

Kingmaker: The Qualities of a Godly Influencer
Prophetic
1 Samuel 7

Introduction: In our study of 1st Samuel, we know that Samuel served Israel as its last official judge, but first and foremost he served Israel as a prophet of God who called the people to believe the truth about God and as such live their lives in obedience to Him. Most people think of prophecy as foretelling, that is, proclaiming things that will happen in the future. However, when you study the Old Testament, you quickly realize the Prophets certainly did plenty of foretelling, but when they did it, it wasn't their purpose as a prophet to do so, but rather a method to call God's people to repent or encourage them to be steadfast in their faithfulness to Him. Foretelling wasn't the purpose of the Prophets; but rather proclaiming and applying The Truth!

In this sense, nobody had a more defined role as a Godly Influencer than the Prophet. The work of the Levites as priests in the temple offering sacrifices to God on behalf of the people was certainly an important part of the religious system God established to point the people of Israel to The Promised One (Jesus), but it is the work of The Prophets that ultimately defined and applied that purpose to the people and the lives they were living.

Now, fast forward to our daily living in the New Covenant. There are many who claim the work of prophecy ended in the first century, however, the passion of Paul was that every believer be able to prophesy. Nowhere in the Bible does this come out more clearly than it does in one of Paul's letters to the church at Corinth, a church filled with people obsessing over the gift of tongues. Paul writes,

1 Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. 2 For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. 3 On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. 4 The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. (1 Corinthians 14:1-4)

Paul knew that the same Holy Spirit that filled the prophets in the Old Testament, was the same Holy Spirit promised to fill every follower of Jesus, so much so, that one of the signs of the coming of the New Covenant would be that all who were in Christ could function as prophets. Peter himself spoke of this promise in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost,

16 But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: 17 "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, (Acts 2:16-17)

Knowing this promise is why Peter could later write this with such confidence,

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9)

Our “**that**”, otherwise known as our purpose, is to “**proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.**” That is the work of the prophet, and Peter makes it clear that it’s also the God ordained purpose of every follower of Christ!

So how do we do it? How do we accomplish the ministry of a prophet? Some of you are already freaking out thinking, “man, I’ve been told I’m supposed to share the Gospel with others and that’s intimidating enough, but now you’re telling me I need to be living my life as a prophet of God; what in the world does that even mean and how in the world am I supposed to do it?” Well, in our study of 1st Samuel, chapter 7 gives us a great testimony of the basic roles of the job of the prophet, and honestly, it’s really not a complicated job description at all.

Proposition: In 1 Samuel 7 we see 3 of the universal jobs of a prophet of God.

The first universal job of a prophet of God is to ...

(1) Lead God’s people through repentance. (7:1-6)

A. 1 And the men of Kiriath-jearim came and took up the ark of the LORD and brought it to the house of Abinadab on the hill. And they consecrated his son Eleazar to have charge of the ark of the LORD. 2 From the day that the ark was lodged at Kiriath-jearim, a long time passed, some twenty years, and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

1. Some might wonder why we didn’t include these two verses in last week’s sermon. In 1st Samuel chapter four, 34,000 Israelite soldiers were killed in battle and The Ark got captured by the Philistines. The event left the Hebrew people believing God had abandon them. One woman even named her son Ichabod because of it. **“22 And she said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured.” (1 Samuel 4:22)**
2. However, by the end of 1 Samuel 6, the Ark of the Covenant had returned to Israel, literally by the hand of God. Ironically though, the blessings the Israelites thought they would receive as they shouted and praised God for bringing back His magic box, soon turned to mourning as at least seventy men in the Levitical city of Beth-shemesh died after looking in it! Sadly, instead of doing their job and studying God’s Word to find out why all this calamity kept happening to them, they instead passed the buck and reached out to a non-Levitical people, meaning a people who had not only not been charged by God for the care of the Ark, but also had no formal education in the matter.

