

SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON

WEEK 16

Saul disobeys God

1 Samuel 13:1–15:35



DAY 1

Saul rejected God's word about the sacrifice • 1 Samuel 13:1–23

READ

1 Samuel 13:1–23

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Samuel 13:1–23

When things in your life seem like they're falling apart, where do you look for help? Even though Jonathan had an initial victory (1 Sam 13:3), things began looking bad for Saul. His troops were leaving him because the Philistines sent a massive army in response to Jonathan's raid (13:4–7). As his army fell apart, Saul did not cry out to God. Instead, he took matters into his own hands. Because he feared man rather than God (Jer 17:5–8), he disobeyed God's word spoken through Samuel and impatiently offered the sacrifice himself (1 Sam 13:9). The sacrifices were a mere ritual to him—a hoop to jump through in order to get the blessing he wanted (13:12).

Then, when given the opportunity to repent, Saul blamed everyone but himself (13:11–12). His sin led to terrible trouble. Because he despised God's word, God's sacrifices, and God's mercy, he gave up an eternal dynasty (13:13). He also lost Samuel's help, and his own forces were overwhelmed by the Philistines. Israel was outnumbered, undersupplied, and incapable of stopping Philistines from roaming wherever they wanted (13:16–22).

ASK

1. Why did Saul offer the sacrifice instead of waiting for Samuel?

He feared man (the Philistines) more than he feared God.

2. Why was Saul's reason for offering the sacrifice foolish?

He said he offered the sacrifice to seek God's favor, but disobedience never pleases God.

3. Did Saul confess his sin?

No. He blamed everyone else.

4. What were the consequences of Saul's sin?

His kingdom would not continue (1 Sam 13:13–14). Samuel left him (13:15). The Israelites were unable to stop Philistine raiding parties (13:16–18).

DISCUSS

1. Have you ever disobeyed because it seemed like the best thing to do? What are some reasons you disobey God's word (fear, greed, pride, unbelief, etc.)? Was your disobedience blessed or cursed (Deut 28)?

2. Where can you turn when things in your life seem to be falling apart (Ps 62)?

DAY 2

Saul rejected God's word in battle • 1 Samuel 14:1-52

READ

1 Samuel 14:1-52

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Samuel 14:1-52

Who acted more like a king, Saul or Jonathan? Jonathan was a brave warrior, but more importantly, he believed the battle was entirely in God's hands (1 Sam 14:6-10). Through Jonathan's faith, God saved Israel (14:10, 15, 23). In contrast, Saul did not leave the battle in God's hands. At first, Saul called the priest to seek God's guidance, but he was too impatient to see what God would say (14:18-19). Later, Saul didn't even bother calling the priest. This time it was the priest who interrupted Saul, reminding him to seek God's approval regarding his plans (14:36). Ironically, Saul acted as if his own words were more important than God's (14:24). He would have even killed his own son if his people had not defied him (14:45)! Because of his impatience and foolish words, Saul stopped chasing the Philistines, allowing them to run away to safety. He ruined the great victory that God had begun through Jonathan. Throughout the rest of his reign, he was usually successful in battle, but he was always spiritually blind (14:47-48).

ASK

1. How did Saul dishonor God's word during the battle with the Philistines?
Saul was too impatient to wait see what God would say.
2. How did Saul hurt his own troops during the battle?
He made an oath that they should not eat any food that day. He wanted people to obey his foolish words, but he didn't obey God's perfect word.
3. What happened because of Saul's sin?
Israel's victory was small.

DISCUSS

1. When have you disobeyed God because you were too impatient to seek God's will? What does the Bible say about those who live their lives apart from God (Ps 14:1)?
2. Think about your typical week. Do you guard time to seek God's word? Or by letting it get crowded out with business, do you show that you trust more in yourself than in God?

