



LIFEgroup Study Guide

May 3- June 7

LIFEgroup Study Guide

This study guide follows along with LBF Church's current Sunday message series, and is intended to be a supplement in your daily passionate pursuit of Jesus.

- *Watch last Sunday's message video:*
[www.lbf.church/messages]

Is your group stumped? Did you come to a question that you feel needs clarification? Our church isn't too big. Contact Pastor Dan with your questions.

- *Contact Pastor Dan:*
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Going Up or Coming Down?

Lesson 1 • May 3 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

Only God can humble the proud and exalt the humble.

Getting Started

1. How can you recognize a humble person?

2. What do you think it takes for a proud person to become humble? Think of examples of when you have seen this happen.

Embracing The Bigger Picture

In this series through 1 Samuel we will not cover every passage in detail, so we will take a moment to get the bigger picture before digging into the passage on which we will focus. The larger section for this lesson is 1 Samuel 1:1 - 2:26.

First, Samuel begins with a man named Elkanah and his two wives, Peninnah and Hannah. The setting is the time of the judges since there is still no king in Israel. In Elkanah's family, Peninnah has born children, but Hannah has been barren. This is a source of deep grief for her. One year when she has gone to Shiloh to worship the LORD, she prays desperately for a child. She prays so desperately that Eli, the high priest, thought she was drunk because of her grief-stricken intensity. Hannah told the LORD that if he gave her a son, she would offer him to the LORD for his service. When Eli realizes her earnestness, he assures her that God will listen.

God does listen! Hannah bears a son and names him Samuel. After she has weaned him, she presents him to Eli so that Samuel can serve the LORD through the ritual worship that Israel practiced. And, as a postscript, we get to find out that God continued to bless Hannah with children. Other than Samuel, she ended up having three sons and two daughters. God showed his ability to bless her abundantly, even after she humbly offered her son to the LORD's service. Hannah did this, not knowing that the LORD would give her more children. It was an act of deep trust and worship.

In 1 Samuel 2:1-11, we get to read a prayer of worship from Hannah. In it, she highlights not only the themes

of how she had seen God work in her life but the very themes that will be at work throughout both 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel. Those themes are pride and humility, and—more specifically—God's ability to exalt the humble and to humble the proud.

Digging In

Read 1 Samuel 2:1-11.

"Then Hannah prayed and said: "My heart rejoices in the LORD; in the LORD my horn is lifted high. My mouth boasts over my enemies, for I delight in your deliverance. ² "There is no one holy like the LORD; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God. ³ "Do not keep talking so proudly or let your mouth speak such arrogance, for the LORD is a God who knows, and by him deeds are weighed. ⁴ "The bows of the warriors are broken, but those who stumbled are armed with strength. ⁵ Those who were full hire themselves out for food, but those who were hungry are hungry no more. She who was barren has borne seven children, but she who has had many sons pines away. ⁶ "The LORD brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and raises up. ⁷ The LORD sends poverty and wealth; he humbles and he exalts. ⁸ He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honor. "For the foundations of the earth are the LORD's; on them he has set the world. ⁹ He will guard the feet of his faithful servants, but the wicked will be silenced in the place of darkness. "It is not by strength that one prevails; ¹⁰ those who oppose the LORD will be broken. The Most High will thunder from heaven; the LORD will judge the ends of the earth. "He will give strength to his king and exalt the horn

of his anointed." ¹¹ Then Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy ministered before the LORD under Eli the priest."

3. What did you hear that stood out to you?

If you listened to the sermon on this passage, feel free also to share something significant that you heard in the sermon.

4. Look through verses 1-10 of Hannah's prayer song. Write down each action that she says the LORD does.

5. Focus on verses 1-5. How do you think Hannah's words in these verses reflect her own experience with the LORD?

6. Focus on verses 6-8. If God is truly the one who does all of the things Hannah claims he does in these verses, how does this impact your attitude toward (1) health, (2) money, and (3) the approval of others?