3. **“7:1 they brought it to the house of Abinadab** The Israelites do not return the ark to Shiloh, suggesting that the city had been destroyed.”¹
4. The people of Kiriath-jearim proudly accept the responsibility of caring for The Ark and ended up assigning its care to the house of Abinadab, specifically to a man named Eleazer. Because of his name, some argue Eleazer was already a priest, but in consecrating him for this task it appears he was not set apart for ministry prior to this.
5. The bigger point however is that the new location of the Ark becomes a symbol of what’s taking place in Israel. God is out of sight and out of mind, but as you will see in a second, the idols of the nations around them are on full display in the homes and life of the Israelites. They want God’s blessings, but they would rather not have God. They lived knowing Yahweh, by His very nature, demands obedience, however, we can do whatever we want with these other gods, so let’s put Yahweh aside for these. They were horrified by the wrath of God, but at the same time they wanted His blessings and favor.
6. So, they certainly weren’t going to destroy The Ark, but they also didn’t want God present in their life, that is until they perceived they really needed Him. Therefore, their solution was to ship the box off to a no name city that had no historical influence or prominence of any kind. In other words, the symbol of God’s covenant with Israel to call them out as His people, the symbol they had all lost their minds over for losing to the Philistines, would now be stowed away somewhere that nobody had to think about, and seemingly that’s what they did with their faith in God as well.
7. Verse two tells us twenty years go by before the people begin to consider their actions. The Philistine dominance of Israel was very real, and the people were discouraged, weary and exhausted. We ultimately don’t know any specifics of why the change of heart occurred, but praise God they finally started mourning over their situation, not just because of the oppression of the Philistines, but the text specifically says it was because they no longer had a relationship with God. An entire generation had grown into adulthood before they started to truly regret that they had turned away from the Lord, but at least some sort of mental and emotional awareness was awakening within the people over their abandonment of God.
8. So many people end up coming to Venture just like this. Long ago, most of the time because of the extreme hypocrisy and spiritual deadness of whatever church they grew up in, they walked away from a relationship with the Lord. They never stopped believing the facts about God to be true,

¹ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (1 Sa 7:1-2). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

but they sent their relationship with Him to “Kiriath-jearim,” that is, they no longer had any priority or real desire to know and follow Him. However, one day a longing began to stir in their heart again, that most often times starts with a sense of regret over what they left. They didn’t walk away from a lifeless local church to go find a group of people intent on helping each other follow Christ, but rather, they just walked away from God. But something finally stirred, a remnant of that relationship remained within them, and they began to regret the absence of God in their life, so they decided to give it a try and find a church that could help point them back into a relationship with God.

9. In the same way, the people must have expressed to Samuel that they had had enough of life without God and His life. However, regretting your rebellion against God and mourning over the years spent apart from Him is only the first step of repentance. So, what’s next? Well, watch what Samuel tells them to do.

B. 3 And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, “If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your heart to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.”⁴ So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served the LORD only.

1. **“Ashtoreths** Refers to idols of the Canaanite fertility goddess Ashtoreth (also known as Astarte). ... **Baals** Refers to idols of the Canaanite storm god Baal, the masculine counterpart to Ashtoreth.”²
2. “The worship of Baal and Asherah involved offerings of ritual sex so as to leverage their powers for fertility. Many Israelites thought this was a more enjoyable way of getting crops to grow than holding a prayer meeting!”³
3. “The plural **Baals** and **Ashtoreths** describe the many local shrines of those Canaanite nature deities. Baal, variously identified as son of El (chief of the Canaanite pantheon) or as son of Dagan (the Mesopotamian deity), was particularly recognized as the god of thunder and rain whose task was to make the earth fertile annually. [Interestingly, later in the story it will be a massive thunderous sound that turns the Philistines away.] Ashtoreth (or Astarte) was goddess of both love and war, as were her Babylonian and Greek counterparts Ishtar and Aphrodite respectively. She apparently functioned with Baal as a fertility deity and by their sexual union in some

² Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (1 Sa 7:3–4). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

³ Phillips, R. D. (2012). [1 Samuel](#). (P. G. Ryken & R. D. Phillips, Duguid Iain M., Eds.) (1st ed., pp. 119–123). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

magical way the earth and all its life supposedly experienced annual rejuvenation and fruitfulness.”⁴

