

10

Problem Priests

Worship

We praise God for His great love for us.

POWER TEXT

"They are dogs with mighty appetites; they never have enough. They are shepherds who lack understanding; they all turn to their own way, they seek their own gain" (Isaiah 56:11, NIV).

KEY REFERENCES

- 1 Samuel 2:12-36
- *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chap. 56, pp. 575-580
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 3, pp. 155-159
- Student lesson on page 112 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 7, The Nature of Humanity
- No. 8, The Great Controversy
- No. 22, Christian Behavior
- No. 23, Marriage and the Family

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that focusing on themselves destroys an attitude of worship.
- **Feel** a desire to worship God with their whole lives.
- **Respond** by committing to place God first in everything.

POWERPOINT

We worship God when we focus on Him and His power.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Eli's sons take advantage of the offerings people bring to God. They take the best parts of the sacrifice for themselves rather than giving them to God. They threaten people who refuse to go along with their scheme. For Eli's sons, what they get out of the religious system is more important than giving true loyalty and worship to God.

This is a lesson about worship.

So many people get involved with religion to see what they can "get." God wants us to *give* worship to Him. Give Him our hearts, our minds, our talents, and our possessions. Eli's sons were only there to see what they could "take" from the worshipers.

Teacher Enrichment

"The Lord had given the most specific directions in regard to offering sacrifices. . . . The sacrifices, pointing forward to the death of Christ, were designed to preserve in the hearts of the people faith in the Redeemer to come; hence it was of the greatest importance that the Lord's directions concerning them should be strictly heeded. The peace offerings were especially an expression of thanksgiving to God. In these offerings the fat alone was to be burned upon the altar; a certain specified portion was reserved for the priests, but the greater part was returned to the offerer, to be eaten by him and his friends in a sacrificial feast. Thus all hearts were to be directed, in gratitude and faith, to the great Sacrifice that was to take away the sin of the world. . . .

"[The] irreverence on the part of the priests soon robbed the service of its holy and solemn significance, and the people 'abhorred the offering of the Lord.' The great antitypical sacrifice to which they were to look forward was no longer recognized" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 576).

How do I focus on God's power rather than my own? What evidence is there in my life that I am committed to putting God first? What struggle is taking more of my time than praise is every day? How can I focus more on God and less on me?

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson.

Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the Readiness Activity of your choice. »

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at the door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	*A. A Material World*	paper, pencils
		B. Win or Worship?	simple games, photocopies of role cards (p. 150)
* Prayer & Praise	15-20	See page 107. Prayer & Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, world map, pushpins, offering plate/basket
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story	
		Experiencing the Story	Bibles
		Exploring the Bible	Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Make It Now*	paper, pens/pencils
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Keep Focused*	paper plates, markers, *He Is Our Song* songbooks
* Closing		A. Prayer and Closing Comments	
		B. Reminder to Parents	
		C. Coming Up Next Week	

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils

A Material World

Distribute sheets of paper and pencils to each person. Ask them to list five or six important things they own, leaving a space under each one. Then they are to add two or three things they would really like to own. When most have accomplished this, they are to place one of the following marks beside each item they have listed. Say: **Place a K beside ones you will keep permanently. Mark Q for ones that will be used up or wear out quickly. U can stand for items that are really needed and useful.** When they have categorized each item, ask them to write beneath them a way that they could be used for worshipping or responding to God. (Ideas: Some items could be shared with others to bring them joy; a stereo could be used to play praise music to God.)

Debriefing

Ask each of the students to share one or two of the items they have listed, and how they could use them to honor and worship God. Ask: **How did you feel about listing your most important material possessions? Do you feel you have many, or few? How do you feel about the amount you possess? For what do you use these possessions?**

Say: **Materialism consists of storing up things for our own benefit. Let's say our power text, Isaiah 56:11:**

"They are dogs with mighty appetites; they never have enough. They are shepherds who lack understanding; they all turn to their own way, they seek their own gain" (Isaiah 56:11, NIV).

Our story today is about young men who fit this description. They weren't concerned about worshipping God; they were concerned about taking whatever they wanted. Worship is not just something we do Sabbath morning; it is a way of life when we demonstrate how much we love God. As our power point reminds us:

We worship God when we focus on Him and His power.

B

YOU NEED:
- ☐ simple games
- ☐ photocopies of role cards (p. 150)

Win or Worship?

Form groups of six or fewer. Give each group a simple game. Before students start playing, ask one person from each group to be an observer. Take the observers aside and inform them that it's their responsibility to watch each person in the group during the game. Show them the role cards (p. 150) so they know what to watch for. Have them take notes on how the players act and what are the results of their actions. The observers should not say anything to the group.