7. In verse 10, Hannah sings of the LORD, "He will give strength to his King and exalt the horn of his anointed." This is significant because 1 Samuel is about the first king of Israel. How do you think Hannah's song sheds light on how God interacts with kings and rulers?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. Hannah, in this song, identifies God as the one who exalts the humble and who humbles the proud. How then should we pray for those who are proud?

Connecting With The Gospel

9. Jesus spoke of the humble being exalted and the exalted being humbled. Why is humility so foundational to responding to the gospel of Jesus?

Applying The Passage

10. James 4:10 says, “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” What are some practical ways that you can humble yourself before the Lord?

11. What is a specific way that you currently need to trust God to exalt you instead of taking it up yourself to try to exalt yourself?



Honor for Honor

Lesson 2 • May 10 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

God shows no favoritism.

Getting Started

1. What are some ways that you see favoritism play itself out in the world?

2. In light of some of the ways that we play favorites, what are some ways that we might—mistakenly—think that God views people just as we do?

Embracing The Bigger Picture

In this series through 1 Samuel we will not cover every passage in detail, so we will take a moment to get the bigger picture before digging into the passage on which we will focus. The larger section for this lesson is 1 Samuel 2:12-3:21.

As we finish the story of Hannah in 1 Samuel 2, we get insight into Eli and his two sons, all three of whom were priests at Shiloh, where Samuel was left to serve. Eli's sons are wicked and greedy men. They abuse their power as priests to benefit themselves. They are irreverent and oppressive. Eli warns them to repent, but they shrug him off.

Then, toward the end of 1 Samuel 2, a man makes a prophecy against Eli and his family. He says that because Eli cared more about what his sons thought than about what God thought, Eli and his whole family will be removed from serving as priests. In a pivotal moment in the prophecy, verse 30, the prophet says: "Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that members of your family would minister before me forever.' But now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from me! Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained.'" This strong statement is vital not only to this section of the book but to 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel as a whole. God will honor those who honor him, regardless of title, position, or lineage.

In 1 Samuel 3, we see a follow-up to this prophecy as Samuel first hears the voice of the LORD. It is a story about God's calling on Samuel as a prophet, and also about God's refusal to play favorites based on externals. Samuel receives honor, while Eli gets a confirmation of the prophecy against him.

Digging In

Read 1 Samuel 3:1-21.

"The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions. ² One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. ³ The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the LORD, where the ark of God was. ⁴ Then the LORD called Samuel. Samuel answered, "Here I am." ⁵ And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down. ⁶ Again the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." "My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." ⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸ A third time the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. ⁹ So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.' " So Samuel went and lay down in his place. ¹⁰ The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." ¹¹ And the LORD said to Samuel: "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it tingle. ² At that time I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family—from beginning to end. ¹³ For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons blasphemed God, and he failed to restrain them. ¹⁴ Therefore I swore to the house of Eli, 'The guilt of Eli's house will never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering.'" ¹⁵ Samuel lay down until morning and then

opened the doors of the house of the LORD. He was afraid to tell Eli the vision, ¹⁶ but Eli called him and said, "Samuel, my son." Samuel answered, "Here I am." ¹⁷ "What was it he said to you?" Eli asked. "Do not hide it from me. May God deal with you, be it ever so severely, if you hide from me anything he told you." ¹⁸ So Samuel told him everything, hiding nothing from him. Then Eli said, "He is the LORD; let him do what is good in his eyes." ¹⁹ The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of Samuel's words fall to the ground. ²⁰ And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the LORD. ²¹ The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word."

3. What did you hear that stood out to you?

If you listened to the sermon on this passage, feel free also to share something significant that you heard in the sermon.

4. How does verse 1 set the tone for this entire chapter?

5. Verse 7 explains why Samuel thought it was Eli who was calling for him. Do you think there is any parallel with us today being able to recognize the voice of the Lord?

6. Eventually, in verse 10, Samuel says to the Lord, "Speak, for your servant is listening." What are some risks of this response to God?

