

SMALL GROUP: SAMUEL

CATCH UP

This section is designed for each person to share their experiences from last weeks' application. This should be an encouraging time and not a time to shame someone for not doing their assignment - simply let a couple of people share how their project went. For the people who did not do the assignment - encourage them on how it why it would be beneficial for them to still do even past the due date. Be sure to encourage the group to talk about their struggles, oppositions, and defeats as well as their successes.

WARM UP

Today is Show and Tell. Have everyone bring something that represents a helpful lesson they've learned from someone else. Obviously, we would all bring our Bibles! Apart from a Bible, what item would represent your valuable lesson? (For example, a lug wrench - car maintenance, a book on organization, or a thank you card - being thankful for the people in your life.)

READ UP

- 1 Samuel 1:1 – 2:11
- 1 Samuel 2:27 – 3:21
- 1 Samuel 12

Samuel was dedicated from birth to be a student of God's ways. His mother couldn't have children, so she made a commitment to God that if he gave her children, she would dedicate the first child to serve the Lord his whole life. His purpose had been sealed. He belonged to God fully.

At a very young age, Samuel was brought to live with, work under, and be taught by Eli, the priest of the tabernacle. Can you imagine the fear and uncertainty? His world was turned upside-down as his mother dropped him off for a life away from his family. I'm sure Hannah was dealing with the bittersweet moment as well.

Eli became the coach Samuel needed to live a life of full devotion to the Lord. It was more than just a daily instruction about the things of God - Samuel lived with Eli and therefore saw the good and bad sides of his coach. He saw how amazing it was to learn about God and be coached by someone who had spent many years serving God. He also saw the awkward relationship Eli had with his sons - sons who used their positions at the tabernacle to sin against God. Instead of coaching them in the ways of God, he neglected his fatherly leadership and avoided disciplining them.

One night God spoke directly to Samuel. It was through that experience Samuel came to recognize the voice of God. As Eli continued to teach young Samuel about the role of serving God, God Himself taught Samuel about His voice and plans for the people of Israel. Samuel's first assignment as God's spokesperson: confront Eli. Samuel had to let him know God was going to punish him and his sons for their disobedience.

Can you imagine the difficult task Samuel had, delivering this news to a man who had raised him, who had coached him in the ways of God? We know Samuel did not want this job.

God took Eli's place as Samuel's coach and Samuel continued to be a lifelong student of God's ways. Many times he faced difficult challenges - including the appointment of Israel's first king, King Saul. He was even tasked with the job of confronting the nation for their lack of faith and appointing a replacement king for a disobedient Saul while Saul was still in power.

Samuel could have said "no" to God and taken the easy way out. But Samuel kept turning back to God for guidance. He kept returning to the fact that God has chosen Him for this task and he kept looking to his Coach, allowing Him to guide him every step of the way.

TALK UP

1. Who in your life is coaching you in the ways of God? If no one is, who could you ask?
2. What does it mean for you to be set apart for God?
3. What is an area of your life that you need to seek God's guidance in?

ACT UP

Send a note or text to your spiritual coach today. (This could be your small group leader, your Mom or Dad, or a friend). Thank them for investing in you and your spiritual development. Name specific ways they have blessed your life. If you do not have anyone in mind, pray for someone to step into your life and start investing in you. Write down the name of someone who could invest in you. Ask them to meet you in the coming weeks.

PRAY UP

Ask God to make you sensitive to His voice and compassionate toward those around you.

GATHER UP

Before everyone leaves, make sure you confirm next weeks' meeting day and time – and confirm those who can make it.