

Samuel Obeys God

Overview

Materials You'll Need

- no extra materials are needed for this lesson



Scriptures

1 Sam 3:1-21

Bible Truth Objective(s)

God blesses those who obey Him

Behavioral Objective(s)

To be able to explain the benefits of obeying God; to identify actions of disobedience to God and to offer alternative behaviors

Memory Verse

"You shall obey the voice of the Lord your God." (Deut 27:10)



Bible Knowledge

Samuel

As the son of Elkanah and Hannah, Samuel grew up to be the last great judge in Israel. He was also one of the first prophets. When Samuel was born, Hannah's heart-felt prayer for a son was answered. In return, she kept her promise to God and took Samuel to the shrine at Shiloh to be trained by Eli the priest. Hebrew children were often nursed for two or three years, possibly more. Therefore, Samuel was probably between three and five years of age when Hannah brought him to live at the tabernacle.

Eli and His Sons

Eli was the high priest in charge of the tabernacle located at Shiloh. 1 Samuel 1:9 refers to the tabernacle, or worship tent. Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were a disgrace. They would not listen to their father, and God warned Eli of their terrible fate. Later, they were both killed in a battle against the Philistines. When Eli heard that God's ark had been captured, he collapsed and died (1 Sam 1-4).

Priests

Those who are called priests are Levites. The Levites were chosen by God from among the Israelites. They were to be set apart from the other tribes for religious duties. Priests had many duties, mostly connected with the tabernacle, temple sacrifices, and worship. But the most important duty was to teach the people the Law of God.

The Tabernacle

The tabernacle, or the "tent of meeting," was a small provisional meeting place of God and His people. When the Jews settled in Canaanite territory the tabernacle was made into a more permanent form at Shiloh (Josh 18:1; Jdg 18:31). It was permanent enough to be called a temple, to provide rooms for Samuel and Eli, and to require that the entrance doors be opened and closed (1 Sam 3:2, 15). After the Philistines had destroyed Shiloh, they also captured the ark of the covenant. It was eventually returned via Beth Shemesh (1 Sam 6:1-10) and Kiriath Jearim (1 Sam 7:2). Even then, the ark of the covenant was still kept in some kind of tent-temple (2 Sam 6:17; 7:2). It remained there until Solomon built a permanent temple.



Understanding Your Students

“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul” (Ps 19:7). God’s way is the best way. His words are perfect for us because God’s teachings are for our own good. As long as we obey His words, we will walk on the righteous path.

Throughout the lesson, emphasize the importance of obedience as part of our Christian faith. Since we trust in God, we also trust in His teachings, and therefore obey His commands. Samuel trusted Eli so he went back to sleep every time Eli told him to. Samuel obeyed because he had a simple faith. The innocence of four- to six-year-olds can actually help them exhibit this kind of simple faith. Our aim is to let the children know and accept the notion that God’s commands are good for us. Therefore we obey without questioning.

For example, children listen to their parents because they understand their parents know what is good for them. They follow the rules their parents set

up for them because they trust their parents to take care of them. The children also understand that their parents have authority over them, and so they need to obey even if they don’t always like the rules. Actually, children don’t like certain rules because they know disobedience comes with unpleasant consequences. But we need to show the children that even though God’s commands may sometimes seem strict, the commandments from God are actually designed by God for our own good. If we are able to obey God’s commands and teachings, God will protect us from temptations and deliver us from evil (Mt 6:13). Also, instead of focusing on the negative, we need to teach the children that when we obey, we will be blessed. This is His promise (Deut 28:1-2). God was so pleased with Samuel’s obedience that He made Samuel a prophet. When the students grow up, they can also be like Samuel, leading a life that is protected and blessed by God. But this kind of obedience and trust begins now and that is what we need to teach our students today.



Vocabulary

Obey

to follow the rules; to listen to and do what others tell you to

Prophet

a messenger of God; this person tells others about God’s words

Judge

someone who tells others what is right from wrong; during the time of Samuel, the judge was also the leader of the people



Before You Teach

We teach our children to obey God and to listen to His teachings. But what exactly does that mean? Does it mean to just follow God’s commands? If that were the case, then the Pharisees would have been the most obedient of all the believers. They followed God’s laws down to the last iota. But Samuel reminded us that “to obey is better than sacrifice” (1 Sam 15:22). That means we need to obey God with a sincere heart. Obedience is not just about following rules and regulations. If we don’t love God with our heart, then our actions would not mean anything.

