

SAMUEL LISTENS TO GOD

1 Samuel 8

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INTRO:

1. Clickbait culture
2. Expectations vs. reality

A. CONSIDER YOUR MOTIVES

1. To conform to the ways of the world (1 Samuel 8:4)
2. To divert away from the Lord (1 Samuel 8:6-7)

B. COUNT ON THE CONSEQUENCES

1. The reputation of the acting king (Exodus 6:6-8)
2. The rebuke of the anticipated king (1 Samuel 8:10-18)
3. The results of choosing the earthly king (1 Samuel 8:10; 15:10, 35)

C. CENTER YOUR LIFE ON THE KING OF KINGS

1. The reign of Christ's kingdom (Matthew 5:3; 6:33)
2. The realm of Christ's kingdom (Matthew 5:13-16)
3. The responsibility of the people of Christ's kingdom (John 3:5-6; Matthew 5:3-11)

CONCLUSION

TABLETALK QUESTIONS

1. In today's session, we find the Israelites discontented because they wanted what their neighbors had: a king to lead them. In order to become like everyone else, they rejected God. Have you ever wanted something very badly, but later ended up regretting that you got it? What temptation for "the good life" seems to trip you up: happiness, peace, prosperity, respect, admiration, or something else?
2. Read 1 Samuel 8:1–3. As Samuel got older, he appointed his two sons, Joel and Abijah, to follow in his footsteps as judges of Israel. But godliness is not hereditary. Although a spiritual legacy can be passed down if both generations actively participate in learning truth and embracing values, a godly parent doesn't automatically guarantee faith-filled, God-loving children. So many factors go into each person's spiritual state, not the least of which is the fallenness of our world and the gift of free will we've all been given. Whatever the causes, sadly, Samuel's sons were more like Eli's sons than they were like Samuel. Look back at what verse 3 says about Samuel's sons.
 - What happens when people are given a position of spiritual authority without the underpinnings of integrity and good character?
3. Read 1 Samuel 8:4–5. Finally, the elders of Israel could no longer put up with the greedy behavior of Samuel's sons, Joel and Abijah. They called for a meeting with Samuel to discuss the situation. First, they reminded Samuel that he was old. (Ouch.) And that his sons were not like he was. (Ouch, again.) Then, they offered their solution to this equation. They wanted a king "like all the other nations have" (verse 5). Never mind that the other nations around them were a mess—with huge problems of their own (including idolatry, extreme cruelty, and even human sacrifice). The elders of Israel wanted what they wanted.
 - Why does comparison with those around us often get us into trouble?
4. Read 1 Samuel 8:6. In the last session, we learned about the time God first called the name of the young boy, Samuel, and how Samuel responded with a listening spirit. Now Samuel is old, and they are still talking. It seems that he and God have had a running conversation all of Samuel's life. Therefore, it's only natural that when Samuel was displeased and upset about something, he talked to God about it. It's important that we are able to discern whether a person is rejecting us or God.
 - Have you ever felt the sting of rejection, which seemed personal at the time, but was really aimed at God?
 - How can we show the love of Christ (who told us to love our enemies) in the face of rejection?
5. As the Lord directed, Samuel passed along a strong warning of what it would mean for Israel to have a king. In verse 18, he lets the elders know that they will live to regret choosing a

king, but there would be no divine recourse from God. The people refused to listen. Isn't that what got them into trouble with the Midianites back in Gideon's day? Isn't that what likely ushered in a season of visions and messages from God being rare when Samuel was a boy? They wanted to be like the other nations, yet God's plan was for them to be set apart. He wanted them to be different from their neighboring countries in a compelling way that would point to a holy, yet loving, God. Now, as then, not listening to God and not listening to wise cautions from godly leaders sets us up for disaster. It is true that we learn by our mistakes, but the lessons are harder than they need to be.

- Other than our own mistakes, how can we learn life lessons in a way that minimizes disastrous consequences?

6. Reflection Questions

- Can you identify any current desires that could bring potential harm and regret to your life down the road? Even if those longings are strong and deep, are you willing to open them up to the scrutiny of your Heavenly Father who loves you and has your best interest at heart?
- What role does comparison play in your life? With whom or what are you most likely to compare yourself?
- How do you react when someone who cares expresses concern about a choice you are making?
- Who are the people in your life who can offer good input and help you brainstorm when you need to make a big decision?