



Growth Group Study Booklet #6

Term 3 2021 – 1 Samuel 1-15



Living for Jesus

By making, maturing and mobilising disciples

For His Glory



Growth Group Study Booklet

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Diary Dates

Friday July 16	Term 3 Youth Group begins
Sunday July 18	1 Samuel Series commences
Sunday July 25	Life@Lakeshore Welcome Course
Tuesday July 27 April 25	“Flourishing in an Anxious World” Seminar
Date TBC (Late Term 3)	Christianity Explored Course
Fri-Sun August 27-29	Youth Group Camp
Sunday September 19	School holidays begin
Tuesday October 5	Term 4 Prayer Night (7:30-9:00pm)
Saturday October 16	The Gospel Coalition Australia Conference

Introduction to Samuel

The author or authors of 1 and 2 Samuel are not known. These books recount the stories of Samuel, Saul, and David. Saul's reign began between 1050–1030 BC and ended in 1010. David then reigned until 971. The books were probably written soon after the end of David's reign.

The books of Samuel are about Israel's first kings, Saul and David: who they were, how they came to the throne, and how they fared. But more than that, the books are about the great King, God himself. In the riveting stories of 1 and 2 Samuel we catch glimpses of who God is, what he does, what life is like with him and without him, and what life can become by his grace and in the power of his Spirit. These stories are part of our family history as children of Abraham by faith ([Gal. 3:7–9, 14](#)). They are meant to instruct us, “on whom the end of the ages has come” ([1 Cor. 10:11](#)), to teach us endurance and, “through the encouragement of the Scriptures,” to give us hope, in order that we may “with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” ([Rom. 15:4, 6](#)).

These are gospel-filled stories, unflinchingly honest about sin and society, but saturated with hope of salvation. The two key characters (apart from Samuel the prophet) are both royal sinners. But Saul and David are as different from one another as darkness is from light. For Saul, God does not appear to be a major concern, perhaps not a reality at all. For David, God is his ultimate concern. For David, God is the ultimate reality. And he carries ultimate weight. This is what it means to “honor” God. By the criteria established early in the books—“those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed” ([1 Sam. 2:30](#))—Saul is destined to fall and David to rise.

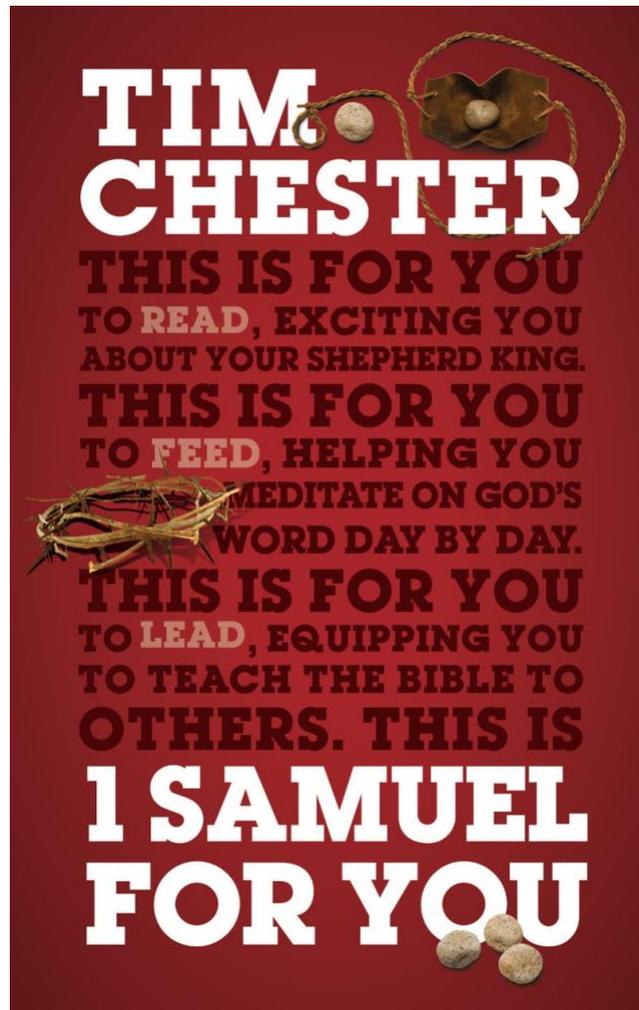
Because stories tend to convey their messages indirectly—which is to say, we see what characters do and hear what they say but are seldom offered explicit commentary—they are susceptible to misunderstanding. One common misunderstanding sees Saul as all bad and David as all good. Another reverses the approach and sees Saul as not so bad and David as little more than an unscrupulous political animal. A careful reading disallows both misinterpretations. Saul is not all bad, at least at first. He exhibits some “good faith” at the beginning, but because he is devoid of “true faith” in God this good faith erodes over time into self-centeredness and suicide. David is certainly not all good, and the accounts of 1 and 2 Samuel make no attempt to hide his sins!