Next, hand out the role cards (p. 150) to the other group participants, and tell them not to let anyone see what their roles are in the game. Don't tell students they all have the same role. Instruct the players to remember it's important to stay in their roles at all times while playing the game. Watch for any deteriorating relationships. Ask observers to report what happened in each of their groups.

Debriefing

Ask: **How is being successful in the world sometimes like this? How does this approach to life affect other people? What does God think about our actions?**

Say: **You've just experienced what it means to live in a materialistic world. It's part of our nature to sin, to focus on ourselves and what we want and think we need. Let's say our power text, Isaiah 56:11:**

"They are dogs with mighty appetites; they never have enough. They are shepherds who lack understanding; they all turn to their own way, they seek their own gain" (Isaiah 56:11, NIV).

Our story today is about young men who fit this description. They weren't concerned about worshipping God; they were concerned about taking whatever they wanted. Worship is not just something we do Sabbath morning; it is a way of life when we demonstrate how much we love God. As our power point reminds us:

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Prayer & Praise

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"You Are My Everything" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 44)
"Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 45)
"We Are an Offering" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 136)
"Seek Ye First" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 83)
"All That I Need" (*Praise Time*, no. 64)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Say: **Our mission is to tell the whole world the good news of the Father's lavish love. Our mission stories report about the people who still need to hear.** Use Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION), or another mission report available to you. Using a world map, have the students identify and mark with pushpins the location where the mission story is taking place.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ offering plate/basket

Say: **Bringing our offerings each week is one way God has provided for us to worship Him and help to share the good news about Him with the rest of the world.**

Prayer

Say: **I would like you all to bow your heads and close your eyes as I speak.** Wait for them to comply. **There are probably times in the past few weeks when all of us have felt like keeping something all to ourselves and not sharing. Or we have seen something another person has that we really wished were ours. I am going to be quiet for a moment, and I would like you, in your hearts, to talk about these times to God in a silent confession.**

Wait 20 to 30 seconds, and then pray a corporate prayer of confession finishing with an expressed desire to focus on God, and not ourselves, as a way of worshipping Him. Close with a prayer for the students' joys and sorrows, for the birthday and other special event celebrants, as well as for the visitors.

Notes

2

BIBLE LESSON

Introducing the Bible Story

Say: **In the activities we have done today we have learned that we can worship God in everything we do by focusing on Him instead of on ourselves. When we focus on Him, we are not living our lives in an attempt to be number one and get everything we can for ourselves. Our story today is about two young men who, even though they had jobs working for the church, used their positions to please themselves and not to help in the worship of God.**

YOU NEED:

- □ Bibles

Experiencing the Story

Ask students to find 1 Samuel 2:12-36. Ask volunteers to read the verses you specify and then discuss each segment after it has been read.

Have a volunteer read verses 12-17. Ask: **What do you think is going on here?** (Encourage responses.)

Say: **These sacrifices mentioned were peace offerings. Only the fat of these offerings was to be burned for the Lord. God's plan was that the priests get something from the offering—only enough for them to eat. The rest of the meat, however, God intended for the person sacrificing to enjoy with their friends** (see *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 576). **The person sacrificing was to have a sacrificial feast. While he and his friends ate, they were to be grateful for and have faith in Jesus, who was to be the great sacrifice that would make peace between man and God.**

Ask: **What were Eli's sons doing to the worship of God by their greed and self-centeredness?** (making people hate the whole sacrificial experience; keeping them from having the feast with their friends; keeping them from reflecting on Christ's sacrifice to make peace with man. Encourage other insights and discussion.)

Have a volunteer read verses 18-26. Ask: **What do you think life for Samuel was like? Do you think Eli was a better foster father to Samuel than a father to his own sons?** (Encourage discussion. Point out that Samuel's parents had dedicated him to God in a special way and were praying for him.) **What do you think was the difference between Samuel and Eli's sons?** (Encourage them to realize that Eli's sons had turned from God and were putting themselves first; Samuel was choosing to focus on and worship God.) **What do you think about verse 25?** Explain to the students information from the following passage as you feel necessary. "They had rejected God's protective control, chosen their own selfish way, and deliberately forsaken the counsel of Heaven. In turning away from the angel of the Lord (Ps. 34:7), they sealed their own doom. It was the Philistines who killed them (1 Sam. 4:10, 11), yet God permitted their death because of their refusal to follow Him. 'God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but He leaves the rejecters of His mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown' (*The Great Controversy,* p. 36). So it was with Judas! So it is with all who reject the pleadings of the Holy Spirit!" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 463).

Have a volunteer read verses 27 to 36. Ask: **What did Hophni and Phinehas focus on instead of God?** (themselves; their stomachs; money; doing what they wanted) **What did Eli put before God?** (his sons; his comfort—he was unwilling to discipline his sons and face the unpleasantness of making them angry.) **What were the blessings that would come to a priest who would honor God and put Him first?** (His family would be established; he would have God's blessing; he would have the joy of worshipping and serving God for a long time.)

