

Through the Bible in 24 Months



WEEK 33 OF 104

You Are My Lord

Week 33 of 104 • 32% of the way through the Bible

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

General Old Testament	1 Samuel 1-8
Wisdom Literature	Psalms 16-17
Gospels	Mark 3
General New Testament	Romans 11-12

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

Somebody is going to run your life. That is the question underneath all four readings this week. Israel looks around at the nations, decides God is not enough of a king, and asks for one they can see, and God tells Samuel plainly whose rejection it really is. David, hunted and hemmed in, says the opposite out loud: You are my Lord, my portion, my cup, the One who holds my lot. In Mark the religious experts look straight at the power of God and call it the power of Satan, while Jesus quietly says His real family is anyone who does the will of God. And Paul, having warned the grafted branch not to get proud, asks for the only thing that settles the question: your body, on the altar, today.

How to use this guide: Read all four passages during the week. Your teacher will take up two of them in class, one in each session. For the other two, work through the "Extended Class Discussion or Self-Study" questions on your own and write your answers in the space provided.

GENERAL OLD TESTAMENT 1 Samuel 1-8

Give Us a King

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

A barren woman prays so desperately at Shiloh that the high priest thinks she is drunk. God gives her Samuel, and she gives him back. Meanwhile Eli's sons steal the offerings and defile the tabernacle, and God calls a boy in the night. Israel carries the ark into battle like a charm and loses it, and Dagon falls on his face before it. Years later Israel repents at Mizpah, Samuel sets up a stone called Ebenezer, and then the elders ask for a king like all the nations.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Hannah asks God for a son and then hands him over at about the age of three (1:24-28). What made that possible, and where does her song in 2:1-10 say her confidence actually rested?
2. In 1 Samuel 8:7 God tells Samuel that the people have not rejected Samuel but have rejected God from reigning over them. Talk about how a request can be a rejection, and where we do the same thing while still saying our prayers.

3. Eli knew exactly what his sons were doing and never did more than talk about it (2:22–25; 3:13). Describe what that same failure looks like in a home or a congregation today, and name what it would have taken for Eli to act.

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Read Hannah's song in 1 Samuel 2:1–10 and list the reversals she names. Then set it beside Mary's song in Luke 1:46–55 and note every place the two overlap.
2. Trace what happens in 1 Samuel 3:1–18 from the first call to the morning report. How many times does Samuel go to Eli, and what finally changes for the boy?
3. 1 Samuel 4 through 6 tells the story of the ark. Make two lists, one of everything that goes wrong for Israel and one of everything that goes wrong for the Philistines. What is the account teaching about treating holy things as tools?
4. Read 1 Samuel 8:11–18, where Samuel spells out what a king will do. Count how many times the word take appears, then compare it with what God had freely given at Mizpah in 1 Samuel 7:10–13.
5. Israel wanted to look like the nations around them. Name the specific place where you most want your life to look like everyone else's, and decide one thing you will do this week that will make it look like God's instead.

WISDOM LITERATURE Psalm 16–17

My Portion and My Cup

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Two prayers of David, side by side, reaching further than David knew. In Psalm 16 he tells God, You are my Lord, then works out what that means: no other gods, no other portion, boundary lines fallen in pleasant places. The psalm ends with a promise about not being abandoned to the grave that Peter will preach at Pentecost. Psalm 17 is a prayer under pressure, asking God to guard him like the pupil of an eye, and ending with a hope that outlasts the night.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Psalm 16:2 says to the Lord, “You are my Lord; my goodness is nothing apart from You.” Talk about the distance between believing that and saying it, and about what a calendar and a bank statement reveal concerning which one is actually true.
2. Peter quotes Psalm 16:8–11 at Pentecost and says David was speaking of the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:25–32). Read both passages side by side and discuss how a man can say more than he knows.
3. Psalm 17:15 ends, “I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.” Where are you presently trying to get satisfied instead, and what would actually change if you believed verse 15 on a Tuesday afternoon?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List everything Psalm 16 says the Lord is to David: his refuge, his portion, his cup, his counselor, and more. Which of those images meets you where you are right now?
2. Compare Psalm 16:10 with Acts 2:25–32 and Acts 13:35–37. How do Peter and Paul each use the verse, and what argument do both of them make from David’s tomb?
3. Psalm 17:1–5 sounds like a man claiming to be sinless. Read it slowly beside Psalm 51:1–4, written by the same man. Is David claiming perfection, or claiming something narrower?
4. Trace the requests David makes in Psalm 17:6–9. What images does he use for God’s protection, and what does each one suggest about how close he expects God to be?
5. Psalm 16:7 says the Lord instructs David’s heart in the night seasons. Take ten silent minutes this week with no screen in the room, and write down what God’s word has been saying that you have been too busy to hear.

