

***The Authentic Christian and Discernment* — November 18 & 19, 2017**  
**Follow-up Bible Studies**

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**Day One: 1 Samuel 3**

- Set the scene of this text (1-3). Explain the boy Samuel's misunderstanding (4-8). How did Eli help clear up the matter (9)? What are some ways you can help others discern God's voice?
- What happened next (10)? This week, try posturing yourself before God as Samuel did. Each morning, pray, "Speak, for your servant is listening." Jot down any impressions you get and respond to God's continual leading throughout the day.
- What did the Lord tell Samuel (11-14)? Describe the next morning (15). Summarize Samuel's conversation with Eli (16-18). As he grew up, how did Samuel's life unfold (19-21)?
- Re-read verses 1 and 19-21. When the "word of the Lord was rare," a child was able to discern God's voice. How do you think this applies to what it means to be an authentic Christian today?

**Day Two: 1 Samuel 16:1-13**

- After a lifetime spent discerning God's voice, which began in yesterday's reading, the prophet Samuel is now an old man. What question did God have for him (1)? What did he tell Samuel to do (1)? What reservation did Samuel have (2)? What "cover" did the Lord provide for him (2-3)? Summarize Samuel's obedience, and how God's plan began to unfold (4-5).
- Contrast Samuel's criteria for choosing a king with the Lord's (6-7). What seems like a good idea may not be God's ideal. Consider whether you allow the Lord to scrutinize your decisions, even the ones that seem sound. This is the door to discernment; fling it wide open and invite God in.
- Summarize Samuel's encounter with all but Jesse's youngest son (8-11). Describe David's entrance onto the scene (11-12). What did Samuel hear from the Lord in this moment, and what did he do (12-13)? How do you think everyone present felt about this?

**Day Three: Isaiah 55**

- Describe the experience of coming to "the waters" (1-3). Who will approach God's people (5)? Why (5)? What advice is given for seeking the Lord (6)? What should "the wicked" do (7)? Why (7)?
- How do God's thoughts compare to ours (8-9)? Meditate on this truth. Thank God for it and pray you'd be able to discern human ideas from the Lord's and respond accordingly.
- Describe the fruitfulness of God's word (10-11). Pray you'd embody these verses: in response to his direction you'd flourish, sustain others and achieve his purpose. What's one area of your life where you feel led to walk this out? What type of environment does the Lord promise to us (12-13)? Why will he do this (13)?
- Consider the experiential commands of this prophecy: buy, eat, delight, seek, call, go out, etc. What does this communicate about how we are to engage God and "rest" in him? Pray such engagement would free you from shame, guilt, anxiety, etc.

**Day Four: Romans 8:1-17**

- Who is not condemned (1)? Why (2)? Meditate on the phrase "no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Why does God want you to hear that message today? Is

there someone in your life struggling with self-condemnation? If so, share this good news.

- Contrast life according to the law and flesh with life in the Spirit (3-8). How do you think this plays into decision-making? In what realm do believers reside (9)? Describe it (10-11). It's true; the Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead resides in you! How does this empower you to live as an authentic Christian?
- What are we obliged to do (12-13)? Contrast spiritual sonship with spiritual slavery (14-15). How does the Holy Spirit help us to know our new status (15-16)? What does it mean to be not only a son but also an heir (17)? A childlike cry to God is an avenue for freedom and direction. Bring your biggest struggle before him now and say, "Abba, help me!" Await his response.

#### **Day Five: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11**

- Describe Paul's concern that believers are uninformed about spiritual gifts (1-2). What illustrates the role the Holy Spirit plays in gifting and guiding people (3)? Ask the Lord to reveal any ways you are presently confused or uninformed. What do you sense him speaking, and how do you think you should respond?
- How does Paul contrast the variety of spiritual gifts with their source (4-6)? What does this mean for sharing your own spiritual gifts and receiving those of others?
- Why does the Holy Spirit manifest in people (7)? What are some examples of such (8-10)? Which of these gifts aid in decision-making? What point from verses 4-6 does Paul then reiterate (11)? Meditate on the phrase "just as he determines." What are some ways you can step aside and let God work in your life "just as he determines"? Think about the rest, discernment and freedom this could bring to your life. Go for it!