

THE BOOK OF

1 Samuel

BIBLE STUDY GUIDES FOR SMALL GROUPS

RELATIONAL BIBLE STUDY SERIES

CREATED BY STEVE CASE

Special Treatment

OPENING QUESTION

What's a prayer of yours that God answered with a "Yes"?

READ 1 Samuel 1:1-2:10.

1. What made Elkanah so special?

- A. Nothing.
- B. He was married.
- C. He was married to two women.
- D. He had children.
- E. The special treatment he gave Hannah.
- F. He came from the tribe of Levi (*1 Chron 6:26, 33-38*).
- G. God spoke to him.
- H. His influence on Samuel.
- I. Other.

2. What happened each year Elkanah's family went to the sanctuary?

- A. Nothing.
- B. Amazing worship.
- C. They grew closer to God—like going to campmeeting.
- D. They grew closer as a family.
- E. They made sacrifices and commitments to God.
- F. Joy.
- G. Tension.
- H. Lots of fasting and prayers.
- I. Other.

3. How did Eli respond to Hannah?

- A. Harshly.
- B. With understanding.
- C. With misunderstanding.
- D. He thought she came to see one of his sons.
- E. He wanted to know where her husband was.
- F. Eli joined Hannah in prayer.
- G. He promised that God would answer her prayer.
- H. He hoped to see her again.
- I. Other.

4. What happened after Elkanah's family returned home?

- A. Nothing.
- B. Hannah continued to pray.
- C. Hannah and Peninnah worked out their differences.
- D. God made Hannah pregnant.
- E. Elkanah made Hannah pregnant.
- F. Hannah stopped going to the sanctuary.
- G. Hannah spoiled Samuel.
- H. Other.

5. What message(s) do you get from Hannah's prayer (1 Sam 2:1-10)?

- A. I'm one lucky lady.
- B. Justice has finally been served.
- C. Mercy made the difference.
- D. The tables are reversed—strong became weak; weak became strong.
- E. This sounds like Mary's song (Luke 1:46-55).
- F. Everything always goes well for God's people.
- G. Life isn't fair, but God is good.
- H. Other.

6. Why did Hannah leave Samuel at the sanctuary?

- A. That was her part of the deal she made with God.
- B. She didn't want Samuel at home any longer.
- C. Elkanah didn't want Samuel at home any longer.
- D. Eli would be a better influence on Samuel.
- E. Hannah had many other children by this time (1 Sam 2:21).
- F. Samuel begged her to let him stay at the sanctuary.
- G. God sent Hannah a message that she should do this.
- H. Other.

7. When have you prayed your hardest to God?

8. When have you "given" someone in your family to God?

God, Parents, and Children

OPENING QUESTION

Where would you put your parent(s) on the continuum? What about you?

LENIENT _____ STRICT

READ 1 Samuel 2:11-36.

1. What made Eli's sons so bad?

- A. They consistently turned their backs on God.
- B. They were PKs (priest's kids), and that creates a lot of pressure.
- C. Bad parenting by Eli.
- D. No mother in their lives.
- E. Social media constantly distracted them.
- F. They seduced women who served at the Tabernacle.
- G. They were gluttons.
- H. They would only do things their way, with no consideration of others.
- I. Other.

2. How did their behavior affect worship in Israel?

- A. It had no effect.
- B. Worshippers felt offended.
- C. People stopped coming to the Tabernacle.
- D. Worship participation increased.
- E. Eli's sons carelessly broke the rules for sacrificial services.
- F. People complained to Eli about his sons.
- G. Physical force sometimes interrupted worship.
- H. Eli did nothing about it.
- I. Other.

3. How did Samuel fit into the picture?

- A. Samuel was a perfect little boy and a role model for Eli's older sons.
- B. Eli became Samuel's surrogate parent.
- C. Eli treated Samuel like his own son.
- D. Eli changed his parenting practices with Samuel.
- E. Samuel confronted Eli's sons.
- F. Eli's sons picked on Samuel.
- G. God provided Samuel to replace Eli and his evil sons.
- H. Other.

4. What was the prophet's message to priest Eli?

- A. Be more strict as a parent.
- B. Be more lenient as a parent.
- C. Follow your wife's advice.
- D. Your sons are going to die before you die.
- E. You guys are fat.
- F. You put your family ahead of God.
- G. Samuel will replace your sons as the priest after you.
- H. Other.

5. Why did God send such a stern message to Eli?

- A. God's messages are usually very serious.
- B. Eli had ignored God's previous messages, including the Torah.
- C. This was God's attempt to get Eli's attention.
- D. People don't notice when they gradually slide downward.
- E. God sends messages before his actions (*Amos 3:7*).
- F. There are consequences to bad choices.
- G. This helps people understand when trauma strikes.
- H. Other.

6. How would you characterize God's dealings with Eli?

- A. Patient.
- B. Judgmental.
- C. True to the covenant.
- D. Warning before actions.
- E. Hope after punishment.
- F. Faithful.
- G. Honoring those who want to be holy.
- H. Other.

7. When does the relationship between parents and maturing children change? What are good ways to navigate through those changes?

8. How is our relationship with God similar to our relationship with our parent(s)? How is it different?

Did You Hear That?

OPENING QUESTION

Describe a time when you had a bad phone connection—what happened?

READ 1 Samuel 3:1-21.

1. What was Samuel's life like before God gave him special messages?

- A. All work and no play.
- B. All play and no work.
- C. An internship to become a priest at the sanctuary.
- D. Doing what his mom had decided he should do.
- E. Doing what God had decided he should do.
- F. His older siblings had given him a hard time as a little kid.
- G. He was on an identity search.
- H. Taking care of the "old man Eli."
- I. Other.

2. Are messages from God as rare now as they were in Samuel's day?

- A. Yes.
- B. No.
- C. It depends on where you live in the world.
- D. Messages from God depend on God, not us.
- E. God gives messages, but most people don't recognize them.
- F. People who claim they got a message from God are hearing things.
- G. There's nothing new to receive; we have everything we need.
- H. What we received in the past isn't enough for what we need today.
- I. Other.

3. How would you respond if God called your name while you were in bed?

- A. I'd freak out.
- B. I probably wouldn't think it came from God.
- C. I would think it was a reaction to something I ate for supper.
- D. I'd recite, "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth" (vs 9).
- E. I'd record it on my phone and share it on social media.
- F. You can be sure I would have some questions for God.
- G. It would make me feel super special.
- H. I'd ignore it and just go to sleep.
- I. Other.

4. When has God sent you messages in the past?

- A. He hasn't.
- B. During some sermons.
- C. Sometimes through music.
- D. When I spend time listening for God's voice as (or after) I pray.
- E. It happens when I read the Bible.
- F. When people I trust as God's messengers have a message for me.
- G. I'm not sure.
- H. Other.

5. What's a message you might not want to receive from God?

- A. Make some changes in your life.
- B. Tell others to make changes in their lives.
- C. Speak for God in front of other people.
- D. Tough times are ahead.
- E. You need new friends.
- F. Are you going to follow me or not?
- G. Love your enemies.
- H. Other.

6. Why doesn't God send more messages these days?

- A. He's waiting for people to pass on the messages he already gave.
- B. He's too busy with other stuff.
- C. We don't ask for any messages from God.
- D. He already sent the messages we need.
- E. He does—some are listening and some aren't.
- F. He's waiting for the very end of Earth's history.
- G. Where two or three gather in His name, God is present.
- H. Other.

7. What message(s) have you received from God? How did you get them?

8. What messages have you passed on from God? How did you do that?

When God's Magic Doesn't Work

OPENING QUESTION

Have you ever had something that seemed to bring you good luck?

READ 1 Samuel 4:1-22.

1. Why did the LORD allow the Philistines to defeat the Israelites (vs 3)?

- A. This is the wrong question to ask.
- B. This is the right question to ask.
- C. The LORD wasn't involved in this.
- D. The Israelites had broken their covenant with God.
- E. The Philistines had a great army.
- F. The Israelites had a bad day.
- G. This was part of God's judgment (*1 Samuel 2:27-34*).
- H. God wanted Samuel to start leading the Israelites.
- I. Other.

2. What difference did it make to take the Ark of the Covenant into battle?

- A. No difference.
- B. All the difference in the world.
- C. It led to an earthquake felt by both sides in the battle.
- D. It rallied the Israelite troops.
- E. It rallied the Philistine troops.
- F. God wouldn't let the Israelites use the ark as magic.
- G. It led to a spiritual revival.
- H. The Israelites lost the ark to their enemies.
- I. Other.

