didn't it? Because we live in a world today that says, "Oh, that Bible, it's out-of-date. It's old. We gotta get up with the times." No, we don't, we need to get back with God is what we need to do.

But then stubbornness. You say, "Well, how was he stubborn?" I want you to notice what happens when Samuel approaches him in verse 20 of chapter 15, "Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites." Do you hear what Saul is saying? He's saying, "I don't care what God said, this is what he should have said." How many times have you entered into a conversation where you say, "Thus saith the Lord or this is what the Bible says," and someone who wants to keep up with the culture says, "I serve a God of love and I just don't see it that way, or I see a God of this or a God of that"? Do you know what that's called? Idolatry.

Now you may call it stubbornness, I may call it stubbornness, the Lord calls it idolatry and so when he defied the word of God and then when he resisted and said, "It doesn't matter because it worked out good for me," the Lord said, "Congratulations, it may have looked good on the outside but you practiced witchcraft and idolatry on the inside. So it has been taken from you. Don't ever expect the giants to come down doing it in your own wisdom and not according to God's word. It's never going to happen.

Then we get to chapter 17. Let's see the perspective of David. Why David? What was it about him that the Lord saw on the inside? Well, the first thing I want you to notice in verse 17 of chapter 17 is that he was a young man who was willing. Now he's already been anointed by this time. It says, "And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren." By the way, I know it really is just kind of extenuating the story, but verse 18, I just love this statement, "And carry these ten cheeses." I don't know about you, but I just find humor there, that the Lord said take ten cheeses to your brethren.

But the difference in the heart is this: David was willing. What do you mean he was willing? Not only was he willing to keep the sheep as his dad asked him, he was willing to fulfill the task of a meager servant. You know, Mark 10:44 and 45, it says Jesus came not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many. You'll never see Goliath come down in your life as long as you have the attitude of, "God, I'm too good to do that. God, I'm too proud to stoop to that." Do you understand David not only was belittled by his family, not only was he the runt of the litter and had the lowest of jobs, he was willing to go to a battle he wasn't supposed to fight and give them food to provide for them anyway. He could've said, "Dad, do you not see how these guys treat me? Do you not hear what they say to me?" And he said, "Okay, dad, I got it. I'll even take ten cheeses with me and we'll take care of business."

He was willing, but then at least in my Bible when I flip the page to verse 29, I see that he's a pretty faithful young man because it says, "And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" You see, his brothers mocked him. They said, "Oh, you just wanted to see the battle. You just wanted to get a little glory. You just wanted to be one

of the big boys." But none of them were fighting Goliath. And I love what David said, "Is there not a cause?" Not only had he been willing to do whatever his family had asked him, when he made that statement in the face of Goliath, he was willing to go down in battle.

Saul tried to arm him. He rejected it. So what does he do? He picks up those five smooth stones from the brook and eventually slings them into the head of Goliath for the victory. David didn't have a whole lot on the outside, did he? Goliath had a big sword. Goliath had a lot of armor. David had a few stones and probably an old rickety slingshot that he'd been using for years. Saul had the height. Saul had the honor. Saul had the beautiful clothes yet he was sitting in his tent trembling. You see, the difference is Saul had a heart of witchcraft and idolatry and David had a heart of just willing to serve and do whatever it takes.

The last thing I want you to notice about this passage is the persistence of God. Saul is removed from the throne and God didn't give up. You see, Goliath was still terrorizing into his people. Goliath was still making his threats. The Lord was not satisfied with him being such and so what does he do? He's looking to and fro in all the earth to whose heart is prepared for him. When you look at the history of the people of Israel, one of the things you'll notice is there are a lot of men and a lot of women who have a lot of ups and whole lot of downs, in particular there's a man in the book of Jeremiah 22 by the name of Jeconiah. He is so wicked that the Lord says unto him that no longer will anybody from your lineage, from your seed inhabit the throne of David. Here's a problem because the eventual Messiah whom we know as Jesus Christ was from the covenant of Abraham, from the tribe of Judah, and you've got it, from the seed of David. Humanity had so gone sideways against God. Oh, don't worry, he's persistent because a couple hundred years later there would be a young woman who had yet to know a man who would conceive of the Holy Ghost.

You know, some years ago in the BC era of our life, before children. You know what AD stands for, right? After diapers. It's before children, after diapers because when children come, until the diapers are gone you don't know what happens. It's just a phase. But nonetheless, I had an occupation in addition to preaching. I worked at a hydraulics company and one of our clients was a steel mill. We got a call one day, it was normal, that they were having issues and we went to the device that was taking metal and shredding it and getting it prepared to be smelted down and made into what you and I know purchase on a regular basis, and the problem was the hydraulic cylinders that we manufactured for them were lasting about 20-30 minutes and then they were busting apart. Now if you've ever worked in a steel mill, you know they've got dozens of these in waiting and they were just flying through them and they brought us in to inspect it and eventually repair it. We had about five or six of these things that were just smashed to pieces and they said, "You need to go back to the shop and find out what's wrong here because we've got more to go but we need the problem fixed. We can't shut this thing down." These devices cost multiple thousands of dollars. They were necessary to make millions of dollars in a steel mill. Do you know what happened when we got back to the factory? Do you know what we discovered? The problem with those cylinders was a ten

cent o-ring, a little piece of rubber that had not been seated properly on the inside. It was painted the right color. It looked good and it would last for about 30 minutes and then it would blow. Why? Because a small little thing on the inside wasn't the way it needs to be.

Let's take the story from Israel to you and your own Goliath for just a moment. If you allow me to use the analogy, how many of you feel like every day, every week your cylinders are blowing? You're faced with a situation, boom, there it goes. You wake up to the scenario, boom, there it goes. You come here on Sunday and we make it look good on the outside but you know it's not right on the inside. You can't see it from the outside but it affects everything. You know, maybe today is the day where the Lord has given you multiple opportunities and you're just blowing through cylinders, maybe today is the day you say, "Do you know what? I need to get that o-ring right because if I'll get it right like David had it right, maybe Goliath will finally come down."