

# The Story of 1 Samuel

A 40-Day Guided Journey through 1 Samuel



DailyLife  
Five Oaks Church  
Week 3: May 23-29

# Day 1

May 23



*Pray* / Ask God to help you understand today's passage well and see how it can deepen your love for God.

The Israelites have rejected God as sufficient to meet all their needs and have requested an earthly king instead. Even in God's relenting and giving the Israelites' a new king, God shows he is still the one who provides for and directs their lives.

To identify God's choice for king, they cast lots, a process used to 'randomly' select whom god appointed, trusting that he would guide the casting of the lots to indicate the man God had chosen. Whether considering himself unworthy to lead the people or fearing the responsibility he would be tasked with, Saul hides himself during the selection process. It's only after god's further intervention that the people find Saul to appoint the first king of Israel.

Even within the first incident of moving toward human kingship, it's apparent that God is still Israel's true king. Through Samuel's wise leadership, they look to god to know who should be king. Then they can't even find the one God appoints without his help. God is still leading and directing his rebellious people; moving away from God's ultimate leadership would be problematic.



*Read* / 1 Samuel 10:17-27



*Reflect / Choose one of the following questions for reflection*

Samuel begins the assembly with a reprimand. While God is granting the king whom the people have demanded, God sees their hearts and knows that despite everything he has done for them, they doubt he really will be enough and meet their needs. Is there something in our life you may be pursuing because you think it will meet your needs, but you instead need to turn back to God in repentance?

Saul hides during the selection process, most likely because he either sees himself as inadequate or is reluctant to serve in the way in which God has chosen him. Is there something in your life that God is calling you step out and serve him is, but you have been reluctant to obey him and trust that he will equip you to serve how he is calling you?

The chapter ends with a group of men having no respect to the king God has appointed over them. Is there anyone God has placed in authority over you (family, church, work, government) whom you need to ask God to change your heart toward and choose to better respect?

## Day 2

May 26



*Pray* / Take time to thank God for specific ways he has blessed you and been working in your life recently.

Even in the midst of rejection or doubt from his own people, God shows himself faithful and equips those whom he calls to bring about deliverance in times of need.

Nahash the Ammonite has attacked Jabesh-gilead, and his terms for treaty are gruesome and disgraceful, demanding that every man have his right eye gouged out. “That meant never-ending subservience, for it made most men unfit for military service. The left eye was normally covered by the shield in battle. With the right eye gone...well, you can’t fight what you can’t sight.”<sup>1</sup> His treaty would basically guarantee a lifetime of servitude and humiliating mockery. Nahash thinks so little of Israel’s military strength or courage that he even gives Jabesh-gilead seven days to send out messengers who can ask for military aid before he requires their subservience.

Despite Israel’s rejection of God as was recounted in the last few chapters, God doesn’t think little of them and provides deliverance through the king he has appointed. With God’s Spirit within him, Saul is able to deliver Jabesh-gilead and turn the hearts of the Israelites to worship in God.



*Read* / 1 Samuel 11:1-15



*Reflect / Choose one of the following questions for reflection*

It is vital to notice that Saul’s source of victory is not in his courage or strategic military skills but because “the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon” him (verse 6). Because of God’s Spirit within him, Saul, who in the last chapter was hiding behind luggage, has the courage to call upon the Israelites to form an army and rout out and destroy a threatening enemy. After Jesus’ ascension, God gifted all believers with his Spirit dwelling inside of us. What is God calling you to face in your life that the Spirit of God within you can give you the power to accomplish?

It could have been easy for Saul to take full credit for the defeat of the Ammonites, especially with the relief that all the people now seem to be rallying behind him. It would be easy to want to hold on to that support and momentum. Instead, Saul assures the people, “The Lord has worked salvation in Israel” (verse 13). How can you be more mindful to give God credit for what he is accomplishing through you?

What great victories has God made in your life that you should take specific time to worship him for?

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1. Dale Ralph Davis, *First Samuel: Looking on the Heart* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2000), 116.

# Day 3

May 27



*Pray / Ask God how you can, like Samuel's example, live as a godly example to others and have the courage to speak wise biblical truth.*

God sees our sins as a seriously offensive problem, and so should we.

Now that Israel has selected a king, Samuel will no longer be operating as Israel's leader. The period of God-appointed judges has ended. While Samuel still will serve as God's prophet, his position as key leader under God is finished. With Samuel's departure in this role, he delivers a retirement speech of sorts, though his position of speaking God's words to the king and kingdom is far from over.

Even in his final words addressing the people as he steps down from leadership, Samuel speaks to the people in reprimand and warning. The Israelites continue to ignore the truth that their request for a new king is a rejection of God or see how severe that is. Samuel wants to use his farewell speech as a final major opportunity to help the people understand how wicked their hearts truly are in God's eyes and to turn them back to him.



