

How One Man Saved a Nation

1 Samuel 2-7

Will these same principles work today? Absolutely!

How did Samuel change his nation?

Our story begins when Samuel was a boy serving under Eli the priest.

“Now the boy Samuel was attending to the service of the LORD under the supervision of Eli. The word of the LORD was rare *and* precious in those days; visions [that is, new revelations of divine truth] were not widespread.” 1 Samuel 3:1

Here we read that Samuel was attending to the service of the Lord. In other words, he was being taught as if he was in school.

In 1 Samuel chapter 2 we learn that Eli was given the charge to raise Samuel. No doubt Samuel would have been taught, as would every Jewish boy, the books of Moses. This would have included God’s Laws, Promises, and Blessings as well as what would have happened had the nation turned away from the Lord. Samuel would have also learned about the Jewish Festivals, Feasts and Celebrations. He would have been taught the stories of how God delivered the Israelites from Egypt and all the miracles that were included. No doubt Eli taught Samuel every custom and tradition. Samuel also learned every duty of being a priest.

We also learn from this passage that the “word of the LORD was rare and precious in those days.” This is another way of saying God’s Word was seldom heard or perhaps it is saying if those did hear the Word of God, they were not proclaiming it. Since God is always speaking (see John 10:27-28, Matthew 7:24) then one could also surmise that perhaps no one was listening.

Let’s Begin:

1. Samuel was in a position to hear God

“The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle (The Temple or House of the Lord) near the Ark of God.”

1 Samuel 3:3 NLT

Samuel was sleeping in the presence of The Most High
This is the place it seems where Samuel slept every night.

Assuming we want to hear from God then how can we get into position to hear God voice?

Our position is the place where we are right now. Our position is an attitude of our heart and our mind more than an actual place.

We must remember God searches the heart. God cares more about the condition of our hearts than anything else. If our hearts are in the right place than our words and actions will follow.

“The Lord sees not a man sees; for a man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7

We just need to seek the Lord right where we are right now. Whatever our position is, all we have to do is make ourselves available to hear from the Lord.

Do we expect to hear from the Lord?

If we are seeking the Lord then He promises we will find (hear) Him.

“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”

Jeremiah 29:13 NIV

Samuel heard God’s voice when no one else was hearing. Samuel was in the right frame of mind (the right position mentally, in his heart). He positioned his heart and mind to not only to hear God’s voice but also to listen intently to Him.

Samuel was able to hear God’s voice when no one else could because he had positioned his life to listen. He surrounded himself with the things of God. For us that would include reading the Bible (God’s Word) and being around others who also want to hear from the Lord.

1. Don’t let the business of life distract or harden our heart and mind.

“the cares of this world and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.”

Mark 4:19 NKJV

2. Get quiet.

Tune out the things that hinder you from hearing The Voice of the Lord.

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Hebrews 12:1-2 NIV

Turn off the radio and the tv. Put our electronics away.

3. Listen for the voice of God

Do I expect to hear from God?

God is always speaking so the question is, am I listening?

“and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice (a gentle blowing) So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?””

1 Kings 19:12-13 NKJV

4. How to hear the voice of the Lord

A. We can actively listen by reading the Word of God.

“My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings.” Proverbs 4:20 NKJV

We must give our undivided attention and focus on what God’s Word is saying.

B. We can ask to hear God’s Voice.

““Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”

Matthew 7:7-8 NIV

“...You do not have because you do not ask God.”

James 4:2 NIV

5. Expect God to answer

“In the morning, Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly.” Psalms 5:3 NIV

Expectantly here is not talking about passively waiting it is referring to waiting actively, being assertive and positive that God will answer.

6. Trust and Believe God will speak

“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.” John 10:27 NIV

“Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way; walk in it.”” Isaiah 30:21 NIV

“Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.”

Jeremiah 33:3 NIV

God is saying we will, can and should hear the voice of God.

2. Samuel Had a Listening Heart.

“One night Eli, who was almost blind by now, had gone to bed. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle near the Ark of God. Suddenly the Lord called out, “Samuel!” “Yes?” Samuel replied. “What is it?” He got up and ran to Eli. “Here I am. Did you call me?” “I didn’t call you,” Eli replied. “Go back to bed.” So he did. Then the Lord called out again, “Samuel!” Again Samuel got up and went to Eli. “Here I am. Did you call me?” “I didn’t call you, my son,” Eli said. “Go back to bed.” Samuel did not yet know the Lord because he had never had a message from the Lord before. So the Lord called a third time, and once more Samuel got up and went to Eli. “Here I am. Did you call me?” Then Eli realized it was the Lord who was calling the boy. So he said to Samuel, “Go and lie down again, and if someone calls again, say, ‘Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went back to bed. And the Lord came and called as before, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel replied, “Speak, your servant is listening.”” 1 Samuel 3:2-10 NLT

Why did it take so long to hear from God? We touched on this a bit earlier. Perhaps many prior to Samuel heard God speak but maybe they simply were not listening. Another thought is perhaps many were hearing God but like so many times in my life I did not want to do what He (God) said.