3. Why did Eli let the Israelites take the ark into battle?

- A. He thought the Israelites couldn't lose when they possessed the ark.
- B. It had worked with the battle of Jericho (*Joshua 6*).
- C. Eli feared what would happen to the ark.
- D. The people took the ark from the sanctuary without asking.
- E. Eli didn't take strong stands.
- F. He sent his two sons with it to care for it.
- G. A prophet had already told Eli he was going to lose everything.
- H. Eli misunderstood Yahweh.
- I. Other.

4. What was the news from the battle?

- A. Just what the people expected.
- B. Just what the people feared.
- C. Israel lost—big time!
- D. The Philistines lost.
- E. Hophni and Phinehas died.
- F. Thousands and thousands died.
- G. The Philistines are coming here next.
- H. The Philistines now have our Ark of the Covenant.
- I. Other.

5. What's wrong with the Philistines having the Ark of the Covenant?

- A. It doesn't belong to them.
- B. They hadn't made a covenant with Yahweh.
- C. It's just not right.
- D. You can't put God in a box.
- E. It meant the Israelites didn't have it.
- F. Why have a sanctuary if there's no ark?
- G. The Philistines will find out what's wrong with this.
- H. Other.

6. How does this chapter end?

- A. Horribly.
- B. The end of Eli's family.
- C. The emergence of Samuel.
- D. All is well that ends well.
- E. How would you like to be called "Ichabod"?
- F. God loses everything.
- G. God's people lose everything.
- H. You'd want to be a Philistine now.
- I. Other.

7. What did the Philistines know about Yahweh and his people? What did they misunderstand? What do others know about your God? What do they misunderstand?

8. When is God more like a good luck charm than a powerful and/or personal friend?

9.

Supernatural

OPENING QUESTION

When have you had “too much of a good thing”?

READ 1 Samuel 5:1-6:21.

1. Why did the Philistines put the Ark in the temple of Dagon?

- A. They had a place reserved for it there.
- B. This was the Philistines’ sanctuary.
- C. This added to their cumulative collection of conquered gods.
- D. This way Dagon, the god of fertility, could take care of Yahweh.
- E. The Israelites recommended this.
- F. God wanted the Ark to be placed there.
- G. God determined to teach the Philistines a lesson.
- H. God determined to teach the Israelites a lesson.
- I. Other.

2. Why did Dagon fall down before the Ark of the LORD?

- A. Because it was the Ark of the LORD.
- B. The Philistines wouldn’t worship Yahweh.
- C. Dagon couldn’t help himself (*vs 3, 4*).
- D. An earthquake caused this.
- E. This was a Great Controversy showdown.
- F. Dagon isn’t the #1 god; Yahweh is.
- G. The temple cleaner accidentally bumped into Dagon.
- H. Every knee bows before Yahweh (*Isaiah 45:15-23*).
- I. Other.

3. What happened because the ark was in the Philistine cities?

- A. Covenant blessings for the Philistines.
- B. Covenant curses for the Philistines (*Deuteronomy 28:21-22, 27*).
- C. The five Philistine cities competed to have the Ark with them.
- D. The Israelites mourned and repented.
- E. Rat infestations.
- F. The plague.
- G. Distress.
- H. Worship.
- I. Other.

4. How did the Philistines take care of their Ark problem?

- A. They didn't.
- B. The leaders of the five Philistine cities took care of this problem.
- C. Pagan priests devised a plan that required supernatural intervention.
- D. Supernatural issues must be determined supernaturally.
- E. They remembered Yahweh's past actions.
- F. They submitted to Yahweh.
- G. Each city gave gifts to Yahweh.
- H. Other.

5. What made the difference for the Ark to return to the Israelites?

- A. The Philistines decided to release their grip on the Ark.
- B. Yahweh wanted the Ark back in Israel.
- C. The cows are what literally brought the Ark to the Israelites.
- D. The confessions of the Philistines.
- E. The persistent prayers of the Israelites.
- F. The gifts the Philistines gave.
- G. The Israelite army came and rescued the Ark.
- H. Other.

6. What happened once the Ark came back to the Israelites?

- A. Rejoicing.
- B. Sacrifice.
- C. Curiosity.
- D. Massacre ("70 men of 50 families," not "50,070 men").
- E. Fear.
- F. Confirmation for the Philistines.
- G. No longer in Shiloh, or a good luck charm (*Ps 78:60-61; Jer 7:8-15*).
- H. Other.

7. How much help does God need from you? How much help does God want from you?

8. When does God seem natural to you? When does God seem supernatural to you?

What a Change

OPENING QUESTION

Who is more likely to notice a change in you: You or someone else?

READ 1 Samuel 7:1-27.

1. Where was God for the 20 years the Ark was in Kiriath-jearim?

- A. Inside the Ark.
- B. In the house of Abinadab in Kiriath-jearim.
- C. Every place Samuel went.
- D. Throughout the land of Israel.
- E. In the hearts of his people.
- F. In the land of the Philistines.
- G. Yahweh abandoned the Israelites during this time.
- H. Yahweh allowed the Philistines to rule over the Israelites for this time.
- I. Other.

2. What does it take to “return to God” (vs 3)?

- A. Get serious about God.
- B. Try harder.
- C. Repent.
- D. Change what you’ve been doing.
- E. “Let go and let God.”
- F. Get rid of whatever distracts you from God.
- G. Ask for forgiveness.
- H. Just pray.
- I. Other.

3. Why did the Israelites make Samuel their judge?

- A. God appointed Samuel to this role.
- B. For 20 years Samuel had provided spiritual help for the Israelites.
- C. There really was no one else.
- D. The Israelites held an election and Samuel won.
- E. Samuel was a good judge.
- F. Samuel was a good warrior (like many in the book of Judges).
- G. God had been providing guidance through Samuel for years.
- H. The Israelites were ready to make a change.
- I. Other.

4. Why did the Philistine army march on the Israelites (vs 7)?

- A. That's what Philistines do.
- B. They wanted to keep the Israelites under their control.
- C. A large gathering of Israelites could change the status quo.
- D. The Israelites had proclaimed freedom from Philistine domination.
- E. They got word that Samuel was the new Israelite judge.
- F. When Israel turns to Yahweh they get freedom from their enemies.
- G. The Philistines wanted to capture the Ark again.
- H. Other.

5. Who/What defeated the Philistines?

- A. The Israelites.
- B. Samuel—Israel's new judge.
- C. Yahweh—since Israel was now fully devoted to him.
- D. Repentance.
- E. Reformation.
- F. The voice of Yahweh changed everything.
- G. A reversal on the same battlefield where the Ark had been taken.
- H. Other.

6. When do you experience noticeable changes in your life?

- A. When I choose to change.
- B. When God acts.
- C. I don't see any pattern.
- D. I rarely change.
- E. I'm always changing.
- F. When I turn my attention to God.
- G. The normal changes that happen through the stages of life.
- H. Other.

7. What "idols" distract you from a full commitment to God?

8. What is your "Ebenezer"—a marker of all God has done for you?

We Want A King

OPENING QUESTION

When have you seen the majority be right? When have they been wrong?

READ 1 Samuel 8:1-22.

1. Why were Samuel's sons not a good choice to replace aging Samuel?

- A. They were too young.
- B. They were too old by this time, just like Samuel was too old..
- C. Samuel had done a poor job training them.
- D. Samuel's wife had done a poor job training them.
- E. The sons were greedy.
- F. The sons were sexually promiscuous.
- G. The sons perverted justice as judges.
- H. The people wanted a king.
- I. Other.

2. Why did the Israelites want a king?

- A. They wanted to be like other nations.
- B. It's hard to follow an invisible God.
- C. There weren't enough good priests, prophets, or judges.
- D. Kings usually do the right thing.
- E. Sometimes it's hard to be different from others.
- F. Samuel had no succession plan for a leader after he would die.
- G. They hoped a change would always be an improvement.
- H. God hadn't revealed the next leader to them.
- I. Other.

3. What would be a good enough reason for you to NOT have a king?

- A. Kings tax their people.
- B. They take the best of everything for themselves.
- C. Kings direct worship from God to themselves or other gods.
- D. They take your children to work for the king.
- E. Their egos usually exceed their leadership skills.
- F. The focus shifts from internal values to external values.
- G. Kings take the place of God in their subjects' lives.
- H. Kings create upper and lower classes.
- I. Other.

