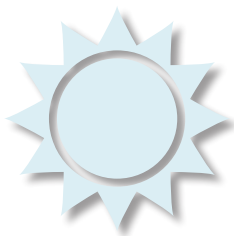


Transformational
Relationships



———— JUBILEE SERIES ————

ADULT STUDENT HANDBOOK
LARGE PRINT
SUMMER 2016

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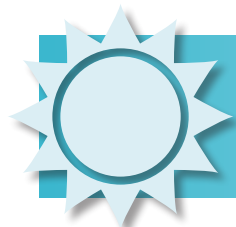
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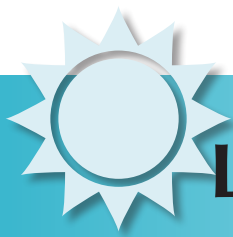
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FOCUS VERSE

I Samuel 3:9

Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

LESSON TEXT

I Samuel 3:1-10

1 And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision.

2 And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see;

3 And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep;

4 That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I.

5 And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

6 And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again.

7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.

8 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.

9 Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.



FOCUS THOUGHT

When we learn to listen to the voice of authority, it is much easier to hear the voice of God.



CULTURE CONNECTION

Biblical Submission to Authority

The decade of the sixties was a time of much cultural rebellion and resistance to—and often defiance of—authority. It was a time in North American history when the clothing styles, music, and cultural mores were challenged, changed, and stretched to the limits because of a disbelief in obeying or submitting to authorities.

One essay author observed, “Historians tend to portray the 1950s as a decade of prosperity, conformity, and consensus, and the 1960s as a decade of turbulence, protest, and disillusionment” (“The ‘50s and ‘60s: Decades of Prosperity and Protest [DBQ],” www.apstudynotes.org, accessed February 24, 2015).

Paul wrote, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (I Corinthians 11:1). (See also I Corinthians 4:16; Ephesians 5:1;

I Thessalonians 1:6; 2:14; Hebrews 6:12; I Peter 3:13.) Interestingly, the Greek word translated in these verses as “follow” or “followers” means “to imitate” or to “be imitators.” We are to “imitate” those who lead us as they “imitate” Jesus Christ.

Now more than fifty years later, cultural problems have raised new reasons to view authority figures with suspicion—sexual misbehavior among church and public authority figures; scandals involving the Roman Catholic Church priesthood and the hierarchy’s efforts to cover up or deflect the problem; and lack of trust in lying politicians. How are we to obey the Scriptures with respect and obedience and yet balance our obedience with reason?

The solution is straightforward: Follow authorities as they follow acceptable, godly principles.

CONTEMPLATING THE TOPIC

Samuel owed his life to the fact that God listened to his mother’s prayers. Hannah desperately wanted a child. During her yearly visit to the house of the Lord, Hannah prayed for a son, promising that the boy would serve the Lord all the days of his life. Eli felt compassion for her and prophesied that God would grant her request (I Samuel 1:17).

After the Lord answered her prayer, Hannah honored her vow and dedicated her son Samuel to the service of the Lord.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

I. TRAINING FOR THE CALL

A. Served Eli

Before Samuel could learn to hear the voice of the Lord and become a great prophet, he had to follow Eli’s instructions. Although Samuel’s mother had probably told him the story of her vow many times, he now had to fulfill the commitment she had made. But Hannah’s obedience to God set a fine example for Samuel. He learned to obey the voice of Eli, and ultimately to hear and obey the voice of God.

B. Served in the Tabernacle

Samuel’s Tabernacle service did not end when he came of age. Even though Samuel might have reasoned he could break a vow he did not



How has obeying spiritual leadership and serving in the church helped you learn to hear God’s voice?

make, he chose to honor his mother and his God. Just as the Lord opened his mother's womb so she could conceive, God opened Samuel's ears so he could hear the word of the Lord and be more than just another child or adult serving in the Tabernacle. Samuel would be a prophet who heard, obeyed, and spoke the word of God.

II. GOD'S CALL

A. Samuel Did Not Recognize the Voice of God

In spite of his godly heritage and his work in the Tabernacle, Samuel did not recognize the voice of the Lord when He called to him one night. In obedience Samuel submitted himself to authority and came running when he thought Eli had called. But God had a higher calling for Samuel. The eyes of Eli had begun to fade, but God wanted to open Samuel's eyes and ears to spiritual realities.

B. God Was Persistent in Calling

In repeatedly calling Samuel, God matched the dogged determination of Hannah's prayer. She had implored God for a son, and now God had something important to share with the boy. God continued reaching out to Samuel even though Samuel failed to fully comprehend. God had big plans for Samuel, and He kept calling until Samuel answered.

C. Eli and Samuel Learned to Listen

When Samuel mistakenly thought Eli had called him, the old priest sent the boy back to bed. Eli had fallen short of God's plan for his life, his sons, and for the Tabernacle at Shiloh. Listening to Samuel brought Eli closer to God.

