



WEEK ONE | DAY ONE

HANDPICKED BY GOD

“I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart” (Acts 13:22, NIV).

Nicole has been my sister-friend for over 20 years. She’s a vivacious, beautiful, and godly 30-something and a delightful blessing in my life; but she has experienced much sadness and frustration. From her earliest childhood Nicole felt rejected by those she most hoped would love her. She never knew her father, and her fiancé called off their wedding. During each of those times, as she grappled with intense feelings of abandonment, the sweet words of Christ spoke to the depths of her wounded soul. His healing balm of love and grace poured on her as she read:

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you” (John 15:16, HCSB).

Choose comes from the Greek *eklegomai* meaning *to choose and out from*. Thus the compound word means *to pick, single out, to choose out*. The genius of the word has in it the idea of not merely choosing, but that of choosing out from a number. The elect are *the chosen-out ones*.¹

Chosen ricocheted off of the hollow walls of Nicole’s heart and invited her to rejoice in the love that led the King of the universe to hand select her. She turned her attention away from those who rejected her and refocused on the One who called her to Himself for His purposes. Knowing you’ve been handpicked can stunningly deepen your affection for the One who picked you.

God chose you! Let that sink in. ... GOD chose you. You may have been turned down by your boss, rejected by your spouse, ignored by your parents, looked over by your friends, or refused by your children; but you can rest in the loving arms of God. He tore Himself away from heaven to come and be with you—the one He loves and chose to be His own to accomplish His purposes in this generation.

1. Do you most often feel:

- | | | |
|------------------|----|-----------------------|
| * Chosen by God | or | * Rejected by God? |
| * Ignored by God | or | * Disciplined by God? |
| * Loved by God | or | * Unloved by God? |

2. What about your life makes you feel this way?

Regardless of how you answered that question, take a moment to contemplate and rejoice in the truth of John 15:16.

3. How might knowing you've been hand selected by God deepen your affection for Him and affect your life decisions?

In the margin write the initials of people who have most rejected you. As you consider God's choosing you, mark through each set of initials, releasing them from the responsibility to make you feel wanted and needed. Now soak in the words of John 15:16 just as my friend Nicole did, and consider how this deepens your love and commitment to please God and not others.

ELECTED AGAINST ALL ODDS

The much-debated theological principle that illustrates our standing with God is election. If you are a believer, you are one of the elect. Election means simply to choose. It designates the glorious fact that God chooses us, so our confidence rests not in our faithfulness but in His. God grants favor and abundant blessing to His chosen as He allows them to participate in His purposes in this generation.

4. Read Ephesians 1:4-5; 1 Peter 1:1-2; and Colossians 3:12. Then underline the phrases that illustrate the principle of election. Scripture reveals that God elects us to:

Salvation

Specific Callings

Specific Tasks

I admit I've pondered election and questioned its fairness. While complete clarity in this matter may always be a hidden secret in the heart of God, I've still wondered: *How could a good God choose some and not others?* A simple illustration has helped me grapple with my questions.

Imagine that I offered a room full of people a free soft drink. For various reasons they each refused to accept, but instead of leaving I then pulled 20 aside from the crowd of 100 to a small room for a more intentional invitation. I told these 20 what it cost me to get these drinks for them. I made clear how important it would be to me if they would accept it. Would I have been unfair to the other 80? No. I offered all 100 the same thing while giving the 20 a more deliberate opportunity to share in the free blessing I have for them.

Remember the teaching of 1 Peter 1:2—God's foreknowledge is part of election. We absolutely cannot think that we control God's sovereign choices, but part of the reason God chooses who He does is because He knows the end from the beginning.

How do we deal with those we love who are not yet saved? How do we know if they are among the elect? We don't. So we pray for the Spirit to work, and we work to tell them about the love of Jesus. All the while we can be secure that God will take the initiative to work in people's hearts. This relieves any pressure for us to "save" people because we know God is in ultimate control.

