

God’s Call to Service

TEXT: 1 Samuel 3:1-10; Isaiah 6:1-8

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Matthew 4:18-22; Acts 9:3-6

KEY VERSE: Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. — Isaiah 6:8

RESOURCE MATERIAL: Tract No. 19 — A Witness of the Power of God

RESPONSES

1. God calls every man to salvation. Review briefly the necessity of a born-again experience which transforms the heart and life. As your students discuss the second part of the questions, they should establish that salvation must be the basis for any work for God. Ask your class to list some of the ways people may try to serve humanity, but in doing so, sometimes leave Christ out of the picture. Their list may include: advancing education through scholarships and grants, maintaining famine and relief agencies, working with social services to aid victims of crime or disease. These are all honorable efforts, but the danger is that man may attempt to substitute these for true service to God. The key to God’s service is having the foundation of salvation in the heart and doing His will. Read Matthew 7:21-23.

2. His mother had consecrated him before conception, and later brought him to be used in God’s service. Discuss with your class the verses which point out that Samuel seemingly had made his own commitment to the Lord. 1 Samuel 1:28; 2:26

3. Because Eli failed in his duty before God, God instructed Samuel to bring a message of judgment to Eli’s house. Point out that all respond to the call of God, but some respond by refusing or neglecting to do what God commands, while others answer yes. Ask the class what happened to Eli because of his neglect? See 1 Samuel 4:17,18. Discuss some of the possible consequences of neglecting to answer the call of God in our day: losing their opportunity to serve, failing to be an example to their children, living with feelings of guilt or condemnation, ultimately losing their spiritual reward or perhaps even their hope of Heaven.

When Samuel answered God’s call with those beautiful words, “Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth,” Samuel was commissioned to a life of service for God. Though still a youth, he had an ear to hear and a heart to do the bidding of the Lord. How wonderful if all would answer the call of God as readily as Samuel did, and with the same consecration and zeal in their response!

1. What is one thing to which God calls every man? See 1 Timothy 2:4. Why is answering this call important in order to serve the Lord?

2. Why was Samuel ministering unto the Lord before Eli? 1 Samuel 1:11,24-28

3. According to Scripture, Eli had neglected to do what the Lord required of him (1 Samuel 2:27-35). How did his neglect tie in with God’s instructions for Samuel?

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. Read 1 Samuel 3:15 and describe how Samuel responded to this opportunity for service.

5. Why do you think God calls us to His service?

6. What are some of the things God calls people to do? How do these calls come to us?

7. Is there a progression in the calls the Lord gives us? How do we qualify for "bigger" jobs?

8. How can we be sure that it is God who is calling us, not just our own ideas or inclinations that are influencing our decision regarding what the Lord wants us to do? See John 7:17 and 1 Corinthians 14:32.

9. After God calls us to something, does He ever change His mind? See Romans 11:29.

4. He was afraid to tell Eli what the Lord had showed him. Discuss with your class how it may be difficult at times to do what the Lord calls them to do, even though He has given the assurance that He will be with them and uphold them. See Isaiah 41:10. Ask your class to relate some biblical examples which illustrate that the most difficult opportunities for service bring about the greatest victories. Consider Moses' facing Pharaoh, and later the Red Sea; Daniel in the lions den; David's facing Goliath, etc.

5. Your students will probably bring out that God wants His message to be spread to all the world, and mankind is the means He has chosen. Emphasize the fact that He calls us because He loves us, and service to God brings wonderful blessings into the lives of all who answer His call.

6. Allow students to suggest some of the things God calls man to do. These calls may come in different ways: instructions from God's Word, request of pastor or other servants of God, or the personal leading of God's Spirit. Stress that God's call doesn't always come by some dramatic revelation. Lead into the next question by discussing how they often may perform seemingly small duties in the Lord's service just because the need is there and it is a position they can fill. It may be that the Lord uses these small steps as a training process for some other responsibility He wishes them to fulfill later.