7. God's news to Samuel is not very pleasant. That said, what does God's differing responses toward Samuel and Eli say about what God values most?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. The concept of favoritism has to do with being a "respector of persons." In other words, favoritism is when our treatment of people based on something about their status rather than about their behavior and character. How does this passage demonstrate that God does not play favorites?

Connecting With The Gospel

9. The gospel of Jesus comes to the Jew and the Gentile in the same way because both are equally lost and in need (Romans 3:9). How does the gospel shape how you view distinctions between different kinds of people?

Applying The Passage

10. What are some ways that you are tempted to rely on status, the past, biblical knowledge, or other external factors to evaluate your current relationship with God?

11. What is a practical way that you can honor God with your life today?



Along for the Ride

Lesson 3 • May 17 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

God is unwilling to serve as anyone's good luck charm.

Getting Started

1. What are some ways that you see people try to use God as a sort-of good luck charm?

2. When God refuses to function as a good luck charm to people, how (in your observation) do they typically respond?

Embracing The Bigger Picture

In this series through 1 Samuel, we will not cover every passage in detail, so we will take a moment to get the bigger picture before digging into the passage on which we will focus. The larger section for this lesson is 1 Samuel 4:1-7:2.

This section of 1 Samuel is focused on the ark of the covenant, which was a box that symbolized God's presence with the people of Israel. It was a revered religious item in Israel. And, because the Israelites saw it as a symbol of God's presence, they take it to battle with them against the Philistines in chapter 4.

They lose the battle, however, and the Philistines capture the ark. God demonstrates that he will not be used as a lucky rabbit's foot for the Israelites.

They failed to honor him, and so he does not honor them. The loss of the battle (and the ark) leaves Eli and his two sons dead.

In the aftermath of the ark being taken, chapters 5 and 6 follow the ark into Philistine territory. Strange things begin to happen. The Philistines put the ark in the temple of their god Dagon. But when they come in the next day, the idol of Dagon is facedown before the ark. And then the following day, the idol of Dagon is facedown before the ark, and his head and arms have broken off. God demonstrates through powerful symbolism that no false god has supremacy over him.

And then God afflicts the Philistines with tumors. The Philistines respond by passing the ark from city to city. It goes from Ashdod to Gath to Ekron. No one wants it because God is humbling those who thought they could use it for their purposes.

Finally, the Philistines send the ark away and return it to Israel. The Israelites in Beth Shemesh, who receive it, rejoice over its return. Then, however, some of them look inside of it, and God strikes down 70 of them. This leads the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh to send the ark away to Kiriath Jearim, where it stays.

The entire passage is putting on display a powerful reality. God will be used and manipulated by no one. Not the Israelites or the Philistines. God is no nation's servant. Instead, the nations are called to serve God willingly.

Digging In

Read 1 Samuel 4:1-11.

"Now the Israelites went out to fight against the Philistines. The Israelites camped at Ebenezer, and the Philistines at Aphek. ² The Philistines deployed their forces to meet Israel, and as the battle spread, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand of them on the battlefield. ³ When the soldiers returned to camp, the elders of Israel asked, "Why did the LORD bring defeat on us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the LORD's covenant from Shiloh, so that he may go with us and save us from the hand of our enemies." ⁴ So the people sent men to Shiloh, and they brought back the ark of the covenant of the LORD Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim. And Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. ⁵ When the ark of the LORD's covenant came into the camp, all Israel raised such a great shout that the ground shook. ⁶ Hearing the uproar, the Philistines asked, "What's all this shouting in the Hebrew camp?" When they learned that the ark of the LORD had

come into the camp, ⁷ the Philistines were afraid. "A god has come into the camp," they said. "Oh no! Nothing like this has happened before. ⁸ We're doomed! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? They are the gods who struck the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the wilderness. ⁹ Be strong, Philistines! Be men, or you will be subject to the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Be men, and fight!" ¹⁰ So the Philistines fought, and the Israelites were defeated and every man fled to his tent. The slaughter was very great; Israel lost thirty thousand foot soldiers. ¹¹ The ark of God was captured, and Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died."

3. What did you hear that stood out to you?

If you listened to the sermon on this passage, feel free also to share something significant that you heard in the sermon.

