

Prophets and Kings Discussion Questions 4.3.16

Leader Prep Section

Take time before your small group meeting to prepare by reading through the questions and scripture passage so that you can select 4-5 questions that are best suited to your group.

Try to work through at least one question from each of the sections - Hook, Book, Look, Took in order to move from observation to application.

When possible spend time in prayer for each member of your group.

Questions

Hook - Ice breaker type questions to help make the transition into the study time.

1. Share a story of a time when you wanted something because all your friends had one.
2. Why do we often want the same things that the people around us have?

Background

The book of 1 Samuel is about the life of the prophet Samuel and the critical role he played in Israel's history. His story coincides with the election of Saul and David as the first two kings of Israel. Samuel was the only son of Hannah who was the favorite wife of Elkanah. She had been barren for many years. 1 Samuel 1:5 tells us that the LORD had closed Hannah's womb and that she was harassed by Elkanah's other wife who had many children. One year when Elkanah's family had made the pilgrimage to Shiloh where the Tabernacle was Hannah went to pray on the steps to the LORD's house. She was in such anguish she could not pray out loud which was the custom and Eli (the Chief Priest) thought she was drunk. When Elkanah and his family returned home Hannah became pregnant because the LORD remembered her and her anguished prayers for his help. When Samuel was a young boy Hannah kept her promise to dedicate him to the LORD and left him with Eli at Shiloh. Samuel grows up to be someone who seeks to follow the LORD diligently and plays the role of both prophet and military leader, he is the last of the judges.

Our part of the story picks up in chapter 8 when Samuel is old and his two sons have proven they are not like him. The leaders of Israel gathered at Ramah and asked Samuel to appoint a king for them so they can be like the nations that surround them.

Read 1 Samuel 8

Book - These questions are designed to get you into the text itself.

1. What was Samuel's reaction when the leaders of Israel asked him to appoint a king?
2. What did God say was the real reason the people were asking for a king?
3. Will the lives of people be made better or worse by having a "king like the nations"? How?
4. Make a list of the things that Samuel told the leaders of Israel would happen when they had a king.

Look - These questions will take you on a deeper look at what the passage means for us today.

1. How do we, like the leaders of Israel, ask God to make us like the nations?
2. How does God respond when we ask to be like the nations?
3. What does life look like when we choose to put something in the center of our lives other than our God?

4. Why do we so often choose to be like the nations when we know it will not make things any better?

Took - These questions are focused on applying the big idea from the text to our lives.

1. Why do we want to be like the nations?
2. What impact does choosing the ways of the world over God have on us?
3. How can we avoid the negative consequences of putting our desire to fit in with the world?
4. What are the keys to keeping God front and center in our lives?

Closing

As you finish your time together take a few minutes and pray for one another to recognize those places where you have put being like the nations ahead of being like Jesus.

Reminder: We are called to live in such a way that those around us recognize that we are patterning our lives after someone who is different. When we choose the world over our compassionate God we are on a path that leads us nowhere good. Even then, our God chooses to pursue us with love and call us back to relationship with him.