

# Water of Life Community Church

## SAMUEL: A LIFE OF PRAYER

WEEK 4

1 SAMUEL 7

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### ICE BREAKER

Your Small Group Host or Leader will guide you concerning this unique ice breaker.

#### COME THOU FOUNT OF EVERY BLESSING

Come Thou Fount of every blessing  
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing  
Call for songs of loudest praise  
Teach me some melodious sonnet  
Sung by flaming tongues above  
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it  
Mount of Thy redeeming love

Jesus sought me when a stranger  
Wandering from the fold of God;  
He, to rescue me from danger  
Interposed His precious blood  
How His kindness yet pursues me  
Mortal tongue can never tell  
Clothed in flesh, till death shall loose me  
I cannot proclaim it well

O to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be!  
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter  
Bind my wandering heart to Thee  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it  
Prone to leave the God I love;  
Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it  
Seal it for Thy courts above

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### PRAYER

### WORSHIP

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## INTRODUCTION

In 1 Samuel 4–7, we find that Israel had, indeed, wandered from the Lord. They took the ark of the covenant into battle as if it were a good luck charm of sorts. In that battle, the Philistines defeated Israel and took the ark of the covenant. This news was so distressing that upon hearing it, Eli fell backwards in his chair, broke his neck, and died (4:18).

Still, after losing the ark of the covenant, Israel was not repentant. It took 20 years before they were ready to ask Samuel to lead them in a full return to the Lord. It is at this point in Israel's history that today's lesson begins.

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### 1. READ 1 SAMUEL 7:3-6.

- a. What “if . . . then” statement did Samuel give in verse 3? What specifically did Samuel indicate Israel's repentance would entail?
- b. If the people had put away their idols, then why did Samuel also lead them to pray and fast (vv. 5-6)?
- c. Is it possible for a person to truly turn to the Lord and not fully repent? Explain.
- d. How might this idea of half-hearted relationship with God help us understand why it took Israel 20 years to get to this point?
- e. What might half-hearted relationship with God look like in the church today? In contrast, what would be involved in true repentance?

### 2. READ 1 SAMUEL 7:7-11.

- a. In light of verses 3-6, does verse 7 surprise you? Do you think Israel was surprised to find out that upon returning to the Lord they still had difficulties to face?
- b. Read 1 Samuel 4:3-4. How did Israel respond differently in 1 Samuel 7:8 to the difficult battle they faced? Why?
- c. What was the result of Israel's turning to the Lord for help in humble repentance?

### 3. READ 1 SAMUEL 7:12-17.

- a. Ebenezer means “stone of help.” Recall the lyrics in “Come Thou Fount.” How does the context of verse 12 aid in your understanding of the hymn lyric, “Here I raise my Ebenezer, hither by Thy help I've come”?
- b. Why do you think Samuel said “Thus far”? What was he wanting Israel to know about their present and their future?
- c. Why did Samuel feel it necessary to set up a stone to commemorate this moment in Israel's history? Why is it important to remember how God has rescued us in the past? What are some ways

He has done that for all of us, and what are some ways we can always remember and praise Him for it?

d. Considering what Israel had done with the ark of the covenant in chapter 4, how might the people have reacted wrongly in regard to the stone? What does it look like to idolize the memory of a past victory? In contrast, what does it look like to remember and praise God alone for past victories?

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## PRAYER/MINISTRY TIME

Today's passage can be outlined this way: repent (vv. 3-6), rescue (vv. 7-11), and remember (vv. 12-17). Which of those three words stands out to you the most personally in your own relationship with the Lord? Explain.

Oftentimes, we move on to whatever is next all too quickly. What is something God has done in your life lately for which you need to take some time to remember and praise Him? Outside of confessing that need to this group, what would that look like?

Pastor said, "Jesus is ready to rescue you even if you feel you cannot win the battle. You have the Holy Spirit available to empower you to win...This altar didn't just look back, it looked ahead. 'Thus far' means there is more to come. God counts the cost to win. He knows what it will take in the days and weeks ahead to win." How does this truth encourage you today?

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## GOING DEEPER/WEEKLY CHALLENGE

### REFLECT

- We learned that God blesses our obedience. Reflect on a time when you felt like you were obedient to God.
- How did He bless your obedience?

### RESPOND

- Take some time throughout the week and spend a few minutes in a posture of obedience (i.e. kneeling on the ground, putting your hands open, worshipping, etc).
- As you do so, pray God blesses you with grace to keep your heart in a posture of faithfulness and obedience.

*Also ... Subscribe to our e-devotionals by texting "e-devotional" to 67076; or go to [wolgroups.com](http://wolgroups.com) and click on the eDevotional button for daily testimonies relating to this week's theme.*

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## MEMORY VERSE

1 Samuel 7:12, New International Version (NIV)

Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the Lord has helped us."

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## NOTES