International Bible Lesson
International Bible Study Commentary
L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

God Sees Our Hearts
1 Samuel 16:4-13

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7—ESV).

When Samuel went to anoint David as the king to follow King Saul, he went to Bethlehem expecting to find someone with the physical appearance that befits a king. When he had anointed King Saul, "There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people" (1 Samuel 9:2). But this time, when Samuel jumped to the conclusion that Eliab was surely the LORD's anointed because of his appearance, the LORD needed to correct him. Samuel listened to the LORD and insisted on seeing all of Jesse's sons. So, Jesse finally called David from tending the flock to see Samuel. Like no other son, David was the son who had a heart for the LORD.

When we consider how his brothers treated him later, when David brought them food from home and asked why no soldier had come forward to fight the Philistines and the giant Goliath, we see into his brother's hearts. Whereas Samuel thought Eliab was the one the LORD had chosen to be king, we see into Eliab's heart when he said to David, "Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those *few* sheep here in the wilderness? I know your presumption and *the evil of your heart*, for you have come down to see the battle." And David

replied, "*What have I done now? Was it not but a word*?" (see 1 Samuel 17:28-30). David's response suggests that for some reason his brothers always mistreated him. God saw their hearts, and Eliab, the first to be rejected, accused David of having an evil heart! In David's Psalms and in the story of David's life we see a man who truly sought to honor God by all he did. We also see how David made mistakes and sometimes sinned against the LORD, but these were rare exceptions to the way he sought to live. David shows us his love for God and his desire to honor and obey God no matter what trials he faced. Thankfully, because all of us have sinned, Jesus came to save us from our sins and make His home within us. In John 14:20 and 23, Jesus said to His followers, "You will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you…If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." God lives within all His children and He knows their hearts.

© 2026 by L.G. Parkhurst, Jr. All Rights Reserved.
Permission Granted for Not for Profit Use.