

THE GROUND SHOOK

unit 9 | session 3



CHRIST CONNECTION

Eli's sons were evil priests who received the judgment they deserved for their sins. In contrast, Jesus is the great High Priest ([Heb. 6:20](#)), the sinless Son of God who took the judgment He didn't deserve for the sins of the world.

PRESENCE AND RELATIONSHIP

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

1 Samuel 4—1 Samuel 6

THERE'S NO SALVATION APART FROM GOD

1 SAMUEL 4:1-5

1 And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out to battle against the Philistines. They encamped at Ebenezer, and the Philistines encamped at Aphek. 2 The Philistines drew up in line against Israel, and when the battle spread, Israel was defeated before the Philistines, who killed about four thousand men on the field of battle. 3 And when the people came to the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has the LORD defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD here from Shiloh, that it may come among us and save us from the power of our enemies." 4 So the people sent to Shiloh and brought from there the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, who is enthroned on the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. 5 As soon as the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel gave a mighty shout, so that the earth resounded.

THERE IS ONLY DEFEAT APART FROM GOD

1 SAMUEL 4:6-11

6 And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shouting, they said, "What does this great shouting in the camp of the Hebrews mean?" And when they learned that the ark of the LORD had come to the camp, 7 the Philistines were afraid, for they said, "A god has come into the camp." And they said, "Woe to us! For nothing like this has happened before. 8 Woe to us! Who can deliver us from the power of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with every sort of plague in the wilderness. 9 Take courage, and be men, O Philistines, lest you become slaves to the Hebrews as they have been to you; be men and fight." 10 So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and they fled, every man to his home. And there was a very great slaughter, for thirty thousand foot soldiers of Israel fell. 11 And the ark of God was captured, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

MAIN POINT.

When we place our faith in anything or anyone besides God, we'll face defeat.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

SALVATION/ REGENERATION

Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of God's grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of our entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.

DISCUSSION

THERE'S NO SALVATION APART FROM GOD

1 SAMUEL 4:1-5

- How were the Israelites treating the ark of the covenant? Were they depending on God? Explain.
- ♥ • In what ways do we treat God similarly to the Israelites? What does it reveal about our hearts?
- 📖 • What things have you leaned on for salvation other than God Himself?

THERE IS ONLY DEFEAT APART FROM GOD

1 SAMUEL 4:6-11

- How are we sometimes like the Philistines in treating God as just another "god"?
- 💡 • What does this passage help you understand about God's presence?
- ✝️ • What was the role of the priest? What do we learn about the seriousness of it here?



HOW CAN YOU TAKE STEPS TO DO BATTLE WITH THE LORD INSTEAD OF FIGHTING WITHOUT HIM?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

When do you cry out to God? Is it only when you're in need? Do you approach Him or spend time with Him only when you need something from Him? Think about this: You probably wouldn't want a friendship where the person only came to you in times of need. And yet, many of us do this when it comes to our friendship with God. When life gets hard, we turn to God. Difficult situations often wake us up to our great need for Him. But we must realize we have great need of Him every single day. He sustains our every breath. He is sovereign over every minute of our lives. We often forget the Lord in the mundane, or everyday, parts of life. God wants to have a real relationship with you. He wants you to be intimately connected to Him. He wants to be more than just the One you turn to when life is difficult. He wants to be in the good parts, the mundane parts, too. He wants to walk with you always. Walking with God every day will mean you'll more easily lean on Him when life does get hard because you'll know Him—you'll know His kindness, His goodness, and His faithfulness. Why wouldn't you want to enjoy His presence at all times?



DAY ONE

HEBREWS 8:1-6

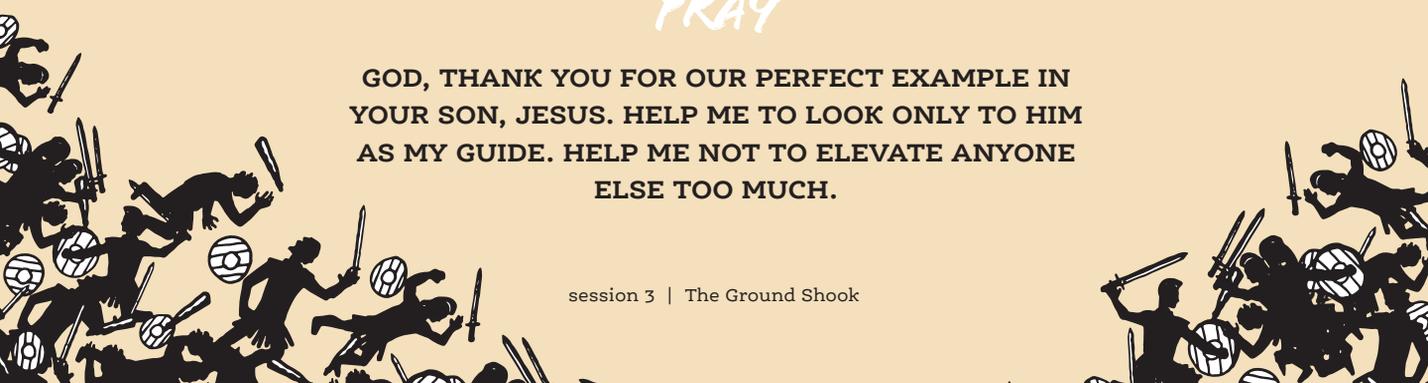
Many of us have looked up to other people. They're our mentors and examples. We may even want to imitate everything they do. Because they're human, though, it's likely that you've also been let down by people you look up to. Having others to look up to is a gift that often motivates us to be better, but it can sting when they don't live up to our expectations.

