

SERMON OUTLINE

THREE DEAD ENDS TO SUCCESS

CLAYTON KEENON | JANUARY 10 & 11, 2026

1 SAMUEL 16:1-13

Dead End #1: _____ (1 Samuel 16:1-7)

Dead End #2: _____ (1 Samuel 16:8-12)

Dead End #3: _____ (1 Samuel 16:13)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

FOR FAMILY, FRIENDS & GROUPS

ICEBREAKER: If you could have one impressive skill that would make people say "Wow!" at parties, what would it be and why?

1. Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13 out loud. Give everyone in the group 2-3 minutes in silence to jot down some observations about the text (repeated words, truths about God, themes, striking details, questions, etc.). Go around the group and have people share some of their observations and discuss them.

2. Why did Samuel need a cover story (the sacrifice) in order to go to Bethlehem to anoint one of Jesse's sons? (1 Samuel 16:2-3)

3. Why does God have Samuel go through the process of having all seven of Jesse's sons before seeing David?

4. The key verse in this passage is, "The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). What are some of the qualities our world values that God doesn't prioritize?

5. Why is image management so tempting? How does it show up in your life?

6. The sermon suggested five practices for becoming people of depth: Connection, Contemplation, Creativity, Challenge, and Confession. Which one feels most absent from your life right now?

7. The sermon said, "If you don't have someone who knows your embarrassing secrets, you might be a shallow person." Do you have that person? If not, what's stopping you?

8. What is the significance of the fact that David is "tending the sheep" when Samuel arrived (1 Samuel 16:11)? What does this say about who David is?

9. Who in your life right now is doing low-status work that actually benefits everyone—someone you might be overlooking like Jesse overlooked David?

10. David's shepherding became his training ground for kingship. What unglamorous work are you doing right now that might actually be preparing you for something bigger?

11. The pastor contrasts "Team Bubble Bath" (believe you're enough) and "Team Cold Plunge" (prove you're enough). Which false gospel are you more naturally drawn to, and what does it promise you?

12. If prayer is where dependence on God shows up, what does your actual prayer life (not what you wish it was) reveal about how much you're trying to rely on yourself? What could you do to increase your "regular prayer" and "random prayer" this week?

13. Where in your life right now are you exhausted from self-reliance, and what would it look like to let God carry that burden instead?

14. How does believing "God is on the side of the underdog" actually change the way you parent, work, or lead?

PRAYER PROMPT: Think of someone you've been overlooking (at work, home, church, or in your community). Pray specifically for those people by name, asking God to help you see them the way he does and to honor their unseen service.