

# 1 Samuel: The Lord's Heavy Hand

## 1 Samuel 5:1-7:2

Even as we enter into a dark place in this story where the Israelites have overvalued the ark and undervalued God himself, we see that God is at work the entire time. What looks like despair from a human perspective is really the beginning of God's "victory tour" as he systematically takes down the Philistines. His supremacy is clear as he shows up in undeniable ways just like he often does in our own lives as a means to display his glory and drive us to repentance.

## Application

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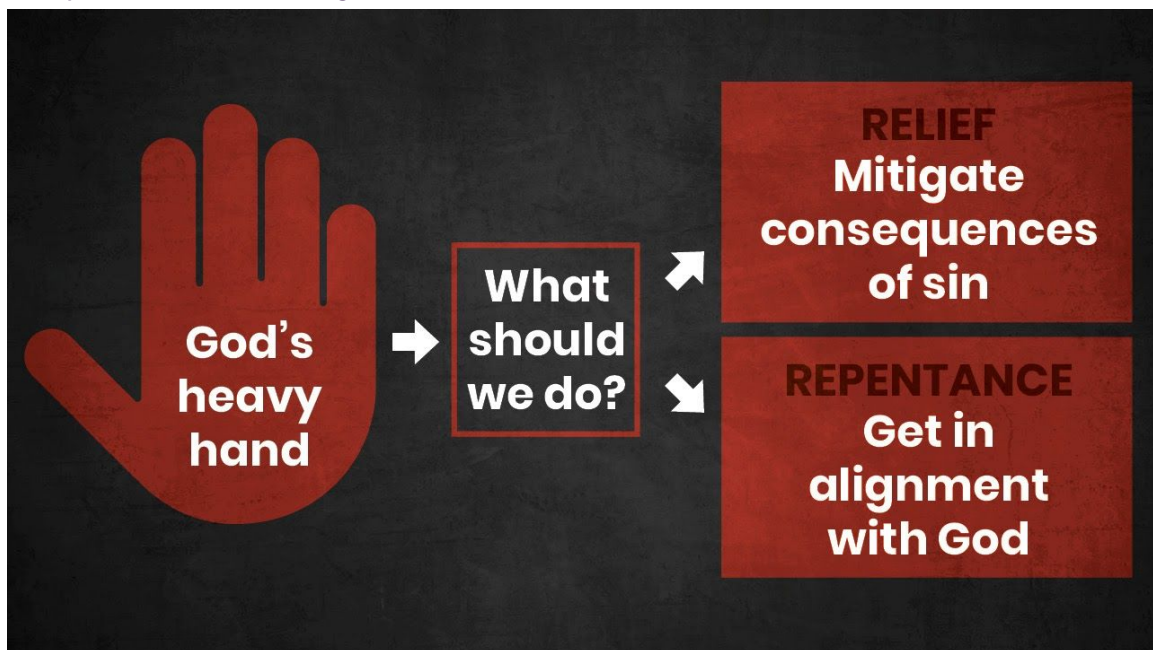
1. God often uses the dark circumstances of our lives to bring about glory for himself and holiness in us. Think about some of the harder parts of your life right now—how could God be using this for his glory? How could he be using it for your holiness?
2. What are you worshiping that actually depends on you, like the people who worshiped Dagon and had to prop him up themselves? (e.g. job security, people's opinions of us, a house, a car, a certain reputation or social media image)
3. The people continue to worship a god who has proven to be inadequate, insufficient, and inept. What do you continue to worship that actually never satisfies you? How can you set up memorials in your heart to the failures of your idol?
4. Opposite of the "American dream", loyalty to God's glory is all that matters. Does that bring you comfort or strife? How might your actions show loyalty to your own glory rather than God's?
5. Is there an explicit way that God has asked you to honor him yet you are treating it casually? Has there been a time recently or in the past that God has been undeniably present but you are distracted or unwilling to lean in?

6. Refer to the graphic below. When God convicts you of sin and brings difficult circumstances into your life, do you create distance and remain comfortable, or do you surrender on his terms and do whatever it takes to get in alignment with God? What kinds of things will it take for you to get in alignment with him?

## Key Points

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- God is often doing things in our lives for his glory that in the moment feel like defeat and despair.
- We are fools to choose to worship something that needs us rather than worship the One who needs nothing.
- When our false gods are exposed, it should be a reminder to worship the true God alone and not the idols.
- Set up memorials in your heart to the failures of your idols.
- Whether you are out of or in alignment with God, he will still be glorified in your life—it will be either through your judgment or your salvation.
- You do not want to make God choose between his glory and your life because he will choose his glory every time.
- The Philistines look for relief Instead of repentance and try to manage the consequences of their sin instead of getting in alignment with God.
- It's a gracious act when God brings his heavy hand on our life because it drives us to repentance and realignment with him.



- Oftentimes God makes himself undeniably present to us, but we are distracted or unwilling to come to him.

- "Safe? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you." —C.S. Lewis
- We see despair and defeat in these chapters, but it's the very thing through which God brings glory to himself and victory to his people.
- The question is not am I a Christian or not, it is am I repenting or not.

## Other Scripture References

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[2 Timothy 2:12-13](#)

[Numbers 4:17-20](#)