



Session 1: ANSWERED!
Suggested Week of Use: June 5, 2016
Core Passages: 1 Samuel 1:10-18;26-28

News Story Summary

Benjamin Rogovy led 1.3 million people to believe that they could purchase prayers that would be favorably answered. Through a Facebook page called Christian Prayer Center, Rogovy promised that God would give customers favorable answers to prayers such as healthy babies, clean HIV tests, and winning lottery tickets if they paid a monthly fee of \$9 to \$35. Over a period of four years, Rogovy profited \$7 million. However recently, he was ordered to refund the money.

(For more on this story, search the Internet using the phrase “Seattle paying for prayers scammer.”)

Focus Attention

After the group arrives, ask: *How much would you pay a person to pray for you?* Allow time for discussion, then share a summary from the news story about the fraudulent prayer center. Comment that amazingly some people placed their hope and trust in someone other than God to meet their needs.

Introduce the unit of study by providing an overview of the Book of 1 Samuel. Point out that the book begins with the birth of Samuel who was the last judge. Samuel delivered the Israelites from the Philistines and installed Saul as the first king of Israel. The book also includes the origin of David and Saul’s slide into paranoia and bitterness. It concludes with Saul’s death and sets the stage for David’s dynasty.

Explain that today’s lesson focuses on the humble and fervent prayer of Hannah who asked God to bless her with a child. Challenge the group to look for keys to effective prayer in today’s lesson.

Challenge

Remind group members of the opening illustration. Explain that just like Hannah, the people who paid for prayers were desperate. Yet they focused on someone who had no power to answer their prayers. Hannah directed her prayer to God. Challenge the group to spend some time in prayer this week, remembering them that God is able to do what no one else can do. Close in prayer, asking God to strengthen the groups’ resolve to wait faithfully on Him to answer their prayers.