

## Daily Devotional, July 3, 2020

### “The Lord Looks at the Heart”, (1 Samuel 16:7, NKJV)

*“But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7)*

The context of this verse is God’s identification through the agency of His prophet Samuel of His choice for the King of Israel. That choice was not obvious to David’s family, because they were using outward criteria for their judgment. The Lord, in contrast, was using inward criteria. His choice was based upon the tender and regenerated heart of David, and not upon the strength and age of the man.

We see here the utter failure of men to accurately assess the condition of other men. We can apply this to the church. It is not for human beings to make final determination who exactly is saved, although we can be reasonably sure by applying the fruit test. *“By their fruits you will know them”* (Matthew 7:20). Further, the church is also called to exercise biblical discipline within its ranks. Notwithstanding, the church is warned against determining who is false, and weeding them out, lest some other weak believers might be unjustly lumped with them (*Matthew 13:24-30*). Let us also be careful in our zeal to judge others based on *“the outward appearance.”* Years of evangelism and ministry have proved out the point to me that God calls and prepares the hearts of those whom He wills, those who are willing to believe upon Jesus and receive His grace. Since the Christian has a distinct viewpoint regarding the Lord’s accurate estimation of an individual, he or she who is spiritual does not judge based on *“the outward appearance.”*

There are some today in our society who insist upon looking in the heart of those who believe according to what I have just stated, and all other people who have been pre-selected based on certain outward appearances. These self-appointed authorities of the inward man vehemently insist that certain prejudices or racist tendencies exist in the heart of certain folks, absent good evidence in the lives and conduct of these individuals. To have such determinations made by the unbelieving and worldly crowd is not surprising, for that crowd lacks a biblical worldview. But may it never be so among Christians, that sin is imputed by those of like faith to the brethren, when there is no evidence of it there! To make judgments based upon the inward heart is to ‘play God.’ And this leads to strife, division, and every other evil thing. I pray that the church is revitalized by the faithful preaching of the gospel to

all, and renewal of inward hearts, and that it does not fall prey to the devil's schemes to distract and divide it through endless discussions and debates based on assumptions of what is inside a man, as informed by any agenda beyond a biblical agenda. We all know what is inside a man. Wretched sinners capable of great evil are we all! "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings" (Jeremiah 17:9-10). Hence the need for the Savior, Jesus Christ! If we want to have real change in our land, it is the inward hearts of men that need renewing. Lasting change cannot be imposed by worldly society, cancel culture, or more laws. So, Christian friend, don't be distracted or hamstrung. Get out there and preach the cross of Christ today, with words, and with a life lived in such a way to back up your words. That's what the focus of the church is about (Matthew 28:18-20). Amen!