When Eli perceived that God was calling Samuel, he began to see Samuel's potential. Credit Eli with being a good mentor who recognized that God wanted to do something in the life of his young charge.

Samuel looked to Eli for guidance, and Eli told him the proper response: "Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth" (1 Samuel 3:9). By learning to devote himself to the things of God and by listening to Eli, Samuel was able to focus on the special word the Lord had for him.

D. Samuel Accepted the Call

God desired that Samuel be a prophet. We can only imagine Samuel's surprise at learning the Lord was the one speaking to him. Nevertheless he accepted his call to enter the ministry as God's prophet. Samuel received a word of judgment against the house of Eli.


E. Eli Sought to Hear the Message from the Lord

The next morning when Eli called for Samuel, the old priest implored the young prophet to tell him the word from the Lord. Perhaps nervous about his first prophecy being so negative, Samuel "feared to shew Eli the vision" (1 Samuel 3:15). But when Eli insisted, Samuel shared the sad message of judgment God had directed toward his mentor.


Samuel need not have been fearful to tell Eli what God had revealed to him, for a man of God had previously informed Eli of the coming judgment upon his house. (See 1 Samuel 2:27-36.) Eli recognized the word of the Lord and accepted His will, modeling obedience in the face of being rejected by the Lord.




In retrospect, has there ever been a time when you failed to recognize God's voice? Have you improved your spiritual listening skills so you won't miss His voice again? If so, how?

 **Mentally review the past week. How available were you to hear the voice of God? What can you do in coming weeks to increase your awareness of God's voice?**

 **What roles have parents and pastors played in helping you hear the voice of God?**

 **Do you have a spiritual mentor? Who? How has that person helped you hear God's voice?**

 **When praying, do you set aside time to listen to God? What steps can you take to improve your listening skills in prayer?**

 **Think of someone to whom you could serve as a spiritual mentor. What can you do in the near future to help that person mature in his or her relationship with Jesus Christ?**

III. GOD STILL CALLS

A. The Value of Being Available

In the age of cell phones, social media, and other rapid-fire forms of communication, we can forget God still calls us. But like Samuel, we must make ourselves available to hear the voice of the Lord. Sometimes connecting with God means disconnecting ourselves from the rest of the world.

Samuel came to the Tabernacle out of obedience to his mother, learned to listen to Eli, and ultimately heard the voice of the Lord and received his calling.

B. The Value of a Spiritual Mentor

Even though he heard the voice of the Lord, Samuel still needed a mentor. Today, we still need to teach our children how to respond to God's voice. Are we teaching our children lessons from the Bible without teaching them how to pray? Are we teaching them to listen to rules and obey them without teaching them to listen for the voice of God?

We should consider taking a more proactive role in mentoring others. When children and youth come to us with questions, we must help them find answers in the Word of God and encourage them to pray and seek the face of the Lord. We need to listen to them, encourage them, and help them recognize the voice of the Lord.

C. The Value of Listening

We cannot underestimate the value of listening. Listening and obedience are essential parts of a strong relationship with God. In a world with so many voices demanding to be heard in all forms of traditional media and social media, we must place a premium on listening to the voice of the Lord.

INTERNALIZING THE MESSAGE

Scripture beseeches us to listen to the voice of God. How much time are we devoting to the Lord? Does His voice sometimes get lost in the traffic of other voices? Do we need to devote more attention to Him?

We need to think about parts of our lives that are muffling the voice of God or preventing us from hearing what the Lord has to say to us. Some of these things may be sins that need to be removed. We may also be weighted down by the cares of life. Perhaps we need to follow Mary's example and sit at the Lord's feet. (See Luke 10:38–42.) We should carve out quiet times to hear the voice of God. Sometimes that means putting down our cell phones or the book we are reading or turning off the radio when we are driving.

How we can know God is speaking to us? First, we must realize God speaks to us through His Word. He has also sent his servants, the prophets, to communicate the message of hope and salvation to us. Some of these prophets appear in our pulpits, speaking through the anointing of ministerial authority. Others speak to us one-on-one. Some provide us with a word of encouragement.

Perhaps God is calling us to mentor a young person as Eli mentored Samuel. God may be waiting for us to listen to Him. Perhaps He has work for us to do—if we will only open our spiritual ears and listen. ■



MOTHERS OF THE MASTERS

WEEK 2
06.12.16

FOCUS VERSE

Luke 1:41

And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.

LESSON TEXT

Luke 1:35, 42–45, 57

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

.....

42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

43 And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

45 And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

.....

57 Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

Luke 2:7

7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Luke 3:15–16

15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;

16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.



FOCUS THOUGHT

Great things can be accomplished for the kingdom of God when people are willing to submit themselves to His will.