In the Old Testament, priests held an important position. They acted as a go-between, or mediator, for God's people and God. They made sacrifices for Israel's sins, led by example, and even spoke what they heard from God. But they were human. As we read this week, some of them made deadly mistakes—like Eli's sons. They disobeyed God's commands and corrupted their priestly role. They paid for this sin with their lives. This is a great reminder for us that earthly leaders and mentors—even pastors—are human. Even the best people we know will make mistakes. The verses today reinforce this idea about earthly priests too. They were only shadows of the one perfect priest, Jesus. Godly mentors are gifts, but no one can lead us like Jesus leads us. He is our perfect mediator, and He introduced a greater covenant and promise! We can look to people for encouragement, but we must remember they're only shadows. We must fix our eyes on Jesus, our perfect example, instead of elevating earthly leaders to a position they could never fill perfectly.

- **WHEN HAVE YOU ELEVATED SOMEONE TOO MUCH INSTEAD OF LOOKING TO JESUS AS YOUR EXAMPLE?**
- **WHY DO YOU THINK GOD GIVES US GODLY EXAMPLES TO FOLLOW? HOW CAN YOU WALK AS ONE?**

PRAY

GOD, THANK YOU FOR OUR PERFECT EXAMPLE IN YOUR SON, JESUS. HELP ME TO LOOK ONLY TO HIM AS MY GUIDE. HELP ME NOT TO ELEVATE ANYONE ELSE TOO MUCH.





DAY TWO

MATTHEW 16:13-16

Who are you? Are you a son, a daughter, a friend, a student, an athlete, a musician? People probably define you as one of these, but you're so much more than people realize. There's more to your identity than others see.

The disciples knew Jesus on a deeper level than most. They spent more time with Him than anyone else. There were a lot of rumors circulating about Jesus's identity. In an effort to help His disciples understand who He was, Jesus asked them: "But who do you say that I am?" (v. 15). Peter's answer was unlike any other; he claimed Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of the living God (v. 16). In the passage this week, even the Philistines—Israel's enemy—recognized that Yahweh was some type of "magnificent" god (1 Sam. 4:8). They had heard of God's power in defeating the Egyptians, and they acknowledged that He must be some great god among many gods. They didn't understand Yahweh is the only God. So often in our culture, people have a similar understanding of Jesus. They acknowledge that He existed and that He was a good teacher, but they fail to truly see Jesus as the Messiah. They fail to see that we must confess Him as Lord and surrender our lives to Him if we want to follow Him. Who do you say Jesus is? Is He just someone you learn about on Sundays but don't follow daily? Is He the One you've surrendered your entire life to, or is He just another "god" among the many idols you're surrendering to? Your answer matters greatly.

- **WHO DO YOU SAY JESUS IS?**
- **IF WE SAY JESUS IS MESSIAH, WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR OUR LIVES TO BACK IT UP?**

PRAY

JESUS, I KNOW YOU ARE THE MESSIAH—THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD. HELP ME TO LIVE IN A WAY THAT REFLECTS THIS TRUTH SO OTHERS CAN SEE IT.



DAY THREE

EPHESIANS 6:10-19

If you were going into battle, what would you take with you? You'd need supplies, right? Going in empty-handed could result in catastrophic consequences. You'd probably carry some type of body protection, a helmet, and some type of weapon. You may even wear specific clothing to camouflage yourself. What you choose to carry into battle would matter greatly.

