EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

Adults

1 Samuel

QuickSource **Winter 2026-27**



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EVERYTHING WE NEED

If you're the product of a certain generation, you may remember the card catalog at your local library. While students today can find information at the click of a button or the tap of a screen, not that long ago we relied on the catalog's line of drawers and rows of cards to locate our research material. It was organized according to the Dewey Decimal System, but it had everything we needed.

It's helpful to have one resource that covers a variety of topics. While the card catalog took some time to navigate, it saved us time in the long run. It held the key to just about any subject we could image. From sports to history to geography to biographies to fiction to poetry, it was all there.

In a sense, the book of 1 Samuel is like a card catalog for learning God's perspective on life. Like an encyclopedia of His work in the world,
1 Samuel offers lessons on prayer, leadership, conflict resolution, faithfulness, courage, friendship, integrity, and so much more. Through the lives of individuals like Hannah, Eli, Samuel, Saul, Jonathan, and David, we get a broad picture of what God expects of His people—and what happens when things go wrong.

Best of all, 1 Samuel points readers toward the Messiah, the promised One who would come to redeem people from their sins. The Messiah would be a descendant of David: Jesus Christ. We all need Jesus to bridge the gap between ourselves and holy God. He is our only hope for salvation. If you've never made the decision to follow Jesus, there is no better time than right now! Here's what you need to do . . .

- **Admit** to God that you are a sinner. Repent, turning from your sin.
- **By faith receive** Jesus as God's Son and accept His gift of forgiveness from sin. He took the penalty for your sin by dying on the cross. Jesus also rose from the dead, making a new, eternal life possible for us.
- **Confess** your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. You may pray a prayer similar to this as you call on God to save you: "Dear God, I know that You love me. I confess my sin and need of salvation. I turn away from my sin and place my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. In the name of Jesus I pray, amen."

After you have received Jesus Christ into your life, tell a pastor or another Christian about your decision. Show others your faith in Christ by asking for baptism by immersion in your local church as a public expression of your faith.

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*Evangelistic Emphasis

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MEET **THE WRITERS**



Dr. Zach Kilpatrick wrote the Key Words and Dig Deeper features for this quarter. Zach serves as pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church in Brookhaven, Mississippi.

Dr. Sam Crouch wrote the Biblical Background content and the Bible Skill activities for this quarter. Sam is retired pastor and editor who lives in Tuscon, Arizona.

Dr. Bill Craig wrote the object lessons for sessions 1-7 this quarter. Bill served many years as a leader at Lifeway Christian Resources before his retirement. He lives in Mount Juliet, Tennessee.

Kima Jude wrote the object lessons for sessions 8-13 this quarter. Kima leads the women's ministry at The Oaks Baptist Church in Grand Prairie, Texas, where her husband, Barry, serves as lead pastor.

Dr. G.B. Howell, Jr., wrote the content adapted for the Discussion Plans in sessions 1-7 this quarter. G.B. served as content editor for *Biblical Illustrator* until his retirement from Lifeway.

Dr. Craig Hamlin wrote the content adapted for the Discussion Plans in sessions 8-13 this quarter. Craig serves as associate pastor and discipleship and mission strategist for Crosslink Church in Mebane, North Carolina.

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Amber Vaden
Team Leader

Bob Bunn
Content Editor

Gianetta Thornburg
Production Editor

Darin Clark
Design Team Leader

Hailey Gaar
Graphic Designer

Dwayne McCrary
Manager, Adult Ongoing Bible Studies

John Paul Basham
Director, Adult Ministry

Send questions/comments to the team by email:
ETB.adults@lifeway.com
or by mail to:
Team Leader
Explore the Bible QuickSource
200 Powell Place, Suite 100,
Brentwood, TN 37027-7707

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FROM **THE TEAM LEADER**

I don't know about you, but I like having and following a plan. Knowing what to expect and when to expect it fills me with comfort. Life doesn't always cooperate, though. Plans change. Circumstances shift. When the unexpected happens, flexibility is key.

In 1 Samuel, we learn about God's plans for David. Surely God's purposes were far beyond anything David would have imagined for himself. In 1 Samuel 16, God instructed Samuel to travel to Bethlehem, visit Jesse's house, and anoint the one who would succeed Saul as king. God chose David, Jesse's youngest son and a humble shepherd, to lead Israel. Samuel anointed David, but the next part of God's plan was anything but conventional. David spent many years running from Saul and waiting for the day he would be installed as king. These years were filled with unforeseen and unwanted experiences that would test David's character. Still, God's purposes would come to fruition.

