

Sermon-Based Discussion Guide

Date 10/1/26 Bryce Taylor

Watch the sermon at manheimbic.org/sermon.



BIBLE PASSAGES

1 Samuel 7:2-12 "Then all the people of Israel turned back to the LORD. ³So Samuel said to all the Israelites, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." ⁴So the Israelites put away their Baals and Ashtoreths, and served the LORD only. ⁵Then Samuel said, "Assemble all Israel at Mizpah, and I will intercede with the LORD for you."⁶When they had assembled at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out before the LORD. On that day they fasted and there they confessed, "We have sinned against the LORD." Now Samuel was serving as leader of Israel at Mizpah. ⁷When the Philistines heard that Israel had assembled at Mizpah, the rulers of the Philistines came up to attack them. When the Israelites heard of it, they were afraid because of the Philistines. ⁸They said to Samuel, "Do not stop crying out to the LORD our God for us, that he may rescue us from the hand of the Philistines." ⁹Then Samuel took a suckling lamb and sacrificed it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. He cried out to the LORD on Israel's behalf, and the LORD answered him. ¹⁰While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle. But that day the LORD thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites. ¹¹The men of Israel rushed out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, slaughtering them along the way to a point below Beth Kar."

¹²Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "*Thus far the LORD has helped us.*"

Other passages: Hebrews 12, Exodus 3:5, Revelations 3, Proverbs 3

Connect: Get to know each other. Connect, warm up to each other, and take time to fellowship.

Care:

Carry each other's burdens. Share life's challenges and practice Soul Care. Pray together.

Challenge:

- 1) **Running Ahead vs. Pausing First - 1 Samuel 4:1-3 / 7:3-6** When life hits a bump, Israel's go-to move was to grab the Ark and sprint into battle without even talking to God first. When you're stressed or facing a tough situation, what does your version of "running ahead" look like instead of taking a breath to pray?
- 2) **God as a "Lucky Charm" - 1 Samuel 4:3 / 7:3** The Israelites treated the Ark like a magic token to get out of trouble. Have you ever caught yourself treating spiritual things—like saying a quick prayer or showing up to church—like a lucky charm rather than actually talking to God?
- 3) **Losing the Awe Factor - 1 Samuel 6:19-20 / Exodus 3:5 / Heb 12:28-29** The people in Beth Shemesh got way too casual with the Ark and forgot who they were dealing with. It's super easy in our culture to lose that sense of wonder and respect for God. What's one area where we might be taking God's holiness or His Word a little too casually?
- 4) **Having It Both Ways - 1 Samuel 7:3-4 & Revelation 3:15-16** Israel wanted God for protection, but they ran to Ashtoreth for comfort and pleasure—trying to keep one foot in both worlds. What are some modern "Ashtoreths" (things like comfort, money, or culture's approval) that tempt us to settle for a lukewarm faith?
- 5) **Ebenezer stone moment? - 1 Samuel 7:12** They poured out water before the Lord, a sign of complete repentance and surrender and they fasted and confessed, "We have sinned against Yahweh." Samuel then sets up the *Ebenezer* stone, declaring, "Thus far the Lord has helped us" What's an Ebenezer stone in your life? Reminding you of who the Lord is throughout the day?

Clarify:

Does anyone need clarity on something? Are there any big God questions you are wrestling with?

Celebrate:

Celebrate life's successes and God's provision. Worship God's presence. Time to brag about God.

KEY TAKEAWAYS