What is the difference between hearing and listening? Is there a difference?

Samuel listened with his heart. When God spoke, it moved Samuel into action. At first when Samuel thought it was Eli speaking, Samuel arose and walked over to see what he wanted. When Samuel realized it was God speaking to him, he responded to him by saying Speak, for I am listening (paying attention).

Samuel heard God’s voice when no one else did because he listened with his heart. Was God silent, of course not. God is always speaking. See Hebrews 1:1-5; Romans 1:19-20

Samuel’s heart was ready to listen. Samuel allowed his heart to yield to God.

There is a difference between hearing and listening. It’s like when we were kids and our parents asked us to do something. We heard them yet we didn’t respond to them. We weren’t really listening. When we are listening, we receive the message into our hearts. When we are listening, what we hear moves us into action.

God is always speaking and trying to get our attention.

Samuel made it a priority to listen to the voice of the Lord.

We will Always pay attention to that which is important to us

God said if you seek me with all your heart mind and soul you will find me

“Then [with a deep longing] you will seek Me and require Me [as a vital necessity] and [you will] find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.”

Jeremiah 29:13 AMP

Other reasons we don't hear the voice of God is because we are too busy, to preoccupied or other noises simply drown His voice out. When God is *not* a priority to us, we allow ourselves to be too busy or preoccupied.

I often think how many times was God saying something to me and either I was too busy, my mind was preoccupied with other thoughts or I was simply not listening with my heart?

Become Familiar with God's Voice

Samuel became familiar with the Voice of the Lord because he learned God's voice over other's voices. We too can become familiar with God's voice the more we listen to him. The more we read His Word, the more we hear His voice.

One of the things Solomon asked for from God was that he would have a listening heart. We read this in 1 Kings.

“Here's what I want: *Give me a God-listening heart* so I can lead (influence) your people well, discerning the difference between good and evil. For who on their own is capable of leading your glorious people?”
1 Kings 3:9 MESSAGE

3. Samuel Grew

“**Samuel grew**, and the LORD was with him and He let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the LORD.”
1 Samuel 3:19-20 NKJV

“And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the Lord and with people.”
1 Samuel 2:26 NIV

Samuel grew bigger and taller (physically). He was about 12 years old when he first heard from the Lord. Samuel grew intellectually. He grew smarter as he got older. Samuel grew in all ways just as we grow. Samuel grew to know The Lord and he grew to know the voice of The Lord.

Growth is one of the most important things we can do. We were made to grow.

Even Jesus grew.

“Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” Luke 2:52 NKJV

We must constantly be growing no matter our age. God is all about growth. We will be growing in our knowledge of the Lord the rest of our lives. This is what we call the journey of being a Christian.

4. The Lord was with him

“So Samuel grew, and **the LORD was with him** and He let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the LORD.”
I Samuel 3:19-20 NKJV

God is with us always. God says that He will never leave us nor forsake us. “...I WILL NEVER [under any circumstances] DESERT YOU [nor give you up nor leave you without support, nor will I in any degree leave you helpless], NOR WILL I FORSAKE or LET YOU DOWN or RELAX M Y HOLD ON YOU [assuredly not]!” Hebrews 13:5 AMP

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9 NKJV

Jesus said, “I am with you always.” Matthew 28:20

The truth is, none of us can ever escape the presence of the Lord (Psalm 139:7-8), but why would we want to?

We can be most assuredly confident in God’s Presence.

5. Samuel made sure everything The Lord said was accomplished

“So Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and **He let none of his words fall to the ground**. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the LORD.”
I Samuel 3:19-20 NKJV

The AMP version says “He let none of His word fail to be fulfilled.”

Samuel took so seriously God’s Word, that he believed that if God said it, then it was going to happen, and that was that.

Samuel as a prophet would proclaim to the people what God would tell him. Samuel would keep declaring it until it happened or took place. Samuel was quite the determined prophet. No matter what was taking place around him, Samuel would just stand on the Word of God until he saw it manifest. Something as believers today need to do more often. I don’t know about you but I am too quick to give up if I don’t see something happen that God promised in the time frame, I think it should happen. It’s so easy to look at our circumstances around us and then think God’s Word didn’t work. But that is not what Samuel did. He may have saw with his eyes the circumstances around him, but he didn’t let his circumstances dictate what he believed. He chose to believe God’s Word above his circumstances. He chose to believe what God said about the situation regardless of what was happening around him.

What a great lesson to learn for all of us. Let's keep standing on the Word of God until we see it happen!

6. Samuel spoke the Word of God

“So Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and **He let none of his words fall to the ground**. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the LORD.”
1 Samuel 3:19-20 NKJV

Samuel cared deeply for his nation and the people. Samuel also understood God's heart for the people so as a consequence he would only declare the words God would put on his heart.

Samuel used The Sword of the Spirit!