Whether you're enjoying a season of calm or learning to trust God with the unexpected, I hope this quarter of study brings you closer to Him. We can depend on His plans even when we don't have all the details. God is both trustworthy and good! "There is no one like you, and there is no God besides you, as all we have heard confirms" (2 Sam. 7:22b).

In Him,

Amber Vaden

amber.vaden@lifeway.com

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Moving People Forward in their Faith

G. Dwayne McCrary

Imagine a novice hiker setting out on a trail that leads to a mountain summit. The trail starts wide, but as the hiker ascends, it becomes steeper, rocky, and hidden under early-season snow. At a fork in the path, he realizes the hike is more than he can handle. What he needs is a seasoned hiker who has climbed up this path before—an experienced hiker to walk alongside the novice, give tips and warnings of loose rocks, and encourage every step.

Jesus taught as He walked with people, asking probing and personal questions, clearing up misunderstandings, and offering an example of what it looks like to follow.

Today, helping others grow in faith means following that same pattern: getting personal, making it practical, and setting an example.

GETTING PERSONAL

The experienced hiker would need to engage with the novice hiker to keep both of them moving. He could not ignore the novice or view him as an obstacle in his way. As group leaders, we have a list of people assigned to us, and we must see them as the sheep we are called to lead, including novices to the group or those who rarely attend. To shepherd these individuals well, we must get to know them, which requires intentionally engaging with them. We can invite them to tell their stories, listening and making mental notes of clues about their spiritual journey and needs. This requires us to visit with them outside the normal group time. We may need to keep a notebook (digital or paper) to record important tidbits so we can be better shepherds.

We might look at our assigned ministry list and conclude there are too many names to get to know everyone personally. We can organize our classes so others can carry that load, but ultimately, those in our groups expect us to know them on a personal level. If we can't do that, we may need to consider enlisting an apprentice so we can create two smaller groups to better serve everyone.

MAKING IT PRACTICAL

Remember our hikers? The novice hiker required the help of the experienced hiker to teach him what he needed to know and how to put it into practice so they could both reach the summit safely. Application was the point. The experienced hiker could share information about the mountain, intriguing stories about others who

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had gotten lost on the trail but survived in a cave overnight, or details about the reasons some rocks are more treacherous than others. But what the novice hiker needed were practical actions.

We can approach teaching as an opportunity to dazzle with our knowledge or to help those in our groups put into practice critical spiritual principles. Encouraging some basic spiritual disciplines, such as biblically informed prayer and daily Bible reading, could be a start. We can provide resources and tools to help them with these disciplines, showing them how to use those resources and tools so they can pray and read the Bible for themselves.

SETTING AN EXAMPLE

The experienced hiker needed to show the novice where to step and where not to, setting an example. As teachers, our lives may be more important to those in our groups than what we say when we teach. We set the standard by sharing our lives with them. We can share the challenges we have faced and those we are navigating now. We can show them what it looks like to fail, find forgiveness in the gospel, and take the next step back onto the path.

Following Jesus is not always easy, and we need to be honest about the challenges. The challenging days may be the most fruitful for showing others what it looks like to follow Jesus regardless.

G. Dwayne McCrary is the manager of Adult Ongoing Bible studies at Lifeway.

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HOW TO USE *QUICKSOURCE*

Using *QuickSource* as your primary resource for preparing to lead a small Bible study group (with the group using the *Personal Study Guide*).

1. Read the core passage, using the Key Words as a quick commentary on the passage.

2. Review the outline provided on the Talking Points page (page two of each session) to organize your thoughts and identify the key points in the passage.

Tip: You can record your notes on the second page if you desire, giving you a way to remember insights gained.

3. Review the questions with response prompts on the Discussion Plan page (page three of each session), recording your response to the questions as you do so.

Some questions/prompts are included in the *Explore the Bible Personal Study Guide*. The corresponding PSG page numbers for these questions are noted. These page numbers correlate to the regular print version of the PSG and may differ from large print versions. The prompts are adapted from the comments in the *Personal Study Guide*.
Tip: Additional "Bonus" questions are also provided in the Discussion Plan, along with the For Further Discussion QR codes. These extra questions are found only in *QuickSource*.