4. Look at verses 1-3. What events led to the ark of the covenant entering into this story?

5. What do you think is the difference between the Israelites trusting the ark to save them and trusting God to save them?

6. In verses 6-9, the Philistines respond to the Israelites having the ark in their camp. What do you learn from the response of the Philistines?

7. The result of the battle for Israel—even when they brought the ark with them—was disastrous (verses 10-11). What do you conclude from how the events played out here surrounding the ark?

11. What changes in your actions, beliefs, and attitudes are necessary if you are going to honor God instead of treating him as someone who exists to serve your purposes?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. We don't have the ark of the covenant today. What, though, do you think are some modern versions of Christians doing the same sort of thing that the Israelites did in this story?

Connecting With The Gospel

9. Jesus calls us to sacrifice everything to follow him (Luke 14:25-34). And when we embrace him by faith, we receive eternal life. How does the hope that Jesus gives us through the gospel help us when God does not "cooperate" with our plans?

Applying The Passage

10. What are some ways that you have been tempted to try to use God for your purposes?



Just Like Everyone Else

Lesson 4 • May 24 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

God is the only true deliverer.

Getting Started

1. What are some advantages and disadvantages of taking your cues from how other people are behaving?

2. What are some ways that you look to be rescued from different kinds of danger that you face?

Embracing The Bigger Picture

In this series through 1 Samuel, we will not cover every passage in detail, so we will take a moment to get the bigger picture before digging into the passage on which we will focus. The larger section for this lesson is 1 Samuel 7:3-8:22.

First Samuel 7:6 says, “Now Samuel was serving as leader [judge] of Israel at Mizpah.” Chapter 7 is about his time as Israel's judge. The word used for “leader” is the same word used for the judges in the book of Judges. Samuel, then, is the final judge before Israel asks for a king. Samuel's time as judge is a time of spiritual renewal for the nation. The people rid themselves of idols, repent publicly, and turn entirely to the Lord. And God responds by delivering them from the Philistines and bringing Israel a season of safety. Samuel's time as a judge in Israel is a time of refreshment and peace amid turbulent times for the nation.

In chapter 8, however, Samuel intends to make his sons the new judges of Israel. The people object to this, though, because Samuel's sons—much like Eli's sons—were corrupt. Instead, Israel asks for the king so that they can be like the other nations. Samuel is alarmed by this, and so he prays to the Lord about it. The Lord tells Samuel to anoint a king for Israel. He makes it clear their request for a king is not a good thing. It was a rejection of the kingship of God. But the Lord chooses to give them a king and establish a monarchy in Israel.

Samuel, at God's instructions, goes back to Israel to warn them about all the freedoms they will be sacrificing if they have a king. He tells them of all the taxes that will be collected and all the rights that the

king will take. Despite these warnings, the people still ask for a king. In fact, in 8:20, they say, "Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles." This is striking because God had always been the one who had given them victory. The request for a king is a sad request because it represents that Israel would instead put their trust for deliverance in a human being that they can see rather than in an unseen God.

The chapter ends with God affirming that Samuel should give them a king. Samuel then tells all of the Israelites to return to their homes as he prepares to anoint Israel's first king.

Digging In

Read 1 Samuel 8:1-22.

"When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as Israel's leaders. ² The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba. ³ But his sons did not follow his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice. ⁴ So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. ⁵ They said to him "You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have." ⁶ But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. ⁷ And the LORD told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. ⁸ As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. ⁹ Now listen to them, but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will claim as

his rights." ¹⁰ Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king.

¹¹ He said, "This is what the king who will reign over you will claim as his rights: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. ¹² Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still, others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots.

¹³ He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. ¹⁴ He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. ¹⁵ He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. ¹⁶ Your male and female servants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use.

¹⁷ He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. ¹⁸ When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, but the LORD will not answer you in that day." ¹⁹ But the people refused to listen to Samuel. "No!" they said. "We want a king over us. ²⁰ Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles." ²¹ When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the LORD. ²² The LORD answered, "Listen to them and give them a king." Then Samuel said to the Israelites, "Everyone go back to your own town.""