4. As I stated in the introduction, the job of the prophet is first and foremost to proclaim the truth of God to where it needs to be spoken. Prophecy is sometimes foretelling, but it's always relevant truth telling; that is, speaking the truth that applies directly to the circumstances of those who are listening. In this case, there is no more relevant truth in the life of Israel than their rampant idolatry! If they truly regretted walking away from God; if they truly longed to live in a relationship with Him, then something very specific had to happen—repentance! They could never worship God and idols, its only and always God OR the idols!
5. **1 And God spoke all these words, saying, 2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 3 "You shall have no other gods before me. (Exodus 20:1-3)**
6. To, “have no other gods ‘before me’” means no other gods in my presence, which mean you don’t have them anywhere because God is everywhere! This is why Jesus told a rich young ruler who was following the Law as good as anybody could, that there was still a serious problem in his life. In Mark 10 we read,
7. **21 And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." 22 Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. 23 And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" 24 And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10:21-24)**
8. The point is Jesus made it clear you can’t follow Him and worship money. Money and possessions were this man’s idol. Jesus said if you want me, you must give it up because you can’t have me and an idol! I will not allow that which is being called or treated as a god in my presence, therefore if you want to be in my presence, you can’t bring your idols with you!
9. In the same way, as a prophet, Samuel says, **“If you are returning to the LORD ...”** then you’ve got something you’ve got to do! Up to this point, nothing about what Samuel has witnessed in Israel has ever told him they were interested in trusting and following God and, despite their grief over

⁴ Merrill, E. H. (1985). [1 Samuel](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 438–439). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

their lack of a relationship with the Lord, this still holds true. Therefore, because Samuel is a prophet, he refused to allow them to believe the lie that they can somehow muster up some sort of religious act that's going to allow them to simultaneously rebel against God in the most fundamental way possible, all while claiming to seek His face and follow Him. Furthermore, if they wanted the promised blessings of the covenant God made with Israel that would end the oppression of the Philistines, then they needed to do what God said and repent of their idolatry, otherwise they weren't really returning to God in the first place.

10. R.D. Phillips noted, "**Samuel understood that repentance involves far more than feeling sorry about our sin. Most people are sorry only that they got caught sinning or for the misery they have experienced as a result. But true repentance begins by being sorry over the sin itself and then goes on to forsake sin so completely as to turn to God in new obedience.**"⁵

11. This is why Samuel then directed them to the next step of repentance. Repentance isn't just about turning from sin, it's also about turning to God. The writer of 1st Samuel then states,

C. **5 Then Samuel said, "Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD for you." 6 So they gathered at Mizpah and drew water and poured it out before the LORD and fasted on that day and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah.**

1. "Firth (107) comments: "Given the rejection of Canaanite worship, it may be an attempt to indicate that life belongs to Yahweh. In this way, the people are shown as separating themselves from both food and water, and entirely trusting Yahweh, something given greater clarity in their confession of sin."⁶

2. "The Mizpah meeting, some eight miles north of Jerusalem, was one of the great revivals in Biblical history. The people fasted that day. To symbolize the surrender of their entire beings, they drew water and poured it out before the Lord. They confessed their sins."⁷

3. Samuel led the people to repent. He didn't just tell them to do it, he led them through it. The job of the prophet isn't just to preach, it's to lead. Being an "influencer" is by definition being a leader. Therefore, the role of a Godly influencer is no different than the role of a prophet! As God's children we

⁵ Phillips, R. D. (2012). *1 Samuel*. (P. G. Ryken & R. D. Phillips, Duguid Iain M., Eds.) (1st ed., pp. 119–123). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

⁶ Hoffner, H. A., Jr. (2015). *1 & 2 Samuel* (1 Sa 7:5–6). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

⁷ Smith, J. E. (1995). *The Books of History* (p. 259). Joplin, MO: College Press.

are called to influence others to Him, and as such, each of us should be doing the same thing as Samuel; we should all be used of God not to just proclaim repentance, but lead people through it!

