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Hey small group leaders! As we continue our journey through 1 Samuel, we hope you will embrace the attitude of thanksgiving that Samuel displayed in 7:12: "Up to this point the LORD has helped us!" If we allow our lives to be filled with humility, obedience, and trust, God's word (the Bible) will point us to THE Word (Jesus) so we can be a blessing to those around us!

Thank you for shepherding a group of people to Love God, Love Others, and Live Sent!

NEED A RESOURCE, HAVE A QUESTION, OR WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?
Let us know how we can help! Contact your groups director or discipleship@rockbridge.cc

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"One who faces his own failures is steadily advancing on the pilgrim's way."

[William Temple]

LEADER RESOURCES || Leader Note *We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well. Access a resource by clicking on the underlined title and share them with your group!*

- **Passage Summary**
 - Finally, the request for a king is made by Israel. It is immediately identified as sinful and dire warnings are given to the people. However, God permits their request to be answered. This passage raises several questions about God and about Israel's request:
 - Why did God allow a sinful request to be honored?
 - Why did Israel want a king so badly?
 - Where will this lead?
- **Chapter 8 Commentary & Israel Demands a King**
 - Use this commentary and short devotional video to give you background for this week's discussion. These would be good resources to share with your group before you gather.
- **3 Things God Will Never Do With Your Sin**
 - This article reminds us why we can sing and celebrate that God does not and never will "deal with us according to our sins"! This would be a good resource to share with your group after you gather.

ICEBREAKER || Leader Note *The main goal for the icebreaker is to build joy and gratitude together.*

What are you grateful for or what has brought you joy over the past week?

BEGIN WITH PRAYER || Leader Note *Wherever two or more are gathered in God's name, He is there! We want to begin our time together by thanking him for being present with us and praying God's Word back to Him. Ask a few people to pray as you begin your time in a posture of humility and dependence!*

Spend a moment praying the following passage, beginning in a posture of humility and gratitude!

"The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all."

[Psalm 103:19]

MAIN POINT || Leader Note Read this aloud as a road map for where the discussion should go.

God's permissions are never without purpose. Failure and regret have divine designs!

PASSAGE || Leader Note Have someone read the passage aloud slowly. Consider having another person read it a second time, possibly in a different translation.

- 1 Samuel 8:1-22

DISCUSSION || Leader Note Your role is to FACILITATE the conversation, so keep your group moving and encourage multiple people to share. The questions do not need to be asked in order and not every question has to be answered ... there is freedom to go where the Spirit is leading your group! Look for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God in the lives of your group!

1. What stood out to you about the passage? What word or phrase resonated with you?
2. *Read aloud → Israel's request for a king was rooted in their desire to be like their neighboring (pagan) nations. This request revealed their lack of trust in God's leadership, a theme that continued throughout Saul's life, which demonstrates an important reminder of God's desire that we trust Him and His plans for our lives, and that we live fully devoted to Him.* What reasons did Israel's elders give in their request for a king? (see v. 4-5 and 19-20)
3. What was their real reason, according to verse 7? What was wrong with their desire to have a king?
4. Share about a time that you (ultimately) discovered you had a misplaced desire for something that wasn't what God wanted for you. How did you discover that? What was the result? *This would be a good opportunity for you to go first!*
5. How did Samuel respond to the elders? What is the key difference between Samuel's response to the elders and the elders's response to their situation?
6. *Have someone read aloud Luke 23:1-5.* How is Israel's demand for a king (in 1 Samuel 8) similar to the way many Israelites responded to Jesus when He was on earth (in Luke 23)? Why did people struggle to trust that Jesus was the Messiah? *These elders wanted a king who would provide military leadership and make the nation's borders secure. Also, the leaders apparently held the misconception that a king was less susceptible to corruption. The elders, however, chose to address one wrong with another wrong. There was no praying and seeking of the Lord. There was no solemn assembly or crying out to God. The elders simply demanded that Samuel appoint a king to judge them "the same as all the other nations have". Their motives may appear commendable, logical, and timely. The trouble was that Israel was to be different from all the rest of the nations. This fact was a fundamental principle of the Torah. God, and God alone, was Israel's King.*
7. When in your life have you had a similar struggle, trusting fully that Jesus is who he says he is? How did God reassure you that his way is the best?
8. Why were the Israelites willing to ignore the warning about a king? Why does God seem to "give in" to their request? What does this teach us about Him?

9. When are you inclined to do something just to be “like everyone else”? What does that desire communicate to God?

STEP OF OBEDIENCE || Leader Note *This is an opportunity for people to put into practice what the Spirit is inviting them to do and live in obedience to God for the sake of love! You can encourage your group to be accountable to one another and use these to follow up with one another throughout the week.*

The failures that God allows in our lives has a divine design ... to show us the King we need AND the King God gives: Jesus! Based on our conversation today and the leading of the Holy Spirit , **what is a step of obedience that you can take to live out this passage and the truths above?**

Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 3-4 for this question.

PRAYER FOCUS || Leader Note *We want to commit to praying for OTHERS as a unified church who is dependent upon God for everything. Be intentional about saving at least 5-10 minutes for prayer at the end of your small group each week to pray for the focused area below. You are encouraged to break into smaller groups of 3-4 people if your group is much larger than that.*

We Are Bridge Builders → *We are focused on those who are not yet connected to Jesus and His church. We strive to reach people by breaking barriers and filling gaps of division with love, grace, and truth.*

- As we strive to live out this Rock Bridge value, let's pray that God will add more Bridge Builders to our Ministry Teams who serve others to see them mature in Christ.
- For those not yet serving, we pray for clarity to discover their best fit and how their gifts can impact the lives of others at Rock Bridge.

Optional Closing Prayer *This would be a good prayer to read TOGETHER as you close your time. If you don't, consider texting it to your group the day after.*

Father God, we praise you for
your mighty providential hand in our lives.
You are in control and work every detail
for our good and your glory.
Even amid the unknown, that may cause anxiety,
we choose to trust you and rest in your sovereignty.
You are worthy to be praised for who you are.
We are so thankful for your sovereignty
that guides, protects, and holds our lives together.
Continue to strengthen our faith in you.
Help us be a light to others
who also need to trust your sovereignty.
Amen.