Text: 1 Samuel 8

Reflection Questions

1. In 1 Samuel 8:4–9, the elders ask for a king “like all the nations,” and God tells Samuel that the people have rejected Him as their King. Why was this request more than simply a change in Israel’s form of government? What does it reveal about their view of God and their desire to be like the surrounding nations?

Leader follow-ups if needed:

- Why do you think Israel struggled with being different from the nations around them?
- How can the desire to fit in become a form of rejecting God's design?

2. The message described Israel’s request as an expression of subtle distrust and a desire for control. How can someone outwardly claim to trust God while still trying to maintain control over the outcomes of their life?

Leader follow-ups if needed:

- What is the difference between asking God to guide our decisions and asking Him to endorse decisions we have already made?
- Why can it be so difficult to surrender something when we believe we know what would make us happy?

3. In 1 Samuel 8:10–18, God warns Israel that their king will take their sons, daughters, land, livestock, and freedom. Yet the people refuse to listen. What does this passage teach us about the danger of wanting something so badly that we become unwilling to consider its consequences? How does this connect with the warning in Romans 1 that God may give people over to their own desires?

Leader follow-ups if needed:

- Why isn't getting what we want always evidence of God's blessing?
- How can God's warnings and boundaries actually be expressions of His mercy?

Application Questions

4. The message challenged us to consider whether our lives look different from the lives of those who don't follow Jesus. If someone observed your ordinary life—your marriage, family relationships, work, finances, priorities, and use of time—what would demonstrate that Jesus is King over your life?

Leader follow-ups if needed:

- Are there areas where your behavior looks different but your underlying motivation is essentially the same as the world's?
- What is one area where you could better reflect God's priorities this week?

5. The message described subtle distrust as wanting Jesus to be our co-pilot while we remain in the driver's seat. Where are you currently tempted to keep control rather than fully surrender to God's direction? What would trusting Him in that area actually require?

Leader follow-ups if needed:

- Are you rationalizing something you already know Scripture speaks clearly about?
- Is there a relationship, career decision, financial goal, or personal desire that has become more important to you than obedience to God?
- What would it look like to let God determine the outcome rather than simply asking Him to bless your preferred outcome?

6. God warned Israel about the consequences of their decision, but they chose to move forward anyway. Is there an area of your life where you recognize that you have been ignoring God's wisdom or the counsel of others? What would it look like to respond differently before experiencing the consequences?

Leader follow-ups if needed:

- What warning or counsel have you been tempted to dismiss?
- Are you asking someone to rescue you from consequences that might actually be teaching you something important?
- How can we extend grace to someone while still allowing them to take responsibility for their choices?

7. The message closes by contrasting earthly kings who take with Jesus, the true King who gives Himself for His people. How does understanding Jesus as the sacrificial King change the way you think about following Him? What is one practical way you can live this week under His kingship rather than your own?

Leader follow-ups if needed:

- What does it mean that Jesus came not to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom?
- Where might following Jesus require you to give something up, serve someone else, or surrender your own preferences?
- How does remembering what Christ has given us motivate our obedience?