3. What did you hear that stood out to you?

If you listened to the sermon on this passage, feel free also to share something significant that you heard in the sermon.

4. Look at the words of the Israelites in verse 5 and even in verses 19-20. What are their reasons for wanting to have a king appointed for them?

5. In verse 7, God says that when Israel requested a king, they were rejecting God as their true king. Why do you think the request for a king represented this?

6. In verses, 11-18 Samuel gives the Israelites a reality check about the costliness of having a king. What stands out to you in these verses?

7. In verse 22, God tells Samuel to listen to the people, even though he has said that their request for a king was a rejection of God himself. Why do you think God decides to give them a king?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. What—if anything—do you think this passage teaches about how believers ought to think about their political leaders?

Connecting With The Gospel

9. We are not ultimately saved by our strength, our intelligence, or our morality. We are saved by the grace of God poured out in Jesus. How can you regularly remind yourself to live in the reality that God is your one and only Savior?

Applying The Passage

10. Do you think that there are areas of your life in which God has given you what you asked for, even though he knew it wouldn't be as helpful as you thought it would be? Explain your answer.

11. God is the one and only deliverer, and when we look for rescue elsewhere, it is a slight to him. What are some alternate deliverers that you are tempted toward?



Call and Response

Lesson 5 • May 31 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

Whatever God calls us to, he will equip us for.

Getting Started

1. Do you find yourself more likely to take something without preparing or to resist taking on something until you feel entirely ready? Give an example.

2. Share about a time that you were forced to do something that you didn't feel prepared for.

Embracing The Bigger Picture

In this series through 1 Samuel, we will not cover every passage in detail, so we will take a moment to get the bigger picture before digging into the passage on which we will focus. The larger section for this lesson is 1 Samuel 9:1-10:27.

First Samuel 8 ended with the Israelites demanding a king and God telling Samuel to go ahead and appoint a king for them. Chapter 9, then, identifies that king. We read a story of a man named Saul from the tribe of Benjamin. Innocently enough, Saul, along with a servant, is out on a journey, looking for his father's lost donkeys. Because they are not having success, they decide to stop in a town to see the prophet, Samuel. The reason that he might be able to help them find the donkeys. When they find Samuel, however, he invites Saul to dine with him. He does this because just before Saul arrived, God had told Samuel that he was bringing to him the man who would be the king. And, when Saul arrived, God told Samuel that Saul was that man.

After their meal together, Samuel anoints Saul with oil, telling him that he is God's chosen king for Israel. Samuel then tells Saul to return to his home, but first, he predicts several strange occurrences that Saul will encounter on his journey home. These predicted encounters all come to pass, demonstrating to Saul that Samuel was speaking the words of God to him when he anointed him to be the king.

However, when Saul returns home, he tells no one of what Samuel told him. When Samuel gathers all of Israel to anoint a king, Saul still seems unconvinced that he is up the job. After Samuel identifies Saul as the chosen king, no one can find him because

he is hiding near all the people's luggage. Samuel, however, brings him out, and the people affirm him as the king.

This passage is not simply a historical account of how Israel got its first king. It is a story about a man who is reluctant to do what God has called him to do. But throughout the passage, God makes it clear again and again that he will be the one who accomplishes his will. It is a reminder to all of us that God will never call us to do something and then fail to give us what we need to fulfill that call. If God calls us to something, he also equips us for it.

Digging In

Read 1 Samuel 10:17-27.

"¹⁷ Samuel summoned the people of Israel to the LORD at Mizpah ¹⁸ and said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I brought Israel up out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the power of Egypt and all the kingdoms that oppressed you.'

¹⁹ But you have now rejected your God, who saves you out of all your disasters and calamities.

And you have said, 'No, appoint a king over us.'

So now present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and clans."²⁰ When Samuel had all Israel come forward by tribes, the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot. ²¹ Then he brought forward the tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan, and Matri's clan was taken. Finally, Saul son of Kish was taken. But when they looked for him, he was not to be found. ²² So they inquired further of the LORD, "Has the man come here yet?"

