

**“After God’s Own Heart,” Lesson 2, Leader’s Guide  
Faithfulness, 1 Sam 16:1-13**

**Central theme: God’s kind of man is faithful, even with little things**

**Important note: The theme of this study may also work well as “responsible.” In the passage, David shows his faithfulness by watching the sheep, which may also be him doing the responsible thing. The lesson approaches faithfulness from this vantage point.**

**For Starters – Details, Details, Details**

The point: In this activity, you will use a childhood game to reinforce the importance of paying attention to details. Put students in groups of 2 or 3. Give one “Find the Differences” game sheet to each group and tell the students that you will have a timed contest to see which group can find the differences the fastest. Give them one minute.

Supplies:

- “Find the Differences” games (at end of lesson)
- Pencils

Sometimes, attention to the little things in life demonstrates our concerns for the big things. While probably isn’t the case that a “Find the Differences” activity reveals how you treat other tasks in life, sometimes the way we go about little tasks shows a lot about how we approach bigger tasks.

**Look at the Book – 1 Sam 16:1-13**

Show: The clip of Allen Iverson’s famous “practice” rant. (Find it here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGDBR2L5kzI>)

After the clip is finished, ask your group what things Allen Iverson considers important and which things he considers unimportant. It’s obvious that he considers the games important, but practices unimportant. Ask your group how practicing and doing drills well relates to performing well in games. Ask if someone can really be serious about the game if they’re not committed to doing the little things well in practice.

**Read 1 Samuel 16:1-10**

Handout: Have them write 1 Samuel 16:1-10 on their handout.

Handout: Have them answer the question, “What was it about David’s brothers that made them seem to Samuel like good choices for king?” on their handout and then ask them to share their answers. **(Their appearance)**

When Samuel was looking for a king, he was thinking about how a king ought to look. But, what does God tell Samuel is important to him? **(The heart, 16:7)**

Handout: Have them answer the question, “What was it about David that made him God’s choice for king?” on their handout. **(His heart, 16:7)**

This ought to be an encouragement to anyone who sometimes feels as though they don’t measure up when the world takes stock of who is valuable and who isn’t. The world’s measures today aren’t much different than Samuel’s were that day. God’s measure is really different, though.

**(Optional teaching direction: Talk about self-worth and value, comparing the world’s standards and God’s. Can tie it in to faithfulness by talking about the need to live in ways that are pleasing to God, even if it makes you unpopular.)**

God looks at the character of a person, not just their appearance. That’s why Saul lost his place as a king in the first place! He looked good to everyone on the outside (see **1 Sam 9:1-2**), but on the inside, he didn’t have the character that God desired, so God said he would look for someone after his own heart. Which brings us back to our story.

**Read 1 Samuel 16:11-13**

Handout: Have them answer the question, “What was David doing when Samuel came to the house?” on their handout. **(Watching the sheep)**

Read to your group the short section from “Shepherd’s Status,” by Randy Alcorn, provided at the end of the lesson.

Although watching the sheep wasn’t the most glamorous or dignified job, someone had to do it, and in that family it was David. The Bible doesn’t tell us what his reaction was, but let’s use our imaginations.

Have students read aloud the following fictional excerpts from David’s diary.

**Diary 1:** “Dear diary, Today is going to suck. Dad told me that a prophet is coming to visit and I don’t even get to meet him! I have to watch the stupid sheep! They aren’t *going* anywhere! This is so unfair! Just ‘cause I’m the youngest, he treats me like I don’t matter! I can’t wait to turn 13 and get out of here! My dad is so dumb!”

**Diary 2:** “Dear diary, Well, today’s going to be another really exciting day. Oh, wait, no it’s not. Me and the sheep. Again. Sheep are so boring. They eat a little. Walk around a little and generally take up space. Dad mentioned that some guy is coming by the house, but I’ll be out with the sheep. Bored. Out of my mind. I really hate this.”

**Diary 3:** “Dear diary, Can you believe that Dad asked me to watch the sheep on a day as beautiful as this? No way! Our secret, diary: I’m just gonna take them over to the valley by the meadow and then I can fish in the river and still be close enough to check in on them every once in a while. He’ll never know and nothing will ever happen. It’s not like anyone will come by to check on me anyway, so why does it matter?”

**Diary 4:** "Dear diary, Can't write much; I have to go watch the sheep today. It's kinda boring, sure, but my brothers and dad have other stuff they've got to do, too. Gotta go."

Which diary entry do you think is most like what David might have written that day? Which is most like what you would have written?

So, the day when Samuel comes to visit the family and anoint a new king in Israel, David is out watching the sheep. Imagine the scene that would have unfolded if David had been irresponsible that day and snuck off to go fishing at the Jordan River when he was supposed to be watching the sheep. But, we learn in other parts of Scripture that David not only watched the sheep, he took good care of them and did his job well. He had fought off lions and bears in order to do his job well. Even though the job wasn't very appealing (after all, sheep stink), David did it with all he had.

Think about the design of the Statue of Liberty. When the Statue of Liberty was designed by Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi in 1886, the most common way for people to view the statue was by boat or ship. The Wright Brothers wouldn't make their first flight for another 7 years, yet the sculptor designed the hair on the top of the head with as much precision and detail as any other part of the statue. Although he maybe could not have even imagined anyone ever seeing the top of the statue, he still gave it as much attention as he did the crown, dress, feet or tablet. What could have been seen as an insignificant detail, Bartholdi treated as important.

