

1 WHAT IS GREATNESS?

Acts 13:22

Ask each other: What makes someone a hero? What makes them great?

Thousands of years ago, a young hero named Alexander built an army and conquered a huge amount of land. He created the biggest empire the world had ever seen. Alexander named 70 cities after himself (which would make writing a letter to someone in Alexandria a bit confusing) and one city after his horse! People called him Alexander the Great because he had taken over so much land. He even told people he was the son of the Greek god Zeus.

Was Alexander really great? Well, that depends on your definition of *great*.

The Bible teaches that true greatness isn't about how much you own or how many people you lead. The greatest king in the Bible was David, and God called him "a man after my heart" (Acts 13:22).

That doesn't mean David was trying to grab God's heart (that sounds squishy) but rather that he was a God-chaser.

Alexander chased power but David chased God. This is what makes someone great, according to God.

Alexander chased power, and when he died at age 32, his empire was divided up and eventually fell apart. David chased God, and God promised that he would have an everlasting kingdom!

Alexander pretended to be the son of a god. David got to be the great-great (and many more greats) grandfather of the actual Son of God, Jesus.

There are a lot of things we can chase, like winning at the science fair, being the best on a sports team, doing the coolest bike tricks, or getting to the top level of a video game.

None of those things are bad. David was also an amazing soldier, leader, and friend, and his people even wrote songs about how cool he was. But he didn't chase fame, money, or power. He chased God.

(What does it look like to chase God? Keep reading this book and we'll find out together!)

Write God a letter (or draw him a picture) about what you are chasing. (What is most important to you right now?) Then pray, "God, please help me want to chase you."

2 LOOKING AT THE HEART

1 Samuel 16:1–13

Ask each other: What do you see when you look at me?

When you meet someone new, what's the first thing you notice about them? The style of their hair or clothes? Their laugh or how well they kick a soccer ball?

Let's talk about the time the prophet Samuel got a big lesson about judging people by their outsides. Saul was already the king of Israel, but he had disobeyed God in some big ways, so God told Samuel to anoint a new king in secret.

God could have told Samuel exactly who was going to be the next king, but instead, he just told him which family to visit. Samuel obediently walked over to Bethlehem to meet Jesse's family.

When he got there, Jesse's oldest son, Eliab, walked past him. Samuel thought, "Wow. Now *that* guy would make a great king!"

The Bible doesn't tell us why Samuel thought that, so what do *you* think?

Maybe Eliab was super strong, with muscles on top of muscles. Maybe he was the tallest guy around. Maybe his beard was the bushiest. All we know is what God told Samuel next:

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)

OK, apparently Eliab wasn't going to be the next king. In fact, Jesse went on to present seven sons to Samuel, but God didn't pick any of them! It didn't matter if they were the smartest or the strongest or the fastest, because God wasn't looking for those things.

Finally, Samuel scratched his head. Could he have heard God wrong? Where was the next king?

“Are all your sons here?” he asked Jesse. No, Jesse’s youngest son was taking care of the sheep. They sent someone to get him. When he got there, God told Samuel that *this* was the king: the youngest kid in the family, who got stuck with the dirty work.

Samuel picked up his flask of oil and poured it over the head of the new king, the one who had the best heart. David.

Pray: “God, what do you see when you look at me? Please show me.”

You might have to be quiet for a minute or two after you pray, but wait for God to give you the ideas. Then write down whatever you think of, even if it’s just one word.

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Mother’s Prayer Section

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3 THE HOLY SPIRIT

1 Samuel 16:13

Ask each other: What's the biggest storm you remember?

Have you ever been in a huge windstorm? Trees bend nearly sideways, dust whips down the street, and even high-rise buildings sway in the wind. Big windstorms can cause a lot of damage when they knock down trees or become whirling tornadoes.

Now imagine being outside on a perfect summer day. You lie in a field, and the grass rustles gently in the breeze. An eagle soars high above.

Where would you rather be? If you chose the gentle wind, you're not alone! But would it surprise you to know that sometimes good things can come from the craziest windstorms? Dust storms in the Sahara desert in Africa send beneficial minerals all the way to the Amazon rainforest in South America, and these minerals help the rainforest grow.

In the Bible, the Holy Spirit is sometimes described as a wind, but we don't really know what form the Holy Spirit took for David when Samuel anointed him. All we know is this:

Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. (1 Samuel 16:13)

Sometimes the Holy Spirit would help him do amazing, powerful things that changed his country, like a crazy windstorm making his enemies shiver. Other times, the Holy Spirit helped him write poetry and sing songs to God that we still sing today, like grass rustling on a warm day.

Having the Spirit of the Lord upon him did not make David's life easy. In fact, it took about 15 years for David to actually become king after he was anointed by Samuel! David spent most of those years in battles or hiding.

Most people in the Old Testament didn't actually receive the Holy Spirit. Only super special people got the Holy Spirit's help, and they got it only for specific jobs, like speaking prophecies or fighting an enemy.

The good news is that when Jesus left, he sent the Holy Spirit to be in every single believer. That means you! The same Holy Spirit that helped David be courageous and wise is in you. Forever.

Sometimes the Holy Spirit might be in you like a windstorm, helping you change the world. But most times, the Spirit is like a gentle breeze. He whispers through your mind and heart, teaching you and helping you become a God-chaser.

Draw a comic of the Holy Spirit coming to you. What do you say to the Holy Spirit?