“Take the helmet of salvation and ***the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.***”
Ephesians 6:17 NIV

“***For the word of God is living and active and full of power*** [making it operative, energizing, and effective]. It is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating as far as the division of the soul and spirit [the completeness of a person], and of both joints and marrow [the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and judging the very thoughts and intentions of the heart.”
Hebrews 4:12 AMP

Another wonderful lesson from Samuel for us to always remember to only speak the Word of God and not our opinion.

7. Samuel was an honorable man. Respected and held in high esteem.

“So Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and He let none of his words fall to the ground. **And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the LORD.**”
1 Samuel 3:19-20 NKJV

“But the servant said, “I've just thought of something! There is a man of God who lives here in this town. ***He is held in high honor by all the people because everything he says comes true.*** Let's go find him. Perhaps he can tell us which way to go.”” 1 Samuel 9:6

Samuel was respected by everyone in the entire nation. He was looked at with high honor and esteem.

The people respected, trusted and valued Samuel because what he said would happen, is actually and precisely what happened. Samuel stood on the Word of God no matter what, and that earned the respect of the entire nation. I say again the entire nation, not just a church, a community or a city, but the entire nation. That is saying a lot.

If only people would say that us as Christians.

8. Samuel taught repentance

As we just discussed, Samuel had the respect of the entire nation. The people were like, 'this guy is for real.' Samuel was proven among the people and was seen as true prophet of God. 1 Samuel 3: 19-20

We read in 1 Samuel chapters 4-6, The Philistines, who's country bordered Israel, was an enemy of Israel. The Philistines were constantly provoking and antagonizing the Israelites, with ultimately wanting to control the nation of Israel. The Israelites had already lost several battles to the Philistines and by now the very mention of these people would create a great deal of fear within them. We pick up the story in 1 Samuel 7. The people are seeking the advice of Samuel. Since Samuel was now proven and highly respected, the people were ready to listen and do whatever was necessary.

It was time for God to tell the people through Samuel, to repent.

"Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, ***"If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, then remove the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and direct your hearts to the LORD and serve Him alone;*** and He will save you from the hand of the Philistines." So the sons of Israel removed the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and served the LORD alone." 1 Samuel 7:3-4 NASB2020

"If My people, who are called by My Name, ***humble themselves***, and ***pray*** and ***seek (crave, require as a necessity) My face*** and ***turn from their wicked ways***, then I will hear [them] from heaven, and forgive their sin and heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14 AMP

Samuel was saying, If you are truly putting God first in your heart, then all the things in your life that are a detriment or a hindrance to your relationship with God, must be discarded or thrown out. Samuel told the people that all of these idols that were in their homes must go. In order for the nation to be saved, the people had to make a choice. Were they going to keep following other gods, sitting on the fence and do nothing, continue to compromise and be lukewarm or decide with all of their hearts to follow God, the true God?

I believe God is asking the Christians in The United States today the same question.

9. Samuel prayed for the people. He interceded for them.

** he was a man of pray**

"And Samuel said, "Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and ***I will pray to the LORD for you.***"
1 Samuel 7:5 NKJV

"And Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. ***Then Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel***, and the LORD answered him." 1 Samuel 7:9 NKJV
We ought to be praying for our nation as well.

Samuel was essentially saying, no more compromising, Change the way I think and change the way you live. Then, God will save you!

The nation decided to repent and follow God.

"So the Israelites removed the Baals and Ashtaroath and served the Lord alone. 1 Samuel 7:4 AMP

Good Choice!

Results of their decision to repent and follow God.

"As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines approached for the battle against Israel. Then the LORD thundered with a great voice that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were defeated and fled before Israel. And the men of Israel came out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and struck them down as far as (the territory) below Beth – car. The Philistines were subdued and they did not come anymore into the Israelite territory. And the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. The cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath; and Israel recovered the cities' territory from the Philistines. Also there was peace between Israel and the Amorites." 1 Samuel 7: 10-11, 13-14 AMP

God fought for them.

"As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines approached for the battle against Israel. Then the LORD thundered with a great voice that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were defeated and fled before Israel. And the men of Israel came out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and struck them down as far as (the territory) below Beth – car. The Philistines were subdued and they did not come anymore into the Israelite territory." 1 Samuel 7:10-11

God used weather to frightened the Philistines but the Israelites still had to show up and do something. The Israelites were engaged by striking them down and pursuing them.

God healed their land.

"The cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath; and Israel recovered the cities' territory from the Philistines. Also there was peace between Israel and the Amorites." 1 Samuel 7:14 AMP

God brought peace with other countries.

“...there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.” 1 Samuel 7:14 AMP

This is a great lesson for the people of The United States today. If we as a nation would humble ourselves, pray and seek the Lord with our hearts and then repent of our wickedness then we can see what the outcome would be.

“If My people, who are called by My Name, **humble themselves**, and **pray** and **seek (crave, require as a necessity) My face** and **turn from their wicked ways**, then I will hear [them] from heaven, and forgive their sin and heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14 AMP