

Following David's Example

One of the odd facts about King David is that he was the youngest of Jesse's sons. David had a number of older brothers, but God was not impressed with any of them:

I Samuel 16:5: "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.”

David was held in such low esteem by his family that when Jesse brought his sons to Samuel he didn’t even think about including David. David was an outcast. When his father sent him to bring food to his brothers (who were on the front line fighting the Philistines), Eliab demonstrated exactly why God had rejected him:

I Samuel 17:28: “And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab’s anger was kindled against David, and he said, **Why camest thou down hither?** and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? **I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart;** for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.
29 And David said, **What have I now done?** Is there not a cause?”

The reason David went to the front line was because his father told him to bring his brothers food. Eliab was completely out of line – but his attack on David was so routine that David’s response was “What have I done this time?” David was used to unjust attacks; that was the story of his life.

David’s family was not a fan of David, and there is no evidence in the Bible that this ever changed. One thing we do know, though, is that when David killed Goliath someone was paying attention. Later in the Bible we find out that one of David’s nephews followed in David’s footsteps and killed a giant:

I Chronicles 20:6: “And yet again there was war at Gath, **where was a man of great stature,** whose fingers and toes were four and twenty, six on each hand, and six on each foot and he also was the son of the giant.

7 But when he defied Israel, **Jonathan the son of Shimea David's brother** slew him.”

David may have been rejected by his brothers, but Jonathan decided to follow in his uncle's footsteps. The family outcast had become the family role model.

