

Rise & Fall

Andy Deane · 5/21/2023 · 1 Samuel 3-7

Most decisions move us just a few inches closer to, or farther away, from God. Some move us more significantly. Today's passage will show us the decisions and attitudes that lead to rising or falling in life with God.

RISE: Knowing God

1 Samuel 3:4-12, ...4 the Lord called Samuel. Samuel answered, "Here I am." 5 And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down. 6 Again the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." "My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." 7 Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord: The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. 8 A third time the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. 9 So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. 10 The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." 11 And the Lord said to Samuel: "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it tingle. 12 At that time I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family..."

- We have to learn how to discern God's voice from others that we hear if we are going to get to know Him.
- John 10:4-5, ...*his sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 But they will never follow a stranger...*
 - God speaks: first & frequently: 3:4, ...*the Lord called Samuel*
 - God speaks: to those who listen: 3:9, *your servant is listening*
 - God speaks: hard truth: 3:12, *I will carry out against Eli...*
- John 17:3, *Now this is eternal life: that they know you...*

FALL: Using God

1 Samuel 4:3, ...3 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."

1 Samuel 4:5-8, 5 When the ark of the Lord's covenant came into the camp, all Israel raised such a great shout that the ground shook. 6 Hearing the uproar, the Philistines asked, "What's all this shouting in the Hebrew camp?" When they learned that the ark of the Lord had come into the camp, 7 the Philistines were afraid. "A god has come into the camp," they said. "Oh no! Nothing like this has happened before. 8 We're doomed!..."

1 Samuel 4:10-11, 10 So the Philistines fought, and the Israelites were defeated and every man fled to his tent. The slaughter was very great; Israel lost thirty thousand foot soldiers. 11 The ark of God was captured, and Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

- The Israelites did not worship God, yet still wanted to use His power during times of crisis.
- God didn't allow this plan to work. Why? Would you allow it? Being used isn't a sign of an authentic relationship.

FALL: Challenging God

1 Samuel 5:1-4, 1 After the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they took it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. 2 Then they carried the ark into Dagon's temple and set it beside Dagon. 3 When the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the Lord! They took Dagon and put him back in his place. 4 But the following morning when they rose, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the Lord! His head and hands had been broken off and were lying on the threshold; only his body remained.

[The Philistines were judged by God and decided to send golden gifts back with the ark to Israel]

1 Samuel 6:13, 19-20, 13 Now the people of Beth Shemesh were harvesting their wheat in the valley, and when they looked up and saw the ark, they rejoiced at the sight... 19 But God struck down some of the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh, putting seventy of them to death because they looked into the ark of the Lord. The people mourned because of the heavy blow the Lord had dealt them. 20 And the people of Beth Shemesh asked, "Who can stand in the presence of the Lord, this holy God?..."

- The Philistines: they challenged God by putting the ark below their god, Dagan.
- The Israelites: They challenged God by ignoring His law by taking a peek at the ark.
- Us: How do we challenge God today? Our pride? To go from challenging God to being changed by God is hard!

RISE: Obeying God

1 Samuel 7:2-3, ...2 Then all the people of Israel turned back to the Lord. 3 So Samuel said to all the Israelites, "If you are returning to the Lord with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the Lord and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."

- The pain of doing life apart from God caused the Israelites to return to Him.
- 1 John 5:3, In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.

1 Samuel 7:7-10, 7 When the Philistines heard that Israel had assembled at Mizpah, the rulers of the Philistines came up to attack them...8 [The Israelites] said to Samuel, "Do not stop crying out to the Lord our God for us, that he may rescue us from the hand of the Philistines." 9 Then Samuel...cried out to the Lord on Israel's behalf, and the Lord answered him. 10 ...that day the Lord thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites.

- The enemy of our soul does not like it when we turn to God.

1 Samuel 7:12, 12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the Lord has helped us."

- God is always helping us whether we notice it or not, but our tendency is to forget about His help.
- What can we do to remember the goodness of God in our lives more often?

1 Samuel 7:13-14, 13 So the Philistines were subdued and they stopped invading Israel's territory. Throughout Samuel's lifetime, the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines. 14 The towns from Ekron to Gath that the Philistines had captured from Israel were restored to Israel, and Israel delivered the neighboring territory from the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

- We talked about our commitment to God, but here is God's commitment to you:
 - He'll give you victory over sin: *the Philistines were subdued* (7:13)
 - He'll help restore broken relationships: *towns...were restored* (7:14)
 - He'll use you to bless others: *Israel delivered...neighboring territory* (7:14)

How to Live Out What We Learned

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