But David's relationship with God is fundamentally sound. He knows God, prays to God, confesses to God, and finds strength in God. He knows himself to be a sinner, and he knows what it means to be saved by grace. Does he also sense that God, in putting him on the throne, is about much more than just establishing a limited, local kingdom? Surely he has some sense of this, even if without full discernment. After all, God's promise to Abraham ([Gen. 12:1–3](#)), which finds numerous echoes in the promise to David ([2 Sam. 7:4–17](#)), culminates with the prophecy that “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” ([Gen. 12:3](#)). David cannot foresee just how this blessing will work out, but he seems aware that something grand and glorious is underway ([2 Sam. 7:18–29](#)).

Only to us, those privileged to live after the coming of the true King, the Lord's Anointed (Messiah) from David's line, is it given to understand that “the kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever . . . Hallelujah!” (from Handel's *Messiah*).

Recommended Reading

A helpful companion for reading 1 Samuel, by Tim Chester:



Top Recommendation

Resources used in preparing this study booklet:

- Tim Chester, *1 Samuel for You*, The Good Book Company (2014).
- Tim Chester, *1 Samuel: Choose Your King*, The Good Book Guide series (2014).
- Andrew Reid, *Teaching 1 Samuel: From Text to Message*, Christian Focus (2020)
- *1 Samuel: Rise of the Kings*, Bray Park Community Church.
- *Rise of the Kings: 1 & 2 Samuel*, EV Church.
- *The ESV Gospel Transformation Bible* (2013), 'Introduction to 1 and 2 Samuel', by V. Philips Long.
- Websites: www.visualunit.me

Notes

STUDY 1

1 Samuel 1:1-2:11

Kick Off: How do you tend to respond when you feel upset?

Key Verse: 1 Samuel 2:6-8a

Big Idea: Hannah's fervent prayer and joyful response anticipates the coming of a King anointed by God to reign over Israel.

Investigate & Apply:

Read 1 Samuel 1:1-28.

1. How do verses 1-7 explain why Hannah is "weeping" and "downhearted" in verse 8?

2. How do the different characters respond to Hannah's situation?
 - a) Peninnah (v6-7)

 - b) Elkanah (v8)

 - c) Hannah (v9-18)

 - d) What can this teach us about how we respond to our trials?

Read 1 Samuel 2:1-11.

3. What do we learn about God's character:
 - a) In verses 1-2?

b) In verses 3-8?

4. What do we learn about human strength in verses 9-10? How would it effect your life if you constantly remembered this?

5. Hannah's prayer in 2:1-10 introduces the big themes of 1 Samuel. What themes do you see in these verses that might be important later in 1 Samuel?

6. What are one or two things you have learned from Hannah's praying in this week's passage? How do you hope this might change your own prayers from now on?

Prayer:

In your group prayer time:

1. Share prayer requests and pray for one another in your group.
2. Use a copy of the **Lakeshore Church prayer points** (either from Sunday's bulletin or from the weekly email) to pray for people and events across the church.

Read Ahead: For next week's sermon and growth group, read 1 Samuel 2:11-4:1.

STUDY 2

1 Samuel 2:11-4:1

Kick Off: What do you believe is the answer to the present crisis in our world?

Key Verse: 1 Samuel 2:30

Big Idea: God rectifies the spiritual crisis in our lives by sending Jesus, God's word

Investigate & Apply:

Read 1 Samuel 2:12-36.

1. a) What shocking accusation does verse 12 make about Eli's sons, Israel's priests?

b) What evidence does the writer give to prove this accusation? (v13-17)

c) Read Leviticus 3:14-16 and 7:31-32. How were the young men treating the offering of the Lord with contempt?
2. a) In verses 22 to 25 how effectively does Eli address his son's behaviour?

b) Why might Eli have been half-hearted in his attempt to correct them? (v29)

c) What does God say will happen to the house of Eli? (v27-36)

d) In answer to Hannah's prayer (v2:1-11), how is God already raising up the poor to bring down the proud?

