

# extreme GRACE

## Like a Shepherd

A wonderful Bible story tells of the day Samuel the prophet went searching for the young man who was to be Israel's next king.\* God sent the prophet to the home of Jesse, a Bethlehem farmer who had sired eight sons, each of whom paraded before Samuel hoping to be selected for crowning.

Son Eliab was the first to be introduced to Samuel. He was tall, good-looking with strong shoulders and clear eyes. Samuel immediately "knew" he had met Israel's new king!

But God said, "No," and added a phrase mothers have been using on their children ever since. "Man looks on the outward appearance," God said, "but the Lord looks on the heart."

After Eliab, God said "NO" six more times.

Imagine Samuel's amazement as son after son walked by, and God said, "No, not this one." Each had an un-kingly flaw, usually something invisible to the human eye.

The eighth son, a young boy named David, was out on a hillside serving as shepherd for Bethlehem's flock of sheep. He was such an illogical choice, that his father hadn't even invited him to the audition.

While waiting for David to arrive, Samuel asked about him. "Well," the villagers said, "he certainly does an excellent job of protecting our sheep. Once, he killed a marauding bear with his own hands. Another time he killed a lion. Truthfully, no sheep-killer dares come near our sheep when David is protecting them."

God's "YES!" was clear and distinct. "He is the one!" were the Lord's exact words.

God looked far beneath the outward appearance, listened to the young shepherd's hillside songs, heard his eloquent prayers, and found safety within the young man's care. So, God called a shepherd, and Samuel anointed David to be the next king—the protector of the people.

I believe God is still calling shepherds today. There are scores of good-looking, would-be kings waiting to be crowned on the street corners of our communities. But, there are also a few shepherds, looking around quietly for new ways to protect God's children.

He is calling today, ready with the crown of responsibility. He is calling for you, and me, to watch out for the safety of His kids. He is calling for protectors who are willing to care, *like a shepherd*.



**\*\*The Shepherd Psalm  
by Harry Anderson**

*Like a shepherd*—taking time to care for each person individually.

*Like a shepherd*—listening to each need with empathy.

*Like a shepherd*—ever alert to the challenges being faced by others, ever ready to support and encourage in the midst of those challenges.

*Like a shepherd*—protecting from anything or anyone that threatens life.

*Like a shepherd*—guarding against predators who demean, degrade, or devastate the hearts of his children.

*Like a shepherd*—loving, regardless of illness, color, language, or the thickness of our wool.

*Like a shepherd*—willing to lay down their life for the sheep.

King David is remembered as shepherd royalty; an honored king who cared, who protected, who failed, and who knew how to say, "I am sorry," and mean it. He was, as God himself said, "a man after my own heart."

I think that means he was a man who was

always chasing after God's heart, eager to catch and hold on tightly.

Not a bad model for all of us young shepherds.

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\* I Samuel 16:1-13

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