

Running with the Big Dogs

Experiencing success in life by following God's lead from 1 & 2 Samuel

Getting Off the Porch

Introduction to 1 Samuel 1-3

As the old saying goes, "if you want to run with the big dogs, you have to get off the porch". This week begins a new series in 1 & 2 Samuel, which is all about the "big dogs" in Israel—kings, kingmakers, prophets and generals. The "big dogs" were the leaders of Israel as they began to form a more permanent national identity under God; but the true leader of Israel was God Himself. He was the One who led the whole pack of big dogs, and the more the leaders cooperated with Him, the more success they experienced. As the story opens in 1 Samuel 1-3, the principle is revealed that you have to take action if you want to have success. It takes more than just good intentions, or bold pronouncements to see positive change occur in one's life. The first

one to illustrate this was Hannah, a childless woman who was belittled by her husband's other wife, who had lots of children. However, she called on God in prayer, and He blessed her with a famous son in Israel, Samuel, who became God's prophet and kingmaker. In his childhood he grew up under the tutelage of Eli, Israel's priest, who was a good man in many ways. Eli, though, illustrates the damage that occurs when one fails to follow through with good intentions. While he was a blessing to Hannah and to Samuel, yet he failed to deal completely with the sin of his sons, which resulted in God's judgment and the destruction of his family. Finally, in order to institute the new order of kings, God called



When you run with God and follow His lead, you will have success in life.

Samuel as a prophet, which effectively abolished the role of Eli as Israel's current leader. To his credit, Eli (as well as Samuel), conceded to God's will. This allowed him to freely serve God by mentoring Samuel; in this way he would leave a lasting legacy, in spite of his sons' sins. If we are to "get off the porch", then, we must call on God's help, confront sin relentlessly, and concede to God's will.

The 5 Purposes of the Purpose Driven Life

- **Worship**—You were planned for God's pleasure
- **Fellowship**—You were formed for God's family
- **Discipleship**—You were created to become like Christ
- **Ministry**—You were shaped for serving God
- **Evangelism**—You were made for a mission

Study/Discussion Questions for 1 Samuel 1-3

(For answers to questions attend an ABF or go to www.celebrationnet.com/resources/leader resources)

<p>1. Read 1:1-11. What were Hannah's 2 problems (v2, 5, 6-7) and how was she blessed (v4-5, 8)? How did she respond (v10-11) and why was that good?</p>	
<p>2. Using 1:12-20 what mistake did Eli make (v12-14) and what does this teach us? What were the results of Hannah's prayer (v18, 19-20), and how can we relate this to our lives?</p>	
<p>3. In 1:21-28 what did Hannah do that was right (v22, 24), and what did this lead to (v25-27)? What impact did this have on Eli (v28)?</p>	

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I Samuel 1-3 Study Questions (cont)

4. From 2:1-11 what does Hannah thank and praise God for (v1-8), and what does she know He will do (v9-10)? To what action did this lead (v11), and how can we apply this?

5. Looking at 2:12-17 describe the sin of Eli's sons (v13-16). Why was this wrong (v17), and what was the root of the sin (v12)? How does this happen today?

6. Using 2:18-26 how did God bless Hannah (v20-21) and Samuel (v18-19, 20, 26)? What did Eli do that was good (v20, 22-26), and what were the results (v21, 25)?

7. Based on 2:27-36 what was Eli's sin (v29), what would be the consequences (v31-34, 36), and why (v30)? What else would God do (v35)? What does this story teach us?

8. Read 3:1-9. Describe the manner of life Samuel had under Eli's direction (v1-4)? What experience did Samuel have (v5-9), and how did his manner of life make this possible? Apply.

9. From 3:10-18 how did Samuel respond to God (v10) and why is this response always correct? What did God reveal to him (v11-14), what was Eli's reaction (v15-18), and why was this good?

10. According to 3:19-21 what did God do for Samuel as he grew up (v19), and after he was grown (v21)? To what did this lead (v21)?

11. Consider the lives of Hannah, Eli and Samuel. What would you imitate, and what would you avoid in each?

Scripture to Remember

“The Lord is a God of knowledge, and with Him actions are weighed.”

1 Samuel 2:3

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Life Group Questions

(Using questions based on today's message, Life Groups meet in homes to build supportive relationships with others at Celebration Fellowship that enable us to grow in Christ.)

1. Share with the group something about your father that you really enjoyed or appreciated.
2. What are some ways that your heavenly Father shows that He cares for you? What do you need for Him to care for the most right now?
3. Discuss why believing in God's consistency is important when difficulties in life arise. Compare this to the way earthly fathers deal with their children.
4. Share which aspect of the closeness of God means the most to you—never too busy, loves to meet your needs, sympathetic to your hurts—and why.
5. Talk about why it is such a blessing to us that God is a “capable” Father. Pray for the dads in your group to be more like God as they father their children.
6. Discuss anything else that impressed you from the worship service if you have time.