

Lesson 5: Live it Out

1 SAMUEL PROFILE



Genre: Narrative History

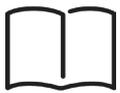
Author: Traditionally, Samuel

Passage: 1 Samuel 3:1-4:1

Where Is It: The ninth book of the Old Testament: Ruth, **1 Samuel**, 2 Samuel

Key Characters: Samuel, Hannah, Eli, God, Saul, David

Main Plot: Samuel emerges as the last judge, and the book details the history of Israel in Canaan from the rule of judges to the rule of kings. Samuel anoints the first two kings of Israel, Saul and David.



THE WORD

1 Samuel 3:1-4:1



ENGAGE THE WORD

Lesson Overview: Relational Dimension

Adolescents often turn to people other than their parents for relational and spiritual guidance. For some parents, this truth may be scary. However, it is important that we educate parents and kids on what it means for students to have healthy mentors in their lives. If our kids are not listening to their parents, then we need to make sure the right people are pouring into them. With great guidance, our students' lives can begin to be shaped while they are young.

The story of Samuel is a good example of this. Samuel starts following God at an early age while being mentored by Eli. This study will help our students understand the importance of positive adult influences in their lives and help them see that by surrounding themselves with strong Christian influences, they can grow into spiritual leaders. In addition, they will learn that they don't have to wait until they are adults to begin to make an impact on others' lives. We will explore Samuel's story and look at some kids who are doing great things at young ages.



Wesleyan Snapshot *The Calling of God*

"God's calling of particular Christians into the life of service through pastoral work most often emerges within the context of a congregation. The work of the Spirit in calling men and women to the pastorate is not an individualistic affair. The wooing of the Spirit is personal, but it is also always communal."

—Dr. Jeren Rowell, *Thinking, Listening, Being: A Wesleyan Pastoral Theology*

Biblical Commentary

Samuel's birth is a miracle, a blessing from God to Hannah. His name means "to ask," which is symbolic of the request that Hannah makes to God. She asks him to bless her with a son. She promises that if he does, she will give her son back as a gift to God: "And she made a vow, saying, 'LORD Almighty, if you will



THE MAIN IDEA

SAMUEL TEACHES US THAT HAVING POSITIVE ADULT INFLUENCES IN OUR LIVES IS IMPORTANT AND THAT STRONG CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE CAN GROW US INTO SPIRITUAL LEADERS.

Church

The church of Jesus Christ was established by the Father, instituted by the Son, and constituted by the Holy Spirit. Christians belong in this triune family as brothers and sisters.

only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head" (1 Samuel 1:11). God remembers Hannah and blesses her with Samuel.

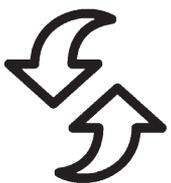
Hannah delivers Samuel to Eli, the high priest, who raises him. Samuel grows up under Eli and with his sons, who, as it turns out, aren't men of God. There is great contrast between them and Samuel in chapter 2. However, while there is evil all around him, Samuel doesn't partake. He stands out, and God and people notice him. They see in Samuel a new life, away from evil. Again, we see God's love and God's wrath at the same time: God's wrath is demonstrated through Eli's sons, but in Samuel we see God's grace and love.

At the beginning of 1 Samuel 3, we see God speaking to Samuel. Three times, Samuel hears God, and three times he runs to Eli, thinking it is Eli calling him. This is a good point to focus on because it helps illustrate that sometimes it takes time to hear God communicating with us. In addition, it is common and typical to include a mentor to help discern God's voice and call. Eli and Samuel's relationship is another good illustration of this. Although we see that Samuel surpasses Eli quickly, Eli's guidance contributes to Samuel's success. At the end of chapter 3, when it becomes obvious that Samuel is a prophet of God, we see the roles reversed, and it is Eli who looks to Samuel for advice.

God speaks to Israel through Samuel. He grows into a man and is trusted and respected throughout the country. Samuel rallies the nation until his sons, who are corrupt, lead the people astray and they began to demand a king. Samuel tries to persuade them that God is their true king, but the people push until God tells Samuel to give them what they want. Even in his old age, Samuel looks to God for guidance, and only when God tells him to provide them what they want does Samuel agree. And yet, even then, Samuel urges them to avoid idols and serve the true God.

