

GOD'S WILL, OUR WAY

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STORIES FROM THE BOOKS OF RUTH AND 1 SAMUEL

LESSON 1: A FOREIGNER IN A NEW LAND – *WHY HAVE I FOUND FAVOR?*

LESSON 2: THE KINSMAN REDEEMER – *BLESSED BE THE LORD*

LESSON 3: THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL – *AND THE LORD REMEMBERED HER*

LESSON 4: GOD'S MESSAGE – *HERE I AM; SPEAK, LORD!*

LESSON 5: DEMAND AND WARNING – *GIVE US A KING*

LESSON 6: DISOBEDIENCE – *YOU HAVE REJECTED YOUR GOD*

“...I have stored up your word in my heart...”

Psalm 119:11

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GETTING STARTED

You are embarking on an adventure that will shape the rest of your life. Your journey will be unique to you and will be determined in part by your eager and enthusiastic desire to grow in your understanding of the Book called The Holy Bible. Your commitment to the study promises to enrich your life as God speaks to you through His Word.

As you study you are encouraged to have some recommended supplies on hand:

1. This Bible study unit: *God's Will, Our Way*
2. English Standard Version of the Holy Bible (ESV). Note: If you are making a new purchase, look for a Bible, if possible, that has:
 - a. a cross-reference column preferably down the center of each page,
 - b. a Concordance usually found in the back of the Bible, and
 - c. a few basic maps also found in the back.
3. Pen or pencil
4. 3x5 or 4x6 index cards

With the three features listed in #2 you will adequately supplied for your study and be ready to successfully navigate through these lessons. If, however, this is your first exposure to the Bible, you may want to consider beginning with the study entitled *Navigating the Bible*. This study provides navigational tools designed to help you develop skills and make you a more confident Bible student. *Navigating the Bible* may be downloaded at no cost or obligation on the CrossConnect web site at www.crosscm.org. Although this study is recommended, it is not essential for success in studying *God's Will, Our Way*.

Do not hesitate to mark up your Bible. It's your Bible to study. Make it your own with your notes, your underlining, highlighting, circling and arrows! You may choose to use a notebook or tablet for recording thoughts, questions, and tracking your journey through the study.

The study material is written so that you are able to learn on your own. With a degree of self-discipline you will cover the material with little or no difficulty. At the same time, you will acquire new information, share new insights, and ask some challenging questions that will beg for answers. Anticipating this response you are encouraged to seriously consider inviting a couple of friends to study with you.

May you find joy in your study. May your heart be receptive as God speaks to you through His Word. May these Bible stories reassure you of His great love given to you through His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Editor's note: For clarification, capitalized pronouns reference God. i.e. "...what He said.

UNIT INTRODUCTION

God's Will, Our Way includes the study of three very different individuals. Ruth, a widow and foreigner, left behind everything familiar and moved with her mother-in-law Naomi to the Promised Land where she lived among God's people. Rather than separate herself from Naomi, Ruth committed herself to Naomi for the rest of her life.

The second individual is Samuel who was conceived in a barren womb. Given back to the Lord at a very young age, he served in the Tabernacle under the authority of the priest Eli. His faithful service to the Lord was evident all the days of his life. God appointed Samuel to anoint Saul, the third individual in this lesson, as the first king of Israel. Saul was a personification of Israel as the people lived out their relationship with God.

Saul was chosen by God to serve as Israel's first king; however, Saul chose to forsake the Lord and live his life in disobedience to God's commands. Like Saul, the people of Israel were chosen by God. Like Saul who was anointed king over the people, the Israelites were God's covenant people. Like Saul on whom the Spirit of God came with power, the Israelites were empowered by God to conquer the land that He had given them for their possession. Like Saul who chose to disobey, rebel, and ultimately reject God, the Israelites rejected God and demanded their own king in order that they might be like the other nations.

Israel had to address the question: Who would be their God? In Exodus 32 under Moses' leadership we read how quickly the people were ready to trade their God for another god, the golden calf. With Aaron yielding to their desires and fearful of the people he led them into their idolatry. In 1 Samuel 13-15 we will learn of how Saul led the people astray by choosing to disobey because he, too, had excuses for his actions and was afraid of the people. Like Israel, Saul also had to address the question: Who would be its God? And, like Moses abhorring what Aaron and the people had done, Samuel rebukes Saul and condemns him for his actions. "Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has rejected you as king (1 Samuel 15:23)." The question that Israel and King Saul had to address is the same question that you and I must answer as well. Who will be *my* God? Who will be the God whom *I* love, serve, and obey?

As you engage in this study may you find joy in obeying God's Word, take delight in living your life in a close relationship with Him, and discover pleasure in reflecting His will. May His Will become your way as empowered by the Spirit of God you worship the Lord alone as your Savior and King.

LESSON ONE

WHY HAVE I FOUND FAVOR?

RUTH 1-2 – A FOREIGNER IN A NEW LAND

OVERVIEW OF LESSON 1

Overview	5
Introduction	6
Lesson 1: Ruth 1-2	
• Story Situation	7
• Pleasant to Bitter	8
• Meet Boaz	9
• Character Qualities of Boaz and Ruth	11

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Ruth is a love story. It's a story that may never have happened had loss and grief not come to both Naomi and her daughter-in-law Ruth. Observe the relationship between these two women throughout the story. Love permeated their lives as they returned to the land of Naomi's forefathers. The Lord blessed them with the community that received them. He protected and provided for them through a man named Boaz. And the Lord changed their sorrow and brought joy to their lives.

Life can be difficult and even overwhelm us. Grief comes and manages to turn us inward affecting the way we live our lives. This was true for Naomi. As you study this lesson consider all the lost she experienced. What did these events cause her to say about herself? Naomi chose to leave it all behind and start anew again in the land she had left years earlier. Ruth was also stricken with grief. Observe her character qualities as she demonstrated her love and respect for Naomi.

In the story of Ruth you will learn about the kinsman-redeemer. Grow in your understanding of this term as you reflect on the Old Testament reference. Learn what this meant for the widow and her inheritance. Boaz took this responsibility as kinsman-redeemer seriously. Naomi and Ruth would not be left destitute and alone without any hope. As you read about Boaz and the role of the kinsman-redeemer, keep in mind that Jesus came into this world as God's only Son who fulfilled His responsibility to be your Savior and Redeemer, the one who saved us from obscurity and made us sons and daughters of the Most High God.

LESSON 1

Part 1

INTRODUCTION: In between the Book of Judges and First Samuel comes a love story. The Book of Ruth is only four chapters. This story takes place during the time when the judges ruled. It was a time when Israel would not listen to their judges but prostituted themselves to other gods and worshiped them, a time when Israel refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways (Judges 2:17, 19).

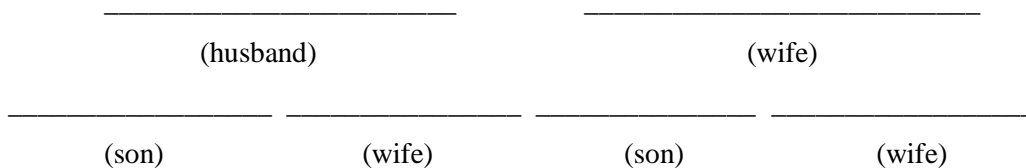
The story of Ruth may be unfamiliar to you. In this lesson you will be introduced to a woman who leaves behind all that is familiar and embraces the culture, the people, and the God of the Israelites.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Ruth 1.

- Identify the characters in this chapter.
- What is the situation?
- What are the decisions?

EXERCISES:

1. As you read verses 1-4 chart the family:



2. Where did this family come from and why did they leave (verse 1)? _____

3. Where did they choose to live (verse 2)? _____
4. The two sons married Orpah and Ruth who were both from Moab. What happened to Naomi's family (verse 3-5)? _____
5. What news had reached Naomi in Moab (verse 6)? _____
6. The women prepared to return home and set out on the road to Judah. What did Naomi tell her daughters-in-law to do in verse 8? _____

What was her blessing?

- May the Lord _____
- May the Lord _____

7. What was the response of the women (verse 10)? _____
 8. Why did Naomi insist that they return home (verses 11-13)? _____

 9. What did Orpah do (verse 15)? _____
What did Ruth do? _____
 10. Naomi insisted that Ruth return to her people and to her gods. What did Ruth reply? _____

- Ruth was not about to leave Naomi. Only death would separate her from her mother-in-law.
11. So, the two women traveled on to Bethlehem. Their arrival caused quite a stir. The women of Bethlehem asked: _____
 12. Naomi wanted people to know the extent of her grief. The name Naomi means pleasant. Now she wanted to be called (verse 20) _____. What does it mean? _____
 13. How did she view her life (verse 21)? _____

 14. Verse 22 summarizes what has happened. Note that reference is made to Ruth as the Moabite, Naomi's daughter-in-law. What was the time of the year? _____

Part 2

TEACHING: The story is quite simple. There was a famine. The family moved to a foreign country where food was available. While living in Moab the woman's husband died and she was left with two sons. Her sons got married and sometime later they also died. The three widows decided to move back home. One daughter-in-law returned to her family and the other daughter-in-law insisted on staying with her mother-in-law and together they returned to Bethlehem.

The women of Bethlehem could hardly believe that this woman who had arrived was Naomi. Names are important. The name Naomi means *pleasant* but Naomi refused this name and wanted to be called Mara which means *bitter*.

Read again Ruth 1:20-21. What does she say the Lord has done to her?

- "has dealt _____"
- "has brought _____"
- "has testified _____"
- "has brought _____"

Pleasant to bitter. Naomi's life appeared to be nothing but a tragedy with no good in sight. Her husband and sons were dead. She considered her life void of joy. From Naomi's perspective she believed her condition was the way that it was because of what God had brought upon her. She believed the Lord God Almighty had done this to her. She was a bitter woman.

REFLECTION: Circumstances and situations in our lives may cause us to become bitter. We, like Naomi, may blame God for our conditions. We may accuse Him of making life bitter and regard it as empty, full of affliction and misfortune. These responses to life are all a part of the grief process but in the end we are left with the choice of how we will live. Will we succumb to living a life of bitterness and resentment? The inevitable question is: How will I choose to respond to life during those times when it seems empty and full of affliction? _____

In what ways does your life reflect a life of Naomi (pleasant)? _____
_____ of Mara (bitter)? _____

PRAYER: O Lord, sometimes life is filled with events and circumstances that cause grief and pain. I find myself quick to blame and accuse You of causing my bitterness, emptiness, affliction and misfortune. I turn *from* You rather than *to* You. You are the One who longs to heal my bitterness, fill my emptiness and release me from the oppression of affliction and misfortune. Open my heart to both receive You and to welcome Your indwelling presence. _____

Part 3

ASSIGNMENT: Read Ruth 2. As you read you will be introduced to a new character.