CULTURE CONNECTION

Our Purpose in Life

In his commentary article titled “Link Your Life to God’s Purposes,” the late J. Hampton Keathley III made the following observation about performing the will of God in our lives: “Why are our lives often . . . lacking in purpose? . . . Are we caught up in the . . . pursuit of . . . prosperity derived from things, power, position, and pleasure? . . . there is a mountain to climb with a purpose that brings blessings to others and to the climber himself. It brings glory to God, and has eternal rewards; it is the purpose of serving God and others” (www.bible.org, accessed February 25, 2015).

Our purpose in life is to fulfill God’s purposes, and doing so is the key to abundant living—joy, contentment, peace, and

fulfillment. Those who live in frustration, anger, or bitterness have failed to discover the key to true purpose in life. They are miserable because they focus only on themselves—their hurts, their disappointments, their circumstances. Only when we learn to shift our focus from ourselves to others and dedicate ourselves to a life of serving Christ will we realize true purpose and fulfillment.

Elizabeth and Mary fulfilled God’s purposes for their lives through their obedience and submission to His plan. In doing so they experienced joy and contentment and advanced the kingdom of God. Obedience and submission to the will of God form the only pathway to true joy and peace in life.



In what way(s) do you feel you can relate to Elisabeth or Mary?

CONTEMPLATING THE TOPIC

A study of the mothers of the masters Jesus and John the Baptist offers a contrast of two submissive women. Jesus’ mother, Mary, was young and looking forward to a fruitful life with her betrothed, Joseph. John’s mother, Elisabeth, was older and had experienced a long life with her husband, Zacharias. The couple had yet to receive the blessing of a child because Elisabeth was barren. These two women show us that we can do great things for God—whether we find ourselves in the spring or the fall of our lives.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

I. EMBRACING DIVINE SUBMISSION

A. Elisabeth and Mary

We can place Elisabeth around the age of fifty while Mary was about sixteen. Despite their age difference, they had no trouble connecting. When a pregnant Elisabeth encountered an expectant Mary, Elisabeth’s baby leaped for joy. God not only granted Elisabeth a child, but He also gave her a special endowment of His Spirit before the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost.

The gift of prophecy that would be her son’s birthright also manifested itself in Elisabeth. (See Luke 1:42.) She considered herself blessed because of her soon-to-be-born child, but now she found someone even more favored of God. (See Luke 1:45.) However, belief was not enough; submission was also required.

B. Submitted Relationship

Both belief and submission played key roles in the lives of Elisabeth and Mary. Elisabeth had received an unexpected blessing from God in a season of life that made such a gift seem impossible. She recognized that God had granted her a miracle. (See Luke 1:25.) Mary also responded with submission and belief. Upon hearing Gabriel's message, Mary submitted herself in faith and humility to the word of the Lord.


II. THE RESULTS OF SUBMISSION

A. The Prophet

John was a compelling preacher, and many people obeyed his message of repentance and were baptized. (See Matthew 3:5–6.) Although a fiery preacher with a growing following, John obediently accepted his role as the forerunner of the Messiah by denying he was the Christ. Instead he told the people of one coming who was mightier than he. The man who spoke with such conviction in calling the Pharisees and Sadducees a “generation of vipers” (Matthew 3:7) submitted himself to the will of God.

B. The Messiah

John the Baptist prepared the way for the Messiah. When Jesus came to him seeking to be baptized, John hesitated to perform the baptism. (See Matthew 3:14.) Although many might assume Jesus' sinless nature made His baptism unnecessary, Jesus recognized its importance. (See Matthew 3:15.) Both Jesus and John had righteous missions to fulfill, and John submitted to Jesus' request.

 **What blessings have come to you through submission to God's plan in your life?**


III. THE MISSION OF SUBMISSION

A. The Prophet's Decrease

Arrested for speaking against Herod's marriage to his brother's wife, John's faith dwindled to doubt. While in prison, John sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus, “Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?” (Matthew 11:3). John found himself imprisoned by uncertainty, wondering if he had failed in his calling.

Jesus sent word back to John, letting him know of the miraculous events taking place in His ministry. (See Matthew 11:5.) Jesus had one last important message for John: “Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me” (Matthew 11:6). As John faced imminent death, he must have realized the plan of God was different from what he had thought. Yet John responded with submission.

Jesus lauded John before the people, calling him “more than a prophet” (Matthew 11:9). He even referred to him as the prophet Elijah (Matthew 11:14). Even when He spoke of John's greatness, He let the people know about their great potential. (See Matthew 11:11.)

 **What uncertainties and doubts are you facing in your present situation? Like John the Baptist, take these to Jesus in prayer. Continue to seek Him until you receive His response.**

B. The Messiah's Increase

As John's star faded, Jesus' star rose brightly. He gathered disciples and taught the people. In spite of His growing following and the miracles that were taking place, Jesus knew what ultimately awaited Him.

Jesus realized that for His message to truly increase throughout the world, He would have to submit Himself to death on the cross. Like