REFLECT ON THESE THEMES:

Samuel lived out his faith in God. What are you doing to show your faith?



Samuel couldn't have grown into who he was without a mentor like Eli. The relationship between them helps illustrate the importance of Christian community. Who makes up your community? How is your community contributing

to your well-being? Are you growing in your faith as a result of your community?

REFLECT ON YOUR STUDENTS:

How can your students live out their faith? What can you do to help encourage them?

Do you believe that they understand the importance of being in a community of believers? Why is it important for Christians to be in community?

DISCUSSION GUIDE

<p>LESSON OUTLINE</p> 	<p>Main Idea: Samuel teaches us that having positive adult influences in our lives is important and that strong Christian influence can grow us into spiritual leaders.</p> <p>Resources: Bibles, copies of handout, writing utensils, art supplies</p> <p>Connect to My Experience: Welcome and Prayer Surf's Up Discussion</p> <p>Connect to the Word: Read and Reflect on 1 Samuel 3:1-4:1</p> <p>Connect to My Life and the World: Making a Difference</p> <p>Closing: Prayer</p>
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CONNECT TO MY EXPERIENCE

Student Goal: Youth will understand the importance and necessity of community.

Welcome your students and open in prayer.

SURF'S UP DISCUSSION

Show the *Surf's Up* Clip. You can find it here: <http://www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/surfs-up/just-like-him>.

SAY: Cody is talking about the person who got him into surfing. He looked up to Big Z. He had an influence on who Cody wanted to become.

ASK: Who in your life is making an impact on who you want to become?

How has this person changed you?

SAY: This week we are going to study Samuel. But before we dive into Samuel, I want to take a few minutes and talk about Samuel's mentor, Eli. Samuel lived with Eli for years before he heard God speak to him. Eli was the high priest, and he helped shape Samuel. It was through community that Samuel matured and developed his character.

ASK: Do you think community is important?

Who makes up your community? Friends? Family? Church?

Is your group of friends mostly like you or made up of diverse individuals?

READ 1 Samuel 3:1.

SAY: This verse reminds us that Samuel grew in maturity and spiritually under Eli. He learned from Eli, gaining favor with the people and with the Lord. All of this served as preparation for the work the Lord had planned for Samuel.

ASK: Why do you think it is important for us to have mentors in our lives?

How do you think the story of Samuel would be different if he hadn't been raised under Eli's guidance?

Community

God created us to be relational beings. We were never meant to be alone. For Christians, *community* is another word for *church*.

Further Explanation

Your students probably have a diverse set of friends. Some of them are Christians, and some of them are not. It is okay for our students to have friends who are not Christians. God wants believers to be a light to others. The question is: are we influencing our friends, or are they influencing us?



CONNECT TO THE WORD

Student Goal: Youth will understand that the calling of God is personal as well as communal.

READ 1 Samuel 3:1-4:1.

SAY: Samuel was only twelve years old when he heard God's call. During the time when God spoke to Samuel, there was a lot going on. There was spiritual unhappiness, corruption, political upheaval, and social disorder. When we know this, it makes the fact that God spoke to Samuel even more amazing. He was selecting a twelve-year-old boy to begin his work in challenging circumstances.

ASK: What would you do if you were in Samuel's place? Would you recognize the call of God if it came to you?

How do you think Samuel felt the first time he heard the voice of God? What about after Eli told him it wasn't him, but God?

SAY: Most of us cannot recognize the call of God on our own. That's why community and mentors are so important. Samuel was open (and humble) to seek the advice and wisdom of someone older and wiser to help him discern what was going on.

ASK: Is it easy for you to ask someone for advice? Why or why not?

What if the person tells you something you don't want to hear? Does that change how you feel about the advice or person?

What do we know about Samuel other than the fact that he was a young boy?

Why did God choose him?

1 SAMUEL READING

READ the following passages. Ask the students to write down words that exemplify Samuel's character.

1 Samuel 2:11-19

Note: Despite the corruption going on around him, Samuel stays true to his commitment to the Lord. He worships and does what is right.

1 Samuel 2:20-21

Note: Even though his family is elsewhere, Samuel stays with Eli. Again, we see his loyalty to Eli, his mother, and most of all, the Lord.