4. Consider ways of using the Bible Skill and Object Lesson ideas to lead your group.

Look for ways of using these ideas, in addition to the questions included on the Discussion Plan page.

5. Read the Dig Deeper feature (page four of each session), looking for ways of using that information when leading the group.

The information found in the Dig Deeper feature is available only in *QuickSource*.

6. Review and refine.

- Add transition ideas to move from one question to the next.
- Consult the *Explore the Bible* Extra page (goExploreTheBible.com/leaderextras) for an idea about using a current news event to begin and end the group time.
- Listen to the weekly *Explore the Bible* adult podcast to gain further insights about this week's study. The podcast can be found on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, goExploreTheBible.com/adults-training, or on MinistryGrid (MinistryGrid.com/ExploreTheBible).

7. Gather the items needed to lead the group.

If you plan on using a visual from the *Explore the Bible Leader Pack* or creating your own (see p. 65 for a listing of items and suggested sessions for using them), do so early in the week. Be sure to have extra copies of the *Personal Study Guide* on hand to be given to guests.

8. Arrive early.

The group time starts when the first person arrives. Make sure you are that person so you can set the tone and direction for the group Bible study time.

9. Lead the group in a time of Bible study, following your plan.

10. Evaluate the group time.

Note what you learned about the people in the group as well as things you may need to work on to improve as a teacher. Also make sure any follow-up actions promised to the group are carried out.

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Using *QuickSource* as a Supplement.

Leader Guide + QuickSource

As a supplement to the *Explore the Bible Adult Leader Guide*.
After completing your study using the commentary provided in the *Explore the Bible Leader Guide,* consult the Key Words section, the Talking Points page, and the Dig Deeper feature for additional insight or as a review. Reflect on the "Bonus" questions in the Discussion Plan and the extra questions provided in For Further Discussion, and add those to your plan as appropriate.

Daily Discipleship Guide + QuickSource

As a supplement to the Leader Helps in the *Explore the Bible Adult Daily Discipleship Guide*.
Look at the Key Words section to identify additional key words not included in the *Daily Discipleship Guide,* the Talking Points page, and the Dig Deeper feature for additional insight or as a review. Reflect on the "Bonus" questions in the Discussion Plan and the extra questions provided in For Further Discussion, and add those to your plan as appropriate.

Other resources that might be helpful.

Leader Guide

Explore the Bible Adult Leader Guide provides extensive group plans and additional Bible commentary that builds confidence when preparing to lead a group. Additional teaching options based on learning styles are also included. Available at goExploreTheBible.com

Pack

Explore the Bible Adult Leader Pack provides ready-made posters and handout masters that add to the learning experience and make it easier on the teacher. DOC files of the Leader Guide commentary and Leader Guide group plans are also included as a digital download. Available at goExploreTheBible.com

Commentary

Explore the Bible Adult Commentary provides an extensive Bible commentary written by recognized conservative Bible scholars. Available at goExploreTheBible.com.

Find out more or order at **goExploreTheBible.com**

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BIBLICAL **BACKGROUND**

FIRST SAMUEL

Holy Scripture is the story of God's redemption, beginning with humanity's fall into sin and the promise of the redeeming Messiah in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:15). That story continued with the choosing of Abraham to give rise to a nation from which that Messiah would come, specifically Israel.

Much of the Old Testament chronicles the ups and downs of the Israelites (Abraham's offspring) as they struggled to play their part in God's redemptive story. The whole of biblical history culminates in the coming of Jesus Christ and His death on the cross, which God the Father ordained before the creation of the world. After living a perfect life, Jesus became the "Lamb of God," fulfilling the ancient sacrificial requirements by dying for the sins of all people.

First Samuel records one season of the Bible's redemption story, describing a time of transition in the lives of God's people. This book, along with its companion volumes, recounts the shift from the leadership of judges and priests to the reigns of royalty over the Jewish people.

Initially, this book was a part of a larger work, sometimes called "the Kingdoms." This four-volume collection included 1 and 2 Samuel, along with 1 and 2 Kings. When the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into the Greek Septuagint during the third and second centuries BC, this huge historical book was divided into two works, Samuel and Kings. Later translations divided them even further to the four books we have now.