4. Therefore, as a Godly influencer, after they got rid of their idols, Samuel told them to gather at Mizpah, not just so he could pray for them, but also to lead them to corporately announce to God and the world that they had indeed sinned, but were now turning from their allegiance and reliance on false gods to instead surrender their lives completely to Yahweh, the only God!

The second universal job of a prophet of God in 1st Samuel 7 is to ...

(2) Encourage God's people to trust Him. (7:7-11)

- A. It is almost guaranteed that when you and I come back to the Lord, the enemy will attack, and that's exactly what happened in this case.
- B. **7 Now when the Philistines heard that the people of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the people of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines. 8 And the people of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry out to the LORD our God for us, that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines." 9 So Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. And Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him. 10 As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. But the LORD thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were routed before Israel. 11 And the men of Israel went out from Mizpah and pursued the Philistines and struck them, as far as below Beth-car.**
- C. Samuel was a human like any other and I'm sure he was tempted to panic as well. You've got all of Israel gathered in one place in the weakened physical state of fasting, when low and behold here comes the Philistines! And remember, the Philistines have been dominating the Israelites for a while now. It's not like Israel is their equal. Israel has been getting bullied by them for generations now! But, because Samuel is a Godly influencer, He doesn't run to get the Ark, nor does he seek to find another pagan nation they can form an alliance with and fight against the Philistines, instead, he does what the Book says!
- D. When the Philistines drew near to where the Israelites were encamped, Samuel offered a sacrifice and cried out to Him to rescue them. At the same time the men of Israel were preparing for battle, Samuel was seeking God to fight and win the battle. By offering up a lamb as a sacrifice, Samuel was saying we deserve your wrath, but we are asking for mercy and grace.

- E. This is where it gets real interesting. The Philistines, who had a god of thunder, all of a sudden heard, not the sound of thunder, but a sound that thundered against them. Whatever it was they heard shook the earth.
- F. It was just as Hannah had said: "The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken in pieces; against them He will thunder in heaven" (1 Samuel 2:10).
- G. We have no idea what that sound was, clearly it wasn't thunder, adults don't get confused by that. But whatever the sound was that thundered against them, it was clearly targeted at them and done so with such intensity and power, that the Philistines went into total panic mode. Seeing the disarray, the men of Israel attacked the Philistines and routed their army! This by no means eliminated the Philistines as an enemy nor a threat, but as you will see in a minute, it facilitated such a large defeat of the Philistines, that it not only temporarily silenced the ambitions of the Philistines against Israel, but also the Ammonite ambitions against Israel!
- H. The point is, that when the inevitable attack of the enemy came, Samuel was a stalwart of faithfulness to the Lord. He refused to be knocked off balance and showed the people what it means to "seek first the Kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33); to "cast all your anxieties on Him" (1 Peter 5:7); and to "trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding" (Proverb 3:5).
- I. The role of the prophet is always to encourage the people of God to trust Him, and that role is true of everyone who wants to be a Godly influencer. If we want to influence people to God then we must influence them to continue trusting the Lord no matter what, and that doesn't mean we only call on them to do it, it means showing them how. It means in the moment of crisis; people see you not only proclaiming the need for trusting God but posturing yourself to do it!

This takes us to the third universal job of a prophet of God in 1st Samuel 7 ...

(3) Help God's people to continually remember Him. (7:12-17)

- A. **12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name Ebenezer; for he said, "Till now the LORD has helped us."
13 So the Philistines were subdued and did not again enter the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. 14 The cities that the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath, and Israel delivered their territory from the hand of the Philistines. There was peace also between Israel and the Amorites.**
- B. "While it is possible, it seems unlikely that this Ebenezer is the same as the Ebenezer of 1 Samuel 4:1. That location seems too far north. ... The Philistines were no longer a cause of fear in Israel. The indigenous Canaanite peoples ("the

Amorites”) also ceased to be a threat, perhaps because of Israel’s supremacy over their common enemy. Israel enjoyed, in other words, a period of peace, the likes of which had not been known for a very long time.”⁸