Jesus spent a good part of His ministry teaching others about the true meaning of obedience. And He did not do it through mere words. He lived it. He prayed to God not because He was supposed to, but because He wanted and needed to. He did not heal someone on the Sabbath to deliberately stir up the people. He did it because that is what God taught Him to do. He did not raise Lazarus from the dead to show off His amazing powers. He was glorifying God. Even until the end, when He was about to be crucified, He asked that God’s will be done. Jesus is the best example of a completely obedient servant.

Today, we have many opportunities to demonstrate our obedience to God. In our words, in our behavior, and in our faith, we can show God our sincere desire to worship Him.



Bible Story

Have you played the game "Simon Says" before? What is the most important rule of that game? (Let the children respond.) To be a good player at this game, we need to listen carefully and do exactly as Simon says, right? (Teacher may wish to play this game now. Ensure it is structured. Be sure not to let the game take over the class. Alternatively, you may wish to play the game after the lesson to tie into the listening aspect of the lesson.)

Are you good at listening and following instructions? What do we use to listen with? That's right, we use our ears. God gives us ears so we can hear and listen. God wants us to use our ears to listen to His words. Today, we are going to learn how to obey God by being a good listener. Remember Samuel who grew up in God's temple? As soon as he was old enough, his mother brought him there to live. He was going to live with Eli the priest and learn how to serve God. Today, we are going to learn how Samuel used his listening ears to obey Eli and God's words.

Samuel Gets Ready to Sleep

After he moved into the temple of God, Samuel was busy learning from Eli every day. Sometimes, Eli would teach him about God. Sometimes, he would pray to God. And other times he helped Eli in the tabernacle (review the meaning of tabernacle). He would clean it up and get it ready for the people to come worship the Lord. As Samuel grew up, he became Eli's best helper. Eli knew Samuel would be a good worker for God one day since he was obedient. That means Samuel always listened to what Eli told him to do.

One night, Eli was very tired after a long day's work and went to bed early. Samuel also got ready for bed. He lay down and closed his eyes.

Samuel Hears A Voice

As Samuel was just about to go to sleep, something strange happened. Suddenly, Samuel heard someone calling his name.

"Samuel, Samuel!"

Upon hearing that, Samuel sat up in his bed. Who could be calling him?

"It must be my teacher Eli," Samuel thought to himself. He got out of bed and went to where Eli

slept.

"Here I am, teacher. Did you call me? Do you need something?" Samuel asked.

Eli opened his eyes. He looked puzzled.

"No, I did not call you," Eli said. "Now go back to bed, Samuel."

So Samuel went back to bed. He was pretty sure he had heard something but since Eli told him to go back to sleep, that is what Samuel did. Everything was quiet again after Samuel settled in. But then, he heard the same voice again.

"Samuel, Samuel!"

This time, Samuel heard it clearly. This voice was calling his name. Again, he quickly went to Eli.

"Here I am, Eli. I heard you calling me."

"No, Samuel," Eli said. "I did not call you. Go back to bed again."

This was very strange. But Samuel obeyed and went back to bed. He was about to go to sleep when he heard the voice one more time.

"Samuel, Samuel!"

Samuel heard the same voice for the third time. Samuel ran to Eli.

"Here I am, Eli. I am sure you called me this time," explained Samuel.

At first, Eli didn't understand why Samuel kept coming to him. He did not call Samuel. Why was Samuel saying that? So he thought for a minute. Suddenly he knew why. It was God who was calling Samuel. Samuel thought it was Eli because he had never heard God's voice. This was the very first time that God called Samuel.

Samuel Obeys

When Eli realized that God had been calling Samuel, he told him, "Go lie down. If you hear someone call your name again, say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.'" (Instruct the children to echo and practice this phrase, pretending they are Samuel.) This means that Samuel is telling God he is listening to God.

Samuel obeyed Eli and went back to bed. And it wasn't long before he heard that voice again.

"Samuel, Samuel!"

This time, instead of running to Eli, Samuel knew just what to do. He lay very quietly and said what Eli told him to say.

"Speak for your servant hears." (Have the children echo this phrase again.)

After Samuel said this, something amazing happened. God spoke to Samuel. Samuel listened carefully to everything God told him. God told him many things that would happen in the future. Do you know why God wanted to talk to Samuel? God told Samuel these things because He knew Samuel would be a good prophet and judge. A long time ago the people of Israel had prophets or judges to lead them. Prophets and judges were people who listened to God and helped the Israelites, God's people. Prophets and judges also told the people if they were doing something wrong, and showed them what God wanted them to do. After Samuel grew up, he became a prophet and judge. He was a good prophet and judge because he listened to God.