4. What are good reasons to have a king?

- A. A visible leader instead of an invisible God.
- B. Easy accessibility.
- C. Wisdom (like Solomon).
- D. The promotion of national identity.
- E. The whole nation fits into the larger society of nations better.
- F. It establishes a clear role model for people.
- G. You can't trust prophets, priests, or judges.
- H. It's hard to trust God.
- I. Other.

5. If you were God, how would you have responded?

- A. Anger.
- B. Disappointment.
- C. Feelings of rejection.
- D. I'd choose a different group to be "my people."
- E. Blame Samuel for his disappointing sons.
- F. Help the people see their short-sightedness.
- G. Agree with the people—a king is a great idea.
- H. Other.

6. Why did God allow his people have a king?

- A. Having a king is actually a good idea.
- B. God didn't have anyone else who could lead his people at that time.
- C. Sometimes God leaves people to their own choices.
- D. He knew the people would soon return to following God.
- E. He knew the king would direct people to God.
- F. God already prepared for his people to have a king (*Deut 17:14-20*).
- G. Most of the kings of Israel turned out to be pretty good.
- H. Other.

7. As a follower of an invisible God who claims the #1 spot in your life, how do you relate to government leaders and what they require of you?

8. When you've already made up your mind about something, what, if anything, would change your mind?

Finding What You're Looking For

OPENING QUESTION

How often do you lose things? How good are you at finding them?

READ 1 Samuel 9:1-27.

1. What made Saul a good candidate to be Israel's first king?

- A. Nothing.
- B. His height—everyone looked up to him.
- C. His experience as a prophet of God.
- D. His background as a priest.
- E. Saul's dad was wealthy.
- F. His humility.
- G. His wisdom.
- H. Being from the tribe of Benjamin—the smallest tribe in Israel.
- I. Other.

2. How good was Saul at finding his father's lost donkeys?

- A. Terrible.
- B. Dutiful.
- C. Obedient.
- D. He's a quitter.
- E. Finding the donkeys wasn't the point of the story.
- F. He covered a lot of ground.
- G. His servant seems to be more in charge than Saul.
- H. Saul ended up right where God wanted him to be.
- I. Other.

3. What did Saul's servant add to the story?

- A. Loyalty to his master.
- B. More creative than Saul.
- C. A better nose to sniff out donkeys.
- D. Faith in God.
- E. Determination.
- F. Knowledge of Samuel as a man of God.
- G. He had more money than Saul.
- H. Friends in high places.
- I. Other.

4. What did the unnamed women add to the story?

- A. A well story (as in *Gen 24:15-22; 29:1-12; Exod 2:15-21; John 4*).
- B. They knew what was happening.
- C. They knew Samuel the seer.
- D. They knew exactly where Samuel was at that moment.
- E. They perceived Saul would become Israel's first king.
- F. Being young, they lowered the average age of the group.
- G. They provided both food and water.
- H. Other.

5. What made Samuel a seer?

- A. That's just what people called prophets at that time.
- B. He could look right into you and know your thoughts and motivations.
- C. God gave him the ability to see into the future.
- D. A better term is "hearer" since he heard God's voice (*vs 15, 27*).
- E. When predictions came true, people would say, "See, I told you."
- F. Supernatural input from God.
- G. His reputation from speaking the messages God gave him.
- H. Other.

6. Why did Saul get such special treatment?

- A. God had chosen him to become Israel's king.
- B. Samuel made sure Saul got the VIP treatment.
- C. This town was known for its hospitality.
- D. Saul was so upset about not finding his father's donkeys.
- E. It was because of his height.
- F. He was single and rich, with lots of available young women present.
- G. God had told Samuel to privately anoint Saul to become Israel's king.
- H. Other.

7. Why don't divine interventions like this happen more often?

8. How was Samuel able to get over the Israelite's rejection of prophets and priests in favor of a king (*chapter 8*)? How do you get over disappointments, including spiritual disappointments?

Preparing a King

OPENING QUESTION

When did someone honor you and you didn't expect it?

READ 1 Samuel 10:1-27.

1. What made Saul Israel's king?

- A. Samuel anointed him.
- B. Saul's many talents.
- C. Samuel's kiss of relational acceptance.
- D. God chose him.
- E. Winning a battle (*1 Sam 8:20; 11:11-15*).
- F. Saul's height.
- G. The Israelite's vote.
- H. The Israelites' demand to have a king.
- I. Other.

2. Why did Samuel spell out Saul's specific future for that day?

- A. Saul needed specific directions, and lots of them.
- B. Proof that what was happening to Saul was all pre-ordained.
- C. Saul was lost.
- D. This reminded Saul that Samuel was in charge and calling the shots.
- E. It confirmed all Samuel said as it all became true.
- F. This gave Saul the courage he needed.
- G. Samuel simply passed on God's message to Saul.
- H. It opened Saul to accept God's Spirit.
- I. Other.

3. What happens when the Spirit of the Lord comes upon you?

- A. Prophesying (*1 Sam 10:10*).
- B. Leadership (*Judges 6:34; 1 Sam 16:13*).
- C. Speaking in tongues (*Acts 2:4*).
- D. Supernatural physical strength (*Judges 14:6*).
- E. Speaking with boldness (*Acts 4:31*).
- F. Nothing noticeable.
- G. Something noticeable.
- H. You become a new person (*John 3:6-8*).
- I. Other.

4. Why didn't Saul tell his uncle about being anointed as king (*vs 16*).

- A. His uncle wouldn't believe it.
- B. Saul still didn't believe it.
- C. It was to stay a secret for a while.
- D. It wasn't up to Saul to proclaim this message.
- E. Nobody knew except for Samuel and Saul.
- F. Finding the donkeys was more important.
- G. Saul wanted one of those prophesying with him to tell others.
- H. Other.

5. What do you think of Samuel's method of choosing a king—casting lots?

- A. Casting lots seems so random.
- B. It was customary at that time.
- C. It's a better method than lineage.
- D. It's a better method than democracy.
- E. God controlled it.
- F. It matched what God had already revealed to Samuel.
- G. Getting everyone together was a good idea.
- H. Other.

6. Why did Saul go into hiding?

- A. He wasn't ready to become king.
- B. It's better to move up than have to move down (*Luke 14:7-11*).
- C. It was his place of prayer.
- D. Samuel told him to wait.
- E. It's hard for tall people to hide.
- F. He was naturally shy and humble.
- G. Saul didn't know that hiding from God doesn't work.
- H. Other.

7. When has the Spirit of the Lord come upon you? What happened next?

8. How do you relate to people who speak in favor of you? How do you relate to people who speak against you?

Victory and Celebration

OPENING QUESTION

When have you experienced a victory worth celebrating?

READ 1 Samuel 11:1-15.

1. Why did Ammonite King Nahash threaten Jabesh-Gilead?

- A. He wanted more land.
- B. He wanted more spoils from war.
- C. In Hebrew, Nahash means “serpent”—an instrument of Satan.
- D. It’s the only thing he knew how to do.
- E. Gouging out eyes disabled and humiliated his Israelite victims.
- F. Those who had fled from Nahash went to Jabesh-Gilead.
- G. There was no king in Israel.
- H. Nahash hounded his neighbors—Israelite tribes east of the Jordan.
- I. Other.

2. Why would other Israelites come to rescue those in Jabesh-Gilead?

- A. They wouldn’t.
- B. Because the call for help went out.
- C. The Israelites felt growing contempt for Nahash.
- D. King Saul’s tribe was related to Jabesh-Gilead (*Judges 21:13-14*).
- E. The Ammonites regularly attacked the Israelites (*Judges 10:6-11:33*).
- F. Ammonites were unwelcome relatives (*Genesis 19:30-38*).
- G. With a new king, the Israelites were ready to fight.
- H. If Samuel called them, they would come.
- I. Other.

3. What was King Saul doing when the call for help came?

- A. Nothing.
- B. Saul was very busy.
- C. Recruiting an army.
- D. Building a palace.
- E. Praying.
- F. Farming his dad’s fields.
- G. Partying.
- H. Consulting with his advisors.
- I. Other.

4. What happened when the Spirit of God came on Saul (vs 6)?

- A. The Spirit came in a mighty manner.
- B. Saul began to prophesy again (cf 1 Samuel 10:10).
- C. He became angry, very angry.
- D. Saul consulted with Samuel.
- E. He conducted a covenant ceremony (cf Jeremiah 34:18).
- F. He called for all the troops in Israel to mobilize.
- G. Saul called for a prayer meeting for God to save the people.
- H. Other.