- Who is the new character?
- What do we learn about him?
- What is his relationship to Naomi and Ruth?

EXERCISE:

1. Who do we meet in verse 1? _____ What do we learn about him? _____

2. What did Ruth want to do (verse 2)? _____
3. Where did she glean (verse 3)? _____
4. What did Boaz ask his foreman and what did the foreman report (verses 5-7)? _____

5. What kindness did Boaz show Ruth (verses 8-9)? _____

6. How did Ruth respond (verse 10)? _____
7. Boaz told her of all the things that he had been told about her. Then he gives to her two blessings (verse 12):
 - a. May the Lord _____
 - b. May you receive _____
8. As a foreigner Ruth had less standing than a servant girl. Nevertheless, what did Ruth ask of him in verse 13? _____
9. What instruction did Boaz give to his workers (verse 15-16)? _____

10. Boaz's kindness and generosity not only blessed Ruth but also Naomi. Ruth gleaned in safety until evening. She threshed over half a bushel of barley and Boaz's generosity gave her the opportunity to be generous to Naomi with the barley that was leftover. What did Naomi ask Ruth (verse 19)? _____
11. What did Naomi tell Ruth about Boaz? Who was he (verse 20)? _____
12. In verse 21 Ruth continues to report to her mother-in-law all that transpired between her and Boaz.
 - a. What did Naomi encourage Ruth to do (verse 22)? _____
 - b. How long did Ruth remain in the fields? _____
 - c. Where did Ruth live all this time? _____

TEACHING: Deuteronomy 25:5-6 gives us some understanding of Naomi's grief. In essence these verses say that if a man dies and leaves his wife without a son then the man's brother is to marry his widow. This was to keep the name of the dead brother from being forgotten in Israel. Now consider Naomi and Ruth's situation. Naomi's husband and both of her sons have died. There is no one to carry on her husband's family name. Ruth has no one to marry since her brother-in-law is also dead. When Boaz shows kindness and favor to Ruth, Naomi makes the comment, "He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead."

When Naomi refers to Boaz as "our kinsman-redeemer" she is saying that he holds the responsibility for keeping the family name alive. Boaz had the responsibility under Jewish law to marry Ruth. This was also true regarding all property of the dead husband. Leviticus 25:25-28 says that if the person was poor and needed to sell some of his property, the nearest relative was to purchase or redeem what had been

sold. He was the kinsman-redeemer. We will take a closer look at the role and responsibilities of the kinsman-redeemer later in this lesson.

Part 4

APPLICATION: In Ruth 2 we notice two distinguishing characteristics, one characteristic of the man Boaz and the other of the woman Ruth. Remember, this is a love story. In Ruth 4 we learn that Boaz marries Ruth. The story is brief and we see their relationship developing already in this second chapter. Let's look at Boaz first:

1. Reread Ruth 2:8-9. What were Boaz's instructions to Ruth? _____

Boaz was concerned about Ruth's safety and protection. Recall his instructions.

2. Reread Ruth 2:14-16. What were Boaz's provisions for Ruth? _____

Boaz was also concerned that Ruth had adequate provisions. He not only wanted her to have enough food to eat but also plenty to gather for Naomi and even sufficient to sell.

3. God has created man with the intuitive desire to protect and provide for his wife and family. Boaz demonstrated these characteristics in the way he related to Ruth. Often in modern times these qualities are both withheld and rejected. In Ephesians St. Paul exhorts men to love their wives just as Christ loved the church and gave His life for her. Take a moment and consider times when you have observed the love of a man for his wife. What was done or said by the man that communicated his desire to protect and provide for his wife? _____

Now let's take a look at Ruth:

1. Reread Ruth 2:7, 10, 13, 23. What character qualities of Ruth do you observe?
 - a. Verse 7: _____
 - b. Verse 10: _____
 - c. Verse 13: _____
 - d. Verse 23: _____
2. In 1 Peter 3, St. Peter encourages women to emanate an inner beauty that never fades—the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. In his letter to Titus St. Paul encourages women to be reverent and to model kindness and gratitude (Titus 3). How are these qualities reflected in Ruth's life? _____

3. At this time take a moment and consider when you have observed the love of a wife for her husband. What was done or said by the women that communicated her respect for him as her spirit reflected gentleness, quietness, kindness, and gratitude for her husband? _____

4. How might the love expressed by Boaz toward Ruth and by Ruth toward Boaz reflect one's love for others and one's unfading inner beauty? _____

PRAYER: Step back and take a close look at the image you reflect to those of the opposite sex whether family members, spouse, business associates, or friends. Ask the Lord to give you the qualities of love that reflect His love to both men and women. Thank Him for the differences He has placed within men and women and ask that those differences be received as a blessing. _____

LESSON TWO

BLESSED BE THE LORD

RUTH 3-4 – THE KINSMAN REDEEMER

OVERVIEW OF LESSON 2

Overview	13
Introduction	14
Lesson 2: Ruth 3-4	
• Naomi's Instructions	15
• Noble Character	16
• The Witnesses	18
• God's Blessing upon Ruth's Marriage	19
• The Blessing of a Grandchild	20

INTRODUCTION

The story of Ruth continues. Naomi gave instructions to Ruth. These instructions may seem unusual but were appropriate for the culture in which these women lived. As you listen to Naomi's words to Ruth note what she told Ruth to do. Ruth obeyed. Boaz discovers her and responds by blessing her and reassuring her with a promise. Watch for his promise to her as you continue your study in this lesson.

What was it that kept Boaz from marrying Ruth? Why did he ask for witnesses as he began to converse with the redeemer? What was the outcome of this encounter? What transaction needed to be confirmed in the presence of the elders?

God richly blessed the union of Boaz and Ruth. Naomi also knew that God had renewed joy in her life. Review all that she and Ruth had endured during their lifetime together. Now she had great cause for thanksgiving. Carefully note the name given to her grandson by her friends and their words of praise and blessing. What was the child's name? Who would be his son and grandson? Naomi took responsibility for her new grandson as she laid him on her lap? How might her influence have shaped and molded his life? Who might be placed on your "lap?"

LESSON 2

Part 1

ASSIGNMENT: Read Ruth 3. The love story of Ruth and Boaz continues. As you read this chapter observe:

- Naomi’s instructions to Ruth
- Boaz’s response to Ruth’s initiative
- Boaz’s generosity

EXERCISE:

1. What did Naomi want to do for Ruth (verse 1)? _____
2. What do we learn about the concept of home in Ruth 1:9? _____
3. What did the “rest” of a home offer that life as a widow gleaning in the fields did not (Ruth 3:1)?

4. What are Naomi’s instructions to Ruth (verse 3-4)? _____

Ruth obediently responded to Naomi’s directives (verse 5).

5. How and where did Boaz encounter Ruth (verses 7-9)? _____
6. Who did Ruth say she was? Who did she declare Boaz to be (verse 9)? _____

7. What did Boaz say about Ruth in verse 10? _____

8. What does Boaz promise Ruth (verses 11-13)? _____
9. What does he instruct her to do? _____
10. She leaves his feet before anyone gets up and can recognize her. What is the last thing he has her do (verse 15)? _____

Once again Boaz demonstrates his generosity as he provides food for both Naomi and Ruth.

11. Naomi is eager to find out what happened and Ruth is eager to share! What is Naomi’s final instruction in verse 18? _____
Ruth revealed her willingness to come into the home of the kinsman-redeemer. She demonstrated obedience to her mother-in-law and respect for the laws of the God Naomi worshipped. Now everything remained in the hands of Boaz. What does Naomi say about Boaz? “For the man _____.”

Part 2

APPLICATION – Part 1: In Ruth 3 we have qualities that both the man and the woman bring into their relationship. The first is mentioned in Ruth 3:11.

1. What is Ruth’s reputation with all of Boaz’s fellow townsmen? What do they know about her?

2. The Book of Proverbs speaks of the woman of noble character. What do we learn about this woman from each of these references?
 - a. What is the contrast in Proverbs 12:4? _____
 - b. What is the contrast in Proverbs 14:1? _____
 - c. How is a house built in Proverbs 24:3-4? _____, _____,
and _____
 - d. Proverbs 31:10-12 – A husband with a wife of noble character lacks _____.
3. Is there a woman who stands out in your mind as a woman of noble character? What makes her attractive? _____
4. What are some things she says and does that set her up in your mind as a woman of noble character? _____
5. If you are a woman, what traits of a woman of noble character are you developing? What traits do you want your life to emulate? _____

APPLICATION – Part 2: The other quality that is brought into their relationship is attributed to Boaz. He was a kinsman-redeemer. In verses 11 and 12 Boaz acknowledges the responsibility he has as kin and also acknowledges that Ruth is a woman of noble character. He says that among his friends and the community her reputation is above reproach.

1. What new information does Boaz give Ruth in verse 12? _____
This man must first be given the opportunity to redeem her by completing and making the transaction official. If he wants to redeem Ruth, saving her from the life of poverty and rejection as a widow and a foreigner, that would be good, however, what does Boaz pledge to Ruth if the first kinsman-redeemer is not willing to fulfill this responsibility? _____

2. Protecting her, once again, what does Boaz insist in verse 13? _____

TEACHING: The future for widows such as Ruth and Naomi was often a condition of hopelessness. Life was hard. Widows were ignored. They were shown little, if any, care and doomed to a life of poverty. Jewish law provided for the widow and for the name of the dead husband to continue by means of a kinsman-redeemer. Naomi had no other sons so there was no brother-in-law to marry Ruth. Ruth chose to care for Naomi and left her homeland in order to serve her. Although she was an alien from the country of Moab, God blessed her faithfulness to Naomi.

Naomi was thrilled to learn that Boaz was a kinsman-redeemer. She encouraged Ruth to find out if he would accept the responsibility to be her kinsman-redeemer (Ruth 3:1-2). This individual was the one who took responsibility for the extended family which meant that the nearest relative could become the kinsman-redeemer. The nearest relative was not forced to marry the widow. If he didn't marry the widow, the next closest relative was given that opportunity. In Jewish culture the inheritance was passed on to the son. If a kinsman-redeemer did not marry the widow, she was left with nothing.

