



## A Worship Discussion Guide for Individuals, Groups & Families for the week of June 1, 2025

Read the Bible passage aloud in your group meeting. This is a worship discussion guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for your meeting, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

### Warm Up

- Trusting God requires faith. But can we grow impatient, afraid, or want to go another way altogether. Think about a time you could not how God was working. What temptation did you experience?

### I Samuel 4:1-11

### Who Can Deliver Us?

*Up to this point in the Life of Samuel, we have seen the faithful longing of Hannah graciously answered by God in the birth of Samuel. The sons of Eli walked in prideful disobedience as false priests, while Samuel was set apart and called to the work of the LORD. Today, we see that sin leads to death as the nation of Israel foolishly goes to war with the Philistines. Israel suffers heavy casualties, and they lose the ark of the covenant. Amidst their reckless behavior and its consequences, God remains faithful, even while allowing their defeat. Though the enemy holds the ark of the covenant, the God of Israel is not restrained. He stands ready to demonstrate His holiness both to the Philistines and His covenant people.*

<sup>1</sup> And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out to battle against the Philistines. They encamped at Ebenezer, and the Philistines encamped at Aphek.

<sup>2</sup> The Philistines drew up in line against Israel, and when the battle spread, Israel was defeated before the Philistines, who killed about four thousand men on the field of battle. <sup>3</sup> And when the people came to the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has the LORD defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD here from Shiloh, that it may come among us and save us from the power of our enemies."

<sup>4</sup> So the people sent to Shiloh and brought from there the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, who is enthroned on the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

- Why did Israel suffer defeat in the battle against the Philistines? (2)
- Read [Deuteronomy 28:15, 25](#) to learn about the spiritual dynamics of God's covenant in the time of Moses. What are the repercussions for disregarding God's law and promises? Why is this the case?
- How do the elders of Israel respond to the defeat? (3)
- The sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests at Israel's Tabernacle at Shiloh, the very center of the worship of the LORD. Read [I Samuel 2:12-17](#). How would you describe the character and ministry of Hophni and Phinehas?
- Read [I Samuel 2:27-30](#). How did God affirm His covenant with Eli household leading up to today's battle? What role do they play in response to Israel's defeat in battle? (4)

<sup>5</sup> As soon as the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel gave a mighty shout, so that the earth resounded. <sup>6</sup> And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shouting, they said, "What does this great shouting in the camp of the Hebrews mean?" And when they learned that the ark of the LORD had come to the camp, <sup>7</sup> the Philistines were afraid, for they said, "A god has come into the camp." And they said, "Woe to us! For nothing like this has happened before." <sup>8</sup> Woe to us! Who can deliver us from the power of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with every sort of plague in the wilderness. <sup>9</sup> Take courage, and be men, O Philistines, lest you become slaves to the Hebrews as they have been to you; be men and fight."

<sup>10</sup> So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and they fled, every man to his home. And there was a very great slaughter, for thirty thousand foot soldiers of Israel fell. <sup>11</sup> And the ark of God was captured, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

- How do the Philistines respond to Israel's strategy to bring the ark of the LORD into the camp? Why? (5-9)
- What do you think the Israelites hoped to accomplish by bringing the ark of the covenant with them to war? What was the result?
- Does it surprise you that God would allow His people to be defeated? Why, or why not? (10-11)
- Has God ever permitted defeat in your life for a greater purpose? Describe what that was like. How did you struggle? How did you grow in the knowledge of the Lord? What did you learn about the Gospel?
- Pray together in response to God's Word.

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Questions? Contact Pastor Kevin Greene, [kevin@wepc.org](mailto:kevin@wepc.org)

