

King Demanded

Session 5 • 1 Samuel 8:1-9,19-22

ENGAGE

PREPARE: Display **Pack Item 1** (*Map: The Kingdom of Saul*), and **Pack Item 4** (*Poster: Prophets, Priests, Kings*). Make copies of **Pack Item 9** (*Handout: Praying Scripture in 1 Samuel*). Gather some small sticky notes.

READ: Call on a volunteer to read the opening paragraph on page 45. Affirm that those who want freedom often end up copying each other.

ASK: **Why is it sometimes more comfortable to be like everyone else? Why does standing out from the crowd make us feel uncomfortable and vulnerable?** (p. 45)

CONTEXT: Using **Pack Item 2** (*Poster: Outline of 1 Samuel*), point out that this session covers a transition away from the rule of judges. Use **Understand the Context** (p. 45) to summarize how the role of judges had developed in Israel across time.

TRANSITION: *In today's Bible study, we'll see how the leaders of Israel challenged this form of government and requested something that resembled the neighboring nations. This request ushered in consequences that would last for generations.*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

READ: **Invite a volunteer to read aloud 1 Samuel 8:1-3** while adults listen for what the writer said about Samuel and his sons.

DISCUSS: Direct adults to work in groups of two or three to compare and contrast 1 Samuel 2:12-17 and 1 Samuel 8:1-3. After a few minutes, allow volunteers to share their insights. Lead a brief discussion on how the example of Eli and his sons might have affected Samuel. Share this information to supplement the discussion:

- **(8:3)** *The problem in Samuel's life centered on his sons, Joel and Abijah. This was a repeat of the past. Eli, who had mentored Samuel, also had two sons who served as priests alongside him. But instead of showing humility and devotion to God, they were "wicked men" (1 Sam. 2:12). Similarly, Samuel's sons led corrupt lives and misused their authority. They pursued dishonest gain (Ex. 18:21), took bribes (23:8), and twisted justice (23:2).*

HIGHLIGHT: On **Pack Item 1** (*Map: The Kingdom of Saul*), highlight the cities of Beer-sheba and Ramah. Explain that Samuel's sons served as judges in southern Israel (Beer-sheba), while Samuel spent most of

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his ministry in central Israel (Ramah). The distance may have made it more difficult for Samuel to correct his sons' behavior.

READ: **Direct a volunteer to read 1 Samuel 8:4-5** while adults listen for the leaders' logic in asking for a king.

ASK: **Given the difference between judges and kings, what advantages did the people think having a king would offer?** (p. 47)

EXPLAIN: Note that the desire to avoid corruption likely played a role, but the desire to be like other nations seems like it was the driving force. Emphasize that the move from a theocracy to a monarchy represented spiritual compromise and served as an abandonment of God and His leadership.

TRANSITION: *The elders' request signaled a significant shift in the cultural, political, and religious fabric of the nation.*

READ: **Call on a volunteer to read aloud 1 Samuel 8:6-9** while the rest of the group listens for God's response to the people's request.

GUIDE: Samuel's first instinct was to pray about the request. Direct the group to work in pairs to summarize and paraphrase the interaction between Samuel and God.

EXPLAIN: Share why God would allow Israel to have a king.

- *The context clearly shows God was instructing Samuel to do as the elders asked. God's willingness to allow them to go through with their plan shows how seriously He valued man's free will. As He had done in the garden, God allowed people to make the hurtful choice—but with that choice came unavoidable consequences. We reap what we sow.*

ASK: **What makes it so easy for us to pursue our own agenda instead of trusting in God?** (p. 47)

SHARE: Note that God had spoken about this in Deuteronomy 17, so this was no surprise to Him. Explain that in verses 10-18, Samuel recounted God's words about what the people could expect from a king, but they still clamored for a human leader.

CHALLENGE: Challenge adults to consider how they might tend to remove God from the throne in their lives.

OVERVIEW: Summarize the warning Samuel gave in 1 Samuel 8:10-18. Share the information for kings on **Pack Item 4** (*Poster: Prophets, Priests, Kings*).

READ: **Read aloud 1 Samuel 8:19-22** while the group listens for the people's response. Allow volunteers to share what they heard.

SHARE: Explain the force of the people's "No!" Point out that while the people may have known Samuel was right, they probably thought things would be different for their king.

- **(8:19-20)** The exclamation "No!" is a strong negative that often describes something impossible or unnecessary. The Israelites basically cast aside any concerns Samuel had raised. They were willing to put up with all that a king would require to fulfill their selfish wish.

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ASK: Why do we often think that we are going to be the exception to the rule, as in: "That consequence will never happen to me"? How does that reality help you better understand the elders' insistence that Israel should have a king, despite dire warnings? (p. 47)

SUMMARIZE: Highlight the twisted logic behind the people's insistence for a human king:

- *They thought having a king and being like all the other nations would be good. But being like all the other nations meant Yahweh would no longer be their Ruler, King, and Lawgiver. They would no longer reflect His glory. What the people's request failed to acknowledge was that God had been fighting their battles since their ancestors had been captives in Egypt. Further, He promised He would continue to do that if they would remain faithful to Him.*

SAY: *God again told Samuel to appoint a king for the people. So, the aging priest told the people to go back home until God had made His choice for the new monarch. Now, they had to wait for God to reveal His plan.*

ASK: Although the people were rejecting God as their King, He would still be the one who would choose the man Samuel was to anoint. What does that say about God's sovereign rule over His people? (p. 47)

CHALLENGE

SUMMARIZE: Review these points from this week's Bible study passage:

- Parents can remain diligent in directing their children to follow God.
- Believers should resist the temptation to replace God's plan with their own ideas.
- Believers must be careful about allowing others to fill the roles reserved for God in their lives.

REFLECT: Direct adults to spend a few moments reading and reflecting on the **Apply the Text** questions on page 51.

DISCUSS: Allow a few volunteers to suggest ways believers can evaluate whether they are following God's plan for their lives or seeking to replace it with their own ideas.

PRAY: Close the session with prayer, asking God to provide courage and strength so adults can follow His plan.

AFTER THE SESSION

Send a text or an email to each adult in the group, reminding them to continue reflecting on the **Apply the Text** questions from page 51. Assure them you will be praying for each one of them during the week and that you look forward to seeing them during the next session.

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