For the Christian, the kinsman-redeemer is Jesus. He redeemed us and rescued us from a life of spiritual poverty and death by means of His life, death, and resurrection. He redeemed us and made us God's own possession. We were bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:20). As our Kinsman-Redeemer His sacrifice is our guarantee that we are made God's own possession. Our lives are now filled with hope and joy, peace, reassurance, and the riches of life eternal spent together with Him forever.

MEMORIZATION: Write out 1 Peter 1:18-19 and place these verses in your memory library.

Read the passage carefully. Envision yourself, whether male or female, as one doomed to hopelessness, despair, and poverty. Realize that you have been redeemed by Jesus, your Kinsman-Redeemer. He is the one who rescued you from the empty life by means of His precious blood given and shed for you for forgiveness of all that you have done wrong. The sacrifice of His life gives to us the abundant life with Him. Enjoy the Good News that you have been redeemed! On the back of your index card write words of praise and thanksgiving that Jesus Christ is your Redeemer!

Part 3

INTRODUCTION: Boaz is wasting no time. He is about to encounter the closer kinsman-redeemer. As you read this chapter notice Boaz's manner of dealing with the man.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Ruth 4:1-12 and note the following:

- Boaz's tactics
- Where this incident takes place?
- The witnesses to the whole ordeal

EXERCISE:

1. Where does this part of the story take place (verse 1)? _____
The town gate was the place where men gathered and discussed the issues of the day and also conducted business transactions. This was the place in the city wall where strangers and visitors entered and exited.
2. What was Boaz's invitation to the kinsman-redeemer? _____
3. Who did Boaz invite to join them (verse 2)? _____
4. Why do you suspect he invited them into the conversation? _____
5. What does Boaz want to get settled (verses 3-4)? _____
6. How does Boaz present the matter? _____
7. What is the man's response (verse 4)? _____
8. What additional information does Boaz share with the man in verse 5? _____
9. What does the man respond this time (verse 6)? _____

The kinsman-redeemer is not willing to redeem the land.

10. Verse 7 gives us an insight into what is about to happen in verse 8. What was necessary for the redemption and transfer to become final? _____
11. And then, what happens in verse 8? _____
12. Verse 9 tells us why Boaz arranged for all the elders to be present and why he chose this public place. Why? _____
13. What did they witness in verses 9 and 10? _____

The transaction of acquiring property and then marrying a wife were extremely different for Boaz than they are for individuals in today's western culture. A man's word rejecting the offer and then taking off one's sandal and giving it to the other before witnesses sealed the deal. No papers were signed. No legal documentation needed notarization.

14. Boaz received property and a wife before all of these witnesses. Then the declared witnesses gave Boaz three blessings:
 - a. Concerning Ruth _____

Note: The blessing for Ruth in verse 11 is a prayer for Ruth's fertility. Leah and Rachel as you may recall were the wives of the patriarch Jacob. Leah had no difficulty conceiving. Rachel, on the other hand, had great difficulty. She was barren for a long time before giving birth to Joseph. She died giving birth to her second son Benjamin. Nevertheless, together they "built up the house of Israel (Jacob)."

b. Concerning Boaz _____

Note: This verse gives a reference to Ephrathah. In Ruth 1:2 we learned that Naomi was an Ephrathite from the town of Bethlehem in the land of Judah. Some references do not distinguish between Ephrathah and Bethlehem. Look for Bethlehem on a map that shows the land of the twelve tribes.

c. Concerning the offspring _____

Note: Verse 12 mentions Judah, Tamar, and Perez. The story is told in Genesis 38. Judah was one of the twelve sons of Jacob. Tamar conceived and Perez was a twin born from her union with Judah. The family line belongs to Perez.

Part 4

ASSIGNMENT: Complete the reading of Ruth 4:13-22. Note God's blessings upon the marriage of Boaz and Ruth. Through them Naomi was also blessed.

- The response of the women of Bethlehem
- Naomi's relationship to the child
- The characters, if any, in the family line of Perez that you recognize
- The role that Ruth played in Israel's history

EXERCISE:

1. Boaz took Ruth as his wife and Ruth conceived and gave birth to a son. How would you describe the response of Naomi's friends and the women of Bethlehem? _____
2. What is the first thing they say in verse 14? _____

3. Because Boaz accepted the responsibilities as the kinsman-redeemer, what did this mean for Naomi and Ruth's future? _____
4. Not only would they have provisions, such as food and shelter, but Naomi had a grandson! Through Boaz what would happen to Naomi's husband's name? _____
5. What is the blessing that the women give?
 - a. For the child (verse 14b) _____

- b. For Naomi (verse 15) _____
2. And, they celebrate with Naomi the blessing her daughter-in-law has been to her (verse 15).
What do they say about Ruth? _____
3. Naomi takes the child, lays him in her lap, and cares for him. Can't you see "Proud Grandma" written all over Naomi's face as she shows him off to her family and friends? Her lap is full once again. She has a grandson to love. What was the name given to the child? _____
In a nutshell we are told who became his son _____ and who became his grandson _____. Ruth was to become the great grandmother of King David.

REFLECTION:

- One can't help but consider how Naomi's circumstances have changed. In chapter 1 she was a bitter woman and insisted her name was Mara. Now in chapter 4 she was seen by the community as more blessed than if she had had seven sons! Review some of the people and events that brought blessings to her life: _____

- In chapter 1 Ruth left her homeland and all the security that afforded her in order to care for her mother-in-law. Her faithfulness brought her to a new land, new people, new culture, and a new God. God honored her determination to come to Bethlehem with Naomi even if it meant poverty and adversity. Review some of the people and events that brought blessings to her life: _____

- One can't help but admire Boaz as a man of integrity. He kept his word. He was not afraid of taking responsibility as a kinsman-redeemer. He was determined that Naomi and Ruth would not be left without a redeemer. Review some of the things he did and said that blessed the lives of these women: _____

Part 5

APPLICATION:

- The characters in this story challenge us to consider our care for others, especially for widows. In some countries throughout the world government provides welfare programs to assist those who suffer from need. One can't help but raise the question: Would such organizations be as necessary if friends and family within the community took seriously the responsibility of caring for the poor and needy, the widow and the orphan, the homeless and

the hungry? Where do you see yourself ministering and caring for those who are in need? Who are those family members that you consider in need that you might serve more intentionally? In your notebook write some of your thoughts as you wrestle with these questions.

- In chapter 4 we read the blessing of the witnesses to Boaz (verses 11-12) and the blessing of the women to Naomi (verses 14-15). The blessing of the witnesses is like an engagement or marriage blessing and the blessing of the women is a blessing at the birth of a new baby. We carry on similar traditions with a toast for the newlyweds and the passing of cigars among men at the birth of a new baby. Consider for a moment, if you were given the opportunity to *bless* the bride and groom at a wedding reception. What might you prepare to say that would bless the couple and give others who are assembled the opportunity to join with their hearts in that blessing? _____

- Consider the next time you are able to congratulate parents upon the birth of their child, what might be your blessing for them as parents and for the child as he/she grows? _____

REFLECTION: The lap is the place of love and nourishment. When a child was placed on the lap it was an outward sign that the baby was yours. Ruth 4:16 says that “Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse.” How seriously do we take the lap using it as the place to express and experience love? Whether you are a parent or grandparent, aunt or uncle, extended family or close friend, look for opportunities to bring a child to your lap. It’s the place where stories are told and read. The lap is the place where food and nourishment are received and enjoyed, the place where a child is nurtured in the things of God, taught Bible stories, Bible passages, and Biblical truths. The lap is the place where the child is introduced to the love of the Lord, where the child is corrected and taught, not rejected or abandoned. Consider memories you have of sitting on someone’s lap. What do you remember? What feelings and emotions come to your mind? Are your memories and emotions positive? _____

Who might be someone you’d like to lay on your lap and care for? The eyes of others often cry out for the lap of love. What might be the stories that need to be told? What might be the experiences that need to be heard? What might be the words of encouragement? What might be the actions that demonstrate care? _____

PRAYER: Lord God, Almighty Father, because of Jesus who has brought me to You, You have taken hold of me and brought me to Your lap. You have made me Your child and have given to me all the rights and privileges as Your son/daughter. I come to You and You always welcome me. For this I give You my thanks and praise. Open my eyes to see those around me who need my lap, the place where Your love and care can be given, the place where Your truths can be taught, the place where others can come and be heard, accepted, and encouraged. Enable me to receive others with open arms as Your open arms continually receive me. _____

QUESTION: What might be a reason the Book of Ruth was included as an Old Testament Book of the Bible? _____

Clue: Ruth 4:18-22.

LESSON THREE

AND THE LORD REMEMBERED HER

1 SAMUEL 1-2 – THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL

OVERVIEW OF LESSON 3

Overview	23
Introduction	24
Lesson 3: 1 Samuel 1-2	
• Samuel's Genealogy	25
• Hannah's Promise	27
• The Journey to Shiloh	28
• Hannah Rejoices in the Lord	29
• Eli's Sons	30
• Ministering Before the Lord	32

INTRODUCTION

In Lesson 3 we are introduced to two new characters, Hannah and Samuel. Both found themselves in difficult situations, however, both responded obediently to the word of the Lord. What was Hannah's situation? Why was it so difficult? What were the provocations and accusations made against her?

Everything appeared bleak but we are told that "the Lord remembered her." The Lord did not forget Hannah but granted her the prayer of her heart. She gave birth to her son Samuel. Learn what Hannah promised the Lord. She had little time to influence the life of her son but kept her promise. What was her response to the Lord who had granted her petition? Her response may surprise you. Consider what your response may have been?

We also learn about the sons of Eli in this lesson. We are told these sons were worthless men. Why were they considered worthless? How did they live their lives as priests of the Most High God? Discover their character. Learn what we are told about Samuel as a young man growing up in the environment of these men. Consider the contrast between Eli's sons and Samuel. Eli's sons were under their father's influence. His attitudes and character were reflected through the lives of his sons.

LESSON 3

Part 1

TEACHING: Samuel was one of the last judges. His story is told in First Samuel. The first chapter begins with several strange names and locations. Turn to the map in your Bible that shows the land occupied by the different tribes. Using the map, locate these places: 1) the land of Ephraim situated due north of the lands of Judah, Dan, and Benjamin; 2) the hill country of Ephraim which is primarily the western region of Ephraim; and 3) Shiloh to the east and north of Bethel. Reference is made to Ramathaim, or Ramah, but your map may not include this town. It is located approximately 15-18 miles due south of Shiloh. Once you have located these sites on the map you will be logistically oriented.

