

# 1 Samuel 17:56

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling is.

## Analysis

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**And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling is.**

The term 'stripling' ('elem) denotes a young man just reaching maturity - one whose beard is barely growing. Saul's command to investigate David's lineage reveals concern for political and social standing before granting his promised rewards. The king who should have led Israel against Goliath now inquires about the family credentials of the one who did. There is irony here: Saul investigates David's human credentials while remaining blind to David's divine appointment. The king measured by appearance and lineage; God had measured by the heart (16:7).

## Historical Context

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Ancient Near Eastern kings regularly investigated the family backgrounds of those entering royal service. Marriage into the royal family required verification of acceptable social status. The term 'stripling' indicates David's youthful appearance distinguished him from battle-hardened warriors.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. When have you focused on outward credentials while missing someone's God-given calling?
2. How does God's evaluation of people differ from typical human assessment?

## Interlinear Text

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יְהִי אָמֵר לְךָ שְׁאֵל אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ :

**said**

H559

**And the king**

H4428

**Enquire**

H7592

H859

**thou whose son**

H1121

H4310

H2088

שְׁאֵלָמָן :

**the stripling**

H5958