AUTHORSHIP

While 1 Samuel itself does not name an author, other biblical texts suggest that it could have been the work of multiple writers. For example, 1 Chronicles 29:29 states, "As for the events of King David's reign, from beginning to end, note that they are written in the Events of the Seer Samuel, the Events of the Prophet Nathan, and the Events of the Seer Gad." Most conservative Bible scholars believe these books represent a compilation of Samuel and the prophets (or seers) Nathan and Gad.

DATE

Scholarly dating for the books of 1 and 2 Samuel varies widely. Some experts see the books as having been written very soon after the time of David, who died around 970 BC. These scholars place the writing of 1 Samuel around 950 BC.

Other scholars lean toward a much later date for 1 Samuel. They believe the stories were compiled during the Babylonian exile. Jerusalem finally fell to Babylon in 586 BC, so this would put the date for 1 Samuel as sometime in the middle of the sixth century BC.

STRUCTURE

The book of 1 Samuel readily divides itself into these three major sections:

The leadership of Samuel (**1:1–7:17**). In this section we read the story of Samuel's gracious birth. God heard the prayers of a childless woman named Hannah and blessed her with a son. Hannah eventually dedicated her son to the Lord, allowing him to live with and learn from Eli, the high priest. Readers also learn about the failings of Eli and his wicked sons.

However, God did not abandon His people. Instead, the young boy Samuel matured into a respected judge of the nation and a prophet of God. Politically, this section is marked by Israel's ongoing conflict with the Philistines, a powerful Canaanite enemy living primarily along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

The rise and fall of Saul (**8:1–15:35**). This middle section of 1 Samuel details the transition of Israel from being a theocratic nation under the direct rule of God to a monarchy led by a human leader. Desiring to be like surrounding nations, the people asked Samuel

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to appoint a king to reign over them. Although Samuel was reluctant to do so, God instructed him to follow their wishes (1 Sam. 8:6).

These chapters chronicle the promise of Saul as a leader who began well. However, his leadership quickly devolved thanks to arrogance and disobedience. His utter failure to live up to his potential is emphasized throughout these chapters. Despite physically standing head and shoulders above his contemporaries, Saul provided a cautionary tale of spiritual compromise. His shallow commitment to the Lord resulted in continual rebellion against the One who chose Him.

The Ascension of David (16:1–31:13). The last chapters of 1 Samuel cover the ten-year period where the nation moved from Saul's leadership to the reign of David. After prolonged disobedience on the part of Saul, the Lord rejected him as king over Israel. David was God's new choice for king, so He sent Samuel to Bethlehem to anoint this youngest son of Jesse.

However, the road to the throne was a rocky one. Knowing God's plan for David, Saul attempted to thwart the divine agenda in his own power. David, who had been a loyal servant of Saul and a close friend of Saul's son, Jonathan, was forced to flee and hide from Saul, who was determined to kill him. The book of 1 Samuel ends with the death of Saul and his sons at the hands of the Philistines, opening the door for David's ascension to the throne of Israel.

PURPOSE

As noted, 1 Samuel highlights the shift from the period of the judges to the era of kings in Israel's history and in God's story of redemption. The book recounts the story of Israel moving from a theocracy with God as King to a monarchy where earthly kings ruled under the authority of the Lord.

In addition, the book establishes the royal lineage of God's coming Messiah. The first glimpse of this lineage is seen in the last chapter of Ruth, which is set in the time of the judges. Ruth and her husband Boaz had a son who became the grandfather of David (Ruth 4:17). First and Second Samuel pick up the story of that lineage and carry it through to David's son, Solomon. These books continue tracing the line of God's redemption that is found throughout the Old Testament.

MAJOR THEMES

Government transition. First Samuel describes the major shift in Israel from a theocracy with localized judges giving leadership to individual tribes to a national monarchy exerting central rule over all the tribes. This centralized government would last through the kingdoms of Saul, David, and Solomon, but it later dissolved with the splintering of Israel into two separate, and often antagonistic, kingdoms: Israel (or Samaria) in the north and Judah in the south.

Seeking godly leadership. First Samuel introduces readers to a series of inept and wicked leaders, including Eli and his sons, the sons of Samuel, and Saul. However, the book's writer(s) also paid special attention to a series of godly leaders: Samuel, Jonathan, and David. While the former group provides a warning against sin and rebellion, the latter group offers solid examples for trusting God and following His directions.