- C. “The memorial *stone* (12) set up to celebrate the Israelite victory was named *Ebenezer*, lit. ‘stone of help’. The Israelites had suffered defeat at a different place called Ebenezer (see 4:1), some miles further north, and it seems that Samuel deliberately reapplied the name to record this first Israelite victory over the Philistines.”⁹
- D. The stone was nothing spiritual and it wasn’t to be visited to try and get some sort of spiritual power, rather, the stone was set up to remember the Covenant God made with Israel, and more importantly that God will keep His Covenant. The stone was meant to remind them that if they worshiped idols, their life and protection would be what those idols could bring them. However, if they worshipped God instead of idols, then His life and protection would be their experience! Every time a person passed the stone named Ebenezer, they were challenged to remember that they didn’t need a magic box, nor, as we will see next week, did they need an earthly King; all they needed was HIM!
- E. So, as a prophet, it was Samuel’s job to help them not forget God or the truth about Him, and that’s exactly why he not only named a stone Ebenezer, but also why and how he spent the rest of his days judging and leading Israel! As those called to be Godly influencers, our purpose is no different. The words of our mouth, the action of our life and the attitudes of our heart should be a constant reminder to the world of the excellencies of God and His Gospel!

Challenge: How well are you prophetically influencing the people in your life? How are those in your life being encouraged to repent from sin, trust God in all things, and never forget Him or His Gospel. How are you speaking Jesus?

There are some who live their lives in complete arrogance, running around with the belief that they have a supernatural ability to identify sin in other people’s lives. They do nothing but turn people away from God. In my experience, most of the people who proclaim to have the “gift of discernment,” really just have a narcissistic spirit that wants to exercise authority over people. They can identify a speck in somebody else’s eye, all while miraculously overlooking or even justifying the log in their own eye! It’s quite a talent!

On other side of the arrogant, pharisaical people who are always looking to call people out, are those who are so worried speaking truth will cause somebody to no longer affirm them

⁸ Woodhouse, J. (2008). [1 Samuel: Looking for a leader](#) (pp. 130–134). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

⁹ Payne, D. F. (1994). [1 and 2 Samuel](#). In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 303). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

as a friend, that they will sit silently watching those around them totally ruin their lives and say nothing.

On the other side of the pharisee is the person who believes somehow, they aren't qualified to proclaim the Gospel of God to others; that they can't encourage others towards righteousness because they themselves aren't righteous enough. It stems from a belief that there is a place of perfection that we can attain to, and only those who attain that level of perfection can truly be used of God to influence others to repent from sin and live their lives in total submission to Christ. To that belief let me read you the testimony of the most influential leader in church history,

9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (1 Corinthians 12:9-10)

This is why true Gospel driven prophetic ministry doesn't shout repent and follow Jesus, but rather, it shouts come with me as I try to live my life in repentance, trusting and following HIM! Prophetic influence isn't living a life in front of your children as if you have it all together. It's an honest life that certainly doesn't use God's grace as justification to sin, but rather the reason to invite all those around you to join you in striving to live submitted to Christ!

I'm so blessed to get to be the lead pastor of this church. The problems that keep me up at night are all problems caused by a church that is impacting lives for the glory of Christ. But let's get honest. If we were all truly living out the prophetic ministry of Christ that the Holy Spirit has given each and every follower of Jesus the ability to do; if we were truly influencing one another, our families, neighbors, friends and the people we work with to repent of sin, trust God and follow Him, then the space and budget problems we have right now wouldn't even begin to compare with the space and budget problems of that scenario. It's the exact opposite of what you might think!

In the Bible, when God's people start living out their prophetic calling, the local church runs out of money and space faster than a forest fire could consume it! When God's ambassadors start living out His life and influencing the world around them, people run either to Jesus or from Jesus, but they start running, and lots of them run to HIM!

It would be the most glorious mess you and I could ever see in our life if we would ALL start truly living out our prophetic calling and influencing one another and those far from God to Jesus! We would have to install a filtration system in the baptismal because we couldn't afford to keep filling it up!