

# HOW DO I GET THE LIFE I REALLY WANT?

## 1 SAMUEL 8

### CHURCH GROUP SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE – JUNE 7, 2026

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#### SCRIPTURE READING

1 Samuel 8 (ESV)

#### ICE BREAKER QUESTION

When was a time you really wanted something and finally got it, only to discover it didn't deliver what you'd hoped? What did you learn from that?

#### SERMON RECAP

- Israel's problem wasn't wanting a king—God had always planned to give them one. The problem was why they wanted it (fear and comparison) and what they were willing to compromise to get it. Saying “now” can be as disobedient as saying “no.”
- An idol is anything we trust more than God. It's whatever our peace, joy, or significance depends on apart from him. A good thing becomes an idol the moment we trust it more than God to give us what we need.
- Idolatry works by promising what only God truly provides. As David Powlison said, “Idols counterfeit the identity and character of God,” which is exactly why Israel wanted a king to “go out before us and fight our battles.” They used language Scripture reserves for God himself.
- The late novelist David Foster Wallace observed that everyone worships something, and anything other than God “will eat you alive.” Whatever we look to instead of God ultimately enslaves rather than satisfies.
- Sometimes God rescues us from our idols by letting us have them, so we discover first-hand how empty they are and how much better he is. Israel got the king they asked for, but God was leading them toward the King they truly needed: Jesus, the better King.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*Observation: What does this passage say?*

1. How are Samuel's sons described in verses 1-3, and how does this set the stage for what the elders ask in verses 4-5?
2. In verse 7, how does the LORD interpret the people's request? Whom does he say they are really rejecting?
3. Look at the warning in verses 11-18. What specifically does Samuel say a king will “take” from the people, and how often does that word appear?

*Interpretation: What does the passage mean?*

1. The people say they want a king to “go out before us and fight our battles” (v. 20). Why is it significant that this is language the Old Testament uses to describe God Himself?
2. The sermon argued that the real issue was fear and comparison—wanting to be “like all the nations.” How does that help explain how a good desire (a king) became an act of idolatry?
3. What does it reveal about God's character that He grants their request even after warning them of the cost? How does that connect to the idea that God sometimes rescues us by letting us have our idols?

*Application: How can we apply this passage to our lives?*

1. Pastor Mike defined an idol as “anything you trust more than God—whatever your sense of peace, joy, or significance depends on other than God.” What's been functioning that way in your life lately?
2. Idols promise what only God truly provides. Where are you tempted to believe that something—security, approval, success, a relationship—can give you what only God can? Why is Jesus a better King than that thing?
3. As the OT scholar Bill Arnold said, “Impatience is a form of rebellion.” Where are you tempted to demand something “now” rather than trust God's timing? What would it look like this week to surrender that area to Jesus as King?