We worship God when we focus on Him and His power.

3

APPLYING THE LESSON

Exploring the Bible

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles

Divide the students into small groups.

Give each group one of the following passages to find and read together. Ask each group to decide how to explain to the rest of the class how this passage relates to the lesson for today.

1. Luke 1:50-53. (It is similar to the predictions made in 1 Samuel 2:1-10.)
2. Proverbs 12:15. (Eli's sons would not listen to their father; Eli didn't really listen to the man who came to warn him.)
3. Isaiah 56:11. (This describes people like Eli's sons, who focus on themselves.)
4. Psalm 26:8-12. (God will instruct us in the way we should go, as He tried to do for Eli and his sons. Those who listen to and focus on God will be blessed as a result.)

Say: **Let's repeat our power text, Isaiah 56:11:**

"They are dogs with mighty appetites; they never have enough. They are shepherds who lack understanding; they all turn to their own way, they seek their own gain" (Isaiah 56:11, NIV).

Let's say our power point together:

We worship God when we focus on Him and His power.

Make It Now

YOU NEED:
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pens/pencils

Divide students into working groups again, with an adult facilitator, if possible. Ask them to review the power text, Isaiah 56:11, and the power point, and develop and write out a scenario in the lives of imagined students their age that would demonstrate today's lesson. Suggest that they think about Eli, Eli's sons, and Samuel in a modern-day setting. Have them include their advice to the persons in the scenario.

Have each small group present their scenario to the large group and discuss their possible advice or answers.

Remember the power point:

We worship God when we focus on Him and His power.

4

SHARING THE LESSON

Keep Focused

YOU NEED:
- ☐ paper plates
- ☐ markers
- ☐ *He Is Our Song* songbooks

Have students share if they talked with their family members or other adults about what it means to have God as the first priority. Ask: **Did you have conversations with adults about what it means to seek God above everything else? What does serving God wholeheartedly mean to you?** Give each student a paper plate and a marker. Ask them to draw concentric circles on their plates—leaving at least a half inch (one centimeter) between the circles. Then have each person write "Jesus" in the inside circle. Explain that these are concentric circles. Ask: **Do you know what concentric circles are?** (circles having a common center) **Who is our common center—the one who should be the focus of all we do?**

Now have the students draw various things that are important to them in each of the concentric circles. Ask them to tape their plates in places where they'll see them each day. Close by joining together in a circle and singing the chorus of "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 45).

Challenge students to think of the name of one person with whom they will share the joy of having Jesus in their lives. Divide into pairs & Practice "explaining" how the picture describes worshipping God by focusing on Him and His power. At the end, repeat once again the power point.

We worship God when we focus on Him and His power.

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

Have the students stand quietly in the circle while you give God your corporate praise and worship, and ask for the outpouring of His Spirit that will help you all to focus on Him.

Reminder to Parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel=1.**

Coming up next week:

Say: **Jonathan attacks the Philistines. We are grateful & Praise God for His blessings.**

Notes

Student lesson

Problem Priests

Have you ever chosen to be silent rather than to sing the hymns in church? Have you ever kept your eyes open during prayer or distracted others from listening to the sermon? How do your choices affect your ability to truly worship God?

Eli saw a man walking toward him quickly. As he got closer, Eli could see the veins in his forehead bulging and the angry look on his face.

Eli sighed deeply and prepared himself for the bad news that was sure to follow.

"Your sons have no business being priests!" the man began angrily.

Eli knew his sons had no respect for the holy things of the tabernacle, for their positions as priests, or even for God. He had tried to correct them, but nothing had changed.

The man continued. "The priests are not content with the pieces of meat that God instructed us to give them; they take even more from the meat that is ours." The man paused for a long time, glaring at Eli. "Your sons send their servants to us before the fat has even been offered to the Lord as His portion! The servants demand raw meat for the priests to roast.

"If we protest and tell them that we must wait until the fat has been offered to the Lord, they threaten us, saying they will take the meat by force!"

Eli closed his eyes and remained silent for a moment. The man was right. Hophni and Phinehas should not be priests. They had taken advantage of their positions and cheated the people. They did not care about the God they were there to serve. Eli knew, down deep, that he was also not showing respect for God by allowing his sons to continue as priests. But what to do?

Slowly Eli opened his eyes. "I'll talk to them again," he promised.

Hophni and Phinehas thought of nobody but themselves. They had forgotten who they were and why they were at the tabernacle. The Levites were a special people, set aside to serve God. Only a select few could come so close to God's presence, but Eli's sons just didn't seem to care. They failed to worship God as He instructed; instead they worshipped themselves.