Read 1 Samuel 3:1-4:1.

4. a) What spiritual crisis has the corrupt priesthood caused in Israel? (v1)

b) What does God do about it in these verses?

5) Read Amos 8:11-12. What impact would a famine of God's word have:

a) In your own life?

b) In the life of our church?

c) What does this tell us about what we need most when our lives, our church, or our country are in crisis?

d) Read Hebrew 1:1-2. How has God provided an even greater word-bringer than Samuel?

6) Finally, like Eli's sons, are there ways you are keeping for yourself what belongs to the Lord? (Romans 12:1)

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Read Ahead: For next week's sermon and growth group, read 1 Samuel 4-7.

STUDY 3

1 Samuel 4 - 7

Kick Off: Would you admit that you don't always take God as seriously as you should? Why is this do you think?

Key Verse: 1 Samuel 6:20

Big Idea: There is one true God, and in the face of his power and authority all alternatives look ludicrous.

Investigate & Apply: *The Ark of God was the box containing the Ten Commandments, kept at the heart of the tabernacle, which was intimately connected with God's presence.*

1. *Read 1 Samuel 4.*

a) How are the Israelites treating the ark of God? Why do you think the Israelites felt that having the ark with them would guarantee a win in the battle?

b) How can we sometimes think and act in the same way as the Israelites?

c) What do the Philistines know about God (v7-9)? How is this different to the earlier actions of the Israelites?

d) Does verse 10 surprise you? Why do you think Israel might have suffered this defeat?

2. *Read 1 Samuel 5.*

a) What is your reaction to this section of the story? Share any questions or thoughts you have with the group.

b) The glory of God is a central theme in this story. How would you define glory? Are you taking the weight of God's glory seriously in your life?

c) How is God glorifying himself in this chapter? How do we glorify God?

3. *Read 1 Samuel 6:1-7:4*

a) What do the people of Beth Shemesh do wrong in their handling of the Ark? (See also Lev 1:3 and Num 4:5). Why do you think God dealt so severely with them?

b) 6:20 asks a key question: "Who can stand in the presence of the Lord, this holy God?" What answer is given in 7:2-4?

c) What is answer to this question does Jesus reveal through his ministry? (See Rom 5:1-2 or Heb 10:19-22, for example) How does this answer help when you or someone you wish to encourage feels unworthy or guilty in light of God's glory and holiness?

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Read Ahead: For next week's sermon and growth group, read 1 Samuel 8.

STUDY 4

1 Samuel 8

Kick Off: How has choosing to do things your own way, not God's, proved costly for you?

Key Verse: 1 Samuel 8:7

Big Idea: Rejecting God as King is to forge our own identity to our disadvantage.

Investigate & Apply:

Read 1 Samuel 8:1-21.

1. a) What is the problem in verses 1-3?

b) Why do you think Samuel's sons prove as corrupt as Eli's?

2. a) What do the elders and the people ask for and why? (v4-5 and v19)

b) How does Samuel respond this request? (v6-7)

c) How does God respond to this request? (v7-9)

3. a) Unlike God who had rescued them and given them everything, what does God through Samuel warn them about the kind of King they are asking for? (v10-18)

b) How do the people respond? (v21)

4. Read Exodus 19:3-6 and Deuteronomy 4:5-8. How should Israel have related to:

a) God?

b) The nations?

c) In asking for a 'king to lead us, such as all the nations around them', what are they saying about their preferred identity?

5. How does 1 Samuel chapter 8 reflect the decision humans have always made as in the following examples:

a) Genesis 3:1-7?

b) John 19:4-16?

c) Our own lives?

6. Read 1 Peter 3:13-18 How should those who now swear allegiance to King Jesus relate to Him and the people around us?

Prayer:

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Read Ahead: For next week's sermon and growth group, read 1 Samuel 9-11.

STUDY 5

1 Samuel 9 - 11

Kick Off: What makes a good leader?

Key Verse: 1 Samuel 9:16.

Big Idea: Despite Israel rejecting him, God is still in control and directing events for his purposes.

Investigate & Apply:

Read 1 Samuel 9:1-10:16

1. What is your reaction to this story? Share any questions or thoughts you have.

2. What is your impression of Saul at this point? What stand out to you about the way he relates to others?

3. How do you see God's hand at work in the events of this chapter? Why is this important?

4. v27 shows that despite Israel's wrongheaded request and their continued sin, God continues to speak to them. How is this an encouragement to you?