And the LORD said, "Yes, he has hidden himself among the supplies."²³ They ran and brought him out, and as he stood among the people, he was a head taller than any of the others. ²⁴ Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see the man the LORD

has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people." Then the people shouted, "Long live the king!" ²⁵ Samuel explained to the people the rights and duties of kingship. He wrote them down on a scroll and deposited it before the LORD. Then Samuel dismissed the people to go to their own homes.

²⁶ Saul also went to his home in Gibeah, accompanied by valiant men whose hearts God had touched. ²⁷ But some scoundrels said, "How can this fellow save us?" They despised him and brought him no gifts. But Saul kept silent. "

3. What did you hear that stood out to you?

If you heard the sermon on this passage, feel free also to share something significant that you heard in the sermon.

4. In verses, 17-19 Samuel, before anointing a king, reminds the Israelites of God's role in making them into a nation. Why do you think he felt that this was an important reminder on this occasion?

5. Samuel had already privately anointed Saul as king, but then here he ends up choosing Saul by lot (a game of chance). God clearly shows that he can direct the lot so that Saul will be chosen. How does this reality impact your attitude toward prayer and trust when you are making decisions?

6. Saul, after he is chosen, is not immediately found because he is hiding. Why might Saul have been reluctant to accept the role of king?

7. The chapters end in verses 26-27, with some Israelites being skeptical about Saul's ability to lead them. Perhaps this is included to demonstrate that we can expect to encounter doubters, even when God calls us to do something. How does this reality impact how you can respond when people doubt you as you follow God's will for your life?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. Saul is reluctant to take on the kingship. We know from later that he falls far short and becomes a failure as the king. Does this mean that God made a mistake in choosing him? Does it mean that we can't count on God to equip us for what he calls us to do?

Connecting With The Gospel

9. We seek to fulfill God's calling for us, not to prove ourselves to him, but to walk in closeness with him. How can you serve God as a set-free member of his family instead of as a fearful slave?

Applying The Passage

10. What is something that you believe God has called you to do, but you are reluctant to do it? What would be your next step of obedience in this area?

11. Name one way that God has shown Himself faithful in your life when you stepped out in faith, trusting that he would give you what you needed to do what he called you to do.



The Waiting Game

Lesson 6 • June 7 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

God raises up and removes the rulers of human kingdoms.

Getting Started

1. What are some indicators that a person has great power?

2. When a person who you don't approve of (or didn't vote for) comes into power, how do you find yourself responding in your attitudes and actions?

Embracing The Bigger Picture

In this series through 1 Samuel, we will not cover every passage in detail, so we will take a moment to get the bigger picture before digging into the passage on which we will focus. The larger section for this lesson is 1 Samuel 11:1-13:15.

After Saul is anointed king in 1 Samuel 10, he returns to his home. There is no royal castle or strong immediate impact of his coronation. But in 1 Samuel 11, we begin to see the effects of Israel having a king. A city in Israel—Jabesh Gilead—is attacked by the Ammonites, and they send word to Saul to ask him to deliver them. Saul musters three hundred thousand men to form an army. Saul leads the men to victory, rescuing Jabesh Gilead from oppression and occupation. After this great victory, the Israelites remember that some people scoffed at Saul, being crowned king (1 Samuel 10:26-27). They demand that these scoffers be put to death. But Saul responds with mercy and talks the people out of this slaughter. A military victory and a gracious act of kindness begin Saul's reign. It is a promising start.

In 1 Samuel 12, we read Samuel's farewell speech to Israel. He was the last in a long line of judges, but he is now out of a job with Israel having a king. Samuel's message reminds the nation of God's goodness and provision for them over the years. He then gives them a powerful charge to fear and obey the Lord (1 Samuel 12:14-15). His words are a reminder that whether a judge or a king leads them, God is still the only one who can deliver them. They vow to obey the Lord, and Samuel vows to continue to pray for them during this new season in Israel's history.

