

“THINGS ARE NOT ALWAYS AS THEY APPEAR (PART 1)”

...BUT THE LORD LOOKS AT THE HEART

This past week a friend of ours passed along a recorded teaching on the life of David. This particular teaching focused on the “seasons” of David’s life, beginning with Samuel anointing Him as the future king of Israel (1 Sam. 16:1-13), and moving through the various experiences and challenges he would encounter throughout his life. As you may recall from the story in 1 Samuel, the prophet is directed by the Lord to go to the house of Jesse in Bethlehem to anoint the next king of Israel. He invites Jesse and his sons to the sacrifice he is conducting, and “when they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed stands here before the Lord” (1 Sam. 16:6). “But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart’” (1 Sam. 16:7). You most likely know the rest of this story, as Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but the Lord had chosen none of these to be the next king of Israel. David, who was out in the fields tending sheep, was called in and anointed by Samuel to be king (1 Sam. 16:11-13).

DO NOT JUDGE BY MERE APPEARANCES

A couple of days after listening to this teaching, I was reading in the Gospel of John, chapter 7, and I came across verse 24, which reads as follows: “Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment” (NIV). I noticed that one of the verses cross-referenced was 1 Sam. 16:7 (stated above). I sensed that the Holy Spirit wanted me to “pay attention,” as He was indeed emphasizing the importance of viewing things from His perspective and not judging things only from my vantage point. The next day at the house church we attend, I shared what the Lord was sharing with me about this, and it seemed relevant to many in our group. A bit later I sensed a stirring to write and expand some on this topic.

WRONGLY JUDGING THE FATHER’S HEART

I must confess that when I have read John 7:24 in the past, the first thing I generally thought about was the possibility that I was wrongly judging a person or their actions, and the Lord was trying to bring correction (knowing Him more as a loving and disciplining Father instead of only a corrective one is a continuing work!). This time, however, I did not perceive things in this way, but sensed it was about something deeper—something about knowing the true nature of the Father’s heart. As we have been invited in to help heal peoples’ hearts over the past number of years, we have seen the impact of wrongly perceiving or judging a situation for what appears to be so evident by outward appearances. Many times, these “wrong judgments” relate directly to God the Father and result in an incorrect assessment of the nature of His heart. This, in turn, leads to the establishment of walls or barriers in our relationship with Him, and thus we struggle in trusting Him and in being able to be intimate with Him. Many in this state might not be willing to admit the struggle they are having with God (or they’re not emotionally in touch with it), yet

when asked particular questions about the level of intimacy they experience in the relationship, it is quite clear that something is amiss.

AN INVITATION

Over the next week or so I invite you to join with me in something that may be helpful if you desire to go deeper in intimacy in your relationship with the Lord. I invite you to set aside some time to ask the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind if you have “wrongly judged” the Lord as a result of situations or circumstances that you have experienced. Some of you may immediately know of such times, and you may be in the process of working through them and receiving the healing the Lord desires for you. Let the Father continue this work! Some of you may not feel that this exercise is relevant to you, yet you know that you experience little depth in your relationship with the Lord and do not know why this is so. You may also find that you keep yourself quite busy and thus leave little time for relationship with God. If that is you, go ahead and join with me in this anyway. You have little to lose, except the time you set aside, and if you are asking Him from your heart, you may find a “key” that could open the door for a deeper relationship with Him. For some others, you may be in a very special place with the Lord at this time, and this exercise is not for you now. Be blessed, and I pray that your relationship only goes deeper!

A CHALLENGE—FOR YOU AND FOR ME

For those of you who will join me in this “heart work” over the next week, you may find this to be a challenging assignment. Please be aware that it may take a few times of quiet reflection before the Holy Spirit brings any particular events, situations or experiences to mind. Pray against discouragement and avoid striving to try to “bring something up.” If it is the Lord’s timing for you in this area, He will bring it forth. For some of you, there may be various times that come to mind that are applicable—even from early childhood to the present. If that is the case, ask the Lord to show you the most significant time(s) when you may have “made a wrong judgment against Him.” Remember—He desires for you to be free from such things, as He desires relationship with us even more than we do with Him! As things come to mind as you wait upon Him, write down the situations or circumstances and allow Him to show you all that He desires for you to see. A suggestion that might help you get started in this assignment is to try to respond to the following statement: “This ____ (event, situation, experience—fill in the blank) has/has not happened to me or my loved ones, therefore, this means ____ (fill in the blank) about God the Father.” As you respond to this statement, try to allow your heart to come forth instead of only what you know in your mind. Next time I will share with you some personal things that the Lord has revealed to me in this area, and I will also share a few thoughts on how we can respond to the revelation that comes.

PLEASE PRAY WITH ME . . .

Father God, thank You that You truly are for me and not against me. Thank You that You do indeed desire for me to be free to love You with all of my heart, soul, strength and mind. Thank You that You want all barriers and hindrances to my relationship with You to be removed. Please open my heart and my mind as I invite You in this week, and reveal that which may have caused me to judge You wrongly. I ask for Your grace in this, and I trust You to protect me and allow only that which

is important to be revealed. I desire to see You, Father, in the true light of who You are, and to also see myself and my circumstances from Your heart and Your perspective. Thank You in advance for what You are going to do this week and in the days ahead. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

From the Father's Heart,

Jerry Basel