

Hopes + Ambitions — A Prayerful Guide to Reflecting and Planning

A SEASON OF REFLECTION

Reflecting on the Presence of God in Every Season

Single Lesson · For Individual or Group Use

Before stepping into a new season, this study invites you to pause and look back. Using the story of Samuel and the Ebenezer in 1 Samuel 7, you will be reminded that God's faithfulness is worth remembering — and that reflecting on where He has been strengthens your faith as you move forward.

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1 Samuel 7:3–17

PURPOSE STATEMENT

This study invites you to pause before rushing into a new season and reflect on where God has been in the one you just left. Using the story of Samuel and the Ebenezer in 1 Samuel 7, you will be reminded that God's faithfulness is worth remembering — and that taking time to look back strengthens your faith as you move forward.

INTRODUCTION

An Ebenezer is a pile of stacked stones used in the Old Testament as a tangible marker of God's help. The word itself means "stone of help." Too often we forget how God sustained, guided, or delivered us through difficult seasons — and moving into a new one without pausing to remember means missing an opportunity to strengthen our faith and give God the glory He deserves.

In 1 Samuel 7, the prophet Samuel erects an Ebenezer after God delivers His people from the Philistines — a powerful reminder that when God's people trust Him completely, there is nothing to fear.

OPENING — COME THOU FOUNT OF EVERY BLESSING

Take a few minutes to read through the lyrics of "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" — a beloved hymn in the Christian tradition. As you read, pay attention to the posture of the writer. He is not simply singing — he is remembering, confessing, and surrendering. Read slowly and use the questions below to reflect.

- 1. The song is written like a prayer. What are some things the author is expressing to God?**
- 2. What lines stand out to you? Why?**
- 3. Based on the song, what does it seem like an Ebenezer represents to the writer?**

PAUSE HERE

"Come Thou Fount" is essentially a prayer of remembrance — the writer looks back at God's faithfulness and declares his dependence on Him. That is exactly what we are going to do today. Before stepping into a new season, we are going to pause, look back, and raise our own Ebenezer.

CHAPTER CONTEXT

Samuel grew up under the mentorship of the priest Eli and was chosen by God to serve as Israel's next prophet. Before Samuel assumed leadership, however, God allowed Israel to fall into the hands of their enemies, the Philistines — a consequence of the people's persistent wickedness and idolatry. For twenty years, Israel suffered and mourned. Their ruin was the direct result of hearts that had wandered from God. Samuel's role in this passage is to call the people back to the Lord and lead them into the freedom and blessing that comes from belonging entirely to Him.

STUDY

READ 1 SAMUEL 7:3–17

- 1. What commands does Samuel give the people to represent their repentant hearts (v. 3)? How do they respond (v. 4)?**
- 2. What are the people doing at Mizpah (v. 5–6)? What does their posture there tell you about their attitude toward God?**
- 3. What does Samuel do on behalf of the people (v. 9)? How does God respond (v. 10–11)?**
- 4. What does this passage reveal about the character of God?**
- 5. Why was it important for the Israelites to turn back to God — and what did that restoration make possible?**

APPLY

- 1. Describe Israel's behavior throughout this passage. What do you learn from them? How do you relate to their story?**
- 2. Why was it important for Samuel to stop and raise an Ebenezer rather than simply move on?**
- 3. How might regularly taking time to remember God's faithfulness prepare and strengthen you for what is ahead?**

PAUSE HERE

The reflection pages that follow are your Ebenezer. Set aside some quiet time — alone or with your group — to work through them honestly. Ask God to bring to mind the moments from your last season that He wants you to remember, and trust that He has been present in more places than you realized.

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THIS SEASON'S HIGHS AND LOWS

Use the space below to list the highlights and challenges from your past season. Then reflect on where God was present in each.

This Season's Highlights

This Season's Challenges

Where was God in these high points?

Where was God in these challenges?

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RAISE YOUR EBENEZER

The spaces below represent your Ebenezer stones. In each one, write a single word that represents God's character or role in your life from this past season. These words are your markers — tangible reminders of where He has been faithful.

WHAT DO I WANT TO REMEMBER?

Looking back at your highlights, challenges, and Ebenezer words, what do you most want to carry forward? What has God shown you about Himself through this season?

What do I want to remember about God going forward?

REFLECT & CONNECT

Remembering is an act of faith. Samuel's Ebenezer was a declaration that God had shown up, and it stood as a reminder for everyone who came after. Your reflection today is the same kind of declaration — a marker that says, "Thus far the Lord has helped me." He has been faithful — and He will be faithful again.