5. What happened after the seven-day deadline (vs 3)?

- A. The people of Jabesh-Gilead “went out” to the Ammonites.
- B. The Israelite army surrounded the Ammonites.
- C. A hailstorm saved the people of Jabesh-Gilead (cf Joshua 10:11).
- D. Samuel joined Saul for the battle.
- E. The surprise attack eliminated the Ammonite threat.
- F. People could see clearly with both eyes.
- G. A praise and prayer celebration.
- H. Other.

6. What happened after the overwhelming military victory?

- A. The Israelite army attacked the territory of the Ammonites.
- B. Celebration.
- C. Jealousy for Saul.
- D. Worship.
- E. Feasting.
- F. Everyone went home.
- G. A reaffirmation of Saul as Israel’s king.
- H. Other.

7. When you feel overwhelmed, who do you turn to, and what do you do?

8. What causes you to celebrate? When and where do you celebrate, and with whom?

Final Farewell

OPENING QUESTION

What advice or counsel would you pass on to those younger than you?

READ 1 Samuel 12:1-25.

1. What, if anything, had Samuel done wrong (vs 3)?

- A. Nothing (1 Sam 2:26).
- B. Everything (Ps 14:2-3).
- C. Samuel was pretty good.
- D. As a child, he slept in the Most Holy Place (1 Sam 3:3).
- E. He did a poor job rearing his sons (1 Sam 8:1-5).
- F. He held a grudge since the Israelites asked for a king on his watch.
- G. Samuel faithfully served as Israel's priest, prophet, and judge.
- H. He anointed a king over Israel.
- I. Other.

2. What had God done for the Israelites (vs 6-11)?

- A. Made them into a great nation.
- B. Rescued them from Egyptian slavery.
- C. Forgiven their sins.
- D. Victory after victory when they first entered Canaan.
- E. Punished them when they broke the covenant.
- F. Renewed the covenant with them.
- G. Promised the Messiah through their lineage.
- H. Rescued them repeatedly.
- I. Other.

3. Why did the Israelites drift away from God?

- A. They didn't drift from God.
- B. Each generation needs its own "Red Sea" experience with God.
- C. Human nature remains selfish and egocentric.
- D. Temptations were all around them.
- E. It's hard to remain faithful when God is invisible.
- F. Enemy attacks.
- G. Weak or poor leadership.
- H. Life goes in cycles, like a pendulum swinging back and forth.
- I. Other.

4. What conditions did Samuel give for the Israelites to be God's people?

- A. Fear God.
- B. Worship God.
- C. Obey God.
- D. Get rid of your king.
- E. Prevent or stop rebellion against God.
- F. Have both the people and their leaders follow God.
- G. Don't worship idols.
- H. Other.

5. Why did Samuel call for an unseasonal thunderstorm (vs 16-20)?

- A. He did this out of anger, hurt, and frustration.
- B. This demonstrated God's power.
- C. Samuel saw the cloud forming and so he predicted rain.
- D. He wanted to scare the bejeebies out of the people.
- E. God initiated this.
- F. This caused the people to fear God.
- G. It was Samuel's last hurrah.
- H. Other.

6. Why would you ever turn away from God?

- A. I would never do that.
- B. Pain, sorrow, or misery that I experience.
- C. Shame and feeling unworthy or unlovable.
- D. Unanswered prayer.
- E. God is for immature people (and I've become mature).
- F. It seems like God isn't present or active.
- G. I'm too busy with other things.
- H. The lure of what the world has to offer.
- I. Other.

7. If you charted your life, what highlights would you include about God's actions in your life?

8. What was the likelihood that the Israelites would remain faithful? What is the likelihood for you to remain faithful?

Dreadful Fear

OPENING QUESTION

Over the past month, has your life gotten better, worse, or stayed the same?

READ 1 Samuel 13:1-23.

1. What was Saul's strategy for his new army?

- A. Send them home, but keep them on standby.
- B. Build the army in terms of size and training.
- C. Keep a few of the best soldiers with the king.
- D. Empower his son to oversee part of the army.
- E. Count on God to protect him.
- F. Recruit from each of the 12 tribes.
- G. He had no idea what to do as the first king of Israel.
- H. Communicate regularly with everyone in Israel.
- I. Other.

2. Why did Jonathan attack and defeat the Philistines at Geba?

- A. Saul had instructed Jonathan to do this.
- B. Jonathan came up with this idea on his own.
- C. The Israelite soldiers wanted to attack.
- D. This is the reason the Israelites wanted a king (*1 Sam 9:20*).
- E. God inspired Jonathan with this plan and action.
- F. The Philistines regularly oppressed the Israelites.
- G. The Philistines were weak.
- H. This would put the Philistines on the defensive.
- I. Other.

3. How did Saul respond when he heard of Jonathan's military success?

- A. He was proud of his son.
- B. He was jealous of his son.
- C. He became confused about who should lead the army.
- D. He felt foolish for not attacking the Philistines himself.
- E. He went to Samuel for counsel.
- F. He turned to God to ask for guidance.
- G. He told the army under his command to join forces with Jonathan.
- H. Fear that the Philistines would forcefully come after the Israelites.
- I. Other.

4. How did the Philistines respond to their defeat by Jonathan's army?

- A. They surrendered.
- B. They went home and stopped bothering the Israelites.
- C. They immediately sent another group to attack Jonathan.
- D. They strategized a master plan with overwhelming forces.
- E. They chose to change their allegiance to Israel's God.
- F. They initiated guerrilla warfare.
- G. They called on their Philistine gods to overcome the Israelites.
- H. Other.

5. Why did Saul take Samuel's priestly role and offer sacrifices at Gilgal?

- A. Samuel wasn't there.
- B. Samuel was late.
- C. Saul's soldiers were deserting him.
- D. The Philistines had already begun their attack.
- E. Saul wanted God's blessing before going into battle.
- F. As the king, he could also serve as the priest.
- G. Samuel had told Saul he could do that, if necessary.
- H. Other.

6. What preparations do you make for yourself and others you lead/serve?

- A. I don't take on more responsibilities than I can handle.
- B. Stay within my budget.
- C. I take care of things on the home front.
- D. I'm very much into collaboration.
- E. Communicate, communicate, communicate.
- F. I'm always on time.
- G. I always put God first in everything I do.
- H. I put myself last.
- I. Other.

7. What advantages did the Israelites have by the end of this chapter? What were their disadvantages?

8. When do you experience fear or dread? Are you more apt to respond with fight, flight, or some other response?

Father, Son, and Holy God

OPENING QUESTION

Name a father-son duo who are similar. Name another that is different.

READ 1 Samuel 14:1-52.

1. What comparisons do you notice between King Saul and Jonathan?

- A. Courage.
- B. Actions.
- C. Communication (or lack of it).
- D. The people around them.
- E. How the soldiers related to them.
- F. The level of their trust in God.
- G. Loyalty to each other.
- H. Success in battle.
- I. Other.

2. When do you find Jonathan's statement (*vs 6*) to be true?

- A. When I'm outnumbered or I feel overwhelmed.
- B. Playing the role of underdog.
- C. Conflict with uncircumcised pagans.
- D. After I've already experienced some success.
- E. This sounds like a statement of desperation.
- F. This sounds like a statement of faith.
- G. It reminds me of my life right now.
- H. This describes my church.
- I. Other.

3. Why did Jonathan defeat the Philistines at their outpost?

- A. Jonathan and his armor bearer were great warriors.
- B. They had defeated the Philistines previously (*13:3*).
- C. It would strategically open the pass at Micmash (*13:23*).
- D. They took the initiative rather than just sitting around (*14:1-2*).
- E. The Philistines were cocky and overconfident.
- F. God gave Jonathan success.
- G. Jonathan was one of the few Israelites with a spear (*13:22*).
- H. The earthquake (*vs 15*) turned the tide in favor of Jonathan.
- I. Other.

4. What do you notice about Saul's leadership?

- A. He has a lot of followers.
- B. The soldiers faithfully obey King Saul.
- C. The religious leaders are the best (2:27-35; 3:11-14; 4:18-22).
- D. His wisdom seems to increase the longer he is king.
- E. It's becoming more about him than about God or God's people.
- F. God is first in every decision he makes.
- G. Jonathan doesn't seem to follow his father.
- H. Other.