Next, several names are given. These names are the genealogy of Samuel. His father's name is Elkanah. We are told that he is from _____ (From this point on in our study this town will be referred to as Ramah). His paternal ancestor was a Zuphite of the tribe of Levi. The Zuphites were from the hill country of Ephraim.

- Elkanah's father was _____
- His grandfather was _____
- His great-grandfather was _____
- His great-great grandfather was _____

We are told that Elkanah had two wives: _____ and _____.
What are we told about each of these wives? _____

Remembering these names may not seem important to you and me, however, for the Israelites knowing one's family background gave the people identity. We live in a world that uses addresses and towns, web sites and email addresses, social security and account numbers. This information tells others about us and where we can be found. Knowing one's lineage helped the Israelites to establish location and learn one's reputation within the community where they lived.

EXERCISE: Let's try a little exercise using the information from verses 1 and 2. In this lesson we will be learning about the character Samuel. From what we were told in these two verses what do we already know about Samuel, even before he is born? He will be...

- a. The son of E _____

- b. From the country of E_____
- c. He will live in R_____
- d. The grandson of J_____
- e. His great-great-great-grandfather will be Z_____

ASSIGNMENT: Read 1 Samuel 1:3-20. You will encounter more names that may be strange to you. Don't shy away from these unfamiliar names and places. Write them down and keep reading. We will learn about them later in our study. Things to watch for as you read:

- What Elkanah did each year
- What life was like in Elkanah's home
- Hannah's vow
- Eli's accusation and blessing
- Hannah conceives and has a son

Part 2

EXERCISE:

1. What was the purpose of Elkanah's journey from Ramah to Shiloh each year? _____

- Shiloh was the religious center of Israel. The tabernacle was located there and each year the Israelite men were required to make the pilgrimage to Shiloh for worshipping and making sacrifices to the Lord.
2. In verse 3 we are introduced to three new characters. The father is _____. His two sons are _____ and _____. Eli was serving as the High Priest in the tabernacle and his two sons were serving as priests of the Lord.
 3. What do we know about Peninnah (verse 4)? _____
 4. What do we learn about Hannah in verse 5? _____
 5. What do we learn about the relationship between Hannah and Peninnah in verse 6? _____

 6. What was Hannah's reaction to Peninnah's constant badgering? _____
 7. What was Elkanah's respond to Hannah? What are the three "why" questions that he asks (verse 8)?
 - a. Why _____?
 - b. Why _____?
 - c. Why _____?

8. Finally, what does he ask? _____
 You may recall from our study of other women such as Abraham's wife Sarah and Jacob's wife Rachel that the barren woman brought shame to her husband. She was not accepted socially and if he chose to do so her husband could divorce her.
9. Hannah is in Shiloh. The meal is finished. She's at the tabernacle where the priest Eli was sitting. Emotionally she is distraught. She is weeping to the point that she cannot eat. She prays to the Lord. What is the vow that she makes in verse 11?
- "if you will _____"
 - "and not _____"
 - "then I will _____"
 - "and no _____"
10. Hannah did not want to be forgotten by the Lord. She wanted to be remembered. She wanted the gift of a son. Then, she made a vow to give him back to the Lord and he would be a Nazirite all the days of his life. Recall another judge who was a Nazirite. See Judges 13:7, 24. _____
11. Review: What did it mean that her son was to be a Nazirite? See Numbers 6:2. _____

12. What did Eli observe and what did he conclude (verse 12-14)? _____

13. Hannah was considerably misunderstood. What did she say for herself in verses 15 and 16? _____

14. Eli gave the Lord's blessing of peace to her and the blessing that God would grant all she asked. What notable changes took place (verse 18)? _____
15. Verses 19 and 20 give our hearts cause for rejoicing. Hannah conceives. What is the child's name? _____ What does his name mean? _____

Part 3

INTRODUCTION: Hannah had longed for a child. At last she conceived and gave birth to a son and she named him Samuel. Imagine her joy! Her disgrace was removed. She was no longer barren. 1 Samuel 1:19 says that the Lord remembered her. Had God forgotten Hannah? The word "remember" in this reference means that God took action. He acted upon her prayer for a son. As mortal human beings we will never understand why the Lord seems to act upon the prayers of some and seems not to act on the prayers of others. God does act, however, but maybe not in our preferred way or timing. What we do know is that God remembered Hannah.

After waiting so long and enduring the constant ridicule of Peninnah, Hannah is able to celebrate. But Hannah also remembered the vow that she had made to give her son back to the Lord for all the days of his life.

ASSIGNMENT: Read 1 Samuel 1:21-28.

- Imagine how Hannah prepares Samuel for his life committed to the Lord.
- Imagine Hannah's emotions as she leaves the child and returns home.
- What were Hannah's parting words to Eli?

EXERCISE:

1. The time had come for Elkanah's annual sacrifice in Shiloh. All of the family went, all except Hannah and Samuel. Hannah chose not to go. What did she tell Elkanah? _____

2. What was Elkanah's response in verse 23? _____

In essence he told her to do what she thought best and asked that the Lord's will be done.

REFLECTION:

- So, Hannah stayed home with her son. One can't help but wonder what thoughts went through Hannah's mind during this time of nursing and weaning Samuel. Time must have flown by. Think of the precious memories she would want to hold in her heart always—memories of his laughter and tears, his physical development, learning to crawl, walk and run, his first words and funny quips. What are ways you attempt to hold memories of special times in your life, times you don't ever want to forget? _____
Hannah is incapable of taking pictures and saving them on a CD or creating a scrapbook to show family and friends. The memories could only be treasured in her heart and mind.

EXERCISE:

1. The time finally came. He was weaned and it was time for the annual trek to Shiloh for sacrificing and worship. Along with Samuel, what were the other things that she brought? _____

These were brought to the tabernacle for sacrifices offered to God. Hannah's vow was about to be fulfilled.

2. We do not know how old Samuel was but the customary age for weaning was three years old. Verse 24 only indicates that he was very young. Undoubtedly, you have enjoyed moments with a three or four-year old. Describe a child at this age in life: _____

Consider parents observing their 3 or 4 year old. Describe the delight they take in their child:

3. They slaughtered the bull and presented the child to the High Priest Eli. What did Hannah say to him? _____

Hannah had promised to give Samuel to the Lord and this is the moment when she gives back what He had given to her. Verse 28 says, “And he worshiped the Lord there.” Eventually, Hannah, Elkanah and the rest of the family returned to Ramah but Samuel was left at the Tabernacle to minister before the Lord all the days of his life.

Part 4

MEMORIZATION: It’s difficult to imagine the walk back to Ramah without little Samuel. What was going through the minds of these parents? We get a clue from Hannah’s prayer in 1 Samuel 2. Take a moment and read verse one. Hannah said, “My _____ in the _____.” One doesn’t get a sense that her spirit was moping as they returned home.

Undoubtedly, she was sad and missing a little one under foot. Separation from a loved one causes grief. But as she left Samuel at the Tabernacle, Hannah demonstrated her character which was grounded in knowing and trusting her faithful Lord. “My heart rejoices in the Lord.”

Habakkuk is a short book toward the end of the Old Testament. Habakkuk 3:17-18 speaks about the times when we may not have all that we would want and yet we will be joyful. Rejoicing is not determined by outward circumstances. Rather joy is a condition of the heart because of one’s relationship established in the Lord. When we know the Lord and live in a relationship with Him, it doesn’t mean that we will always be happy about the circumstances and conditions around us. It does mean, however, that inexpressible joy will flow out of knowing Jesus, the One who is our All-in-all.

Take time to write these two verses on an index card and memorize them. The verses speak about fig trees, grapes, olive crops, sheep and cattle. Consider your own life. Your own concern might not be about fig trees, but you may be concerned about finding a Christian spouse. Your concern may not be grapes but it may be finding a job or receiving a clean health report. Again, your concern may not be

cattle but your concern may be conceiving and giving birth to a child. What are the concerns of your life? Are you able to say that in spite of all of these wants, desires, needs, and concerns that “yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation?” Your thoughts: _____

PRAYER: My heart rejoices in You, O Lord. You are the joy of my life. You are the One who gives me joy in spite of the circumstances and conditions that surround me. I can grieve the loss of a loved one but my heart rejoices in You. I can struggle with the loneliness of living without a spouse but my heart rejoices in You. I can pursue a career with no solution in sight but my heart rejoices in You. My joy is real because of Your great love for me. In spite of who I am or what I do or have done You love and accept me. Our relationship is rooted and grounded in Your Son, Jesus Christ, my Savior. Thank you! Like Hannah I pray today with boldness and ask you to look on me and remember me. I ask You not to forget me. This day I ask you to remember me regarding _____

Part 5

INTRODUCTION: This lesson compares the sons of Eli, the High Priest, with Samuel, the son of Hannah and Elkanah. The conduct of these two brothers and Samuel reveals the essence of their character. Although we do not know how old Samuel was when he was left at the Tabernacle, we do know that he was very young. Even without the direct supervision of his parents we learn about this child’s development as a child of God.

ASSIGNMENT: Read 1 Samuel 2:12-21. Note the following:

- The practice of Eli’s sons regarding the sacrificial meat
- Samuel’s activity as a youth in the Tabernacle
- Eli’s blessing for Hannah and Elkanah
- Samuel’s growth and maturity

EXERCISE: Let’s look at the *facts* of the story...

1. What is the first thing we learn about Eli’s sons (verse 12)? _____
_____ and _____
2. In verses 13 and 14 we are told what was the practice and procedure of the priests when an Israelite came to the Tabernacle at Shiloh to offer sacrifices to the Lord:

- a. How was the meat prepared? _____
- b. What did the servant of the priest do? _____
- c. Who received the meat that was retrieved from the pot? _____

TEACHING: Before we can understand the seriousness of what Eli’s sons were practicing we need to understand what God intended for the sacrifices the priest made on behalf of the people. The bronzed three-pronged fork or meat tool was called a fleshhook. In Leviticus 3:3-5 we learn that the fat of the sacrificed animal was the choice meat and was to be burned on top of the meat offering made on the burning wood on the altar. Verse 5 says that this was “a _____ offering with a pleasing _____ to the Lord.” In 1 Samuel 2:15 and following we are told that the priest’s servant would come to the man who was making sacrifices and would _____. The servant would not accept _____. He only wanted _____.

Eli’s two sons Hophni and Phinehas were two of the priests when their father was serving as the High Priest. Hophni and Phinehas sent the servant to demand the raw meat in order to obtain the choice cuts, the fillets and steaks, for roasting. The raw meat would still have the fat and the fat is what they wanted for themselves. The fat according to the Law was commanded to be the offering made by fire that would be an aroma pleasing to the Lord (Leviticus 3:3-5).