*Read / 1 Samuel 12:1-25*



*Reflect / Choose one of the following questions for reflection*

Samuel uses his final platform as judge as an opportunity to call the people back to God. More than anything, his desire for God's people is that they recognize who their true king is and are reconciled to him, and he doesn't lose the opportunity to tell them. What barriers may be standing in your way from seizing important opportunities to speak into people's lives whom you know are far from him?

God takes all sins seriously, even those we may write off as small, permissible, or justifiable. What sins in your life do you need to take seriously, repent of, and ask the Holy Spirit to help you fight the temptation to continue doing?

When the people finally realize the extent of their sins in the eyes of God, their response is fear of death. However, Samuel comforts and instructs them, saying, "Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil. Yet do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart" (v. 20). Are there sins in your past that are holding you back in guilt or fear when you should instead be thankfully living in God's forgiveness and choosing to follow and serve him with all your heart?

# Day 4

May 28



*Pray / Ask God to show you how you can more faithfully and courageously live a life that glorifies him.*

We should not let fear keep us from doing what is right, especially when we know that God is with us.

Saul has assembled an army and given command of part of it to his son Jonathan. The Philistines have set up outposts in Israel and also have taken control of weapons manufacturing throughout Israel (see 1 Samuel 13:19–23). It is Jonathan, however, and not Saul who goes out to fight the Philistines and defeats one of the garrisons, even though reports credit Saul with the victory. “Why didn’t Saul take the initiative? Why didn’t the king go out before Israel?”<sup>1</sup> It would appear that Saul may still be struggling with timidity and fear.

As a note, there is some controversy as to 1 Samuel 13:1 and Saul’s age and length of reign. Many editors of different Bible versions have included conflicting numbers, while others have left it blank. Some commentators believe the text should accurately read that Saul reigned for one year and then assembled an army during year two, as the oldest Hebrew manuscripts seem to indicate. Others agree that the amount of time indicated here is longer, considering Acts 13:21 and that Saul is referred to as “a handsome young man” (1 Samuel 9:2) and now has a son who is capable of leading a portion of the Israelite army. They therefore believe that in the process of copying texts, the complete lengths of time were somehow lost or “the author’s comment about Saul’s reign is lost on today’s reader.”<sup>2</sup>



*Read / 1 Samuel 13:1-7*



*Reflect / Choose one of the following questions for reflection*

Enemies are infiltrating and bullying the kingdom, and yet Saul is not the one to lead the attack against them, which should be his responsibility as king. Instead, Jonathan takes initiative, even with fewer men than his father, and defeats the garrison at Geba. Is there something that you as a believer should be doing, but you've neglected the task and someone else has needed to figuratively fight your battle instead?

After the Philistines join forces in response to Jonathan's attack, the Israelite soldiers hide in fear of them, forgetting God's power in battle and the promises he has made in the past to defeat their enemies. (Deuteronomy 31:3–6 is one example of many.) God also promises to be with us and never leave us. What do you fear in your life that you need to courageously move forward in spite of, calling on God's promises to be with you in the midst of it?

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1. Dale Ralph Davis, *First Samuel: Looking on the Heart* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2000), 134.

2. *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 511.

# Day 5

May 29



*Pray* / Ask God to show you any areas of your life where you have been making choices on your own without seeking God's will.

We should always choose wait on God for guidance and wisdom, especially in the midst of difficult circumstances.

With the Philistines mustering a gigantic army and his soldiers fleeing before him, Saul is feeling significant pressure. Samuel has promised to meet Saul in Gilgal within seven days to make offerings to the Lord and give him God's commands, but day seven arrives and Samuel hasn't shown up. Saul decides to move forward in the process and offer the burnt offering himself instead, showing that he feels as though he can't wait for Samuel any longer, either to present the offering or give direction from the Lord. "By his action Saul confessed that certain emergencies rendered Yahweh's word unnecessary. When the chips were down kingship could function on its own."<sup>1</sup>

The results are ultimately devastating.



*Read* / 1 Samuel 13:8-23



*Reflect / Choose one of the following questions for reflection*

Saul makes excuses for why he should be justified in making the offerings that he did, but Samuel and, ultimately, God do not validate them. Is there ever any valid reason for why we should be able to disobey any of God's commands toward us?

After Samuel delivers the consequence that the kingdom will be stripped from Saul, Samuel departs from him, no longer there to offer guidance and direction from God. How strongly do you feel the need for God's guidance in your life versus choosing to move forward in your own wisdom or personal benefit?

The chapter ends with seemingly insurmountable despair, especially without remembering how faithful God has been toward his people in the past. Maybe you are facing overwhelming circumstances. What specific examples can you recall of how God has shown himself faithful in your life in the past or in the lives of those you know so you can be encouraged as you face your struggles?

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1. Dale Ralph Davis, *First Samuel: Looking on the Heart* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2000), 136.

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