7. First, one must define *bigger*. Is being a pastor a bigger (more important) job than being an usher or church janitor? Allow discussion. Point out that God asks only that we live up to our potential. There is a progression in reaching one's potential, but a title or position isn't the measure of one's success in God's sight. His measure is our willingness to be taught and led according to His calling, and our faithfulness in doing what our hands find to do. See Luke 16:10 and Colossians 3:23.

8. Your students should respond with the thought that anything they feel the Lord is calling them to do must, of course, line up with the teachings of His Word. Point out that God will often reveal His call for them to someone else also. If their leading is in harmony with the Scriptures and the leading of those over them, they can be sure God is calling.

9. In reading the Scripture given, the class should determine that while man changes and circumstances change, God stays the same. That doesn't mean God reveals His whole plan for them in one day. But He will lead them step by step toward the ultimate call that He has for their lives.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

Why did God bother with someone as young as Samuel?

Do you think God was pleased with Samuel's going to Eli? Why or why not? What does his quickness to respond to Eli, even after he had gone to bed, reveal of Samuel's regard for Eli?

If a time should come when we aren't sure of God's call to us, what can we learn from Samuel's example?

How might Eli's advice to Samuel be applied in our own lives? Compare this to Isaiah's response to God's call.

Does Jesus still call us after we are saved? What does He want us to do?

How can we be sure it is God who is calling us, and that we are not just being motivated by our own desires?

Is there a progression in the calls the Lord gives us? How do we qualify for the "bigger" jobs?

What are some of the things God calls people to do today? How do these calls come to us?

In the ANSWER story, what is the call that is very easily missed? Why might it be missed, and what does this tell us about our attitude or receptivity if we don't want to be missed?

THINGS TO DO

Bring a telephone (not a cellular one!) to class. Discuss why, when it is not connected, we cannot get a message through.

If the children in your class have Christian parents or friends, see if they can name some things these people do to help in God's service.

Bring several items to illustrate physical methods of calling: a telephone, a watch with a beeper, an invitation, a bird or duck call, a megaphone, a whistle, etc. Then discuss how God calls. Show some of the following items: the Bible, a picture of a person witnessing, a tract, a sermon tape, a picture of a person praying.

Bring a tape recording of the voices of several people saying a certain phrase. Ask them to identify the voice they know. Then point out that they had to listen carefully

to do so, to be sure they were right. So must we listen carefully to hear and correctly identify God's voice when He speaks.

To help your students visualize the fact that God calls people from all walks of life, provide each student with a sheet of paper on which you have outlined the shape of a shield. Explain that you wish them to fill this in with details to make a symbol of one type of person the Lord might call. For example, they might wish to fill in the shape with textbooks, a pencil, and notebook paper to symbolize a student. Display the symbols with a heading such as, "God's Call Is to All!"

Give all the students a piece of paper. Ask them to pretend they are Samuel the night after he heard God's voice speaking to him. Have them write a diary entry for that night which reveals his thoughts and emotions following this event.

Answers for ANSWER

God's Call to Samuel

Read the Bible text for this lesson. Then fill in the blanks of each sentence. Each word will begin with the letter given at the beginning of the sentence.

- S** . . . When Samuel realized God was calling him, he said, "Speak for thy servant heareth."
- A** . . . Before Samuel knew it was God calling him, he had gone to Eli three times and said, "Here am I, for you called me."
- M** . . . In the morning, Eli made Samuel tell him everything God had said. So Samuel told Eli God was going to make an end to his house.
- U** . . . In the night, after God had talked to Samuel, he lay upon his bed until morning.
- E** . . . The priest, Eli, was old and his eyes were dim. And before the lamp of God went out, God told Samuel things that would make the ears of everyone tingle.
- L** . . . It pays to listen to God's voice, so we will know what God wants of us, and we can live in His will all day long.

