

Running with the Big Dogs

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

The Lesser of Two Evils

Introduction to 1 Samuel 8-12

Parents sometimes face the dilemma of either allowing their children to make a poor choice, or of forcing them to do what they believe is best. The optimum alternative would be for the children to choose to do what their parents ask them to do; however, when they refuse, letting them experience the consequences of their own choices is often the lesser of the two evils. This was the situation into which Israel had placed themselves in 1 Samuel 8-12. They desperately wanted a king so that they could be like the nations around them. This was wrong for a couple of reasons. First, God was already their king, and had demonstrated His beneficent rule through Samuel. Secondly, God's people should never pattern themselves after the world, but follow

God's ways thinking and relating. However, God chose to not force Israel to follow His desires, and allowed them to have a king. He knew they would later regret such a decision, but believed it would be better to allow them to experience the consequences of this decision rather than forcing them to follow Him. He informed them through Samuel of the difficulties of life with a king, but they were so enamored with the protection a king would provide that they continued their demand. God gave them what they wanted, and anointed Saul, a handsome and strong man, as their first king. Saul, however, didn't consider himself king "material", so he reluctantly accepted the position. God, though, equipped



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

him with His Spirit to lead Israel, and he was victorious in his first battle. In spite of this initial success, God revealed to Israel that they had sinned by wanting a king, so they repented. As a good parent, though, God promised His support if they would follow Him through their king. This ultimate outcome showed that giving them a king was the lesser of two evils.

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 8-12

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

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| 1. Read 8:1-9. How did Samuel's sons act (v3), and to what did this lead (v5)? What was Samuel's reaction (v6), and the Lord's response (v7, 8, 9)? What could He have done? | |
| 2. Based on 8:10-22 how would the king treat the people (v11-17), and what would their reaction be (v18)? How did Israel respond to this (v19), and why (v20)? Apply this to our lives. | |
| 3. Using 9:1-10 describe Saul physically (v1, 2). From these verses, how would you describe his relationship to his father (v3-5), and to God (v6-10)? | |

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I Samuel 8-12 Study Questions (cont)

4. From 9:11-21 what had God told Samuel (v15-16), and how was he sure (v17)? What did Samuel disclose to Saul (v20), what was Saul's reaction (v21), and what does this reveal about Saul?

5. Looking at 9:22-27 how did Samuel treat Saul (v22-24, 25-26)? In light of Samuel's feelings about a king (8:6), what does that show us about him? How can we imitate this?

6. In 10:1-13 what did Samuel do for Saul (v1), and what 3 signs would confirm his kingship (v2, 3-4, 5-6)? What further support would Saul receive (v8, 9), and why was this important?

7. Based on 10:14-27 how did Saul feel about being king (v14-16, 21-22), and how did this make some feel (v27)? How is God's grace seen in this passage (v18-19, 24, 25-26)?

8. Using 11:1-15 what challenge did Saul face (v1-5), and how did God help him (v6, 7)? What did he first do that was good (v7-11), and how did he handle the aftermath well (v12-15)?

9. According to 12:1-11 of what two things did Samuel remind Israel (v1-5, 6-11)? What should this have shown the people about themselves?

10. Read 12:12-25. What had Israel done wrong (v12), and how could they overcome this (v14, 20-21)? What would occur if they didn't (v15) and how was this confirmed (v16-18)? What else did Samuel promise (v22, 23-25)?

11. As you look at 1 Samuel 8-12, what does it teach you about making decisions, and about how God's grace works in that process?

Scripture to Remember

“For the Lord will not abandon His people on account of His great name.”

1 Samuel 12:22

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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.