God's amazing grace. One refreshing theme in 1 Samuel is God's grace in using people who might seem unworthy. For example, God used barren Hannah in His plan. He also used a young lad named Samuel to lead His people.

At his best, Saul was a humble young man with great potential. Meanwhile, David was almost an afterthought within his own family. Such stories should give each of us hope!

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OUTLINE

1 SAMUEL

I. **Samuel's Ministry** (1:1–12:25)

A. Samuel's birth and call (1:1–3:21)

B. The ark narrative (4:1–7:17)

C. The people ask for a king (8:1–12:25)

II. **Saul's Reign** (13:1–31:13)

A. Saul's battles with the Philistines (13:1–14:52)

B. Saul's failure against the Amalekites (15:1-35)

C. David's selection as Saul's successor (16:1-23)

D. David's victory over Goliath (17:1-58)

E. David's struggles with Saul (18:1–26:25)

F. Saul's reign ends (27:1–31:13)

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Prayer

When God answered Hannah's prayer for a son, she dedicated the child to the Lord.

1 Samuel 1:9-18,24-28

9 On one occasion, Hannah got up after they ate and drank
at **Shiloh.** A The priest Eli was sitting on a chair by the
doorpost of the Lord's **temple.** B 10 **Deeply hurt,** C Hannah
prayed to the Lord and wept with many tears. 11 Making a
vow, D she pleaded, "Lord of Armies, if you will take notice
of your servant's affliction, remember and not forget me, and
give your servant a son, I will give him to the Lord all the
days of his life, and his hair will **never be cut.**" E 12 While
she continued praying in the Lord's presence, Eli watched her
mouth. 13 Hannah was praying silently, and though her lips
were moving, her voice could not be heard. Eli **thought she
was drunk** F 14 and said to her, "How long are you going to
be drunk? Get rid of your wine!" 15 "No, my lord," Hannah
replied. "I am a woman with a broken heart. I haven't had
any wine or beer; I've been pouring out my heart before the
Lord. 16 Don't think of me as a **wicked woman;** G I've been
praying from the depth of my anguish and resentment." 17 Eli
responded, "**Go in peace,** H and may the God of Israel grant
the request you've made of him." 18 "May your servant find
favor with you," she replied. Then Hannah went on her way;
she ate and no longer looked despondent. [. . .] 24 When she
had **weaned** I him, she took him with her to Shiloh, as well
as a three-year-old bull, half a bushel of flour, and a clay jar
of wine. Though the boy was **still young,** J she took him to
the Lord's house at Shiloh. 25 Then they slaughtered the bull
and brought the boy to Eli. 26 "Please, my lord," she said, "as
surely as you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here
beside you praying to the Lord. 27 **I prayed for this boy,** K
and since the Lord gave me what I asked him for, 28 I now
give the boy to the Lord. For as long as he lives, he is **given
to the Lord.**" L Then he worshiped the Lord there.

Exploring Key Words

A After the conquest, Shiloh became the place where God's people made their annual pilgrimages to offer sacrifices and worship God.

B Not a grand temple like Solomon built, but a tabernacle where the ark of the covenant was kept.

C "Bitterness of soul" (KJV); "deeply distressed" (ESV); "deep anguish" (NIV). Hannah was barren, which made her the target of ridicule.

D The Hebrew (*nadar*) indicates a voluntary promise to God. While a person was not forced to enter the vow, it was binding once made.

E Part of a Nazirite vow. See Numbers 6:1-21 and Judges 13:5; 16:17.

F In the ancient world, prayers usually were spoken aloud. Hannah was praying silently while moving her lips, so Eli assumed the worst.

G "Daughter of Belial" (KJV); "worthless woman" (ESV). The wording suggests one who ignored God's laws and was marked for destruction.

H A priestly blessing from Eli to Hannah. It was a call for her to find rest in God's ability and to expect Him to grant her request.

I The Hebrew word implies completeness. In physical terms, it was the time when a child was taken off milk and could eat solid food.

J Scripture is not clear about Samuel's exact age when he moved to Shiloh, but he may have been as young as three or four.

K When they first met, Hannah had not told Eli what she was praying for. Now, she acknowledged praying for a son.

