

“So the Israelites got rid of their images of Baal and Ashtoreth and worshiped only the Lord. They also went without food all day and confessed that they had sinned against the Lord. “Don’t stop pleading with the Lord our God to save us from the Philistines!” they begged Samuel. Samuel then took a large stone and placed it between the towns of Mizpah and Jeshanah. He named it Ebenezer (which means “the stone of help”), for he said, “Up to this point the Lord has helped us!””

lectio // 1 Samuel 7:3-15

This is quite a mash-up of scriptures, but there’s a point. 1. Israel had to get rid of their idols - obedience. 2. They fasted and confessed their sin. 3. When faced with immediate threat, they asked Samuel to represent their pleas before God. God supernaturally brought massive thunderstorms and scared the Philistine armies so that Israel could chase them down in battle. 4. Samuel left a reminder, an Ebenezer, a stack of stones that allowed the folks to tell a story of why the stones were stacked and why it was important to remember. These stack-stones told the story that God helped them that day. Truth is God did MORE than help, he made it possible for them to win. So maybe it’s just a story? Maybe it’s a pattern of how God works among us? Maybe it’s a tip for us today when WE get so off-track that something, even a pending threat brings us to our senses. We get rid of everything that is false-God. We fast and confess. We plead like crazy that God would hear us and help us. We see him supernaturally make a way and see the possibility of a win and take it! We build an Ebenezer to remind us and our children of that day when God was real and helped us. Lessons: We need to spend more time purging idols. We need to have more public fasts and confessions. We need to corporately go before God with earnest prayer like our lives depend on God doing something supernatural. And, we need to move as a UNIFIED army to chase after the enemy. We need to build more Ebenezers and tell more stories to each other and our children.

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Dad,

Things have definitely changed since Samuel led Israel through these practices of obedience and faith. Really everything has changed! What hasn’t changed is the practices and processes of our heart. We STILL have idols, they’re just not poles and statues anymore. So, we still need to talk about getting rid of them. We still need to fast, confess and pray together. And we definitely need to move forward together in faith. Plus, we need more Ebenezers! I just need to know when we should do this. I could use your help with this.

contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root