5. Why don't we cast lots today to determine God's will?

- A. We do.
- B. It doesn't work very well.
- C. You can set yourself up for a disastrous judgment.
- D. We have better ways of discerning God's will now, such as _____.
- E. We have pastors, not priests with a Urim and Thummim.
- F. God doesn't tell us to cast lots today.
- G. Casting lots is simply a form of gambling.
- H. Other.

6. Should Jonathan have been killed for eating during the fast (vs 24-30)?

- A. Yes.
- B. No.
- C. Just punished, but not killed.
- D. Jonathan should have been honored for all he did that day.
- E. The soldiers did worse by consuming unkosher meat that day.
- F. This became a distraction based on male egos.
- G. Jonathan should have replaced Saul as the king of Israel.
- H. Other.

7. Would you rather be with Jonathan or Saul in this story? Who is the "Saul" in your life today? Who is your "Jonathan"?

8. What do you do when you call out to God but get no answer (vs 37)?

Consequences of (Dis)Obedience

OPENING QUESTION

Where have you seen ongoing rivalries (sports, business, family, nations)?

READ 1 Samuel 15:1-35.

1. Why did God have Samuel tell Saul to destroy the Amalekites (vs 2-3)?

- A. That's what kings do (1 Samuel 8:20).
- B. There was bad blood between these relatives (Gen 36:12).
- C. Payback from when Israel left Egypt (Ex 17:16; Deut 25:17-19).
- D. They were supposed to be vanquished earlier (Judges 6:33-34).
- E. The Amalekites persistently attacked God's people.
- F. If the Amalekites weren't destroyed, they would keep attacking Israel.
- G. God was done with the Amalekites.
- H. This makes God a promoter of genocide.
- I. Other.

2. Why did Saul spare the Kenites (vs 6)?

- A. He didn't.
- B. They were really nice people.
- C. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, was a Kenite (Exodus 19).
- D. Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite, helped Israel earlier (Judg 4:11; 5:24).
- E. Although nomadic like the Amalekites, they weren't treacherous.
- F. God told Saul to spare them.
- G. The Kenites had to choose their alliance: Amalekites or Israelites?
- H. Saul wanted to add them to Israel's army as additional troops.
- I. Other.

3. What led to Samuel crying all night (vs 11)?

- A. He couldn't sleep.
- B. Saul disobeyed God, again.
- C. God expressed sorrow that he ever made Saul the king of Israel.
- D. Samuel's hopes for Saul got decimated.
- E. Saul's greed and ego squelched obedience.
- F. This would result in Israel's doom.
- G. God had rejected Saul as Israel's king.
- H. Disobedience always brings bad consequences.
- I. Other.

4. Did Saul obey God?

- A. Yes.
- B. No.
- C. Technically yes.
- D. Technically no.
- E. Saul did more things right than wrong.
- F. Instead of devoting everything to God, Saul kept the best for himself.
- G. Saul obeyed God, but his soldiers didn't (vs 9, 15, 26-27).
- H. Other.

5. What made Saul's disobedience so heinous to God?

- A. Disobedience breaks a person's trust connection with God.
- B. It hurts everyone.
- C. Saul was in a key leadership position.
- D. Disobedience feeds ego and pride—the opposite of Godliness.
- E. This describes Lucifer at the core.
- F. Thinking forgiveness, sacrifice, or worship can replace obedience.
- G. Saul's disobedience really wasn't that big of a deal.
- H. Other.

6. Why did Samuel cut Agag to pieces (vs 33)?

- A. Saul hadn't done it.
- B. Agag had killed many, many Israelites.
- C. This completed God's directive (vs 3).
- D. Agag would have gone back to attacking the Israelites again.
- E. Agag's smugness made Samuel furious.
- F. This provided an example for Saul.
- G. This provided an example for Saul's soldiers.
- H. Other.

7. What's a current example of rationalizing disobedience, maybe even using "God talk" in the process (vs 22)?

8. What's a consequence you have experienced due to disobedience? What's a consequence you have experienced due to obedience?

Anointing

OPENING QUESTION

What's your birth order (1st, 2nd, 3rd, other)? What difference does it make?

READ 1 Samuel 16:1–23.

1. Why did Samuel continue to mourn for Saul (*vs 1*)?

- A. He had invested so much in Saul.
- B. God had picked Saul to be Israel's king.
- C. Samuel had warned the Israelites about the results of having a king.
- D. Saul had turned bad and the Israelites couldn't get rid of him.
- E. God hadn't revealed a better way (yet).
- F. Samuel reflected long and hard about this.
- G. Both Samuel and Saul were bipolar.
- H. Saul was taking all of Israel into his downward spiral.
- I. Other.

2. What made anointing a son of Jesse a delicate matter?

- A. King Saul would kill Samuel and the anointed one for treason.
- B. Finding a way to anoint a new king and keep it a secret.
- C. Samuel didn't know which one of Jesse's sons to anoint.
- D. Social media of the day would spread the word quickly.
- E. The obvious rift between King Saul and Samuel (*1 Sam 15*).
- F. The city elders feared they'd have to choose: Saul or Samuel.
- G. Samuel killed King Agag (*1 Sam 15*); would he kill in Bethlehem?
- H. The city elders feared Samuel would give a negative pronouncement of judgment.
- I. Other.

3. Why did Samuel have a hard time choosing the right person to anoint?

- A. It wasn't hard for Samuel.
- B. God had revealed it was a son of Jesse, but not which one.
- C. The firstborn looked the part.
- D. First impressions make a big impression, at first.
- E. David wasn't even in the lineup—too young to be considered.
- F. It made this secret errand more of a spectacle.
- G. Samuel's connection with God was a bit weak at the time.
- H. God wanted all of David's older brothers to see David get anointed.
- I. Other.

4. Why do humans look on the outside while God looks on the inside?

- A. Humans can't help it.
- B. God can't help it.
- C. What's on the outside matters.
- D. What's on the inside matters.
- E. Humans need supernatural insight to discern the heart.
- F. Humans need more time to get past first impressions.
- G. I don't judge people by what they look like.
- H. I don't judge people by what they are like inside.
- I. Other.

5. What happened when Samuel anointed David?

- A. David started doing supernatural things.
- B. David took the throne of Israel, replacing King Saul.
- C. Nothing; it was just a symbol.
- D. David went back to taking care of sheep.
- E. Supernatural power started to flow through David.
- F. David started writing songs/Psalms.
- G. His brothers got jealous—like Joseph's brothers got jealous of him.
- H. Other.

6. What was David's relationship with King Saul?

- A. They became good buddies.
- B. They became rivals.
- C. Saul started to mentor David.
- D. David got hired as Saul's music therapist.
- E. David became Saul's bodyguard.
- F. King Saul recruited David because he was fond of him.
- G. David worked for King Saul and also took care of Jesse's flocks.
- H. Other.

7. When are you able to discern what people are like on the inside?

8. Are you anointed?

A Giant Problem

OPENING QUESTION

When has a person or a problem dominated you, leaving you hopeless?

READ 1 Samuel 17:1–58.

1. What made the Philistines able to dominate the Israelites?

- A. A giant named Goliath.
- B. The Philistines had a history of dominating the Israelites.
- C. Better weapons.
- D. They weren't dominating—it was a stalemate.
- E. Avoiding a one-on-one battle with Goliath, the Israelites hadn't lost.
- F. Daily verbal attacks from Goliath.
- G. Intimidation.
- H. No Israelite hero to counter the Philistine giant.
- I. Other.

2. In what way(s) were the Israelites “fighting” the Philistines (vs 19)?

- A. They weren't fighting.
- B. They hadn't given up any ground.
- C. Saul kept encouraging the Israelites.
- D. The Israelites cut off the supply lines to the Philistines.
- E. Daily prayer and worship.
- F. They decided to cast lots to see who would fight Goliath.
- G. Remaining silent when Goliath taunted them.
- H. Practicing slingshot skills.
- I. Other.

3. Why did David offer to fight Goliath?

- A. He believed he could defeat this giant.
- B. He felt certain God would defeat this giant.
- C. Young people often believe unrealistic things.
- D. He expected great rewards if he succeeded.
- E. David had killed wild animals, so why not a giant?
- F. This was David's reaction since Goliath had defied Israel's God.
- G. It gave him a chance to try on King Saul's armor.
- H. Nobody else had offered to fight him through 40 days of taunting.
- I. Other.

4. Why was David able to defeat Goliath?

- A. He got lucky.
- B. David had incredible skill with his slingshot.
- C. The overconfidence of the Philistines.
- D. It was supernatural—God gave him the victory.
- E. Goliath was all talk, but not a good warrior.
- F. David had tremendous faith in God.
- G. Courage and confidence.
- H. Other.

