



UPSTATE GROUP GUIDE

Through the Bible

March 31 - April 6

1 Samuel 1-3

Things to Know

EggVenture Volunteers Needed

April 5th, 2 - 5 pm - [Click Here to Volunteer!](#)

Gospel Connections and Conversations

[Click Here to report your Gospel Connections & Conversations](#)

Studying God's Word *In Community*

*Reminder. Seek to understand and apply God's word, **not** rehash the sermon.*

Read

Read 1 Samuel 3:1-21 and make observations about the text.

- What is God teaching us in the passage?
 - What does this reveal about who God is, what God has done, and how I should respond?
 - Which part of the text was most meaningful to you and why?
 - What do you need help understanding about this passage?
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Sermon *Recap*

- 🖱 Tune In Before You Take Off – You can't follow God's voice if you're too busy to hear it. Position your heart before you pursue your plans.
- 🖱 Obedience Over Outcome – When God speaks, our job isn't to predict the result—it's to obey, even when we're afraid.
- 🖱 Grow Where You're Planted – Spiritual maturity isn't microwaveable; it happens when we stay rooted, listen often, and respond faithfully.
- 🖱 Faithful Isn't Flashy – In a world of spotlight sin, God honors quiet obedience. Stay faithful even when those around you aren't.
- 🖱 God Speaks to the Still – Samuel heard in the stillness. Make space, slow down, and let God have your attention.

Discussion *Questions*

1. What does it look like to honor God with your life when others around you don't?

Reference: 1 Samuel 2:12-17

"Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the LORD."

Follow-up: In what environments today do we see spiritual compromise, even among leaders? How can we remain faithful like Samuel?

2. Where are you intentionally placing yourself to be near the presence of God?

Reference: 1 Samuel 3:3

"Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was."

Follow-up: What are practical ways you can stay near to God daily—especially in your routines and rhythms?

3. How do you discern when God is speaking to you, and what helps you stay attentive?

Reference: 1 Samuel 3:10

“Then Samuel said, ‘Speak, for your servant is listening.’”

Follow-up: What distracts you from hearing God’s voice clearly? How can your small group help one another stay spiritually attentive?

4. Have you ever sensed God asking you to do something hard? How did you respond?

Reference: 1 Samuel 3:15–18

“Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the vision...”

Follow-up: What fears might keep us from full obedience? How can we grow in courage when obedience costs us something?

5. What areas of your life do you sense God wants to grow you in right now?

Reference: 1 Samuel 3:19

“The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and He let none of Samuel’s words fall to the ground.”

Follow-up: Where do you see spiritual growth happening in your life? Where is God calling you to deeper maturity?

The Lord Calls Samuel

1 Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision.

2 At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. **3** The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was.

4 Then the Lord called Samuel, and he said, "Here I am!" **5** and ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down.

6 And the Lord called again, "Samuel!" and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." **7** Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

8 And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. **9** Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 And the Lord came and stood, calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant hears." **11** Then the Lord said to Samuel, "Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. **12** On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. **13** And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God,[a] and he did not restrain them. **14** Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever."

15 Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. **16** But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Here I am."

1 Samuel 3:1-21

17 And Eli said, “What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also if you hide anything from me of all that he told you.” **18** So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, “It is the Lord. Let him do what seems good to him.”

19 And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. **20** And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the Lord. **21** And the Lord appeared again at Shiloh, for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the Lord.

[*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Samuel 3:1-21

Living on Mission In Community

Before you close the group, answer this question:

How is God leading me to respond to His Word this week?

In a time when corruption and compromise were common—even among religious leaders—God raised up a young servant whose heart was open, ears attentive, and life surrendered. Samuel didn’t just serve in God’s house; he listened for God’s voice, obeyed when it was hard, and grew steadily in faith and favor. His story reminds us that faithfulness often begins in quiet places, through simple obedience. Like Samuel, we are called not just to hear God, but to respond—to speak truth, walk humbly, and live set apart. **So where is God calling you to take your next step of obedience, growth, or courage this week?**

Optional Breakout Questions

Consider making time at the end of the group to break out into groups of 2-4 (keep them gender specific). Have them answer these three questions about their weeks:

1. How did you feed yourself?
 - *(What have you been doing to feed your spiritual life, and how is it going?)*
2. How did you feed others?
 - *(How did you share the gospel or gospel truth with someone this week?)*
3. How did you feed your flesh?
 - *(What sins did you struggle with this week? How can your friends hold you accountable?)*

Leader Resources

Small Group Curriculum: 1 Samuel 2–3

Theme: *A Faithful Servant – Hearing, Obeying, and Growing in the Lord*

1. Session Overview

Main Idea: In a time of spiritual decline, God raises up Samuel as a faithful servant who hears His voice, obeys His word, and grows in His presence—unlike Eli’s corrupt sons. God still seeks people who listen, obey, and grow in Him.

