

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, February 7, 2010

Passage: 1 Samuel 3:1-4:1a

Memory Passage: Proverbs 29:18

TODAY: *From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?*

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read 1 Samuel 3:1.** In this chapter, we begin to get a better picture of the boy, Samuel. This chapter begins with an ominous statement though, reminding us as the reader, that the spiritual atmosphere of Israel was not a good one. What is it that we learn about this period of time in this first verse? What ramifications might this have (Proverbs 29:18)?

(b) How does Amos 8:11-12 frame the absence of a word of the Lord (i.e. why is it happening)? With regards to this, how does Peter describe the nature of the church in Acts 2:16-21? And what effect did the word of the Lord have in the early church (Acts 13:48-49)?

(c) How have you seen both the vitality that the Word brings and the chaos that its absence has in your own life? How have you seen your own speaking of God's word into other's lives, cause spiritual vitality to occur? How can you be a messenger of the word of the Lord to people around you? Think of some small yet practical ways to do this, either to encourage, exhort or witness to people that God brings your way.

(d) *Family:* Read 1 Samuel 3:1 and Proverbs 29:18. Why is it so important for us to have revelation from the Lord? What is the revelation that we have? What responsibility do we have to speak this to others? What is an important thing to remember when we share the words of our Lord with others (1Cor 13:2)? Pray that the Lord would give you an opportunity to see the power of His word in the lives of others today.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read 1 Samuel 3:2-3.** These two verses make several subtle statements about Eli and Samuel and their spiritual condition. The use of double meanings are abundant in this passage as well as the whole chapter. What picture of Eli and Samuel do we get from these two verses? Where is Eli sleeping and where is Samuel sleeping? What double meaning does this give us? Compare them from what you know about them.

(b) The time of this story must be early morning because the lamp in the temple of God had not yet gone out. The lamp that this verse is talking about is what has been traditionally called a menorah. (Read Exodus 25:31-40 for a description of it) What does God assign the Levites to do with it at night (Exodus 27:20-21)? What does light help us to do? What does this light burning at night represent to us?

(c) What does it tell us about Samuel that he was about the task of keeping it lit? How does Samuel become a symbol here of how we are to be as Christians (1 Timothy 4:13-16; Luke 16:10-12)?

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read John 1:1-5; 3:19-21.** The themes of word and light are something that are sprinkled throughout the Bible. They are powerful images of God's personal and life giving work in our lives. John's gospel is a gospel of both "the word" and "the light". How is Jesus described in both of these passages? How does the visual image of a light in the midst of darkness shape how you see God?

(b) In the first passage, what are all the things that Jesus is described as doing as both the word and the light? Light reveals things that are hidden and shows things that have long been unseen. Why can this be both a frightening thing and freeing thing all at once? Is there any part of your life/heart/mind that you are "hiding" from God?

(c) Read John 3:19-21 again asking God to show you anything that you might have "hidden" from his light, then read John 3:16-18. Trusting in the word and living by those few verses can be a powerful thing. For He has the power to make all things new and all things clean.

(d) *Family:* Read John 3:16-21. What does it mean to hide things from the light of God? What does this passage promise to those who are willing to let God's light shine in the dark places of their life? Do you believe that Jesus can save you from the darkness of your sin? Pray today that God would show you any areas that you have kept hidden from the light of God's forgiveness and holiness and for the strength to give that over to God in confession and repentance.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read 1 Samuel 3:4-14.** Here we have the pivotal calling of Samuel. This is his inauguration into a special prophetic ministry. Not since Moses do we have a named man as a prophet of God (See Judges 6:8; 1 Samuel 2:27 for unnamed prophets). From the first few verses what can we glean about their character from Samuel and Eli's actions and responses to what happens?

(b) In verse 10, we finally have the call and response to Samuel. How many times does he say Samuel's name? Who else in the Bible has received this same type of call from God (Genesis 22:11; Exodus 3:4)? In Biblical terms, where does this place Samuel amongst the great patriarchs of the Bible?

(c) How does God use the prophecy to both confirm him to Eli as a prophet and as His prophet (i.e. what does he reveal to Samuel that he has already revealed and what new prophecy is added)? The prophecy against Eli is harsh. Why is the judgment against Eli's house forbidden from being reprieved by sacrifices (Numbers 15:30-31; 1 Samuel 2:25)?

(d) *Family*: Read 1 Samuel 3:4-14. Samuel is believed by some to only be 12 years old when this even occurs and at most he was 17. How is God able to use even a young boy like Samuel to be a minister of His word? Do you see yourself as being able to be used by God? What had Samuel been doing that showed himself faithful to God? All it takes to be used by God is to be faithful to Him. Believing in Him and seeking to follow His will is what He desires for each one of us. Do you believe God can use you?

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read 1 Samuel 3:15-4:1a.** After receiving the message from the Lord, Samuel lay there until the morning came, then opened the doors of the house of the Lord in more ways than just physically. What are we told about Samuel? How would you have felt about delivering such a message?

(b) What does Eli tell Samuel about withholding the message? How does the square up with Ezekiel 3:17-21? Is Eli's response surprising to you? Why or why not?

(c) Like Samuel, we have been given a message to tell others, but unlike Samuel's it is not bad news but good news. Why is it that we treat the Gospel like bad news and often are more than willing to talk about how evil will one day be judged? What keeps you from delivering good news? Is it not knowing how to share or is it fear or is it out of discomfort or out of complacency?

(d) How did God reward Samuel's faithfulness to deliver His message? Do you think God will do the same for you (Luke 25:23)?

(e) *Family*: Read 1 Samuel 3:15-4:1a. How hard would it have been to give the message that Samuel had to Eli? What message do we have to give other people? Is it good news or bad news? Why is it that we struggle sharing it with others? How could you overcome those struggles? Read Matthew 25:23. Pray that you would be faithful in what God has given to you.

DAY 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

Think back through what you have learned each day this week. How are you like Samuel? Are you being faithful to all that God has called you to do, say, and be? What areas of your life are you keeping hidden away from God's light? What kind of opportunities has God given you this week to speak the word of God into another person's life? How have you seen that bring forth light and life?

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The Calling of the Lord

“the word of the Lord was rare”