

## **Prayer: More than a 911 Call!**

### **1 Samuel 12**

#### **Introduction:**

1. If there is one thing that is evident about the prophet Samuel it is that he was a prayer warrior. The man was serious about prayer. 7:5, 9, 17, 8:6, 21
2. Prayer is simply talking to God. What a privilege! We can communicate with the eternal God and creator of this universe. How incredible, yet how seldom the average Christian really takes advantage of this awesome opportunity.
3. Most of the spiritual failures that we encounter are prayer failures. We have an entirely wrong mindset about prayer.
  - We think of prayer as a gift that some people have, but that **we** don't have.
  - We think of prayer as one of many options (some pray, some serve, some give, etc.). Praying is not a gift or an option; it is the privilege of every believer.
  - We think of prayer as something to be done only when in distress. We treat prayer like a 911 call. Prayer is so much more than a 911 call to God.
4. All of these attitudes are wrong and lead to complacent and apathetic prayer lives. Samuel had the right attitude towards prayer. He knew it was essential. vs. 23
5. Is prayer as essential today in this time of grace as it always has been? Listen to a few of these verses from Paul: 1 Thessalonians 3:10a, 5:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; 1 Timothy 2:8; Colossians 4:2-3a; Ephesians 6:18a
6. Every believer (like Samuel) must engage in a vibrant and growing prayer life. Why is this so crucial? Let's look in this chapter and learn.

#### **First, prayer will keep your heart clean. vs. 1-5**

1. We have watched Samuel grow up from a boy in this book. As a young man, he was established to be a prophet of the Lord. He was the central, key figure in Israel that everybody looked to for spiritual leadership.
2. He is now old and gray-headed (vs. 1-2) and he is turning the reigns of leadership over to King Saul. But before he does, he wants to make sure that he is leaving with a good testimony. Notice what he publicly asks Israel in verse 3. Notice their response. vs. 4-5
3. Samuel was a man of integrity, honesty, and had a clean testimony. Do you know why? He was a praying man. There is a direct correlation there.
4. Isn't it interesting that Samuel and Daniel have two of the cleanest testimonies in the Word of God and both men were noted for their prayer lives? cf. Matthew 26:41
  - A believer says, "I am struggling to make right choices." If this is true, odds are that you are struggling in your prayer life too.
5. Our number one desire today should be that the name of Jesus be glorified in us, and in our testimonies. This will not happen apart from prayer. 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

6. Prayer is what provides the spiritual power and energy to keep our hearts clean and live godly lives. (**Illustration** - vs. 17-18: When Samuel prayed, God's power was released to do these signs and wonders for Israel.) Today, God's power and Spirit work within the believer to glorify Christ. Do you feel dry and barren in your spirit? Pray!

### **Second, prayer will provide you with spiritual discernment. vs. 6-21**

1. Samuel was a man of great spiritual discernment. He saw things clearly as they really were. Israel's spiritual history was one of extreme ups and downs. They had great victories, but devastating defeats. Why such inconsistency? Samuel knew exactly why. vs. 8-12
2. When Israel would seek God, God would protect Israel and they would dwell safely. But every time Israel forgot God, they ended up in deep trouble and in bondage.
3. Today, Satan is the believer's enemy and his world system seeks to suck in the Christian and entangle him in bondage. When we (like Israel) forsake God and fail to seek God, we begin making very unwise choices that lead us into trouble.
4. When we fail to pray, we begin to lack discernment to understand what is godly and good for us, as opposed to what is worldly and destructive for us. But when we pray, we have biblical discernment to understand God's will for our lives. Colossians 4:12
5. Samuel was a man of great discernment. Israel, on the other hand, lacked discernment and made poor choices. What was the difference? Samuel had a vibrant prayer life; Israel tended to forget God when things were good and prosperous.

### **Third, your prayer pleases the Lord. vs. 22-25**

1. When we fail to pray because we get caught up in the things of this world, it isn't that God is mad at us and angry. The issue is simply that God desires to have a relationship with you. He wants you to walk with Him. (**Illustration** - Enoch in Genesis 5:22a, cf. Hebrews 11:5)
2. Notice how that God, even in the Old Testament, desired a relationship with His people. vs. 21-22
3. Today, the moment we trust Christ as our Savior, we become the children of God, and God becomes our Father. Galatians 3:26, 4:6
4. God desires to have fellowship with you. He wants you to talk to Him about everything of concern in your life (Philippians 4:6). God is keenly aware and interested in the details of our lives. He is not aloof and distant. Hebrews 4:15-16
5. Samuel understood that a lack of prayer not only hurts **us**; it is a direct sin against the Lord (vs. 23). God desires for you to communicate with Him.
6. This is how we demonstrate to God that we are thankful to Him, that we need Him, that we love Him, and that we are submissive to Him.

**In Conclusion:**

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, where would you rate your prayer life?
2. Hopefully, this text from God's Word has challenged you to take your prayer life to the next level. Samuel is quite an example and admonishment to us.
3. Samuel knew that prayer was the key to everything. It is not just one of the spokes of the wheel; it is the hub and central focus of the Christian life.
4. Hebrews 11:6 really sums it up beautifully. Seek God, talk to Him. You may ask, "But what do I talk to Him about?" Anything and everything in your life!