Scripture Focus:

- 1 Samuel 2:11–36
- 1 Samuel 3:1–21

2. Opening & Prayer

Leader Intro:

Welcome everyone! Today we’re diving into a powerful story of contrast between obedience and corruption, listening and ignoring, humility and arrogance. We’ll look at how God raises up Samuel to be His faithful servant in a time of deep spiritual decay.

Opening Prayer:

Invite the group to a quiet moment. Then say:

“Let’s pause and ask God to help us listen as Samuel did—with open hearts and willing obedience.”

Then pray:

"Lord, speak—for your servants are listening. Help us to hear Your voice, to obey what You say, and to grow in Your ways. Give us hearts like Samuel, even when the world around us looks more like Eli's sons. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Icebreaker Question:

What's a time you had to learn something the hard way—or from someone else's failure?

3. Scripture Reading

Take turns reading aloud:

- 1 Samuel 2:12–26 (Eli's sons vs. Samuel)
- 1 Samuel 3:1–21 (Samuel's calling)

4. Teaching Points & Commentary

A. A Contrast in Character (1 Sam 2:12–26)

Key Idea: Eli's sons were "*worthless men*" (2:12), while Samuel grew in favor with God and people (2:26).

Quote:

"Though Eli's sons are described as blasphemers who desecrated holy offerings, young Samuel is quietly growing in faithfulness, positioned near God's presence, wearing a linen ephod as a child priest." — *NAC Commentary*

Teaching Insight:

Hophni and Phinehas abused their priestly roles for selfish gain (2:17), while Samuel ministered before the Lord even as a boy (2:18). The text contrasts the pride and corruption of the old priestly line with the humility and purity of the one God is raising up.

Application Questions:

- In what ways does spiritual pride show up in religious environments today?
- How can we cultivate a heart like Samuel's in environments that might resemble Eli's household?

B. A Servant Who Listens (1 Sam 3:1–10)

Key Idea: Samuel didn't just work in the tabernacle—he listened when God called.

Quote:

“Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was... God stood and called as at other times: ‘Samuel! Samuel!’” — *1 Sam 3:3,10*

“It was a moment as important in Samuel's life as God's call to Abraham or Moses. Samuel's attentive response, ‘Speak, for your servant is listening,’ showed he was ready to hear and obey.” — *NAC Commentary*

Spurgeon Insight:

“Oh, how often has our heart felt this desire in the form of a groaning that cannot be uttered! ‘Lord, I want to know You... Speak, Lord, just to show You notice me.’” — *C.H. Spurgeon*

Application Questions:

- How do you personally listen for God's voice today?
- What distractions make it hard to hear Him?

C. A Messenger Who Obeys (1 Sam 3:11–18)

Key Idea: Samuel didn't just hear God—he delivered the hard message God gave him.

Quote:

“Samuel’s first act as prophet was perhaps his most difficult; though only a child, he had to announce the Lord’s fatal judgment against Israel’s most powerful family.” – *NAC Commentary*

Insight:

Despite his fear (3:15), Samuel told Eli everything (v.18). This moment marked Samuel’s shift from servant to prophet. In contrast, Eli had failed to confront his sons (2:29, 3:13). Samuel would not make that same mistake.

Application Points:

- God is not looking for perfection, but obedience. Are we willing to speak the truth even when it’s uncomfortable?
- What would it look like for you to obey God more boldly this week?

Discussion Question:

- Has God ever asked you to do something hard? What did you learn from that experience?

D. A Life That Grows in the Lord (1 Sam 2:26; 3:19–21)

Key Idea: Samuel’s life is marked by ongoing growth in wisdom, character, and spiritual authority.

Quote:

“The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and He let none of Samuel’s words fall to the ground... All Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet.” – *1 Sam 3:19–20*

“The Lord speaks, His servant hears and obeys. Samuel has no choice; his own will is submitted to the command of God.” – *TOTC Commentary*

Insight:

True spiritual growth is rooted in a posture of listening and obedience. Samuel didn't chase power—he lived near the Lord, and the Lord raised him up.

Application Questions:

- How are you currently growing in your relationship with God?
- What spiritual practices are helping you hear and obey the Lord?

5. Application Summary

Takeaways:

- **Listen:** Cultivate stillness to hear God. Ask daily: “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.”
- **Obey:** Be faithful with what God says—even if it's difficult or countercultural.
- **Grow:** Let obedience lead to transformation. God grows us as we listen and follow Him.

6. Closing Reflection & Prayer

Invite:

Take a few quiet moments and ask the Lord:

- *Is there something You've been saying that I've been missing?*
- *What's one step of obedience I can take this week?*

Closing Prayer:

“Lord, we want to be like Samuel—not just busy in Your house, but attentive to Your voice. Help us to hear You, obey You, and grow in You. Give us courage when obedience is hard. Raise up in us a faithful heart. In Jesus' name, Amen.”