

# Mind

## Presence of Christ

1 Samuel 2:18-26 | Session 7.53

### Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media)
- Review the story of Hannah and the birth and dedication of Samuel in 1 Samuel 1.
- Research current events on the Internet, or use the in-session links to review some issues you may wish to discuss while establishing your context.

### Context

Take a few minutes to discuss a few recent events, such as the [Starbucks cup controversy](#) and the [U.S. response to resettling refugees](#), then ask questions like:

- In what ways have prominent people who claim to be Christian responded to current events and why?
- Why might it be a bad thing for some Christians to openly discriminate against members of other faiths, or protest so stringently over perceived slights to their own?
- In what ways might responses to current events have helped or hindered the good news of Christ we've proclaimed this Christmas?

- How is it possible to uphold the truth of Jesus' life and message, while still honoring the love and grace that he embodied?

## Content

Read [1 Samuel 2:18-26](#) , then watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask questions like these:

- Samuel would become an important figure in Israel's history – anointing two kings (Saul and David) and leading the people into an era of political and religious renewal. What things might Samuel have learned as a boy serving in the temple that other boys his age would not?
- What lessons – both positive and negative – might he have been learning from Eli?
- As a high priest Eli had much responsibility for the spiritual welfare of God's people. Why do you think he decided not to take action against his sons when they didn't listen to him?
- As sons of a priest, Hophni and Phineas, like Samuel, must have spent some of their childhood in God's house. Why might they have turned out differently from Samuel?
- What damage were Eli's sons doing to the people and to God's reputation by their actions?
- In what ways was Eli implicated in his sons' actions?
- Why do you think that ministers and religious workers should be held to a higher standard of behavior than others?

## Closure

Continue by asking:

- What has someone done or said recently, either speaking on behalf of or about a faith that has most troubled or uplifted you and why?
- In what ways are we responsible for others' spiritual welfare?

- Considering this, how do our actions – even when we feel like we’re “standing up” for Christian values – impact the way others see God?
- What message does it send to the world when Christ-followers speak out against secular governments and companies, but not against Christian leaders who might act or speak in ways that are contrary to the teachings of Jesus?
- How can we respond to these kinds of abuses – on social media and in our individual relationships – in a way that upholds God’s holiness, love and grace?

Close with prayer, asking that God would give us the courage to be good representatives of Christ – living out all of Christ’s message – to our neighbors and our world.

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