Have someone read [Colossians 3:17 and 3:23-24](#).

Handout: Have them re-write these verses in their own words on their handout.

Ask: After hearing those verses, how important do you think it is to do all things, even the little things that seem unimportant, with faithfulness? What are some of the things that seem unimportant or meaningless in your daily life? (Homework, studying, etc.) How does what we studied today change your perspective on those things?

God really values faithfulness. Just look at Jesus. He came to earth and was faithful to do what the Father wanted, even to die on a cross for us. To be a man after God's own heart means that we need to be faithful, but not just with the big things in life, but the little things, too. Being faithful with the little things helps us to be faithful when it's time for the big things.

Take a moment and write down two things on your handout that you think are somewhat insignificant in your weekly routine. Then, we're going to pray together and you can pray that God will help you to be faithful even in those things.

### **Optional activities:**

- If you're super planned out, you can make the whole night an exercise in little details. Continually ask your guys to do small, seemingly meaningless tasks. Ask them questions about the smallest details of their day. Make them tell you about the smallest details of their school, their clothes, whatever.

### **From, "Shepherd's Status"**

During the time of the Patriarchs, shepherding was a noble occupation. Shepherds are mentioned early in Genesis 4:20 where Jabal is called the father of those living in tents and raising livestock. In nomadic societies, everyone—whether sheikh or slave—was a shepherd. The wealthy sons of Isaac and Jacob tended flocks (Genesis 30:29; 37:12). Jethro, the priest of Midian, employed his daughters as shepherdesses (Exodus 2:16).

When the twelve tribes of Israel migrated to Egypt, they encountered a lifestyle foreign to them. The Egyptians were agriculturalists. As farmers, they despised shepherding because sheep and goats meant death to crops. Battles between farmers and shepherds are as old as they are fierce. The first murder in history erupted from a farmer's resentment of a shepherd (Genesis 4:1-8).

Egyptians considered sheep worthless for food and sacrifice. Egyptian art forms and historical records portray shepherds negatively. Neighboring Arabs—their enemy—were shepherds, and Egyptian hatred climaxed when shepherd kings seized Lower Egypt.

Pharaoh's clean-shaven court looked down on the rugged shepherd sons of Jacob. Joseph matter-of-factly informed his brothers, "Every shepherd is detestable to the Egyptians" (Genesis 46:34).

In the course of 400 years, the Egyptians prejudiced the Israelites' attitude toward shepherding. Jacob's descendants became accustomed to a settled lifestyle and forgot their nomadic roots. When Israel later settled in Canaan (c. 1400 BC), the few tribes still retaining a fondness for pastoral life chose to live in the Trans-Jordan (Numbers 32:1 ff).

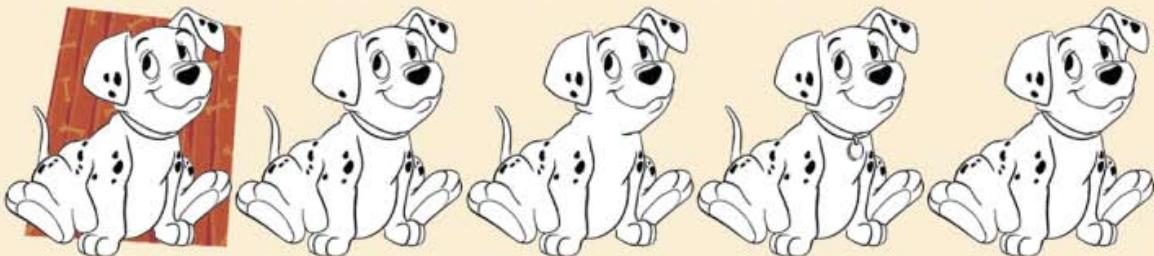
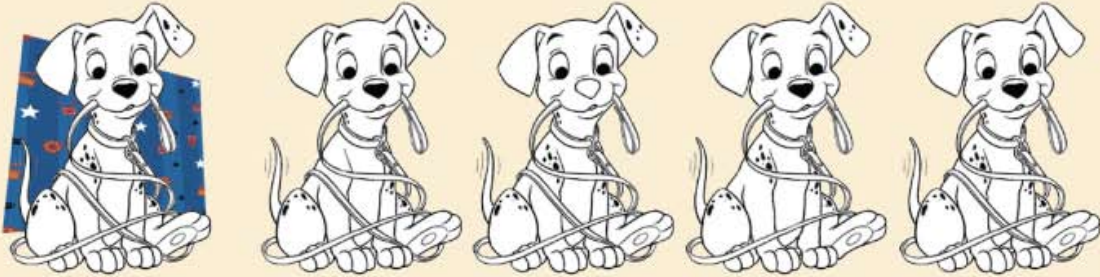
After the settling in Palestine, shepherding ceased to hold its prominent position. As the Israelites acquired more farmland, pasturing decreased. Shepherding became a menial vocation for the laboring class.

-*"Shepherd Status,"* by Randy Alcorn, in *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*, Nancy Guthrie, Editor (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), pp. 85-89.



# What's Different?

Look carefully at the first puppy in each row.  
Try to spot and then circle what's different about  
the other four puppies in each row.



© Disney. Based on the book *The One Hundred and One Dalmatians* by Dodie Smith, published by The Viking Press.

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