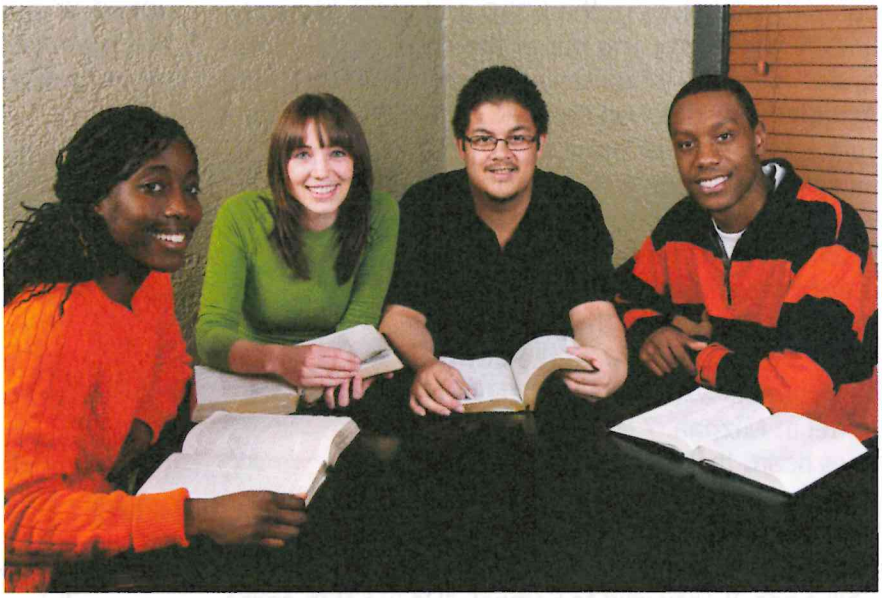
BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: 1 Samuel 7:3-17

PRINT PASSAGE: 1 Samuel 7:3-11, 15-17

L11 A Virtuous Leader

REFLECT



Mikai was now a young adult, and, like Samuel, he was ready to fulfill the purpose to which God was calling him. Mikai spoke with his senior pastor about becoming a youth minister at the church. His pastor was ecstatic. He could think of no better person to minister to the youth in the church and in the community. Mikai's reputation had established him as a young man of virtue, faith, and integrity. He was already operating in other leadership roles thanks to Minister Alexander, who trained and mentored him.

After his training, Mikai was made the youth minister. Minister Alexander worked alongside him. Ashanti and Asia were overjoyed. They supported them as much as possible. Because of Mikai's reputation, the youth ministry grew very quickly. Mikai wanted them to know that though they would have fun, the ministry was about serving, loving, giving, and helping people—all the things that Jesus did when He was on the earth.

One Sunday afternoon, three guys came to one of the services. They had been incarcerated and felt abandoned. They felt that society had no use for them—that they had nothing to offer—so they remained involved in crime-related activities. Mikai told them, "Man, you gotta first stop what you are doing and repent. You gotta turn away from these sins so that God can use you. Stop glorifying these sins and the things you acquire from them." Mikai, Minister Alexander, Ashanti, and Asia helped them discover gifts and talents that they did not know they had. They used these talents in the church to glorify God.

Good leaders help you to find and use your purpose for God and for others. First, put away your desires to worship earthly idols and put God first. Now God can use you. Mikai was a great leader who was helping to build God's kingdom.

Samuel continued as Israel's leader all the days of his life. (1 Samuel 7:15)



1 Samuel 7:3-11, 15-17

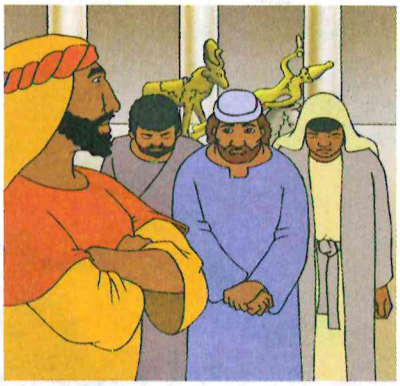
3 So Samuel said to all the Israelites, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." **4** So the Israelites put away their Baals and Ashtoreths, and served the LORD only. **5** Then Samuel said, "Assemble all Israel at Mizpah, and I will intercede with the LORD for you." **6** When they had assembled at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out before the LORD. On that day they fasted and there they confessed, "We have sinned against the LORD." Now Samuel was serving as leader of Israel at Mizpah. **7** When the Philistines heard that Israel had assembled at Mizpah, the rulers of the Philistines came up to attack them. When the Israelites heard of it, they were afraid because of the Philistines. **8** They 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 took a suckling lamb and sacrificed it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. He cried out to the LORD on Israel's behalf, and the LORD answered him. **10** While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle. But 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. **11** The men of Israel rushed out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, slaughtering them along the way to a point below Beth Kar.