L "Lent to the Lord" (KJV). Hannah had asked of God and received her request. Now, she was fulfilling her vow.

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NOTES

Fervent (1 Sam. 1:9-11)

- During a trip to the temple, Hannah prayed fervently for a son.
- She wept and cried out to the Lord. She also promised to dedicate this son to the Lord if God would grant her request.

Persistent (1 Sam. 1:12-18)

- Eli, the priest, watched Hannah pray. As he did, he concluded that she must be drunk because her lips were moving and no words were coming out.
- Hannah explained that she was in deep anguish and had been pouring out her heart before the Lord. Eli encouraged her to go in peace and blessed her.
- Hannah left and "no longer looked despondent" (v. 18).

Fulfilled (1 Sam. 1:24-28)

- The Lord "remembered" (v. 19) Hannah, and she gave birth to a son, whom she and Elkanah named Samuel.
- When the child was old enough, Hannah took the boy to the temple along with a generous sacrifice. Hannah reminded Eli of her vow and dedicated Samuel to live in the tabernacle and be used for the Lord's service.

Summary Statements

When God answered Hannah's prayer for a son, she dedicated the child to the Lord.

- We can cry out to God with our requests.
- We need to be sensitive to those carrying burdens.
- Believers should follow through on what they vow to do.

Memory Verse

1 Samuel 2:1

Key Doctrine

The Family

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. (See Psalm 127; Proverbs 17:6.)

For additional commentary, see the Leader Guide or Adult Commentary, available for purchase at **goExploreTheBible.com.**

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ENGAGE

Have you ever really wanted something and then actually got it? What was that like? (***PSG, p. 10***)

- At the local discount store were two golden bicycles with silver and white trim, each with a built-in headlight. For two elementary school siblings, it was exactly what was hoped for at Christmas.
- Delighted squeals filled the house on Christmas morning when the two bikes were spotted in the living room.

Bonus: Do you believe God answers prayer? Why or why not?

EXPLORE

FERVENT (1 SAM. 1:9-11)

Bonus: When has a situation left you heartbroken? How did you respond?

- Elkanah and his family (including his wife, Hannah) traveled to the temple at Shiloh to offer a sacrifice to the Lord (1 Sam. 1:3). While there, Hannah spent some time pouring her heart out to God in prayer.
- Hannah's anguish was caused by her barren condition. Many ancient Hebrews believed barrenness was a curse from God and thus saw it as a disgrace (Luke 1:25). She desperately wanted a child.
- Hannah made a vow that if God gave her a son, she would dedicate him to the Lord's service for life. Hannah's vow was a type of Nazirite vow (see Num. 6:1-21). The vow typically included abstaining from alcohol, avoiding dead bodies, and not cutting one's hair.

What does Hannah's prayer teach us about the proper way to approach God in prayer? (***PSG, p. 13***)

PERSISTENT (1 SAM. 1:12-18)

Bonus: When have your words or actions been misunderstood? What did you do to explain yourself to others?

- Hannah was praying "in the LORD's presence." She was fully immersed in God's presence as she prayed. This underscores the intimacy of Hannah's prayer to God.
- In those days, people usually prayed aloud. Hannah was praying silently, but her lips were moving. That led Eli, the priest at Shiloh, to assume she was drunk. Demonstrating his spiritual insensitivity, Eli jumped right to a rebuke and accusation rather than seeking an explanation.
- Hannah assured Eli that she was not drunk. Instead, she was pouring out her broken heart to the Lord. The old priest's tone dramatically changed once he heard Hannah's explanation.
- Eli spoke a blessing to Hannah. He encouraged her to "go in peace," trusting that God would hear and answer her prayers. Hannah accepted Eli's words, affirming her desire to experience the Lord's favor. Her prayers complete, she returned to her family where she "ate and no longer looked despondent."

How can we show greater sensitivity to people who are carrying burdens? (***PSG, p. 16***)

FULFILLED (1 SAM. 1:24-28)

Bonus: When have you made a promise to God? What did you do to fulfill that vow?