EXERCISE:

1. Not only did Hophni and Phinehas send the servant of the priest to the man offering the sacrifices demanding raw meat but what did they refuse to let the man do? _____
2. He demanded that the one sacrificing hand over the meat immediately or (verse 16) _____
3. What does verse 17 say about their sin? _____
4. What made their sin so great in the Lord’s sight? _____
5. Contempt is shown toward God by those who know His Word and His Will and yet choose to do their own thing, choose to go their own way. Look up the following verses and find other words that describe contempt.

Reference	Words and phrases that give insight to contempt
1 Samuel 2:29	
Exodus 23:21	

Numbers 14:11	
Numbers 15:31	
Jeremiah 7:21-26	
Malachi 1:2	

6. 1 Samuel 2:22 is another act of these brothers showing contempt toward God. What are we told?

7. Verse 18 is introduced with the big little word “but.” But then there was Samuel. What does this verse tell us he was doing? _____

8. In this verse what are we told the boy is wearing? _____

The ephod is described in Exodus 28:6-14. This garment was worn by the priests. The fact that he was wearing a linen ephod would indicate that he was in training for the priesthood. These web sites may be helpful and give pictures of the ephod:

<http://www.domini.org/tabern/highprst.htm> and <http://www.keyway.ca/jpg/priest.jpg>

8. What did his mother bring to him each year? _____

How special this robe must have been! Each year Hannah would make it larger as her son grew into manhood. Each year she and Elkanah anticipated seeing him again.

9. What was the blessing Eli gave to these parents (verse 20)? _____

The Lord acted graciously toward Hannah. She conceived and gave birth to _____ sons and _____ daughters.

10. What are we told about Samuel in verse 21? _____

Part 6

REFLECTION: Take some time and compare the lives of these three young men.

1. Hophni and Phinehas had a totally different orientation than Samuel. What was the focus of their lives according to 1 Samuel 2:15-17? _____

Regardless of the regulations established by God for the priesthood, these brothers were takers and users. They took from the people. They took from the man who sacrificed. They took from

the offerings. They took from the Lord Himself. And they chose to use all that they took for their own selfish pleasure and gain. They acted contemptuously toward God.

2. Samuel's orientation is quite different as we see in verses 18-21. In these verses we learn that Samuel was given to the Lord, ministered before the Lord, and grew up in the presence of the Lord. Samuel's orientation was the Lord. His life was rooted in the relationship He had with God. He regarded his life not as his own but as a life given to the Lord for Him to use for His pleasure and His purposes. (Note: Remember, he was a Nazirite, one set apart for God's holy use.) And, Samuel spent his young life ministering before the Lord at the Tabernacle. He knew that the work of his life was done as a service, a service ultimately done for the Lord. He lived a life in God's presence. He knew who he was and whom he worshipped and adored. The Lord delighted in him and blessed Samuel with His presence all the days of his life. What does verse 26 tell us about this young man? _____

APPLICATION: Take time to consider your own life. Look at your life as we looked at the life of Samuel.

1. He was given to the Lord. Do you believe your life has been transferred to God's ownership? For some this occurred at the time of their baptism. Baptism is when a person receives the forgiveness of sins and is received into the family of God. All of this was made possible because Jesus came as our Champion, conquered sin and the devil, and made us holy and righteous before the Father. One is received into the loving hands of God the Father as the person is baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Each one is then given to the Lord! In baptism He makes a claim on our lives and declares us to be His! Has God made claim on your life? May His Spirit enable you to trust Him when He says to you: "_____ (your name) _____, I have redeemed you; I have summoned (called) you by name; you are mine" (Isaiah 43:2). Your thoughts: _____
2. Samuel ministered before the Lord. We are told this already in 1 Samuel 2:11. His life had meaning and purpose because He knew the One whom he served. His work was done before an audience of one. In spite of what Eli's sons were doing, Samuel's work was done for the Lord Himself.
3. Many times we fail to discover meaning and purpose as we live out our daily lives. We regard our lives as insignificant and lacking value. Could it be that we want to be great in the eyes of others rather than look for ways we might serve to make others great? Could it be that we desire to be served rather than to serve? Samuel delighted in serving, in ministering before the Lord even when most likely few knew of his service and fewer still acknowledged his ministry.

- a. How do you regard your service, your ministry, your work? _____

 - b. How might your life be filled with excitement and delight as you recognize that in serving others you, too, are ministering before the Lord? _____

4. Hophni and Phinehas disregarded the Lord. They didn't acknowledge His presence in their life and lived accordingly. Samuel, on the other hand, knew the Lord and delighted in a life lived in His presence. He lived in the relationship with the Lord knowing He would never leave him or forsake him. In what area(s) of your life do you find such secure comfort? _____

 5. The Lord bestowed His love on Samuel. Samuel didn't achieve God's favor. God claimed Samuel to be His own. God's undeserved love, His grace, was given to him. This is the same undeserved love that He gives to you and to me. God's love is nothing we can earn or deserve but rather something He gives.

PRAYER: Today, Lord, as I consider my life, I want to thank you for...

1. _____,
2. _____,
- and
3. _____.

I want to talk to you about certain individuals in my life that mean so much to me...

1. _____,
2. _____ and
3. _____.

Lord Jesus, enable me to regard my life as a life lived in service to You. As I consider all that You have done for me may I live with an acute awareness that I am living in Your presence... _____

LESSON FOUR

HERE I AM; SPEAK, LORD!

1 SAMUEL 3-6 – GOD’S MESSAGE

OVERVIEW OF LESSON 4

Overview	35
Introduction	36
Lesson 4: 1 Samuel 3-6	
• God Calls to Samuel	37
• Reflection on the Facts of the Story	39
• Israel Defeated by the Philistines	41
• Ark of the Covenant and Its Journey	42
• The Ark Returned to Israel	43

INTRODUCTION

As a young man, Samuel lived in the temple. This next story takes place one night when Samuel was lying on his bed. The Lord called Samuel. Observe his response. Who did he think was calling out to him? God had a message for Samuel. The message wasn't a message he would be eager to share, especially with Eli. Find out what was God's message. What was happening and why was it displeasing to the Lord?

The events that ensued in the years ahead helped to establish Samuel as a prophet of the Lord (1 Samuel 3:20). Learn some of these stories in the following chapters of First Samuel. Discover what happened to the Israelites, to the Ark of the Covenant, and to the powerful enemies that fought against Israel. Learn how Eli died and what happened to his two sons.

Samuel remained faithful to the Lord but the Ark of the Covenant was no longer in Israel's possession. What had happened? Where was it? What turmoil did this cause their enemies? What was the punishment? How did Israel get the Ark back within its borders? Did they get it back?

Israel had turned away from the God of Israel. These were the people He dearly loved. These were His covenant people to whom He had made the promise to be their God and declared them to be His people. This promise was made centuries before with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This was the God who had brought them out of the land of slavery to the Promised Land, the land flowing with milk and honey. What had gone wrong?

LESSON 4

Part 1

INTRODUCTION: We know that corruption has permeated the priesthood. Phinehas and Hophni and their father Eli were all priests of the Lord. In 1 Samuel 2 we learned that the two sons treated the Lord's offering with contempt. Eli even knew that his sons were sleeping with the women who served at the entrance to the Tabernacle. But Hophni and Phinehas disregarded their father's rebuke (1 Samuel 2:25).

Later on in chapter 2 we are told that Eli also scorned the Lord's sacrifice and offering. Eli was asked the question in 1 Samuel 2:29, "Why do you...honor your sons above Me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?" Eli was participating in the sins of his sons. He also was treating the Lord's offering with contempt by eating the choice parts and enjoying the fat of the meat. What does Leviticus 3:16-17 tell us? _____

ASSIGNMENT: Read 1 Samuel 3:1-4:1. Watch for the following:

- Samuel's response to the Lord's call
- Eli's instruction and Samuel's reply
- The Lord's message to Samuel
- Samuel tells Eli everything
- The Lord's relationship with Samuel

EXERCISE:

1. It was the end of the day. Samuel was lying down in the Tabernacle where he usually slept. What happened on this particular night (1 Samuel 3:4-6)? _____

Two times the Lord calls and two times Samuel responds immediately by going to Eli.

2. What happens the third time? What does Eli realize (verse 8)? _____
 3. What are Eli's instructions to Samuel (verse 9)? _____
-

4. So, we are told at the end of verse 9 that Samuel “went and lay down in his place.” Someone might say that he was having a rough night! And, what a night! Verse 10 reveals something new. What is different about this time that the Lord calls Samuel? _____
-
5. This time Samuel responds as Eli had instructed him (verse 10). Verses 11-14 tell us what the Lord told Samuel. What did the Lord say?
- Verse 11: _____
 - Verse 12: _____
 - Verse 13a: _____
 - Verse 13b: _____
 - Verse 13 c: _____
 - Verse 14: _____
6. Samuel stayed in bed until morning when his chores began. We don’t know how old Samuel is at this time but verse 1 speaks of him as a boy. He could be an adolescent or a teenager. We don’t know. However, he has just had a personal encounter with the Lord. The Lord had come and stood by him. He spoke severe words of judgment upon Eli and his sons. Now he’s afraid to tell Eli his vision (verse 15). Can you blame him? But he hears Eli calling and responds with the same words he did during the night: _____
- What does Eli ask? _____
 - What does Eli insist? _____
 - What is Eli’s threat? _____
7. So Samuel tells Eli everything (verse 18). What is Eli’s response? _____
-
8. 1 Samuel 3:19-4:1 tells us about Samuel as he grows into adulthood.
- Verse 19: _____
 - Verse 20: _____

Take time to identify Dan and Beersheba on a map that shows the division of land among the twelve tribes. Dan will be located to the far north and Beersheba to the far south.
 - Verse 21: _____
 - 1 Samuel 4:1 _____

Samuel esteemed the Word of God and held it sacred. He became recognized as a prophet of the Lord and the Lord continued to appear at Shiloh and revealed Himself to Samuel through His Word which was shared with everyone throughout Israel.

Part 2

REFLECTION:

1. You have worked through the *facts* of the story. So, what do you think?
 - a. About the boy Samuel? _____
 - b. About Eli? _____
 - c. About what the Lord told Samuel? _____
2. What phrase is repeated over and over in this chapter? _____
Mark each time the words are used.
 - a. If you had been Samuel, would you have demonstrated such a persistent willingness to serve?