5. Why didn't King Saul know who David was (vs 55-58)?

- A. When you're the king, you can't know everyone.
- B. Saul asked about David's father, not about David.
- C. The promise of "no taxes" for David's whole family needed follow-up.
- D. Saul hoped this fine young man had other brothers for Israel's army.
- E. For Saul to give his daughter in marriage meant meeting the family.
- F. *Chapter 17* should come before *chapter 16:14-23*, not after it.
- G. King Saul saw David as a musician, not a warrior.
- H. Other.

6. Why is the story of David and Goliath such a favorite?

- A. It's not a favorite with many people.
- B. Most people love to hear about the underdog winning.
- C. It's so easy to relate to giants that torment us in our lives.
- D. It builds faith in God.
- E. I've heard the story so many times I don't want to hear it again.
- F. It inspires us with hope.
- G. It fuels our fascination with power and destruction.
- H. Other.

7. What are examples of giants in your life?

8. What gives you hope, especially when things seem hopeless?

As Close As Family Can Get

OPENING QUESTION

On a scale of 1 (close) to 10 (distant), how close is your family?

READ 1 Samuel 18:1–19:24.

1. What bonded David to Saul's family?

- A. They shared similar interests and just naturally connected.
- B. Strong faith in God (1 Samuel 14:6; 17:37).
- C. Killing the enemy giant Goliath.
- D. They shared the same socioeconomic status.
- E. Mighty warriors.
- F. Humility (1 Samuel 10:21-23; 16:11-13).
- G. Good looks (1 Samuel 10:23-24; 16:12).
- H. The women in their lives.
- I. Other.

2. How would you describe the “love” between David and Jonathan (vs 1)?

- A. Best buds.
- B. They brought out the best in each other.
- C. Romantic love.
- D. Closer than romance.
- E. Mutual respect and admiration (vs 1, 16, 20, 22).
- F. Fickle.
- G. Unusual.
- H. Typical.
- I. Other.

3. Why did Saul have such a wicked turnaround?

- A. Ego.
- B. Jealousy.
- C. Psychological meltdowns, repeatedly.
- D. David's popularity surpassed the king's popularity.
- E. It started with David slaying Goliath.
- F. It started with God's spirit leaving Saul (1 Samuel 15:23, 26).
- G. It started with the anointing of David (1 Samuel 16:13).
- H. The dancing and singing women (1 Samuel 18:6-9).
- I. Other.

4. If you had been David, what would you have done?

- A. Run for my life.
- B. Go confront Saul.
- C. Challenge Saul to a fight—one-on-one.
- D. Appeal through Jonathan again.
- E. Go to God in prayer.
- F. Just wait and see what happens.
- G. Don't trust anyone.
- H. Start a rebellion in Israel.
- I. Other.

5. What do you think of David's wife, Michal?

- A. Clever.
- B. Loyal.
- C. Daring.
- D. Godly.
- E. Quick-thinking.
- F. David's savior.
- G. Two words come to mind: "pretty" and "deceptive."
- H. Other.

6. Where does this story seem to be heading?

- A. A growing family.
- B. A divided family.
- C. A splitting family.
- D. Civil war for the Israelites.
- E. A united kingdom.
- F. A divided kingdom.
- G. The need for a prophet to replace Samuel.
- H. Other.

7. What fuels jealousy in you? How do you deal with it?

8. What have you found drives families apart? What pulls them together?

You Can Trust Me

OPENING QUESTION

Who is a friend you're committed to, even if they mess us up really badly?

READ 1 Samuel 20:1-42.

1. Why did David flee from Saul after God had saved David in 19:19-24?

- A. The prophesying experience ended.
- B. Saul's heart still hadn't changed—no repentance.
- C. David continued to be a threat to Saul.
- D. David continued to be a threat to Saul's family dynasty.
- E. God told David to flee.
- F. Samuel told David to flee.
- G. Jonathan told David to flee.
- H. Common sense told David to flee.
- I. Other.

2. Why did Jonathan not believe his father wanted to kill David?

- A. There was no evidence.
- B. Jonathan was rather clueless.
- C. It simply seemed unbelievable.
- D. Saul had kept this out of Jonathan's sight.
- E. Jonathan's friendship with David would prevent such a thing.
- F. Jonathan's friendship with David added to Saul's anger.
- G. David was more likely to kill Saul.
- H. God wouldn't allow Saul to kill David.
- I. Other.

3. What does it mean to be “only a step away from death” (vs 3)?

- A. That comes from the mouth of a paranoid person.
- B. Someone really is out to get you.
- C. You're very old and about to die any day now.
- D. You're suicidal.
- E. You've made multiple bad choices and you're down to your last one.
- F. Today will probably be the last day of your life.
- G. You're hanging by a string on a knife's edge.
- H. Actually, that's true for anyone at any time.
- I. Other.

4. When did Jonathan realize his dad truly wanted to kill David?

- A. Jonathan never did realize this.
- B. David finally convinced him.
- C. The people around Saul confided in Jonathan.
- D. God gave Jonathan a dream.
- E. David's absence at the feast exposed this.
- F. Saul's outburst against Jonathan (*vs 30-33*).
- G. When Saul threw his spear at his own son (*vs 33*).
- H. Other.

5. Why did Jonathan and David have a secret code (*vs 18-23*)?

- A. At this time you couldn't trust anyone in the palace.
- B. At this time you couldn't trust anyone in Israel.
- C. That's just how Jonathan and David did everything.
- D. Their close bond enabled them to communicate in signs.
- E. They were dealing with life and death issues.
- F. The king's anger made loyalty uncertain.
- G. Even those you trust can turn on you.
- H. Other.

6. What do you consider the MOST tragic thing about this chapter?

- A. Saul's rage destroyed everything.
- B. Jonathan didn't fight to become Saul's successor.
- C. David had to leave the palace for good in spite of his loyalty to Saul.
- D. David had to flee even though he had been anointed as the next king.
- E. Jonathan and David never saw each other again.
- F. God didn't stop Saul like he had in *chapter 19*.
- G. Jonathan lost everything.
- H. Other.

7. Who are two or three people in your life you trust the most right now?

8. When has your life taken a turn you wished hadn't happened?

A Lack of Transparency

OPENING QUESTION

When has somebody not been transparent with you?

READ 1 Samuel 21:1–22:23.

1. Why did David go to Nob (vs 1)?

- A. It was the closest city when he fled from Jerusalem.
- B. God told him to go there.
- C. He certainly wasn't safe inside Jerusalem any longer.
- D. Nob had a great Airbnb.
- E. David went to see Abimelech the priest.
- F. David went to seek guidance from God (1 Sam 22:9-10).
- G. He wanted food.
- H. He wanted Goliath's sword.
- I. Other.

2. What made Ahimelech tremble when he saw David (vs 1)?

- A. David was a fierce warrior.
- B. Ahimelech knew King Saul wanted to kill David.
- C. Everyone knew King Saul wanted to kill David.
- D. It seemed strange that David would just show up.
- E. Ahimelech anticipated David would take the holy food.
- F. David was alone, which was unusual for him.
- G. Ahimelech knew Doeg was also there at the same time—not good.
- H. Ahimelech could sense something wasn't right.
- I. Other.

3. Why did David place his parents under the king of Moab?

- A. They were too old to live as fugitives on the run.
- B. Their lives were at risk under Israel's king.
- C. The Philistines weren't a safe spot (1 Sam 21:10-14).
- D. Egypt was too far away.
- E. David was friends with the king of Moab.
- F. The king of Moab offered them sanctuary.
- G. David came from Moabite ancestry (Ruth 4:13, 21-22).
- H. Saul had fought against Moab previously (1 Sam 14:47).
- I. Other.

4. What indicators have you noticed about Saul spiraling downward?

- A. Saul's jealousy of David.
- B. Saul tried to kill David multiple times.
- C. Saul threw his spear at Jonathan—his own son.
- D. He disobeyed God, sparing Israel's enemies (*1 Sam 15:2-3, 9*).
- E. God's rejection of Saul as king (*1 Sam. 15:23*).
- F. Turning on his military officers (*1 Sam 22:7-8*).
- G. Saul's military officers refused to obey Saul's orders (*1 Sam 22:17*).
- H. Other.