GOSPELS Mark 3

By Whose Power

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

A man with a withered hand stands in the synagogue on the Sabbath while the Pharisees watch to see whether Jesus will heal him. He does, and they leave to plot His death with the Herodians. Crowds press in from every direction. Jesus goes up a mountain and appoints twelve. His own family comes to take Him home, convinced He

is out of His mind, and scribes from Jerusalem announce that He casts out demons by the prince of demons. The chapter ends with Jesus naming His real family.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Mark 3:5 says Jesus looked around at them with anger, grieved at the hardness of their hearts. What made Him angry, and what does it teach us that anger and grief arrived together in the same look?
2. Jesus warns of a sin that has no forgiveness (3:28–30). Read the warning with verse 30 in view, notice exactly what the scribes had said, and discuss why the person most afraid of having committed it is almost certainly the person who has not.
3. In 3:31–35 Jesus draws a family line around whoever does the will of God. How does that land in a room where some people have believing families and some do not, and what does it obligate this congregation to do about it?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. List the twelve as Mark names them in 3:16–19. What sort of men are on the list, and what did Simon the Zealot and Matthew the tax collector have in common besides Jesus?
2. Trace the conflicts from Mark 2:1 through 3:30. Who brings each charge, and how do the accusations escalate from grumbling to a plot?
3. Read Mark 3:22–27 and explain the parable of the strong man in your own words. Who is the strong man, who is the one who binds him, and what are the goods being carried off?
4. Compare Mark 3:6 with Mark 12:13. Why is it remarkable that Pharisees and Herodians would cooperate at all, and what does their alliance say about how threatening Jesus had become?
5. Mark 3:21 says Jesus' own relatives went out to take custody of Him because they thought He was beside Himself. Name the cost of following Him that you are currently unwilling to pay, and take one step toward paying it this week.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND HERE

Paul asks whether God has cast away His people, and answers with Elijah, a remnant, and his own conversion. Then comes the olive tree: natural branches broken off through unbelief, a wild branch grafted in by faith, and a warning not to be arrogant, because the God who spared neither will not spare you either. The argument ends in a doxology. Then chapter 12 turns the whole letter toward the floor: present your bodies a living sacrifice, be transformed, serve in one body, and let love be genuine.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Romans 11:22 tells the Gentile Christian to consider the goodness and the severity of God and warns that he too can be cut off. Read the olive tree passage as a whole and talk about what it means, practically, to “continue in His goodness.”
2. Romans 12:1 asks for your body, not your opinions or your feelings. What would it look like this week to hand over your hands, your schedule, your mouth, and your appetite as a living sacrifice?
3. Romans 12:9 says let love be without hypocrisy. Where does love in a congregation most easily turn into a performance, and what would sincere love have done differently in this church in the last month?

EXTENDED CLASS DISCUSSION OR SELF-STUDY

1. Trace the olive tree illustration in Romans 11:16–24. Identify the root, the natural branches, and the wild branch, and state the one condition on which any branch remains.
2. Romans 11:2–5 recalls Elijah under the broom tree. Read 1 Kings 19:9–18 and note how God corrects Elijah’s arithmetic. Why is the idea of a remnant such a comfort to a discouraged Christian?
3. List the marks of a transformed life in Romans 12:9–21. Choose the three you find hardest and write a sentence on why each one costs you.
4. Romans 12:3–8 describes one body with many members. Compare 1 Corinthians 12:12–27 and Ephesians 4:11–16, then say what all three passages imply about a member who does nothing.
5. Romans 12:20–21 says to feed your enemy and give him a drink. Name the person you would least like to help, and do one concrete good thing for him before next Sunday.