

Running with the Big Dogs

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

Leader of the Pack

Introduction to 1 Samuel 4-7

Whether it's a pack of dogs, or a "pack" of people, the leader always sets the tone for the group. When a leader is capable and confident, his followers feel the same. As 1 Samuel 4-7 began, Israel's human leader, Eli, had failed. God stepped into this vacuum to show that He is ultimately the only leader that His people can count on. After the Philistines defeated Israel in battle, they realized they were vulnerable without a strong leader. So, they relied on their ingenuity and superstitiously brought the ark of the covenant into their camp for strength. Not realizing that the ark's power was due only to the presence of God, they relied on this cheap substitute to defeat the Philistines. Instead, their confident roar, alerted the Philistines that the ark was in the camp,

and they rose up in force to overcome such a challenge. This resulted in Israel's defeat once again, as well as the capture of the ark, both of which underscored the truth that reliance on cheap substitutes for God will always result in defeat. However, when the ark was taken to the pagan temple of Dagon, God personally defended Himself. He caused Dagon to fall face down before the ark twice, and then inflicted tumors on the inhabitants of two of the Philistine towns. In a panic they finally sent the ark back to Israel, illustrating the truth that God is completely capable of defending Himself alone. He really doesn't "need" us, although He often uses us to carry out His work. Finally, when the ark was returned, some



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

men desecrated it, and God killed 50,070 men, leading Israel to fear the Lord and repent after twenty long years. As they forsook their false gods, and sacrificed to Him, God thundered against the Philistines and defeated them again. He then put Samuel in place to care for them. The truth is God will always take care of us when we repent and turn to Him. He is the ultimate "leader of the pack".

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 4-7

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

<p>1. Read 4:1-4. As Samuel's ministry began, what occurred (v1-2)? What was the leaders' assessment (v3), and what was their solution (3)? Why do you think this was wrong (v4)?</p>	
<p>2. Using 4:5-11 how did Israel feel about the ark (v5), and what did this lead to (v6-10, 11)? How do we do similar things, and what results can we expect when we do?</p>	
<p>3. From 4:12-22 what happened when Eli heard the report (v16-18), and why (v13, 18)? What else occurred (v19-20), and what did this mean (v21-22)? What did this fulfill (1 Sam 2:27-34)?</p>	

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I Samuel 4-7 Study Questions (cont)

<p>4. In 5:1-5 what happened to the false god, Dagon, (v2-3, 4), and why do you think it did? What does this show us about God's ability to take care of Himself and show His greatness?</p>	
<p>5. Looking at 5:6-12 what happened to the inhabitants of 2 Philistine towns (v6, 10), and how did they interpret this (v7-8, 10-11)? What was their final decision (v11)?</p>	
<p>6. Using 6:1-12 how did the Philistines try to appease God (v2-4), and how would they come to know that Israel's God had been dealing with them (v7-9)? What happened (v12)?</p>	
<p>7. Based on 6:13-7:2, what good thing did the Beth-Shemites do (v13-15), what bad thing did they do (v19), and what were the results (v19-21)? How did this affect Israel (7:2), and for how long (7:1)?</p>	
<p>8. Read 7:3-6. What did Samuel call Israel to do (v3), and how did they respond (v4)? What did Samuel ask them to do next (v5), and how did they respond (v6)? Why was this last step important? Apply to your life.</p>	
<p>9. From 7:7-11 what was the Philistine reaction (v7), Israel's reaction (v7-8), Samuel's reaction (v9), and God's reaction (v10)? What does this teach us?</p>	
<p>10. According to 7:12-17 how did Samuel commemorate God's help (v12), and what was the final result (v13-14)? How did Samuel continue to shepherd Israel (v15-17)? Why was this good?</p>	
<p>11. Think back over 1 Samuel 4-7. What do you think Israel learned about the ark, about God and about themselves? How can we apply this?</p>	

Scripture to Remember

"Who is able to stand before the Lord, this holy God?"

1 Samuel 6:20

Celebration Fellowship

*Reaching—
Restoring—Raising Up*

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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, on a scale of 1-10, how "hopeful" you are at the moment? What are you most hopeful about?
2. What are some competing things that distract your attention from Christ in a typical day? Share some ways to focus more on Christ—be practical and specific.
3. Discuss what you think the connection is between being hopeful and surrendering to the Lordship of Christ. Where are you in this process?
4. Talk about why people are so attracted to hopeful people. If someone were to ask you, what story of hope would you share?
5. Why is it so important to be gentle, respectful and honest when sharing your hope in Christ with others? Which one do you need to work on most?
6. Discuss anything else that impressed you from the worship service if you have time.