



1 Samuel Bible study guide

A clear 7-session guide for personal study, small groups, and churches

Read 1 Samuel as a whole before working through the sessions. Let its own structure set the agenda.

Every question sends you back to the biblical text. The guide helps you observe the passage, follow the author's argument, interpret it in context, and respond faithfully.

CHOOSE YOUR DEPTH

- Short: Read the book overview and discuss the first and final question in a session.
- Study: Work through all 7 sessions and answer each question from the passage.
- Deep: Open the free chapter commentary and dictionary links while you study.

protos-app.com/commentary/1-samuel

1 Samuel at a glance

BIG IDEA

The right leadership can give people a sense of safety when neighboring nations are hostile. [1]

HISTORICAL SETTING

Author: Unknown. Date: Records events that occurred around 1050-1011 BC. Setting: The transition from the period of the judges to the Israelite monarchy. [1]

HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

Read this book as a shaped narrative. Follow plot, repeated scenes, turning points, and the narrator's choices before turning events into personal lessons.

MAJOR THEMES

- To recount the establishment of the Israelite monarchy and to highlight the differing character of Israel's first two kings
- The book's literary movement and central claims
- Faithful response within the people of God
- Hope, judgment, grace, and obedience in their proper context

INTERPRETIVE CARE

- Let the narrator establish the point before treating an event as a general rule.
- Do not assume every action recorded in the story is commended.

1 Samuel 1-5

119 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Eli · Samuel · Hannah · Elkanah · Shiloh · Philistines

Questions

- Before anyone explains it, walk through what actually happens here. Who does what, in what order?
- What does the writer repeat? Repetition is usually the point, not a habit.
- What surprised you, or what did you have to read twice?
- Eli turns up in this section. What does the passage actually show, as opposed to what you already assumed?
- The word ark is doing real work here. What did you assume it meant, and does the passage agree?
- What did the writer choose to include here, and why that detail?
- Where does this cut against something you already believe or already do?

[Stuck on a word or name? Open the free Bible dictionary.](#)

NOTES AND PRAYER

1 Samuel 6-10

114 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Samuel · Saul · Philistines · Mizpah · Kish · Ashkelon

Questions

- Tell the story back in your own words. What is easy to skip over?
- Who is being addressed here, and what do they already know that we do not?
- What is assumed rather than argued? Those assumptions are often the real claim.
- Read this section from where Ashkelon was standing. What changes?
- Define ark from this passage alone, without reaching for what you already know.
- This is a story, not a lesson with a moral attached. What is it showing rather than telling?
- What would actually be different this week if you took this seriously?

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NOTES AND PRAYER

1 Samuel 11-14

115 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Saul · Jonathan · Philistines · Samuel · Gilgal · Aaron

Questions

- What happens in this section that you would struggle to explain to someone who has never read it?
- Which single verse carries the weight of this section?
- What is left unsaid that you expected to be said?
- What does the writer tell us about Aaron, and what is deliberately left out?
- Where else have you heard honey used, and is it being used that way here?
- Whose perspective are we given, and whose are we denied?
- Who do you know who needs to hear this, and what stops you saying it?

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NOTES AND PRAYER

1 Samuel 15-17

116 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Saul · David · Samuel · Jesse · Philistines · Agag

Questions

- Read it once more, slowly. What do you notice the second time that you missed the first?
- Where does the tone shift, and what causes it?
- What question does this section answer that you had not thought to ask?
- What would this section sound like if Agag were telling it?
- The word sword is doing real work here. What did you assume it meant, and does the passage agree?
- What would you have written differently if you wanted to make a point?
- What is the hardest thing in this passage to accept, and why that one?

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NOTES AND PRAYER

1 Samuel 18-21

111 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

David · Saul · Jonathan · Michal · Achish · Samuel

Questions

- If this were the only part of the book you had, what would you conclude about Jesus?
- What does the writer repeat? Repetition is usually the point, not a habit.
- What surprised you, or what did you have to read twice?
- Michal turns up in this section. What does the passage actually show, as opposed to what you already assumed?
- Define field from this passage alone, without reaching for what you already know.
- What did the writer choose to include here, and why that detail?
- If this is true, what have you been getting wrong?

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NOTES AND PRAYER

1 Samuel 22-25

118 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

David · Saul · Nabal · Keilah · Abigail · Philistines

Questions

- Where does the pace change here, and what is the writer slowing down for?
- Who is being addressed here, and what do they already know that we do not?
- What is assumed rather than argued? Those assumptions are often the real claim.
- Read this section from where Nabal was standing. What changes?
- Where else have you heard cave used, and is it being used that way here?
- This is a story, not a lesson with a moral attached. What is it showing rather than telling?
- What would you want to be reminded of from this section in six months?

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NOTES AND PRAYER

1 Samuel 26-31

117 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

David · Saul · Philistines · Achish · Samuel · Abishai

Questions

- Before anyone explains it, walk through what actually happens here. Who does what, in what order?
- Which single verse carries the weight of this section?
- What is left unsaid that you expected to be said?
- What does the writer tell us about Abishai, and what is deliberately left out?
- The word woman is doing real work here. What did you assume it meant, and does the passage agree?
- Whose perspective are we given, and whose are we denied?
- Where does this cut against something you already believe or already do?

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NOTES AND PRAYER

Sources, method, and reuse

Protos created this guide to help readers understand 1 Samuel in its literary and historical context. Questions are designed to be answered from the passage, not from guesswork or personal opinion alone.

REFERENCES

[1] Tyndale Open Study Notes

Tyndale House Publishers. Book background, purpose, setting, and structural orientation. CC BY-SA 4.0.

<https://tyndaleopenresources.com/>

[2] Protos study guide editorial

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A Bible dictionary, 1,129 entries [_protos-app.com/bible-dictionary](https://protos-app.com/bible-dictionary)

Printable Bible reading plans [_protos-app.com/reading-plans](https://protos-app.com/reading-plans)

Protos is also available on iPhone and Android, with verse-by-verse study help beside the passage you are reading.

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