- God answered Hannah's prayer and gave her a son, whom she named Samuel. Once Samuel was weaned, she took him to Shiloh and fulfilled her promise to the Lord.
- Hannah reminded Eli that he had seen her in Shiloh years earlier praying to God. At their first meeting, Hannah had not told Eli what she was praying for. Here, though, she revealed that she had been praying for a son. Samuel was the answer to her prayer, so she was dedicating him to serve in the Lord's presence.
- The Hebrew word translated "worshiped" carries the idea of someone being prostrate, on his face before God. It is a posture of absolute vulnerability, submission, and humility. The pronoun "he" likely refers to Samuel.

When has prayer strengthened your faith in God? What is the relationship between our prayer life and our walk with the Lord? (***PSG, p. 17***)

CHALLENGE

As a group, review Hannah's prayer. Talk about how God cares about everything in our lives, big stuff and small stuff.

Be ready to share with your Bible study group a time when God has answered a prayer about a smaller event or circumstance in your life. (***PSG, p. 18***)

Challenge individuals to evaluate the consistency of their prayer life.

What changes might you need to make to have a more stable prayer life? (***PSG, p. 18***)

FURTHER DISCUSSION

Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week's study.

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BONUS IDEAS

BIBLE SKILL (PSG, P. 13)

Use a Bible dictionary to better understand a term.

> Read the article "Nazirite" in a Bible dictionary to learn more about a Nazirite vow. Consider the similarity between Samuel and Samson. Read Samson's dedication as a Nazirite in Judges 13. Note the similarities between the birth of Samson and Samuel. ***How were they alike? How were they different? How does the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1), who was also a Nazirite, compare to that of Samson and Samuel?***

Write "vow" on the board. Encourage adults to share what comes to mind when they see that word. Explain that the law of Moses included different kinds of vows, including the Nazirite vow. Provide Bible dictionaries and direct adults to work in pairs to complete the Bible Skill activity (PSG, p. 13). After a few minutes, allow volunteers to share what they learned about Nazirite vows and how that applies to Hannah's prayer.

OBJECT LESSON: WORSHIP ITEMS

Prior to the session, secure a calendar, an offering envelope, a devotional guide, a hymnal, and other objects that might represent personal worship and commitment to the Lord. Display the objects and encourage the group to identify what these items have in common. Write "worship" on the board. Encourage adults to share what worship means to them. Lead a brief discussion on how these items might relate to meaningful worship.

After a few minutes, explain that using our time, giving our finances, singing, and spending daily time with God in prayer and in His Word are ways that we can worship the Lord. Ask: ***How are these things similar to, or different from, what Hannah did to worship God?*** Affirm that worship can take many different forms, but God must be our focus. Share that even before she prayed, Hannah understood that God was her refuge and deserved her absolute worship.

DIG DEEPER

THE LORD OF ARMIES

In Exodus 3, God revealed His personal name, *Yahweh*, to Moses. That name is represented in most English translations as "LORD." So, when we see LORD written in small caps, it is a placeholder for *Yahweh*.

There are several instances in Scripture where adjectives are added to this personal name for God, resulting in a variety of names for God. These names provide a deeper understanding of who He is and what He is like. For example, in Genesis 22:14, Abraham saw God's ability to provide and introduced the name *Yahweh Jireh* ("the LORD will provide"). The addition of *Jireh* (the Hebrew word for "provide") helps us understand that God is able to provide for the needs of His people. Similarly, Exodus 15:26 refers to *Yahweh Rapha* ("the LORD who heals you") to reveal that God can, and does, heal His people.

First Samuel 1 introduces a name of God previously unseen in Scripture: *Yahweh Sabaoth*, the LORD of Armies. *Sabaoth*, or hosts, commonly referred to the army of Israel (1 Sam. 17:45), but it also referred to heavenly armies (Pss. 103:21; 148:2). In some cases, biblical writers used it to describe celestial bodies (Deut. 4:19; Isa. 40:26).

Therefore, we understand the term "LORD of Armies" to refer to God as the supremely powerful and authoritative God who is over all things! He created and directs the human armies of Israel (1 Sam. 17), the heavenly armies of angels (Pss. 103; 148), and the sun, moon, and stars in the sky (Deut. 4, Isa. 40). He stands as the sovereign God, whose strength is displayed in the things He has created and rules.

This term becomes a prominent title for God. Overall, it is used more than two hundred times in Scripture. Its introduction in 1 Samuel 1 highlights the sovereignty and unmatched power of God. The One who commands angels and created the sun, moon, and stars had the ability to hear and respond to the petitions of a barren woman.

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