

Read: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

The LORD Chooses

1 Samuel 16:7b

The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

If you're the captain of your kickball team at recess on the school playground, whom do you choose first? Someone who can kick the ball the farthest or run the fastest and help your team play the game well. It's easy to judge people based on what you can see on the outside—how fast they can run, how big they are, what kinds of clothes they wear, what color their skin is. These are all the things that our eyes can see, but what if your eyes don't see the whole picture? "You can't judge a book by its cover," means that outward looks don't tell us the full story of what's inside.

God's people needed a new king. Sadly, King Saul turned away and wasn't listening to the LORD anymore, so the LORD sent the prophet Samuel on a special mission to anoint a new king. He would take a container of special oil and pour it out on the head of whomever God chose to be the next king. This was God's way of setting this person apart for the special job of ruling over his people. Samuel saw seven of Jesse's sons—strong looking men—and he thought each of them might be a good king for Israel. But the LORD didn't choose any of them. Instead, the LORD chose the youngest son of Jesse, named David. David didn't look like he'd be the best choice, but remember: *Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.*

When the LORD looked at David, he could see everything in his heart. That's why David prayed, "Create in me a pure heart, O God." David knew he was sinful. What does the LORD see when he looks at you and your heart? A heart that always gladly listens to God's Word and obeys my parents? A heart that always keeps God first in life? No! God sees all the ways we haven't lived and loved like he tells us. So, we pray, "Create in me a pure heart, O God."

Guess what, God heard our prayer! Jesus gave us his pure and sinless heart that loves God above all things and serves our neighbor in love. God chose you and set you apart—not with oil poured on your head, but with the water and Word of your baptism. Even though you might look weak or feel unimportant on the outside, when God looks at you, he sees a pure and dearly loved child. Because of your baptism, there's more to you than meets the eye!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What special job did the LORD give to the prophet Samuel?
- The LORD didn't look at David's outward appearance; where did he look? Why?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Why was King Saul not a good king anymore?
- What does God see when he looks at you?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- How did God choose you and set you apart?
- Think of at least one reason why it's good not to judge people based just on what they look like outwardly.

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank you for choosing me to be your own. Please forgive my sins, and help me always remember that you have given me your perfect heart. In your name I pray, Amen.