We Can Obey Too

Samuel learned a special lesson that night—it is always important to listen and obey. Because Samuel

was a good listener, God loved him for his obedience, and God made him His prophet and judge. Samuel became a very important worker for God.

From today's lesson, we learned that listening to God's words carefully can help us do great things for God. Samuel didn't argue or talk back to Eli when he was told to go back to sleep, even though he heard the voice. Samuel just obeyed. To obey is to follow without questioning. Samuel obeyed three times in a row and went back to bed. He did not say, "I am sure I heard your voice," or "Why do you keep calling me and then telling me to go back to sleep?" He simply went to Eli every time he heard the call. God was very pleased with Samuel's obedience. In the same way, we can listen to and obey God's words. We will please God and feel good about ourselves too. And the Bible promises that God will bless His children who obey.



Check For Understanding

1. **How many times did Samuel hear a voice call his name?** (Four times.)
2. **What did he do the first three times he heard his name being called?** (He went to Eli quickly and said, "Here I am.")
3. **Before Eli knew it was God calling Samuel, what did he tell Samuel to do?** (He told Samuel to go back to bed.)
4. **What did Eli tell Samuel to do when he realized it was God who was calling Samuel's name?** (Eli told Samuel to say, "Speak, for your servant hears.")
5. **What did God tell Samuel?** (God told Samuel about some things that would happen in the future.)
6. **After Samuel grew up he became a prophet and judge for God. What does it mean to be a prophet? What does it mean to be a judge?** (A prophet is a messenger of God. He tells people what God wants them to

know. He also tells them if they are disobeying God and teaches them what they should do. A judge is like a leader for the people. He can lead the people into battle. He also tells them what to do when there is a problem. He helps them solve their problems.)

7. **Our memory verse tells us to do what is right and good. How can we obey our teachers?** (Listen to the Bible story, do what the teacher tells us to do, follow the class rules, etc.)
8. **How can we obey our parents?** (Go to sleep early, pray to God as a family, not watch too much T.V., help do chores, etc.)
9. **How can we obey God?** (Pray to Him, come to class on time, help clean up the classroom, read the Bible, be helpful to others, etc.)
10. **Why do we want to obey God?** (God is pleased when we obey and do what is right. This is the best way to show our love for God.)



Life Application Story

“We Choose to Obey!”

“Mom, the mailman is here! Can I go and get the mail?” Juan Lopez yelled.

He was looking out the front window and saw the mailman come up. Getting the mail was his favorite responsibility at home. Since he learned to recognize his name, he loved to receive anything with his name on it. He wondered if he would receive something special today.

“Okay, go get the mail. Be careful not to let any letters fly away or drop on the driveway,” said Mrs. Lopez as she put a casserole into the oven.

Juan opened the front door and went outside. Their mailbox was at the curb in front of their yard. Juan carefully grabbed all the mail. It was Monday so there was a good stack of letters, but he was careful and carried them back into the house.

Juan came into the kitchen and put all the mail on the table.

“Mom, can I sort through the mail and see if there’s anything for me?” Juan asked politely.

“Sure! Can you also put the grocery ads aside for me? I need to see what’s on sale this week,” said Mrs. Lopez.

Juan looked at the pile of mail and he quickly put the ads aside. They were usually larger than the rest of the letters. Then he looked at the letters. The ones with his parents’ names on them he put into a different pile. There weren’t many letters left after that.

“They are probably junk mail,” Juan thought to himself. His mom had taught him that junk mail meant letters that weren’t important at all. Suddenly, he saw a small envelope with his name on it.

To: Juan Lopez.

“Mom, I have a letter! Someone sent me a letter! Ooh, ooh, I got a letter today!” Juan started dancing and singing in the kitchen.

Mrs. Lopez washed her hands and came to the kitchen table to look.

“Well, are you going to open it?” asked Mrs. Lopez.

Juan carefully ripped open one of the sides. His mom had taught him to do that too. He opened the

envelope and took a card out. He couldn’t read all the words, but it was a card with a picture of a swimming pool, a pair of sunglasses, and summer drinks in the front.

“Is it a birthday invitation, Mom? Is it? It’s a pool party, right? I know, it must be a pool party! I can tell from the pictures. Who is it from?” Juan asked excitedly.

“You are right. It’s an invitation from your friend Daniel, from school,” Mrs. Lopez said.

“Yes! I am going to a birthday party!” Juan was jumping up and down by now.

Mrs. Lopez continued to read the card.

“Let’s see. When is the party? September 17 at 12 noon at their backyard pool. Uh-oh, Juan. September 17 is a Saturday.”

“That’s great. I don’t have school. You can just drop me off and pick me up later,” Juan offered.