Getting up from his seat, Eli went off to find his sons. If only they cared about spiritual things the way the young boy Samuel did.

"Why do you do such things?" Eli asked Hophni and Phinehas when he finally found them. "I hear from all the people about these wicked deeds of yours" (1 Samuel 2:23, NIV). Eli went on, trying to caution his sons, attempting to convince them to change. It was as if he were talking to stones. His sons were not interested in hearing what Eli had to say. It was too late to try to correct them.

One day God sent another man to visit Eli. This man brought a message from God. "Did I not clearly reveal myself to your ancestor's family when they were in Egypt under Pharaoh? I chose your ancestor out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod in my presence. I also gave your ancestor's family all the food offerings presented by the Israelites. Why do you scorn my sacrifice and offering that I prescribed for my dwelling? Why do you honor your sons more than me by fattening yourselves on the choice parts of every offering made by my people Israel?"

Eli's eyes became very large, and he slumped on his bench. The messenger continued by telling Eli that his family would no longer serve the Lord as priests. The privilege and responsibility were being removed from them because of their carelessness and disrespect for God. Eli's descendants would not be blessed with long lives. Hophni and Phinehas would end up dying, both on the same day.

God was going to raise up a faithful servant who would serve Him as priest and would honor God in all that he did (see verses 27-35, NIV).

KEY REFERENCES

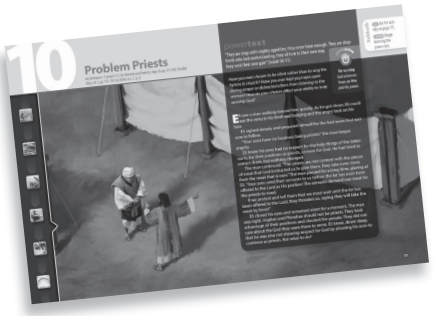
- 1 Samuel 2:12-36
- *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chap. 56, pp. 575-580
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 3, pp. 155-159
- Our Beliefs, nos. 7, 8, 22, 23

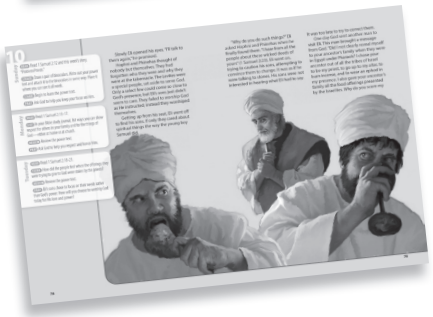
POWER TEXT

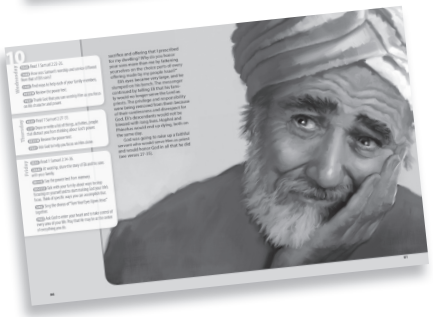
"They are dogs with mighty appetites; they never have enough. They are shepherds who lack understanding; they all turn to their own way, they seek their own gain" (Isaiah 56:11, NIV).

POWER POINT

We worship God when we focus on Him and His power.







Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 75.

Sunday

READ Read 1 Samuel 2:12 and this week's story, "Problem Priests."

CREATE Draw a pair of binoculars. Write out your power text and attach it to the binoculars in some way. Place it where you can see it all week.

LEARN Begin to learn the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you keep your focus on Him.

Monday

READ Read 1 Samuel 2:13–17.

LIST In your Bible study journal, list ways you can show respect for others in your family and for the things of God—either at home or at church.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you respect and honor Him.

Tuesday

READ Read 1 Samuel 2:18–21.

THINK How did the people feel when the offerings they were trying to give to God were stolen by the priests?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Eli's sons chose to focus on their needs rather than God's power. How will you choose to worship God today for His love and power?

Wednesday

READ Read 1 Samuel 2:22–26.

THINK How was Samuel's worship and service different from that of Eli's sons?

CARE Find ways to help each of your family members.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God that you can worship Him as you focus on His character and power.

Thursday

READ Read 1 Samuel 2:27–33.

LIST Draw or write a list of things, activities, people that distract you from thinking about God's power.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you focus on Him alone.

Friday

READ Read 1 Samuel 2:34–36.

SHARE At worship, share the story of Eli and his sons with your family.

RECITE Say the power text from memory.

DISCUSS Talk with your family about ways to stop focusing on yourself and to start making God your life's focus. Think of specific ways you can accomplish that.

SING Sing the chorus of "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus" together.

PRAY Ask God to enter your heart and to take control of every area of your life. Pray that He may be at the center of everything you do.