5. Why did Saul kill the priests, their families, and their town (*vs 18-19*)?

- A. To exterminate the evil Saul perceived in the priestly family.
- B. Saul's rage needed a target.
- C. Saul simply continued on his destructively downward spiral.
- D. The priest(s) supported David.
- E. The priest(s) supported Saul.
- F. This had been predicted by a previous prophet (*1 Sam 2:27-34*).
- G. This makes me think of human evil and/or God not intervening.
- H. Other.

6. Why didn't God give David better guidance at this time?

- A. God did, but David didn't follow it.
- B. David did the best he could in these circumstances.
- C. This was preparing David to become Israel's best king.
- D. Sometimes God seems silent and/or distant.
- E. When you're running for your life, you don't wait for God.
- F. God had Samuel anoint David as the next king—how was that going?
- G. David's world was crashing—he was losing everything.
- H. Other.

7. When are you likely to not be transparent, even if you technically aren't lying?

8. Where is God when you feel like the powers in the world are against you?

Looking For A Safe Space

OPENING QUESTION

What makes a space feel safe to you?

READ 1 Samuel 23:1–29.

1. Who was responsible for the safety of those in Keilah?

- A. The people who lived in Keilah.
- B. The Philistines.
- C. The Israelites.
- D. Israel's King Saul (*1 Sam 8:19-20*).
- E. David.
- F. David and his group of renegades.
- G. God.
- H. Angels.
- I. Other.

2. What led David to decide to attack the Philistines?

- A. The Philistines were Israel's enemies—attack whenever possible.
- B. An attack against fellow Israelites was an attack against David.
- C. Because it came to David's attention, he felt compelled to act.
- D. David asked God.
- E. David received a message from God.
- F. Abiathar the priest used the sacred articles to get God's response.
- G. The Spirit of God was in David (*1 Sam 16:15*).
- H. David followed what his inner sense told him.
- I. Other.

3. How did King Saul respond to David's liberation of Keilah?

- A. Saul thanked David.
- B. Saul asked David to continue the fight against the Philistines.
- C. Saul declared a feast to celebrate the goodness of God.
- D. This added to Saul's jealousy of David.
- E. Saul saw this as an opportunity to kill David.
- F. Saul attributed to God this chance to catch and kill David.
- G. Saul threatened those in Keilah to hand over David.
- H. Saul also wanted to kill Abiathar the priest (*1 Sam 22:15-23*).
- I. Other.

4. Why would the people of Keilah hand over David to Saul?

- A. They were loyal, patriotic Israelites.
- B. They knew Saul was their king.
- C. They feared a repeat of Saul's actions at Nob (*1 Sam 22:18-19*)
- D. They didn't trust David and his group of outcasts.
- E. They feared David would kill them, like he did the Philistines.
- F. David was trying to kill Saul.
- G. Saul was trying to kill David.
- H. Other.

5. Why did Jonathan connect with David at Horesh?

- A. Jonathan went to David since David couldn't go to Jonathan.
- B. The bond between them compelled Jonathan to make contact.
- C. They made plans for David to return to Jerusalem.
- D. God engineered this chance to connect.
- E. The people in the area helped Jonathan find David.
- F. Jonathan brokered a peace deal between Saul and David.
- G. This was one way God encouraged David during this difficult time.
- H. Other.

6. Why didn't Saul catch David?

- A. Saul wasn't that smart.
- B. David was very smart.
- C. David and his men knew the good places to hide and when to flee.
- D. The people in the area helped David hide.
- E. God protected David.
- F. God was determined to preserve the line of the Messiah (*Matt 1:6*).
- G. God directed this, like he later did in *2 Kings 6:8-10*.
- H. Other.

7. When have you felt unsafe like David with Saul on the prowl?

8. Why doesn't God do more to protect his people?

Man Fights

OPENING QUESTION

When have you seen male egos clash?

READ 1 Samuel 24:1–25:44.

1. Why did Saul resume chasing David?

- A. That's what real men do—they fight.
- B. Saul had defeated the Philistines, so he had time for other things.
- C. David continued to be a threat to Saul.
- D. Saul felt David was a threat, and men usually go by their feelings.
- E. Saul's men told him to chase David.
- F. The people of Israel wanted David out of their lives.
- G. Saul had an obsessive paranoia about David.
- H. King Saul would lose his family's dynasty unless he got rid of David.
- I. Other.

2. Should David have killed Saul when he had his opportunity in the cave?

- A. Yes.
- B. No.
- C. I don't know.
- D. God gave David this opportunity.
- E. You don't kill God's anointed one.
- F. It would be manly to kill someone.
- G. There would have been a civil war for years.
- H. Cutting the cloth=cutting the kingdom (see 15:27-28; 1 Kings 11:31).
- I. Other.

3. What reasons did David give Saul for not killing him in the cave?

- A. David wasn't a killer.
- B. David wouldn't kill the Lord's anointed.
- C. It was a strong temptation.
- D. They were like family—father and son.
- E. I don't have to kill you; God will.
- F. David's love for Jonathan.
- G. Samuel had told David not to kill Saul.
- H. Proof that Saul owed David his life.
- I. Other.

4. What difference did it make that Samuel died (25:1)?

- A. No difference.
- B. All the difference in the world.
- C. No more prophetic announcements or messages.
- D. Two different people Samuel had anointed to be king were still at it.
- E. David was now on his own.
- F. Saul was now on his own.
- G. The Israelites had become a monarchy instead of a theocracy.
- H. Other.

5. What is the Nabal story all about?

- A. David and his men are fugitives and opportunists.
- B. Nabal could be both rich and mean.
- C. Some people get unequally yoked in a marriage.
- D. David is as aggressive with Nabal as Saul was with David.
- E. The amazing Abigail—her insight, actions, and way with people.
- F. It's just another obscure Bible story.
- G. God takes care of things in his own time and way.
- H. Other.

6. What do you identify with THE MOST in David's life thus far?

- A. Miracles God does for you.
- B. Miracles God does in you.
- C. A special calling by God.
- D. It seems like somebody is always out to get you.
- E. Those who hang out with you aren't the ones in powerful positions.
- F. You go "all out" in what you do.
- G. Sometimes it seems God isn't there for you.
- H. Other.

7. When do male egos tend to create problems, even for Christians?

8. How can a man be a Christian without turning into a milquetoast or becoming a wimp, especially in light of the Great Controversy in which good and evil continue to clash?

What A Way To Live

OPENING QUESTION

What has been the best year of your life thus far?

READ 1 Samuel 26:1–27:12.

1. Why did Saul go hunt for David yet again?

- A. Saul's dynasty remained in question as long as David was alive.
- B. Saul's obsession to kill David remained unstoppable.
- C. The people from Ziph reported David's hiding place to Saul.
- D. Saul had nothing else to do.
- E. It would strengthen David's faith.
- F. It would test David's resolve.
- G. It seemed like Saul would be successful this time.
- H. This led David to compose *Psalms* 54.
- I. Other.

2. Why did David take Saul's spear and jug of water?

- A. This would stop Saul from ever chasing David again.
- B. It seemed like another divine appointment (1 Samuel 24).
- C. David concocted his own suicide mission.
- D. God made this safe for David.
- E. David was ready to fight Saul to the death.
- F. He didn't want to cut Saul's robe again (1 Samuel 24:4).
- G. As God's anointed, God would protect David.
- H. This was like taking Goliath's sword—dominion over one's foe.
- I. Other.

3. What did Saul and David agree upon after this incident?

- A. Nothing.
- B. A truce.
- C. Saul would stay home.
- D. David would return home.
- E. David would become the king of Israel after Saul died.
- F. David would never become the King of Israel.
- G. Saul confessed his sin.
- H. They would worship together in Jerusalem.
- I. Other.

4. Why did David seek asylum with the Philistines again?

- A. It was safer for David and his men to live with Israel's enemies.
- B. David figured he could fool Achish again if needed (*1 Sam 21:10-14*).
- C. This time David had 600 men with him instead of being alone.
- D. David and his men were weary of living as fugitives.
- E. His wives wanted David to settle down and raise a family.
- F. God told David to do this.
- G. This was the only way Saul would stop chasing him.
- H. Other.

5. Why did David ask to live in Ziklag instead of Gath (*27:5*)?

- A. David and his men weren't Philistines.
- B. Privacy.
- C. It had been an Israelite town at one time (*Joshua 15:20, 31*).
- D. It reminded him of his hometown of Bethlehem.
- E. It would be easier to worship Yahweh.
- F. David could rule his own group without threatening Achish.
- G. It was easier to disguise his raids on other villages.
- H. Other.

