

1 Samuel 15:34–16:13

Change and being changed

Saul has proved himself unworthy to be king and God has rejected him, telling Samuel to find and anoint one of the sons of Jesse as king. All of Jesse's sons meet with Samuel, who is warned by God not to pay attention to outward appearances, for God sees what is on the inside. It is only when Jesse's youngest son is brought in from tending the sheep that God says, 'This is the one'. Anointed by Samuel, the spirit of God came upon David.



Write

Together make a list of all the changes you can think of. Circle all those that are positive in one colour. Circle those that are difficult but lead to good things in another colour.



Have a go at making ordinary objects into something extraordinary – this could involve baking, sewing, art, science, DIY, decorating or recycling. If we can make something good out of something ordinary, how much more can God do with us?



Pick up a positive habit this week. Change isn't always instantaneous. It can take work. Practise by choosing a positive habit and doing it every day this week. It could be anything from getting up a bit earlier, to tidying your room every day, or taking time each day to pray/read your Bible.

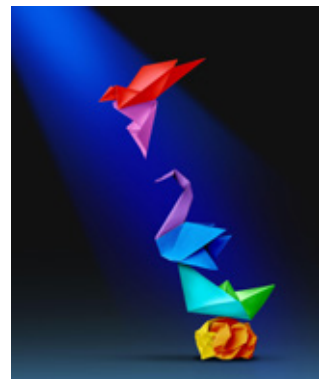
Bible notes



Israelite elders asked Samuel for a king. Saul was identified and anointed, but his kingship turned out to be unsatisfactory. The long saga of the books of Samuel and Kings has a single criterion for evaluating the success of kingship: is the king wholeheartedly committed to worshipping Israel's one God, who is identified as his Father (Psalm 2:7)? Because Saul does not live up to this, God withdraws favour and the search for a new king is on. Samuel mourns the end of his relationship with Saul, and God too is sorry. However, the pause to mark this sorrow is only brief, and the story moves on – change is urgently needed. For Samuel, Bethlehem was just another insignificant place in Judea. Its fame arose from what he would do there: anoint David as king, and later Jesus, Son of David, is born in David's hometown. Samuel's action changed human history in the short- and long-term. One after another of Jesse's sons is rejected – all fine young men who might, in Samuel's eyes, have been suitable. They shared a handsome appearance with Saul, but this was no longer relevant to God's purposes. The choice eventually fell on David, the last-born. He was still a boy (17:33; cf 3:1), and an eighth son in a society that recognised seven as the 'perfect' number. He had the menial task of keeping the sheep, though this also recalls the lifestyle of Abraham and Moses. This focus on his insignificance fits in a pattern of unexpected choices: why was Jacob chosen over his older brother, or Joseph over his brothers? Change for the better flows from God's initiative, not human preference; and so David was anointed with oil and received the

First impressions

- How have you changed in the past few years? Are any of these changes a result of your faith?
- Can you recall a testimony (perhaps your own) of someone whose life has been transformed due to their faith in Jesus?
- What small changes could you make this week that will make a positive impact on others?



A gathering prayer

Thank you, Lord, that you have been faithful to us through all the changes of our lives; we praise you, for there is no end to your faithfulness. Help us today to be open to you, and to trust you through all the changes still to come. Amen.



Look at a copy of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' together and talk about the difference the change makes in this story. What would happen if the caterpillar didn't change?