1 Samuel 2:22-26

Note: Here we see the differences between Samuel and Eli's sons. The writer implies that Samuel stays pure and true to God when the rest of the country goes astray.



Facilitator Note:

Remind your students that all of us need to ask for help, even for things that are good. We can fall into the temptation that we can save the world. First, only God in Christ can save the world. Second, we cannot do things by ourselves; we need the Holy Spirit. Therefore, since we need the Spirit, we need each other. The Spirit typically works in groups of people before working in the life of an individual.

Priesthood of All Believers

God calls all of us to be ministers of the gospel. The church is the messenger of the Good News to the world. We can never be too young to start.

1 Samuel 3:1-4

Note: We can see that Samuel is a young man who holds true to God. Here we learn that he is in the presence of the holy place (or presence of God). Samuel is sleeping near the ark of the Lord. That would indicate that he wants to be with the Lord. The verse after illustrates that Eli is asleep in “his usual place,” which leads us to believe that Samuel doesn’t usually sleep there, but for some reason, he needs to be in the presence of God that night. Again, we see Samuel’s faith as a leading characteristic.

1 Samuel 3:6-10

Note: Samuel is ready for the Lord.

1 Samuel 3:14-18

Note: Samuel shows compassion here. The passage indicates that he is up the rest of the night, unable to sleep. He doesn’t want to bring bad news to the man who has helped mold him into the young man he has become.

1 Samuel 3:19-4:1

Note: These verses indicate that the Lord has been with Samuel as he has grown up and that Samuel now recognizes the voice of God. As a result, he brings the voice of God to Israel, and Samuel gains trust from the people. God uses Samuel to speak to all of God’s people.

1 Samuel 7:2-4

Note: Here we see Samuel challenge the people to give up anything that keeps them from God. This is further testament to Samuel’s character. He puts God before anything else.

1 Samuel 7:7-9

Note: The people trust Samuel. He is the prophet through whom God speaks.

1 Samuel 7:15-17

Note: Samuel becomes the successor of Eli and the judge of Israel. He appears to be the only person who is trying to keep the covenant laws alive.

ASK: What do we know about Samuel from these verses?

What characteristics are evident through these verses?

SAY: God used Samuel to talk to all of Israel. Samuel was the vessel for communication.

ASK: What can you do in the present day to be a vessel of communication for God? Do you think you can be, even at your young age?



CONNECT TO MY LIFE AND THE WORLD

Student Goal: Youth will learn to rely on others and not be afraid to ask for help.

SAY: When Samuel grew up, he went on to try to make real changes in his nation. Remember, he lived among spiritual unhappiness, corruption, political upheaval, and social disorder. Sound familiar?

ASK: Do you ever think you are too young to accomplish something magnificent?

READ 1 Timothy 4:12.

ASK: What does this mean to you? Does it empower you?

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Zach Hunter was fifteen years old when he wrote a book called *Be the Change*. He is a modern-day abolitionist. He is committed to ending modern-day slavery. You can read more about him here: <https://www.christianitytoday.com/iyf/hottopics/faithvalues/10.17.html>.

Austin Gutwein started Hoops of Hope in 2004 when he learned of the children in Africa who were affected by HIV/AIDS. He was nine years old. He has raised more than \$2.5 million. You can read more about him here: <http://austingutwein.com/about-austin/>.

ASK: When you hear about these kids, what do you think? Do you think these kids could have done these things on their own?

How do you think mentors helped them? How do you think God helped them?

What sacrifices do you think they made to accomplish these things?

Brainstorm some ideas you can work on as a group to show your faith and surrender to God to help the world.

Distribute this week's student handout. If you have time, ask the students to spend some time reflecting on the lesson. Give them five to ten minutes to fill in their answers before you close. If you don't have time, ask them to take the handout home with them and spend some time in reflection this week.

CREATIVE OPTION: SAMUEL.COM

Give your students paper and colored pencils, crayons, markers, or other art supplies. Ask them to design a web page promoting Samuel and what you think he would be trying to do in our context today.

Further Explanation

Youth tend to find value in being affirmed by their elders. Acknowledge that you see God working in their lives. They might not believe that God would work through them, but we know that God uses all kinds of people for his glory.



CLOSING

Pray to ask God to help you surrender to him. Ask him to create a spark within you and ignite the world for him.