

The stakes were high. Samuel was in the middle of deciding which of Jesse's sons should be anointed king of Israel. If Samuel looked only at how tall or strong the young men were, he might overlook David, the youngest and seemingly the least capable. But God had chosen David, and he needed Samuel to recognize that. The challenge for Samuel, as well as for us, was to look at the realities beneath the surface.

In the Gospels we see Jesus do this all the time. He always looked past appearances and acted based on what was going on in someone's heart. A good example is Simon Peter. Jesus chose him to lead the early Church, even though Peter was impetuous and was used to speaking before he thought. But Jesus looked past Peter's impatience and saw his heart. He saw that Peter truly did love him and wanted to do the right thing. He saw that Peter had the potential to grow into an effective, passionate leader, even to the point of shedding his blood for the gospel. In the end, Peter's passion wasn't a deficit; it was part of what made him perfect for the job!

What about us? How can we start seeing as God sees?

You can begin by acknowledging that there is more to every situation than meets the eye. So when you are in a complex or challenging situation, ask the Holy Spirit to help you see what's going on under the surface. Try to look through the Spirit's lens of mercy, justice, and love. Remember how Jesus treated Peter, as well as how he treated outcasts and sinners—never condemning but always helping them take their next step forward. Then ask yourself how you can do what Jesus might do.

As you get into the habit of taking these little steps, you'll begin to see things as God does. You'll find yourself more peaceful in difficult situations. You'll find yourself being more patient, caring, and responsive to the people around you. You'll find yourself receiving more insights and guidance from the Spirit. And that will make you even more an instrument of God's peace to the people around you.