In the lesson this week, we read about Israel going into battle against the Philistines without first repenting and drawing near to God. They simply used the ark of the covenant like a good luck charm. They were missing the relational component with God. As believers, we're actually in a battle. We're not in a battle against people but against our only real enemy: Satan. How do we even begin to fight against him, against darkness we can't always see with our eyes? God didn't leave us without a plan. This passage gives us clear instructions for what we need to carry with us each day. It's a lot like suiting up for physical battle, but our armor isn't physical; it's spiritual. The armor of God is truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, and salvation. We arm ourselves with these things by walking closely with the Lord. Our only offensive weapon is the sword, which is the Word of God. Scripture is the weapon we use to fight against the lies of the enemy. If you're trying to live and fight against the enemy without these things, then you're vulnerably walking into a battlefield. Trying to battle the enemy without walking in close relationship with the Lord is leaving yourself open to attack.

- **HOW ARE YOU USING THE ARMOR OF GOD?**
- **IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE STRUGGLING IN THE BATTLE AGAINST SATAN? HOW CAN YOU DRAW CLOSER TO GOD SO THAT YOU'RE STRENGTHENED FOR BATTLE?**

PRAY

GOD, THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME WHAT I NEED TO FIGHT THE ENEMY. I KNOW WALKING CLOSELY WITH YOU IS THE WAY I'M SAFE IN BATTLE. HELP ME TO DRAW ON YOUR STRENGTH AND USE THE WORD AS MY WEAPON.



DAY FOUR

PSALM 23:1-4

Yesterday, we read about how to go into battle against the enemy. The truth is that we go through all types of battles. Some of them are against Satan and darkness, but other battles we face are a little different. Sometimes we fight against physical or emotional pain, sadness, loneliness, sickness. We fight against fear and anxiety. We fight against situations that are out of our control.

Psalm 23 is a beautiful passage that describes the Lord as our Shepherd. He protects us. He leads us to rest and safety. He guides us to still waters and along the right paths. When we are in the middle of a valley—which could look like fear, anxiety, worry, loneliness, ridicule—He is with us there. Verse 4 reminds us that even when we’re walking through unimaginably dark valleys, we aren’t alone; we don’t have to fear because God is with us. When we are in battle, God goes with us in the same way that a good shepherd stays with and protects his sheep. The key here is that we need our Shepherd with us if we’re going to walk through the dark valleys without fear. Many times, we withdraw from our Shepherd instead. We experience some type of pain, and instead of remaining near His side, we blame Him. We doubt His protection. We wonder if He is truly good. Here’s what we need to know: Jesus is our good Shepherd. It’s in His presence that we can feel safe. It’s in Him that we have all we need. If you’re in a valley, don’t pull away from Jesus, draw near.

- **WHEN YOU’RE AFRAID, WITH WHOM DO YOU FEEL MOST SAFE? WHY?**
- **WHEN HAVE YOU BEEN IN A DARK PLACE AND PULLED AWAY FROM JESUS INSTEAD OF DRAWING NEAR TO HIM?**

PRAY

**JESUS, I KNOW YOU ARE MY GOOD SHEPHERD.
I WANT TO STAY BY YOUR SIDE WHEN I’M WALKING
IN A VALLEY. I KNOW YOU’RE WITH ME AND YOU
CARE ABOUT ME.**



DAY FIVE

1 SAMUEL 5

At the end of the battle with the Philistines, the ark was captured and carried away from God's people. The Philistines placed it in their temple next to Dagon, one of their gods. This was a way to acknowledge that Israel's God deserved some type of respect. But the Philistines weren't acknowledging Yahweh as the only true God; instead, He was just one of many gods. They placed the ark, which represented God's presence, next to Dagon's statue. God wouldn't tolerate it. He caused the people to break out in tumors and Dagon to crash to the floor, breaking into pieces before the ark.

God will not tolerate sharing His glory with anything or anyone else. We need to ask ourselves if we sometimes do the same thing as the Philistines. Do we attempt to place God next to our idols? We pay Him some type of respect by showing up at church or saying all the right words, but in reality, we treat Him like just another "god." We assemble our own idols—popularity, our phones, our activities, our relationships—and we simply place God somewhere among them. If our hearts were a throne, God would not sit on it. Other lesser things may sit on the throne. In the same way that Dagon fell to pieces, these idols will as well. God won't share the glory He deserves with anyone else. He wants our entire heart; He alone deserves it.

- **WHAT IDOLS ARE YOU PLACING NEXT TO GOD?**
- **WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE SO THAT GOD IS THE ONLY ONE YOU WORSHIP?**

PRAY

**LORD, I CONFESS THE IDOLS IN MY LIFE. I CONFESS
THAT I'VE ATTEMPTED TO WORSHIP LESSER THINGS.
I KNOW YOU ALONE ARE WORTHY OF MY WORSHIP.**