

Judged  
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## 1 Samuel 15

- *“Be careful what you wish for.”*
- Ever been on the wrong end of that old saying?
- How about this one: *“You’ve made your bed; now lie in it?”*
- **What are those sayings about? How do parents practice this?**
- Choices come with consequences. When we choose to disobey God the consequences can be severe, even tragic.
- Often, followers of Christ fall into the trap of thinking we know best and wanting things our own way. The Israelites were that way.

Let me catch us up on what we’ve missed since chapter six of 1 Samuel:

- Samuel became a great and godly judge leading Israel back to God.
- As Samuel grew old he tried to bring along his sons as his successors.
- His sons were a problem. 8:3 tells us: *...they were not like their father, for they were greedy for money. They accepted bribes and perverted justice.*<sup>1</sup>
- The elders of Israel came to Samuel saying, *“You’re old; your sons are crooked; we DEMAND a king like the other nations have.”*
- This made Samuel mad.
- Worse yet, this made God mad. God said, *“They’re not rejecting you, Samuel; they are rejecting me. I AM THEIR KING.”*
- God said, *“Okay, I’ll give them a king. But tell these rebellious Israelites what their king will do to them.”* So, Samuel did that.
- He told the people this king they wanted wouldn’t just lead them he would run over them. This king would make them and their children slaves.
- Samuel warned them, (8:18-19) *“When that day comes, you will beg for relief from this king you are demanding, but then the Lord will not help you.”* (i.e. – You made your bed, now lie in it!)

- <sup>19</sup> But the people refused to listen to Samuel's warning. *"Even so, we still want a king," they said.* <sup>20</sup> *"We want to be like the nations around us. Our king will judge us and lead us into battle."*<sup>2</sup>
- God said, *"Okay, give them their king, but don't say I didn't warn them!"*
- As we said, Choices come with consequences. When we choose to disobey God the consequences can be severe, even tragic.
- God instructs Samuel to anoint a young man named Saul as king.
- Saul had lots of talent! He was a skillful soldier who won lots of battles!
- But Saul, the king they wanted so badly, had his own fatal flaw. Like the Israelites he led, he wanted to do things HIS way instead of God's way.
- That brings us to the BIG IDEA of this lesson: Willful disobedience of God will cost you His perfect plan for your life every time.
- You see, God's perfect plan for our lives and our willful disobedience of what He's told us to do can't co-exist. It's one or the other.
- Our Heavenly Father gives his children lots of freedom of choice. However, when we disobey something He's clearly told us we'll suffer the consequences.
- But, I'm getting ahead of myself. Back to King Saul.
- Saul had lots of talent and potential. But he never lived up to all his talent because he thought he was smarter than God. You can go back to chapter 13 and read of a time when God had enough of Saul's impulsive, rebellious actions. Samuel told Saul (13:13-14):
- <sup>13</sup> *"How foolish!" Samuel exclaimed. "You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you. Had you kept it, the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever.* <sup>14</sup> *But now your kingdom must end, for the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart. The Lord has already appointed him to be the leader of his people, because you have not kept the Lord's command."*<sup>3</sup>

- Saul had not learned: Willful disobedience of God will cost you His perfect plan for your life, because God's perfect plan for our lives and willful disobedience of Him can't co-exist.
- But God wasn't ready to change kings just yet. He allowed Saul to continue. And Saul not only continued to lead, he continued to disobey.
- That brings us to chapter 15. God told Samuel to tell Saul to destroy an evil group of terrorists called the Amalekites.
- The problems with the Amalekites went way back. These evil people had terrorized the children of Israel as they were leaving Egypt and God was now bringing the Amalekites to judgment.
- By destroy I mean God said kill every man, woman, child, and animal. Burn all their stuff and don't take any spoils. Leave no trace of them.
- **Does it bother you that God would be this harsh?**
- If it helps, we can think about the Amalekites like we picture ISIS today. If you don't kill them, they will kill you. And while it's hard to imagine killing children and animals, God had a righteous purpose for judging and destroying these people.

