

GROUP DISCUSSION

Questions for facilitating dynamic discussion

Samuel - Hearing God in the Chaos

Week 3: Depending on God

1 Samuel 7:2-17

May 23, 2026

Jeff Griffin

The Israelites brought the ark of the covenant into battle and still lost. They were interested in the victory that the Lord could bring, but they were not really interested in the Lord Himself. We must learn from Samuel how we can avoid "Transactional Christianity."

Kicking it off:

What did you do over Memorial Day weekend?

Discussion:

1. Reread 1 Samuel 4:3 (NIV): *When the soldiers returned to camp, the elders of Israel asked, "Why did the Lord bring defeat on us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the Lord's covenant from Shiloh, so that he may go with us and save us from the hand of our enemies."*

Israel brought the ark into battle, and yet they were still defeated. Offer possible reasons as to why their strategy did not work.

2. Sometimes we are guilty of using God. It's a terrible thing to feel used. Can you think of an experience that you can share with the group where you felt used?

3. Faith is called "Transactional Christianity" when believers see God as a cosmic vending machine. They are more interested in the gifts that God gives than in the Giver Himself. How can we discover if we are drifting into "Transactional Christianity"?

4. Reread 1 Samuel 7:3 (NLT): *Then Samuel said to all the people of Israel, "If you want to return to the Lord with all your hearts, get rid of your foreign gods. Turn your hearts to the Lord and obey him; then he will rescue you from the Philistines."*

How does Samuel's instruction help the people to appreciate God's help without falling into the trap of loving the gifts more than the Giver?

5. Reread 1 Samuel 7:10 (NLT): *Samuel then took a large stone and named it Ebenezer (which means "the stone of help"), for he said, "The Lord has helped us!"*

What was the lesson that the Ebenezer stone was meant to remind the Israelites of?

6. Reread Psalm 34:1 (TLB): *I will praise the Lord no matter what happens.*

Have you ever seen someone praise God in a season of loss? If so, tell the group about them.

Wrapping It Up:

Ask the Lord to help you grow to love Him much more than the gifts He gives.