Mrs. Lopez put down the card and looked at Juan.

“No, I cannot do that. You should know by now that Saturday is the Sabbath day. We can’t go to a birthday party on Saturday at noon because we will be at church service.”

“What? That’s not fair!” Juan said as he blinked back some tears. Then he thought of an idea. “Can we just go to church in the morning so I can still make it to the party in the afternoon?” Juan looked at his mother with hope in his eyes.

Mrs. Lopez said gently, “Juan, I know it’s hard to give up a birthday party. It sounds like a lot of fun, and Daniel is a good friend of yours. But I need you to calm down and listen for a minute.”

Juan wanted to say something, but Mrs. Lopez said calmly, “Why don’t I pour you a glass of cold milk? I want you to listen to me as you are drinking your milk, and think before you make a choice.”

When both of them sat down, Mrs. Lopez said, “Juan, I know sometimes God’s rules may seem hard to obey. But I know you want to listen and obey. One of God’s rules for us is to observe the Sabbath. That means we need to go to church on Saturdays to worship God. That is how we show God we love Him. It is not right to skip church so we can have fun. Daniel will understand that you have important things to do on Saturday. I will help you explain this to his parents. You two can still play together some other day. How about I ask his mom if it’s okay that you two do something fun together on Sunday

instead?"

Juan thought about his mom's idea for a moment.

"But there will be so many friends at the party."

"I know. But you have to make a choice here. You know God loves us, and He has blessed our family so much. We want to love Him back. I hope you will understand that to be a good Christian means we obey God's words, no matter what."

"Are you sure you are going to call Daniel's mom and ask if we can play on Sunday instead?" Juan asked.

"Yes, I will. I think you are making a wise choice. You are choosing to obey God's commands. I am so proud of you," Mrs. Lopez said as she gave Juan a big hug.

"Does this mean I can't ever go to any parties?" Juan asked.

Mrs. Lopez looked at Juan and said, "No, only the ones that are on Saturdays because that's our special day with God."

"Well, I guess there will be other birthdays," said Juan. "Are you sure this will really make God happy?"



Activity 1

What Happened to Samuel?

Look at the four pictures. Help the students answer the questions.

1. How many times did Samuel hear God call his name? (Four times; he went to Eli three times, then on the fourth time, he talked to God.)
2. How many times did Samuel go to see Eli? (Three times.)
3. What did Samuel say to God? ("Your servant is listening.")
4. Why might Samuel be smiling? (He is happy God talked to him.)



Activity 2

Are We Obeying? Yes or No?

Circle whether the people are obeying or disobeying God. Talk about alternative behaviors to show obedience if the picture shows disobedience.

"Absolutely. He knows you are giving up something you love so that you can worship Him. God will bless you for obeying Him," said Mrs. Lopez as she took Juan's empty cup.

"I still feel a little sad, Mom," said Juan.

"How about we read a book together? Then my casserole should be ready. And after dinner, we can open that yummy chocolate ice cream we bought yesterday," Mrs. Lopez said, trying to cheer Juan up.

"Chocolate! Yummy!" Juan said as he ran to the family room to grab a book.

Questions to Think About:

1. **Have you ever had to give up something because you had to come to church? What happened?** (Allow students to share.)
2. **Why is it important that we keep Sabbath and come to church on Saturdays?** (God has blessed this day. We come to church to show God we want to worship Him.)
3. **How do you obey your parents and God?** (Encourage the students to give examples from everyday life.)

1. They are fighting. (Disobeying.)
2. They are arguing. (Disobeying.)
3. He is praying with his eyes open. (Disobeying.)
4. He is putting his toys away. (Obeying.)



Activity 3

"I Am Listening and Obeying" Song

God called Samuel one night. Samuel thought it was Eli calling him, but Eli knew that God had an important message for Samuel. Eli told Samuel to go to his bed and wait to listen to God. Sing the song to the tune of "Frere Jaques." Encourage the students to do their best to listen and obey.

I am listening.

I am listening,

To the Lord,

To the Lord.


I want to obey God.

I want to obey God.


Every day.

Every day.

What Happened to Samuel?



How many times did Samuel hear God call his name?



How many times did Samuel go to see Eli?



What did Samuel say to God?



Why might Samuel be smiling?

Activity 2:2

Are We Obeying? Yes or No?

Circle the answers.



1. They are fighting.



2. They are arguing.

Obeying God

Disobeying God

Obeying God

Disobeying God



3. He is praying with his eyes open.



4. He is putting his toys away.

Obeying God

Disobeying God

Obeying God

Disobeying God