6. What would you want to be different in these two chapters?

- A. Saul would stop chasing David.
- B. David would just kill Saul.
- C. Saul would kill David.
- D. Saul and David would reconcile.
- E. David could live safely in Israel.
- F. David and his men wouldn't slaughter entire villages.
- G. David would be more honest.
- H. God would intervene more.
- I. Other.

7. What does it take for you to trust someone who has broken your trust?

8. David lived in the Philistine town of Ziklag for more than a year (*27:7*). How would you describe your last year of life?

Scary Times, Scared People

OPENING QUESTION

What are your thoughts and feelings when someone claims they talk with dead people?

READ 1 Samuel 28:1–25.

1. Why would David fight with the Philistines against the Israelites?

- A. David had switched to the dark side.
- B. When you live with the Philistines, you have to fight on their side.
- C. David hoped this would bring about the death of Saul.
- D. God told David to do this.
- E. David was being deceptive, continuing to fool Achish with his big talk.
- F. David had settled for his kingdom being the town of Ziklag.
- G. David planned to switch sides during the battle and fight for Israel.
- H. Other.

2. What is the significance of *verse 3*?

- A. Samuel was gone—no more input from Samuel.
- B. Samuel's remains were in Ramah.
- C. The Israelites' mourning for him meant Israel had moved on.
- D. Samuel had spoken against spirit mediums (*1 Samuel 15:22-23*).
- E. Saul no longer had access to God's messages.
- F. There were no spirit mediums in Israel.
- G. Spirit mediums were forbidden, but present in Israel.
- H. Consulting spirit mediums has happened for centuries.
- I. Other.

3. Why did Saul consult a spirit medium/witch?

- A. He was desperate.
- B. God no longer communicated to Saul through dreams.
- C. God no longer communicated to Saul through the priest's Urim.
- D. God no longer communicated to Saul through prophets.
- E. Saul's advisors told him to try this.
- F. The Philistine invasion overwhelmed Saul.
- G. It was the next step in Saul's downward spiral.
- H. Saul was open to any guidance at this point.
- I. Other.

4. How was Saul able to connect with Samuel?

- A. He wasn't.
- B. He needed the services of a witch.
- C. Saul's people knew how to find a witch.
- D. Saul swore by Yahweh's name that he wouldn't hurt the witch.
- E. Saul put aside his own fears to calm the witch's fears.
- F. Saul heard and saw nothing, but accepted what the witch said.
- G. Saul's physical and emotional state caused him to hallucinate.
- H. Other.

5. Was this a real thing—communicating with dead Samuel?

- A. Yes.
- B. No.
- C. It's in the Bible.
- D. The witch made up the whole thing.
- E. God communicated to Saul in a unique way this one time.
- F. Satan provided the supernatural element.
- G. Saul imagined the whole thing.
- H. Other.

6. How does the future look?

- A. Scary for King Saul.
- B. Uncertain for Samuel.
- C. Safe for the frightened witch.
- D. Ominous for Saul's associates.
- E. Promising for the Philistines.
- F. Treacherous for David.
- G. Outnumbered for the Israelites.
- H. For God, the future looks _____.
- I. Other.

7. Why did God forbid witchcraft? Why did/does Satan use it?

8. How do you deal with scary evil?

Life's Ups and Downs

OPENING QUESTION

Are the high points and low points in your life close together or far apart?

READ 1 Samuel 29:1–30:31.

1. Why did David join the Philistines to fight the Israelites?

- A. That's just what guys do.
- B. David had turned against the Israelites.
- C. He had no choice since he lived in the Philistine town of Ziklag.
- D. David was counting on the Philistines to send him back home.
- E. David didn't know how to do anything but fight.
- F. Achish wanted David to fight alongside him.
- G. David planned to fight against the Philistines once the battle started.
- H. David and his men were fed up with running from the Israelites.
- I. Other.

2. Why had the Amalekites plundered and destroyed Ziklag?

- A. That's just what guys do.
- B. The Amalekites were allies with the Israelites.
- C. David and his men had left their town defenseless.
- D. This happened because David had joined the Philistine army.
- E. Payback for the raids David had done previously (1 Samuel 27:8-9).
- F. God directed the Amalekites to do this to Ziklag.
- G. The Amalekites were hunters, and then gatherers.
- H. David had become wealthy, which made him a target.
- I. Other.

3. How did David find strength in Yahweh at this crisis point (vs 6)?

- A. He had nowhere else to turn.
- B. The priest pointed the people to God.
- C. Everyone was past crying their eyes out.
- D. The ephod gave them clear directions from God.
- E. David no longer had a home.
- F. He no longer had a family.
- G. At crisis points, people either turn toward God or away from God.
- H. The potential of his own men turning against him.
- I. Other.

4. How did David and his men find the Amalekites?

- A. They used the ephod like a GPS system.
- B. They knew where the Amalekites lived.
- C. They used a strategy of fanning out, then coming together.
- D. It turns out they just got lucky.
- E. A sick and abandoned Egyptian slave showed them the way.
- F. Persistence.
- G. Passion.
- H. Other.

5. How was it that David reclaimed everything (vs 18-19)?

- A. He acted quickly.
- B. God protected the families and flocks of David's men.
- C. God protected them when they attacked the Amalekites.
- D. He launched a surprise attack at night.
- E. The Amalekites were partying unprepared.
- F. David was an incredible warrior.
- G. The Amalekites wanted living slaves, not dead ones.
- H. Other.

6. What is the best way to distribute what you've obtained (vs 20)?

- A. Fairly.
- B. Generously.
- C. Base it on merit.
- D. Base it on belonging.
- E. Don't keep score or make a record.
- F. Save it for yourself, don't give it away.
- G. Celebrate with a party.
- H. Gift it strategically.
- I. Other.

7. Are you more likely to turn to God during life's ups or during life's downs?

8. When have you needed to find strength in the Lord? Did you find it?

A Very Bad Day For Israel

OPENING QUESTION

When have you sensed you were in a bad situation?

READ 1 Samuel 31:1-13.

1. Why did Saul, his sons, and the Israelites get killed by the Philistines?

- A. The Philistines were better fighters.
- B. The Israelites had a bad battle strategy for this fight.
- C. God had deserted Saul.
- D. Saul had deserted God.
- E. Saul had consulted with the witch of Endor (*1 Samuel 28*).
- F. God was ready for David to become king.
- G. Israel's greatest warrior and leader wasn't present.
- H. Saul's downward spiral had to end.
- I. Other.

2. Why did Saul die?

- A. The Philistines killed him.
- B. Saul killed himself.
- C. An Amalekite killed him (*2 Samuel 1:6-10*).
- D. Saul was fearful and demoralized.
- E. Saul's armor bearer didn't protect him.
- F. Saul did the opposite of God's calling for him (*1 Samuel 9:16*).
- G. Saul self-destructed.
- H. God was behind this.
- I. Other.

3. What similarities do you see with the deaths of Goliath and Saul?

GOLIATH

- A. Tall in stature.
- B. Had his own armor bearer.
- C. The primary leader/target.
- D. Beheaded.
- E. Killed by his own sword.
- F. Stripped of his armor.
- G. Those on his side fled.
- H. Other. _____

SAUL

4. Who was absent from the fight between the Philistines and Israelites?

- A. Nobody.
- B. Jonathan.
- C. David.
- D. Abner, Saul's general (*1 Samuel 17:55*).
- E. Ishbosheth, one of Saul's sons (*2 Samuel 2:8-9*).
- F. Samuel.
- G. The singing women (*1 Samuel 18:6-8*).
- H. Other.

5. What happened after Saul's death?

- A. The Philistines humiliated Saul.
- B. The Philistines had to inform their lifeless gods about what happened.
- C. The Philistines took over the trade-route towns through Israel.
- D. Those from Jabesh-Gilead returned Saul's favor (*1 Samuel 11*).
- E. Jonathan became the next king.
- F. David became the next king.
- G. Ishbosheth became the next king.
- H. Other.

6. What are the key themes you gleaned from *1 Samuel*?

- A. God speaks, but people don't listen very well.
- B. Tension continues—between individuals and between groups.
- C. God anoints people for a special task.
- D. People judge by the outward appearance; God looks at the heart.
- E. God always wins.
- F. Miracles are real.
- G. Obedience matters.
- H. Other.

7. How can someone like Saul, who had such a promising start, follow the downward path that ended in his demise?

8. What do you consider the highs and lows of *1 Samuel*?

Notes

Notes