1 Samuel 15:7–15 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup> And Saul defeated the Amalekites from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt. <sup>8</sup> And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive and devoted to destruction all the people with the edge of the sword. <sup>9</sup> But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fattened calves and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them. All that was despised and worthless they devoted to destruction.

<sup>10</sup> The word of the Lord came to Samuel: <sup>11</sup> "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments." And Samuel was angry, and he cried to the Lord all night.

- Let me pause to ask a question: **Why was God so angry with Saul? How did Saul mess up?**
- Willful disobedience of God costs you His perfect plan for your life.

- Saul was not only rebellious, he felt bulletproof. Oh, he knew he didn't follow God's orders. But he had been WILLFULLY DISOBEYING God so long he had become callous. Watch how he reacts to Samuel.

<sup>12</sup> And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning. And it was told Samuel, "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself and turned and passed on and went down to Gilgal."

<sup>13</sup> And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed be you to the Lord. I have performed the commandment of the Lord." <sup>14</sup> And Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears and the lowing of the oxen that I hear?" <sup>15</sup> Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice to the Lord your God, and the rest we have devoted to destruction."

- **Verse 12: What does this verse say about Saul's ego?**
- **Verse 13: What does Saul say to Samuel?**
- **Was Saul was confused or cocky?**
- **Is there any such thing as "partial obedience?" Why?**
- **What if Saul just made a mistake? Did Saul just "slip up?" Why?**
- **If God forgives sins, why would he reject Saul as king because of his disobedience?**
- Truth: God forgives sin but He won't remove the consequences for willful disobedience.
- **Verse 15: What "good, religious" reason did Saul give for keeping the animals?**
- Someone might say, "*I believe; I attend; I volunteer; I tithe.*" **Can they do all this and still be willfully disobedient to God?**
- Truth: Using your talents or giving gifts to God is no substitute for obedience to Him.
- Let's go even deeper. **How was Saul's disobedience actually a form of idol worship?**

Warren Wiersbe puts it well:

*"To know God's will and deliberately disobey it is to put ourselves above God and therefore become our own god. This is the vilest form of idolatry."*<sup>4</sup>

- Saul was so concerned about himself and his image he thought he was smarter than God. He thought he knew better than God. He paid the price.

1 Samuel 15:22–23 (ESV)

<sup>22</sup> And Samuel said,

“Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.

<sup>23</sup> For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry.

Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king.”

So, What’s the Takeaway?

What have we learned from the example of King Saul?

- Willful disobedience of God will cost you His perfect plan for your life every time. God gives us lots of freedom to choose. However, when we disobey something He’s clearly told us we will suffer the consequences.
- *“But, I’m a follower of Christ. My sins are forgiven!”*
- True, God forgives sin, but He won’t remove the consequences for willful disobedience. If you’ve truly trusted Christ as Savior, your “legal status” for eternity won’t change. However, as we said, God’s perfect plan for our lives and our willful disobedience can’t co-exist. It’s one or the other.
- *“But I believe; I attend; I volunteer; I tithe. I’m a model church member.”*
- Good for you. But, using your talents or giving gifts to God is no substitute for obedience to Him.
- Let’s ask ourselves this week: Is there some area of my life where I’m willfully disobeying God? It could be something I’m doing that’s wrong or something right that I refuse to do. I pray we’ll ask God to reveal it to us, then confess it and ask for His forgiveness.
- Let’s pray as David prayed in Psalm 139:23–24 (NRSV)

*23 Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
test me and know my thoughts.*

24     *See if there is any wicked way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

- If we want God’s perfect plan for our lives, we can’t live in disobedience.
- I sure want his best for me – how about you?

<sup>1</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (1 Sa8:3). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (1 Sa 8:18–20). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>3</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (1 Sa 13:13–14). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>4</sup> THE WIERSBE BIBLE COMMENTARY: OLD TESTAMENT © 2007 Warren W. Wiersbe