 - b. Do you think you would have been annoyed? What might have been your response? _____

3. Obviously, speaking and listening are two different things. The Lord spoke. Samuel listened. Samuel regarded himself as a servant of the Lord and as one who ministered before Him knew that he needed to listen. The Word of the Lord was spoken.
 - a. We are also given the opportunity to experience speaking and listening as we grow in our relationship with the Lord. Through His Word, the Bible, the Lord speaks. As we read His Word we listen to what He is saying for we are His servants, those who minister before Him, those who know that as servants of the Lord we need to listen.
 - b. Consider your relationship with the Lord. Sometimes you may speak to Him in prayer. Sometimes you listen to Him as you study His Word. Is your relationship a good balance of listening and speaking? How might the communication in your relationship be improved?

OBSERVATION: This story may raise many questions for you. For example...

- a. What does it mean in 1 Samuel 3:1 that “in those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions?”
- b. How old was Samuel?
- c. In verse 7, what does it mean that Samuel did not yet know the Lord?
- d. Or, what about the fact that the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him?
- e. Verse 10 says that the Lord came and stood there. Did He really? Did Samuel actually see God?
- f. At the end of the chapter it says that the Lord continued to appear at Shiloh. Was He physically present? Did Samuel and others actually see him?

These are a few questions that you may have been asking during your study of chapter 3. Don't be afraid of questions or things that you don't understand. Don't think that for everything there is an answer. The important thing is to continue to ask that God's Spirit guide and direct your learning. Ask Him to use the facts of the story to give insight that you might know more about this God who loves you and wants to claim you as His child and heir of eternal life.

WHAT WE LEARN ABOUT GOD:

1. What do we learn about God as we hear Him call Samuel by name? _____

2. What do we learn about God as He calls us by name? _____

He desires a personal, intimate relationship with us also. The truth is that He knows us and calls us by our individual names (John 10:3)! Such intimacy!

We also learn that God imparts His Word to those who have heart ears to hear what He has to say. Eli did not receive the message from the Lord. His disregard for the Word of the Lord and His holy law brought God's judgment upon him, his sons, and his household. Consider your own response to His Word for your life. As we get to know Him more we eagerly respond with the words: "Speak, Lord, Your servant is listening!"

PRAYER: Write down your prayer thoughts. As you consider this lesson what are you eager to share with Him regarding...

1. Your attitude toward God as He speaks to you in His Word: _____

2. Your response time to His call when asked to serve Him by serving someone else: _____

3. Your growth and maturity as you continue in a communication relationship with Him: _____

Part 3

INTRODUCTION: In this part of the lesson we are going to get an overview of 1 Samuel 4-7. For the most part we hear nothing more about Samuel until chapter 7. In chapter 4 we learn about what happens to Hophni, Phinehas, and Eli. Then in chapter 5 we learn about what happens to the Ark of the Covenant and the Philistines. Chapter 6 answers the question: What shall we do with the Ark of the Lord? In

chapter 7 Samuel re-enters the scene. He leads Israel to repentance and the Philistines are discouraged from ever attacking Israel during Samuel's lifetime.

ASSIGNMENT: You are encouraged to read 1 Samuel 4. Verse 1 makes reference to the Philistines, Ebenezer and Aphek. The Philistines occupied the land along the Mediterranean coast. The primary towns of the Philistine included Ashkelon, Gath, Ekron, Ashdod, and Gaza. You will notice as you look on the map that the territory was along the western region of the land belonging to Judah. The Israelites never drove the Philistines from their land as God intended. As a result, they were always at war with one another. Aphek, where the Philistines were camped, was located due west of Shiloh and less than ten miles to the east of Aphek was Ebenezer where the Israelites were camped. This is where the story begins.

EXERCISE:

1. What was the outcome of the battle (verse 2)? _____
2. Who was blamed for their defeat? What did they ask (verse 3)? _____

3. What was Israel's solution? _____
4. Who accompanied the Ark giving consent to this decision? _____
5. What was Israel's response as the Ark is brought into the camp? _____
6. What was the reaction of the Philistines to all the hoopla of the Israelites (verse 5-8)? _____

What did the Philistines decide to do? _____

7. What was the outcome of the battle? _____
How many lives were lost? _____ What happened to the Ark? _____
What happened to Hophni and Phineas? _____
8. What word was brought to Shiloh, specifically to Eli (verse 17)? _____

9. How did Eli respond to this news? _____
10. What are the things we learn about Eli in verse 18? _____

“The glory has departed from Israel, for the Ark of God has been captured (verse 22).”

REVIEW: Let's take a few minutes and review what we have learned about the Ark of the Covenant in previous studies.

1. What did the Ark look like? See Exodus 25:10-22 and Exodus 37:1-9.

- a. Size and covering material: _____

 - b. What was on the cover? _____
 - c. What was the significance of the cover? _____

2. What was kept in the Ark? See Hebrews 9:4.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 3. Where was the Ark of the Covenant kept? See Exodus 26:34. _____
_____ Only the High Priest was able to enter this place in the Tabernacle. It was called the Most Holy Place.
 4. During the time of Eli where was the Tabernacle located? What does Joshua 18:1 tell us?

- Locate Shiloh on the map once again. The location is central to the whole of the Promised Land. The Israelites from north and south would be able to come to offer their sacrifices and worship.

Part 4

ASSIGNMENT: Read 1 Samuel 5. In this chapter you will note that the Ark was taken on an interesting journey.

EXERCISE:

1. Where did the Philistines take the Ark they had captured (verses 1)? _____
2. Where did they place it (verse 2)? _____
3. What happened in verses 3-5? _____

4. What action did the Lord take (verses 6-8)? _____

5. What was the big question (verse 8)? _____
What was the solution? _____
6. So, they moved the Ark to _____. What happened in Gath? _____

7. Where did the Ark go next (verse 10)? _____
8. What happened in Ekron? _____

ASSIGNMENT: This brings us to 1 Samuel 6. Read this chapter and watch what the Philistines decide to do in order to return the Ark to Israel.

EXERCISE:

1. Even after seven months, what was the big question for the Philistines (verse 2)? _____

2. What was the counsel of the priest and diviners (verses 3-6)? _____

3. What were the instructions in verses 7-9? What was so unusual about this counsel? _____

Was it natural for a cow to leave her calf? According to verse 9 what would they find out?

In verses 10-12 what did they find out? _____
4. The cows took the Ark to _____. The people chopped up the cart, sacrificed the cows and offered burnt offerings to the Lord. We learn in the final verses of chapter 6 that the Ark was finally brought to _____ and was taken to the home of _____.
His son _____ was consecrated to _____
the Ark of the Lord.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. God's people were treating the Ark, God's presence, more like a lucky charm than a wonderful symbol of their relationship with Him. Where can we observe much of the same thing happening in our modern world? When might we also try to do the impossible and attempt to box up and use God's power as something magical? _____
2. The Ark held the Law of God, the Ten Commandments, that had been given to Moses at Mt. Sinai. The lid of the Ark was designed with two angels positioned so that their wings helped to define the place of the mercy seat where God would come to His people. The question in 1 Samuel 5:8 and 1 Samuel 6:2 was: "What shall we do with the ark of the Lord, the god of Israel?" As you consider this question for your life, what meaning does the presence of God's law (that which condemns us because of our inability to keep His Law) and His mercy (the act of God withholding what we do deserve) have for your life? _____

God Law reveals our need for His mercy. May His mercy remind you of His great love for you as He offers forgiveness for our wrongdoings and pardon for our inability to live perfect lives before Him. What His Law exposes in our lives His love covers with the blood of Jesus. Together we can say, “O give thanks unto the Lord for He is good and His mercy endures forever.”

LESSON FIVE

GIVE US A KING

1 SAMUEL 7-10 – DEMAND AND WARNING

OVERVIEW OF LESSON 5

Overview	45
Introduction	46
Lesson 5: 1 Samuel 7-10	
• Israel Called to Repent	47
• Israel's Demand for King	48
• Samuel's Warning	49
• Israel Insisted on a King	50

INTRODUCTION

In Lesson 4 we saw Israel's relationship with the Lord once again deteriorating. Things only got worse for His people. As you proceed, watch closely. Samuel warns the people what their particular demands would bring upon them as a nation. They wanted to be *like* everyone else. They didn't regard themselves as people who were "called out," as people who were *different* than everyone else. As a result, what were the consequences?

God does not force His will on Israel nor on us. We have a free will. We can choose to receive His best for us and live under His authority or we can refuse His Lordship in our lives. Does His love ever change? Even when we disobey, reject Him, and make decisions based on *my* will and *my* way? Samuel's life was a demonstration of a life lived God's way, a life submitted to the will of the Lord God Almighty.

LESSON 5

Part 1

INTRODUCTION: In chapter 7 Samuel reenters the picture. Obviously, he is somewhat older now and the Word of the Lord came through him to all of Israel. All the land from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the Lord (1 Samuel 3:20).

ASSIGNMENT: Read 1 Samuel 7.

EXERCISE:

1. For _____ years the Ark remained at _____.
2. What do you sense is happening to the people of Israel (verse 2)? _____
3. We are told that they are mourning and sought after the Lord. These words tell us the spiritual condition of the Israelites during these years. _____
4. Samuel is their judge. If they intended to “return to the Lord” (repent) they were to do certain things. According to verse 3 what were they to do?
 - a. If you are _____
 - b. Then _____ and _____
 - c. And direct _____
 - d. And _____

Note: The Ashtaroths were the gods of the Philistines and other nations who continued to live with the Israelites in Canaan. To review, read Judges 2:10-15. The people worshipped the Baals and the Ashtaroths rather than the God of their fathers who had brought them out of Egypt and through the wilderness to the land God had promised to them.

5. What was the promise of God (verse 3)? _____
6. So, the Israelites (verse 4) _____
7. In verses 5-7 we are told that the Israelites repented. They confessed that they had sinned against the Lord. What are we told about Samuel? He _____ on behalf of the people before the Lord.
8. The Philistines determined that with the Israelites all gathered at Mizpah it would be the perfect time for an attack. What happens when the Israelites hear about this? _____
9. What did Samuel do in verse 9? _____
10. What did God do? _____

11. What did the Israelites do? _____
12. What did Samuel do in verse 12? _____
 What did he name the stone? _____ What does it mean? _____
13. Give a summary statement of what happened during the remainder of Samuel's lifetime.
- Regarding the Philistines _____
 - Regarding his role as judge _____
 - Regarding his relationship to the Lord _____
- _____

Part 2

INTRODUCTION: The stories recorded in First Samuel contain more material than we can cover in this study. The parts of these next lessons will cover the final years of Samuel's life and introduce us to Israel's life under the authority of a king. Many verses and chapters will be passed over but you are encouraged to read these sections which will tell of Israel's ongoing struggles and challenges to live as God's people.