. . . . .

15 Samuel continued as Israel's leader all the days of his life. **16** From year to year he went on a circuit from Bethel to Gilgal to Mizpah, judging Israel in all those places. **17** But he always went back to Ramah, where his home was, and there he also held court for Israel. And he built an altar there to the LORD.

INTERSECT

ELI—THE PRIEST, PROPHET, AND JUDGE—WAS DEAD. Samuel was now ruling Israel as priest, prophet, and judge. The Philistines returned the ark of the covenant due to the death, devastation, and tumors that God afflicted on them. Then all of the Israelites turned back to the Lord. But Samuel told them that if they were truly returning to God, they must get rid of their foreign gods and Ashtoreths. *Ashtoreth* is the name of a Canaanite and Phoenician goddess who was worshipped alongside the male God Baal. Her worship was condemned in the Old Testament because it was linked to idolatry, sexual immorality, and abandoning the worship of Yahweh. You can see why Samuel told them to rid themselves of this idol.



"They drew water and poured it out before the LORD" (verse 6a).

Pouring water on the ground "before the Lord" was a sign of repenting from sin, turning from idols, and determining to obey God alone. So, the Israelites stopped serving Baal and Ashtoreth and began serving God alone.

Samuel, as Israel's leader and judge, led them into battle with the Philistines. The Philistines were subdued, and they stopped invading Israel's territory. There was peace between the nations. Samuel served as Israel's leader all the days of his life.

Inside Out

On a separate sheet of paper, respond to the questions posed below.

1. Why did the Philistines return the ark of the covenant?
2. Who were the Israelites worshipping before they turned back to God?
3. What did the Israelites do to repent and turn back to God?
4. What did God do during the battle that caused panic and confusion for the Philistines?
5. After the Philistines lost the battle, what happened?



THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT!

How does this passage apply to youth today? When the Ark was returned, it was stored away for twenty years. It was not returned to the tabernacle. The Israelites felt that God had abandoned them, but they were not doing anything about it. Samuel basically told them to *"Do something about it, repent."* Today, we see many things happening in the world, in our community, or in our homes that anger us or hurt us. Why complain about it to everybody? Find out what you can do to help change the situation. God may already have advised you on what to do. If not, pray and wait, then act.



STEPPING OUT!

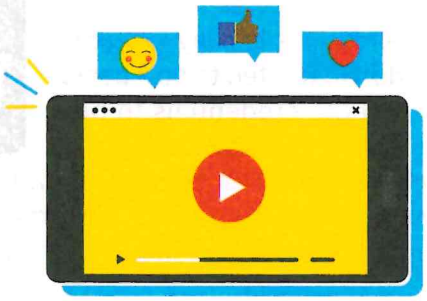
You may choose one of the challenges listed below to complete for the week.

- Research a person whom you consider to be a "leader" in the world. What qualities do they have that exemplify leadership?
- Create a game plan for inviting someone new to join you in God's work next week (at church, Sunday school, etc.).



CONNECT

It's easy to justify or rationalize why we don't vote: "Nobody is going to miss my one vote"; "It's all rigged, anyway"; "No one is going to make anything better, so why vote?" Believe it or not, your one vote makes a difference. Don't complain about what's happening in the world or in the United States if you have not done anything to make a difference to change the outcome. Samuel would say, "Repent from doing nothing and do something!" Protest peacefully, go to town hall meetings, and write to your state politicians. We should not be complacent or sit and complain if we want something to change. Take some action and P.U.S.H. (**P**ray **U**ntil **S**omething **H**appens).



MEDIA MISSION

Find a poem, a song, or a phrase that demonstrates repentance, people turning back to God, giving up sinful ways. Visit the link below to check out the song based on an old hymn and discuss how it relates to today's passage.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dkPClcO4Whw