Read 1 Samuel 10:17-11:15.

5. What is encouraging about the beginning of Saul's Kingship? What is concerning? Discuss all the evidence you can find in the passage.

6. Look back over Hannah's prayer in 2:1-11. Which parts of the prayer make it seem like Saul might be a good king? Which parts of the prayer make us wonder whether Saul might be a poor king?

7. What clues do you see in these chapters that reveal God's view of these events?

8. There is tension or ambiguity in these chapters (and in all of 1 Samuel). The Israelites are sinful and have rejected God, yet there are still hopeful signs of good human leadership. Yet God is the one directing the future of his people for his purposes, despite their sin. Why is this important to know, and how does it shape our understanding of God today?

9. Do you ever find yourself rejecting God's rule but asking him for help, as Israel does when they seek for Saul? How might God respond when you do this?

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Read Ahead: For next week's sermon and growth group, read 1 Samuel 12.

STUDY 6

1 Samuel 12

Kick Off: What sort of things have been important for security and freedom in your own life?

Key Verse: 1 Samuel 12:22

Big Idea: God's King was to lead God's people to follow and obey God only.

Investigate & Apply:

Read 1 Samuel 12:1-19.

1. *Samuel is retiring as military leader though he remains a prophet of Israel. Chapter 12 is a farewell speech but also reads like a trial. In 1 Samuel 8 God warned that a king would 'take' the best of everything for his own use.*

What does Samuel first establish, and the people testify to? (v1-5)

2. Samuel moves on to the real trial: God versus the people. By asking for a king to replace God, the people have accused God of failing in his divine kingship.

a) What evidence does Samuel give to vindicate God? (v6-11, 16-18)

b) What confronting evidence does Samuel give against the people? (v9-15)

c) What is the final verdict? (v.19)

Read 1 Samuel 12:20-25.

3. What is being called for in each of the following verses:

a) 12:20-21?

c) 22-23?

d) 12:24-25?

4. In verses 20 to 25 what do we learn about:

a) Humanity?

b) God's character?

5. a) What 'idols' do we commonly choose to serve in our day and culture?

b) How would you explain to someone that choosing to live under the rule of King Jesus is true freedom?

Prayer:

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Read Ahead: For next week's sermon and growth group, read 1 Samuel 13-15.

STUDY 7

1 Samuel 13 - 15

Kick Off: Some people like to make decisions based more on practical common sense and circumstances, whereas others give more weight to big ideas and beliefs regardless of circumstances. Which way do you naturally tend to make decisions?

Key Verse: 1 Samuel 13:14

Big Idea: Obeying God's Word is more important than pleasing people, self-fulfilment or common sense.

Investigate & Apply:

Read 1 Samuel 13.

1. a) What problem does Saul face? (v1-8)
 - b) What solution does he choose? (v9-10)
 - c) What was his motivation? (v11-12)
 - d) What is Samuel's verdict? Why is what Saul has done so serious? (v13-14)

2. Saul acted out of "common sense" rather than faith-filled obedience. How do you find this a temptation today? Why is it so tempting to live by sight, rather than by faith?

Read 1 Samuel 14:1-15.

3. What stands out to you about Jonathan's attitude and actions? Why do you think Jonathan felt so confident of God's blessing?

4. How does Jonathan give us a model of living by faith, in contrast to Saul?

Read 1 Samuel 15. "This sounds alarmingly like ethnic cleansing. But in fact it is ethical cleansing – an act of judgement against sin. The Amalekites are to be punished "for what they did to Israel", attacking them as they escaped from Egypt (Ex 17:8-16) – they did not die because they were Amalekites, but because they were sinners. Their destruction is a picture of what humanity deserves." (Tim Chester)

5. How well does Saul obey God's command, and what is Samuel's verdict (v17-19, 26-29)?

6. What excuses does Saul offer?

a) v15

b) v20

c) v21

d) v24

7. a) What does God delight in (v22)?

b) What are the modern day equivalents of "burnt offerings and sacrifices" that we can perform while failing truly to obey God?

c) How might we offer the kinds of excuses that Saul did?

Prayer:

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Read Ahead: For next week's sermon and growth group, read 1 Samuel 16.

Notes

Notes

THE 12 TRIBES OF ANCIENT ISRAEL

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TRAVELLING THROUGH THE OLD TESTAMENT

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*The order of the prophets are approximate, as some of the books are not dated.





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