ASSIGNMENT: Read 1 Samuel 8:1-22.

- Why did Israel want a king?
- How did God respond to Israel's demand?
- What did Samuel tell Israel would be the result of having a king?
- How did the people respond to Samuel's warning?
- What was the Lord's answer?

EXERCISE:

- In 1 Samuel 8:1-3 we learn about Samuel and his sons.
 - What are we told about Samuel? _____
 - What are we told about his sons Joel and Abijah in these verses?
 - _____
 - _____ but _____
 - _____
- What did the elders tell Samuel in verses 4 and 5?
 - About himself _____
 - About his sons _____
 - What did they want? _____

- d. Why did they want a king? _____
3. In verse 6 what was Samuel's reaction to their request for a king? _____
4. So, he prayed to the Lord. What did the Lord tell him in verse 7? _____
- a. Who were they rejecting? _____
- b. What had they done to the Lord that they are now doing to Samuel (verse 8)?
- i. _____
- ii. _____
5. What was the Lord's instruction to Samuel (verse 9)? _____
- _____
6. Samuel told all the Lord had said to those who were asking him for a king. What did he tell them in verses 11-17?

Reference(s)	What the King will take...	What the King will do...
Verse 11-12		a. b. c. d. e.
Verse 13		a. b. c.
Verse 14	a. b. c.	
Verse 15	a. b.	
Verse 16	a. b. c. d.	
Verse 17	a. b.	

7. What will be the response of the people to the king (verse 18)? _____

8. What will be the Lord's response to the people's cry (verse 18)? _____
9. After Samuel had finished explaining there comes a big "but" in verse 19. But what? _____
-
10. What did the people continue to demand?
- a. They still wanted a _____.
 - b. They wanted to be like _____
 - i. To have a king who would _____
 - ii. To have a king who would _____ and _____
11. Samuel heard what the people said and went before the Lord. What was the Lord's answer (verse 22)? _____

Part 3

REFLECTION: Look closely at the verses in chapter 8. Certain words are repeated and demand that we take a second look and discover their significance.

1. Consider the words *reject* and *forsake* (verse 6-9). What are some other words and circumstances that reveal Israel's rejection of God?
 - a. Exodus 16:1-8 _____
 - i. When do you find yourself saying or thinking the words "if only?" These are words that reveal the grumbles and complaints of the heart. _____
 - ii. When has someone grumbled and complained about you? What caused it and what how did you feel? _____
 - b. Exodus 32:1-6 _____
 1. Have you ever wanted to find a different god that you thought you could rely on because you felt abandoned by God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth? _____
 2. What do you tend to choose to use as replacements for God? _____
2. Another word that appears over and over in 1 Samuel 8 is the word *take*.
 - a. Underline the word each time it's used in verses 11-17.
 - b. Compare the differences between God and the king of their own choosing:
 1. From your study of God's Word what do you know about God?

Leviticus 26:5-13 _____

2. Review what Samuel tells the people concerning what a king will do:

1 Samuel 8:11-17 _____

3. In several verses the words *listen and heard* are used. God told Samuel to listen to all that the people had to say. He wanted him to listen and understand that it wasn't Samuel that they were rejecting but it was God Himself they were rejecting as their king. Samuel wasn't only to listen but he was also to warn the people. God wanted them to know what a king who reigned over them would do. And, although Samuel listened to them, verse 19 tells us that they refused to listen to him and continued to demand a king. Samuel then repeats all to the Lord who again says, "Listen to them and give them a king."

- a. What is your reaction to what the people are demanding? _____

- b. Would you want a king even if you knew what the king would be taking from you? Why? Why not? _____
- c. What would cause the people to reject God as their King and demand a king in order to be like all the other nations (verse 20)? _____

PRAYER: O Lord, I find myself asking "why" questions. Why would the people choose to reject You as their King? Why would they want to be like all the other nations? Why did they not want to be set apart as Your people under Your leadership? All You did was to love them and provide for them. What made the nations around them so attractive that they wanted to forsake you? At the same time, I must consider my own life and the decisions and choices I make. I ask you to open my eyes, the eyes of my heart, to see the ways in which I want to go the ways of the world around me rather than celebrate the security and protection of Your love and compassion. Grant me a heart of gratitude that in spite of my wanderings You faithfully remain my Lord and my God. _____

Part 4

INTRODUCTION: We are about to meet a new character who played a significant role in Israel's history. The people said they wanted a king so they could be like the other nations. They rejected the Lord as their king. This wasn't a new thing. Israel had been forsaking God by worshipping other gods ever since He had brought them out of Egypt. So, God gave Samuel the instruction to give them a king. In spite of Samuel's warning regarding what a king would do who reigned over them, the people refused to listen.

ASSIGNMENT: Read 1 Samuel 9 and 10. If your Bible has division headings, you know that 1 Samuel 9 and 10 relate the story of God choosing Saul and Samuel anointing him Israel's king.

EXERCISE:

1. What do we learn about Saul from 1 Samuel 9:1-2? _____
2. What was the problem in verses 3 and 4? _____
3. What was Saul's concern (verse 5)? _____
4. What did the servant suggest in verses 6? _____
5. What did Saul need (verse 7-9)? _____
6. Where did they set out to go (verse 10)? _____
7. Where did the girls tell them that they would find the seer (verse 11-14)? _____

8. What had God revealed to Samuel (verses 15-17)? _____

9. What are the two words in these verses that tell what Saul was to do as Israel's leader?
 - a. _____ (verse 16)
 - b. _____ (verse 17)
10. Saul meets Samuel, the seer, for the first time. How does Samuel confirm that he is the man that Saul and the servant are looking for? What does he tell Saul? _____

11. At the end of verse 20 Samuel makes an interesting statement. What does he say? _____

What is Saul's response in verse 21? _____

Part 5

TEACHING: Samuel is about to anoint Saul as the first king of Israel. Saul and his servant are brought into the hall where all the guests were seated. Samuel seats Saul in the place of honor. He had given the cook specific instructions regarding a piece of meat that he had given to the cook to set aside. The piece of meat was a leg which was considered to be the choicest of meats and saved for the guest of honor. Samuel explains to Saul that the meat was prepared for him for this occasion.

After the feast Samuel and Saul came down from the high place where they had eaten. Saul and Samuel talked and then in the morning Saul and his servant prepared to leave. Samuel walked with the men to the edge of town and then instructed Saul to send his servant on ahead and asked him to remain awhile. What did Samuel want (verse 27)? _____

EXERCISE: The anointing of the king was done with oil. The oil was poured on the head of the man.

1. What is the declaration Samuel makes in 1 Samuel 10:1? _____

2. In verses 2-5 Samuel tells Saul that after separating three things will happen along the way.

Who will Saul meet?	Where will Saul meet them?	What will happen?

3. In verses 6 and 7 what does Samuel promise? _____

PRAYER: Lord God Almighty, we lift up to You those who are in authority where we live. We pray that through them Your will is accomplished. We know that all too often we resist and rebel against those in authority rather than pray for them. Give us a heart for those in authority that offers them strength and encouragement to carry out their specific responsibilities. We pray for an outpouring of Your Spirit enabling them to make choices and decisions that are aligned with Your holy will. _____

LESSON SIX

YOU HAVE REJECTED YOUR GOD

1 SAMUEL 10-15 – DISOBEDIENCE

OVERVIEW OF LESSON 6

Overview	55
Introduction	56
Lesson 6: 1 Samuel 10-15	
• Saul Chosen by God	57
• Saul Confirmed as King	58
• Broken Relationships	59
• Psalm 130	61

INTRODUCTION

Saul appeared to have everything going for him. He was anointed by Samuel as God's choice for Israel's first king. He was told that the Spirit of the Lord would come on him with power and that he would prophesy with the prophets. And God reassured Saul that He would be with him.

But what went wrong? In Lesson 6 learn how Saul chose to act as Israel's first king. What did God's people choose to do? What was the consequence of their actions?

Psalm 130 holds Good News for us when we find ourselves in darkness and despair because of the sin and disobedience in our own lives. We cry to the Lord pleading for mercy and He hears us. He offers forgiveness and hope because of His steadfast love. He is our Redeemer.

LESSON 6

Part 1

TEACHING: In 1 Samuel 10:6 Samuel tells Saul that God’s Spirit would come on him in power. In addition, he told Saul that that he would prophesy with the prophets. Then Samuel said, “Then the Spirit of the Lord will rush upon you, and you will...be turned into another man. Now when these signs meet you, do what your hand finds to do, for God is with you.” God’s Spirit would cause Saul to be a “different person.” God would initiate the change in Saul. Verse 9 tells us that God changed Saul’s heart...Saul did prophesy with the prophets. The Spirit of God came upon him in power!

We don’t know what Saul was like before Samuel anointed him king. All we are told is that God’s Spirit changed him and the change God made was noticed by others. In 1 Samuel 10:11 we are told that when those who had known him saw him prophesying with the prophets, they couldn’t help but ask what had happened to Saul.

Saul’s anointing by Samuel set him apart as a man to be used by God for His righteous purposes. He was the Lord’s anointed leader. Samuel anointed Saul with the oil and now came the time for the people to declare him to be their king. In verse 17 Samuel reviews what has happened. He reminds the people that God was the one who brought them out from the oppressive powers of Egypt and all other kingdoms. He tells them that they are the ones who rejected God who saved them from all of their calamities and distresses. God did not reject them, but they rejected God by insisting on having a king. Now their king who was chosen by the Lord would be presented to the people.

EXERCISE: The story continues in 1 Samuel 10:20.

1. Which tribe was chosen? _____
2. Which clan was chosen? _____
3. Finally, Saul the son of _____ was chosen. But what is the problem? Where is Saul? _____
4. In verse 23 they found their king hiding among the baggage. This was the man that the Lord had chosen. When he stood among the people what was Saul’s obvious feature (verse 23)?