In 1 Samuel 13, we see the first tragic turn in Saul's reign. Saul went to war with the Philistines and found himself and his men hiding out in caves and peril. They await the prophet Samuel so that an offering can be made to the Lord. When Samuel doesn't arrive on time, though, Saul decides to stop waiting and to make the sacrifice himself. This was a job that was meant to be done only by priests, not by kings. When Samuel arrives, he rebukes Saul for making the offering himself instead of waiting.

While it might seem like a small deal to us today, Saul's actions were significant. He took it upon himself to subvert God's commands to be expedient. His efforts were so severe that Samuel tells him that his kingdom will not endure that God has identified another man who will rule instead. In a moment of weakness, Saul forfeited having his children rule on the throne.

More striking, perhaps, is that Samuel proclaims to the most powerful man in Israel that his kingdom will not endure. Saul could easily have responded by saying, "Who's going to take it from me? You?!" After all, who is powerful enough to remove a king from power? The answer is clear. Just as God can easily give power, he can easily take it away. The rulers of the kingdoms of this world may seem daunting, but God is easily able to overpower them, raise them up, remove them, or do whatever he pleases. Our world may have kings, but there is only one King of the kings.

Digging In

Read 1 Samuel 13:1-15.

"Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty-two years. ² Saul chose three thousand men from Israel; two thousand

were with him at Mikdash and in the hill country of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan at Gibeah in Benjamin. The rest of the men he sent back to their homes. ³ Jonathan attacked the Philistine outpost at Geba, and the Philistines heard about it. Then Saul had the trumpet blown throughout the land and said, "Let the Hebrews hear!" ⁴ So all Israel heard the news: "Saul has attacked the Philistine outpost, and now Israel has become obnoxious to the Philistines." And the people were summoned to join Saul at Gilgal. ⁵ The Philistines assembled to fight Israel, with three thousand chariots, six thousand charioteers, and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Mikdash, east of Beth Aven. ⁶ When the Israelites saw that their situation was critical and that their army was hard-pressed, they hid in caves and thickets, among the rocks, and in pits and cisterns. ⁷ Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul remained at Gilgal, and all the troops with him were quaking with fear. ⁸ He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel, but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and Saul's men began to scatter. ⁹ So he said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings." And Saul offered up the burnt offering. ¹⁰ Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him. ¹¹ "What have you done?" asked Samuel. Saul replied, "When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Mikdash, ¹² I thought, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the LORD's favor.' So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering." ¹³ "You have done a foolish thing," Samuel said. "You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. ¹⁴ But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler of his people because you have not kept the LORD's

command.”¹⁵ Then Samuel left Gilgal and went up to Gibeah in Benjamin, and Saul counted the men who were with him. They numbered about six hundred.”

3. What did you hear that stood out to you?

If you listened to the sermon on this passage, feel free also to share something significant that you heard in the sermon.

4. Focus on verses 1-7. How would you describe the situation in which the Israelites find themselves?

5. Saul himself offered a sacrifice, which was not the job of the king, but the job of Samuel. Focusing on verses 8-11, what do you think drove Saul to disobey and offer the sacrifice?

6. According to verses 13-14, what are the consequences of Saul's actions?

7. Samuel announces here, in 1 Samuel 13, that Saul's kingdom will not endure. Saul reigns, however, for multiple decades and does not die until the end of 1 Samuel (chapter 31). What lesson do you take from this gap in time between Samuel's prophecy and its fulfillment?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. Verse 8 says that Samuel did not arrive at the appointed time, and this is part of what led Saul to sin and offer the sacrifice himself. Why do you think Samuel's absence didn't excuse Saul's sin? What do you think this says about God?

Connecting With The Gospel

9. Saul sinned. We all sin. That is why we need a Savior. What does it look like to repent when you sin, and yet still walk in the security of being forgiven through Jesus?

Applying The Passage

10. Saul acted in disobedience instead of patiently waiting for God's timing. What is an example of how you become tempted to sin because you are tired of waiting for God?

11. How does God's power to appoint and remove rulers impact your attitude and actions toward influential people right now?