5. Write the names of the people who you're praying will come to know the Lord.

"It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 1:30, NIV).

PICKED FOR A PURPOSE

Our six-week study of David, one of the most beloved persons in the entire Bible, could not begin in a more appropriate place. He had been chosen—elected by God—not only to be in relationship with Him but also to lead His chosen people Israel.

6. Acts 13:22 reveals why God selected David to accomplish His purposes. Write this reason in your own words:
7. Choose two of the following passages as a resource and record some characteristics they reveal about the kind of person David was and the type of heart he had.
- Psalm 78:71-72
 - Psalm 51:1-4,10-13
 - 1 Samuel 22:1-2
 - 1 Samuel 17:44-45
 - 1 Samuel 24:1-22
 - 2 Samuel 2:4-7

God is still looking for men and women whose hearts will reflect His passions. He has a divine search party going. He is seeking “to show Himself strong for those whose hearts are completely His” (2 Chron. 16:9, HCSB). I sure want to see God in my everyday living, don’t you? Turns out He desires to show up in my everyday living—in yours too. He desires and delights to make Himself known, but He desires first to find someone in whom He sees a holy boldness by His Spirit to live fully committed and passionately for Him like David did.

The public anointing of David as King of Israel was the outcome of what had taken place in private between David and God long before. David was anointed for his great service and his ministry as Israel’s king because God, who discerns the hearts of all men, knew that David’s heart was different from others. He had a prepared heart. We can learn much from how David’s heart became prepared to so attract God’s attention. Author Alan Redpath suggests that a simple look at Psalm 23 gives ample insight into David’s heart. Let’s look at each selected phrase and carefully consider what we find.

8. What does each capitalized portion of Psalm 23 reveal about what David believed about God or what characterized David’s lifestyle?

¹The LORD is my shepherd; I SHALL NOT WANT

²He maketh me to LIE DOWN in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the STILL WATERS

³He leadeth me in the paths of RIGHTEOUSNESS

⁴Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies ... MY CUP [OF THANKSGIVING] runneth over

⁵Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: AND I WILL DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD FOREVER

David's writing shows a man who trusted God, led a life of quiet devotion, pursued holiness (despite his imperfection), was thankful, and remained consistently devoted to God regardless of life's circumstances.

9. How would you describe yourself in each of these areas?

<i>Trust God</i>	Rarely	Sometimes	When It's Convenient	Most Often
<i>Prioritize Intimate Times of Quiet with God</i>	Never	Sometimes	When It's Convenient	Often
<i>Pursue Holy Living</i>	Never	Sometimes	When It's Convenient	I'm Not Perfect But Holiness Is My Life Goal
<i>Grateful</i>	Never	Sometimes	When It's Convenient	Most Often

10. What is one specific thing you can do this week in each area to begin to develop a life characterized by these things.?

The good news for all of us is that David wasn't born with a supernatural ability to do these things better than everyone else. He recognized that he was nothing more than a mere man shaped in iniquity and conceived in sin (Ps. 51:5, KJV). He, just like you and me, had sin as a legacy and needed the redemption of God's grace extended to Him. So any good thing God saw in David's heart was only there as a result of David's response to God's work in him. God's electing us for His specific purposes rests on how we respond to His love and work in us by His Spirit.

Over the next six weeks I believe passionately that the Spirit of the living God will speak to you clearly. (How can He not when you are listening to and reading the likes of Miss Beth and Miss Kay!) You have not happened on this study by chance. You're here for Him to do a work in you. You must choose to respond so your heart might capture the attention of God like David's did. It doesn't matter what your past was like or even what you think now disqualifies you from God's plans. He has chosen you. You are handpicked by the Father. Now I urge you to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called" (Eph. 4:1, NASB).

11. Write a prayer to God. If you are a believer, thank Him for your status as one of His chosen ones. Ask Him to use this study to reshape your heart. Ask Him to soften your heart to listen, receive, and obey His Word.