5. What is Samuel’s declaration to the people in verse 24? _____

6. What was the response of the people? _____
7. In verse 25 Samuel explained to the people the rights and duties of the kingship. Your Bible may have a cross-reference after the word regulations. The cross-reference directs us to Deuteronomy 17:14-20. As you read you will learn about the regulations for the king.
 - a. Verse 14 – These words were said by Moses many years earlier. What did he already anticipate before the Israelites even entered the Promised Land? _____

 - b. What were to be the two qualifications of the king? _____
and _____
 - c. What was the warning for the king (verse 16)? Why? _____

 - d. What was he told concerning his wives (verse 17)? _____

 - e. What was he told concerning his wealth? _____
 - f. He was told in verses 18-20 that he was to carefully adhere to the law all the days of his life so that he may learn to _____ the Lord his God by _____
all the words of this _____ and these _____, and _____
them, that his _____ may not be _____
and that he may not _____
 - g. And, what did God promise? _____

Part 2

ASSIGNMENT: 1 Samuel 11-15 tells more stories about the life of Saul as a king. Again, because there is far more material than we are able to study in these lessons, it is necessary that you take the time to read these chapters on your own in order to help you grow in your understanding of what happened to Saul during his reign.

TEACHING:

1. In chapter 11 we learn of the incident that led the people to confirm Saul as king.
2. In chapter 12 Samuel speaks before the people of Israel and shares the pattern of their behavior:
 - a. He reminds them that
 - i. the Lord heard their cry and delivered them from Egypt (verse ____)
 - ii. they forgot the Lord and had forsaken Him (verses _____)

- iii. the Lord forgave them and delivered them from their enemies (verse ___)
 - iv. they wanted a king other than the Lord (verses _____)
 - v. if they served and obeyed Him they would be blessed (verse ___)
 - vi. if they disobeyed and rebelled that the Lord would be against them (verse ___)
 - vii. They realized what an evil thing they had done and implored Samuel to pray for them (verse ___)
 - viii. He reminded them that in spite of what they had done, not to turn away from the Lord (verses _____)
 - ix. The Lord would not abandon them because He was pleased to make them His own (verse ___)
- b. Finally, the Samuel reminds them to serve the Lord faithfully, wholeheartedly, and to remember the great things He had done for them (verse ___)
3. In chapter 13 we learn that Saul offered up the burnt offering (verse 9). This was the work of the priests only. What did Samuel tell him in verses 13-14? _____

 4. In chapter 14 Saul builds an altar to the Lord. He asks God what he should do about the Philistines in verse 37. What is God's response? _____
 5. In chapter 15 the Lord totally rejects Saul as king.
 - a. What was the message from the Lord that Samuel brought to Saul in verse 2? _____

 - b. What was Saul to do (verse 3)? _____

 - c. What did Saul actually do (verses 7-9)? _____

 - d. What did the Lord say to Samuel (verse 10-11)? _____

 - e. What else did Saul do (verse 12)? _____
 6. After Samuel confronts Saul, what does Samuel reply in verses 22-23? _____

Part 3

REFLECTION: What a sad commentary on Saul's life. He was the man who had been chosen by God to serve as king over the people, a man chosen by God and dearly loved by Him.

1. What happened to the relationship between Samuel and the people? _____

The people wanted their own way. They wanted to decide who would lead them. They didn't want to listen to the Lord's warning through His prophet Samuel. The people chose to reject and forsake the God who had delivered them out of their oppression and brought them into the land He had promised to them. They were willing to give all that up in order that they might have a king like the other nations.

2. What happened to the relationship between Samuel and Saul? _____

Samuel knew that God had placed His Spirit on Saul. He knew that God had changed Saul's heart. Samuel presented to the people the one the Lord had appointed to be king. He was confirmed by the people to be their king. No sooner was this done than Saul began to act foolishly. He disobeyed God's instructions and laws choosing to do things his way.

- a) What happened to the relationship between Saul and God? _____

The man whose heart God had changed became the man who turned away from God and refused to obey Him. As a result, the Lord refused to answer Saul when he called upon Him. He replaced God's honor with his own and, ultimately, the Lord rejected Saul as king because Saul first rejected the Word of the Lord.

APPLICATION: Samuel spoke strong words to Saul in 1 Samuel 15:22-23. Saul had disobeyed God and then attempted to justify his disobedience before Samuel. With these words, Saul was confronted and brought to confession. "I have sinned. I violated the Lord's command and your instructions. I was afraid of the people and so I gave in to them." You may recall a similar response found in Exodus 32:21-24 when Aaron was afraid of the people, caved in to their whims, and helped with the construction of the golden calf. Saul put at risk his entire relationship with God and with Samuel.

1. Ultimately, what happened to those relationships according to 1 Samuel 15:34-35? _____

2. We, too, need to confess that we have sinned. We often violate the Lord's command and the instruction of those He has placed in authority over us. If we are honest with ourselves, can we admit that we have been afraid and have caved in to the pressures of the crowd? Can you recall times when you found yourself caving in to the crowd rather than doing the right thing? _____

3. Saul said he was afraid. Consider your own fears. Why do I yield to the crowd? What am I afraid of? _____

We have all sinned. There is no one who has not done all God has commanded. We have all disobeyed and we all deserve nothing but God's wrath and punishment for our wrongdoing. But wait! Good News is coming!

Part 4

MEMORIZATION: God wants us to know His Good News that comes through Jesus. You are encouraged to memorize an entire chapter! Psalm 130 gives us this Good News. When we are down on ourselves and feel utterly hopeless because of our own wrongdoing, the Lord Himself offers to us a life full of hope and fully redeemed. Regardless of the severity of our wrongdoing and the harshness of the consequences, God wants us to know of His great love. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus we are rescued from all that holds us hostage; we are mercifully set free.

These eight verses of Psalm 130 offer God's love. Take this week to memorize these verses. Write them on your index card and let these words minister to your heart. You may even have the opportunity to offer hope to a friend as you work to memorize these verses together.

TEACHING: Psalm 130 uses several words that are rich in their meaning. The psalm will explode with understanding as we review and consider the definition of some of these words:

- a) ***Mercy***: Mercy is God's act of not giving us what we do deserve (punishment and death) but rather graciously giving to us what we don't deserve (love, forgiveness and everlasting life).
- b) ***Forgiveness***: Forgiveness is something that is neither earned nor deserved. Forgiveness is a gift that comes from the One who no longer holds the wrong done against the offender. In fact, the One who forgives no longer even remembers the offense. Forgiveness is what God gives to us even when we offend His holiness and live separated from Him. When God offers to us His forgiveness He erases the offense that causes the separation between Him and us and restores the relationship once again.
- c) ***Fear***: Fear in this psalm is not the act of being afraid. Fear is living with a sense of holy awe. Because God created us, forgives us, and loves us we fear Him. We revere and honor Him with our lives as a response to His faithful love for us.
- d) ***Hope***: Hope is not wishing for something. Hope knows and anchors one's life in the truth of God's Word and believes that what cannot be seen is yet to come, namely life everlasting.
- e) ***Redemption***: Redemption is the process of buying back what once was yours. Redemption means that a payment was made with blood of Jesus. Because of His suffering, death, and

resurrection we can become the children of God. One life was given for another. Jesus died in order that you and I could live life abundantly with God the Father forever.

PRAYER: Lord, You hear our cry for mercy. You don't keep a record of all the wrong. If You did keep an account no one would be able to stand in Your presence. Rather than keep a record of our wrongdoing, You offer the forgiveness of all of our sins. What can we do but fear You as we honor and revere You all the days of our lives? Our hope is in You. You are the foundation on which our lives are built. You offer us more than we can imagine. Our hope rests in knowing that Your unfailing love gives us full redemption from all our sins and makes us Your children forever. _____

UNIT REVIEW

**GOD'S WILL,
OUR WAY**

REVIEW

Congratulations! You have completed the study *God's Will, Our Way*. You have become acquainted with several new Bible stories and characters. Now, it's time to review. Remember, this is not a test, only an opportunity to affirm you and your progress as you continue this exciting journey that is shaping your life. As you study you are learning the *facts* of the stories and the *truths* about God and humankind. You are also discovering how to *apply* the facts and truths to your life lived in this 21st Century.

Let's review each of the following characters and write a word or two that stands out in your mind as you recall their story:

1. Naomi: _____
2. Ruth: _____
3. Boaz: _____
4. Hannah: _____
5. Eli: _____
6. Samuel: _____
7. Saul: _____
8. Hophni: _____

Now, let's do a map review. Locate each of the following places:

1. Shiloh, location of the Tabernacle – The place of worship and sacrifices (1 Samuel 1:3)
2. Location of Ephraim – The hill country where the town of Ramah was located. The place where Hannah and Elkanah lived (1 Samuel 1:1; 1 Samuel 2:11)
3. Land along the Mediterranean coast occupied by the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:1-2)
4. The Philistine towns where the Ark of the Covenant was taken: Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron (1 Samuel 5)
5. Beth-shemesh where the Ark was recovered by the Israelites (1 Samuel 6:10-12)
6. Kiriath-jearim where the Ark was kept under the guard of Eleazar (1 Samuel 7:1)
7. The location of the tribe of Benjamin – Where Saul lived (1 Samuel 9:1)

REFLECTION REVIEW: We have studied three primary characters in this study of *God's Will, Our Way*.

1. Give an example of one way in which Ruth's life reflected God's will through the way in which she lived her life: _____

2. Give an example of a way in which Samuel lived his life reflecting God's will: _____

3. What choice did Israel make that reflected the nation's desire to do things its way rather than living according to God's will? _____

4. Give an example from the life of Saul in which he chose to live his life reflecting his own way rather than reflecting God's will: _____

APPLICATION REVIEW:

1. Ruth 4:16 says, "Then Naomi took the child, laid him in her lap and cared for him." What is one application for your life from this verse? _____

2. 1 Samuel 2:1 says, "My heart rejoices in the Lord...for I delight in your deliverance." How do Hannah's words challenge me as I consider my attitude during times of difficult circumstances? _____

3. Psalm 130 speaks of hope! Review the meaning of each of these words as God's Good News of love speaks to you through this psalm:
 - a. Mercy _____
 - b. Forgiveness _____
 - c. Fear _____
 - d. Hope _____
 - e. Redemption _____

PRAYER: Lord God, Heavenly Father, You have brought me to the end of another study of Your Word. You have challenged me to serve others with a heart of love. You have taught me through the life of Samuel that a life centered in You hears and listens to Your Word. You have also reminded me that Your

Spirit at work in me empowers me to be different. This study has also warned me of rejecting You by putting myself first thus showing contempt for You and what You want for my life. Finally, You reassure me of Your forgiving love that grants me Your underserved love (grace) and protects me from what I deserve (mercy). May I tell others this Good News so that they, too, might be able to come into a saving relationship with You. _____

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Let us hear from you!

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