DAY 3

Saul rejected God's word about the Amalekites • 1 Samuel 15:1-21

READ

1 Samuel 15:1-21

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Samuel 15:1-21

God gave Saul another opportunity to obey Him (1 Sam 15:1). Saul's mission was to kill all the Amalekites. The Amalekites deserved this because they attacked Israel in the wilderness after leaving Egypt (Deut 25:18). Also, despite 300 years of God's patience, the Amalekites had not changed (1 Sam 15:33). That's why God called Saul to carry out His judgment. So why didn't Saul obey? Because he was greedy and

afraid of man. Saul spared Agag and kept the best of the animals (1 Sam 15:9, 19, 24). Do you remember Achan (Josh 7:21)? Like Achan, Saul kept some of what was devoted to destruction. Then he tried to cover up by lying and saying that he had obeyed (1 Sam 15:13, 20). Then he made excuses and tried to make it seem like his disobedience was good (15:21). Don't make that mistake! Remember what Samuel said: "To obey is better than sacrifice" (15:22; Ps 51:15-17; Isa 1:11-17; 1 John 2:3-4). Sacrifice is good, but disobedient sacrifice is false worship. More than anything else, God wants you to obey from the heart.

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK ?

- Did God give Saul another chance to obey Him?
Yes. God told Saul to kill the Amalekites.
- Why did God tell Saul to kill the Amalekites?
God wanted to punish them and stop their cruelty to His people, Israel.
- Did Saul repent when Samuel confronted him about his disobedience?
No. Saul made excuses.
- How did Samuel respond when Saul kept making excuses?
To obey is better than sacrifice.

DISCUSS 

- Did Saul partly obey? Do you obey your parents all the way, or only enough to make it seem like obedience? Why is partial obedience still disobedience?
- When you are confronted with sin, what do you do? It is hard to admit being wrong, but is it ever better to try to hide your sin or make excuses?

DAY 4*God rejected Saul as king • 1 Samuel 15:22–35***READ** 

1 Samuel 15:22–35

EXPLAIN **The truth of 1 Samuel 15:22–35**

What is true repentance? Even though Saul's sin caused him to be rejected as king, Saul still could have repented. But he did not. He acted as if a quick confession could fix everything and make it all ok again (1 Sam 15:25). This proved that he still did not understand just how terrible disobedience is. In his fake repentance, Saul cared more about his own honor, not God's glory (15:30). So the story ends with both God and Samuel grieving over Saul's failure (15:35). Because of Saul's sin, God regretted making him king (15:11, 35). God loves His creation, and He grieves deeply when He sees people dishonoring Him and turning from their greatest good (Gen 6:6). However, this does not mean that God made a mistake or was caught by surprise (1 Sam 15:29). God does not change either His nature or His predetermined plan (Num 23:19). God was sad to see Saul's hard heart, but all along God had planned to give Israel the king they deserved. And all along God had in mind a better king, a king after His own heart (1 Sam 13:14; 15:28; 16:1).

ASK ?

- Why did God reject Saul as king?
Because Saul rejected God's word.
- How did God punish Saul for his sin?
God rejected Saul and his descendants as kings.
- Why was Saul's repentance fake?
He quickly confessed just to try to fix his problem. He was not sorrowful about his sin, only about the consequences (2 Cor 7:8–10). His heart was still not right.
- How did Samuel and God respond when Saul pretended to repent?
They grieved over him.

DISCUSS 

- How do you seek forgiveness from your parents? Do you realize how bad your sin, or are you just sad about the consequences? Do you just say the right words, or do you genuinely desire to be right with them again?
- When is the last time you confessed your sin to God?

DAY 5

Jesus perfectly obeyed God's word • Luke 2:39–52

READ

Luke 2:39–52

EXPLAIN

The truth of Luke 2:39–52

Do you see how different Jesus was from Saul? Unlike Saul, Jesus obeyed God's word in every way. Jesus had a special mission from God, and He knew it. That's why He had to be in His Father's house, the temple (2:49). And if God was His true Father, that meant that Jesus was the Son of God. He was divine. He was greater than his earthly parents! But did that mean he did not need to obey them? No. Jesus did obey them (2:51). He was the Creator, and they were His creation. But He was also their child, and God's word commands children, "Honor your father and mother" (Exod 20:12). By obeying His earthly parents, Jesus proved that He was perfectly obedient to God's word. He did this because he came to "fulfill all righteousness" (Matt 3:15). Because of that, all those who trust in Him can receive His own righteousness (2 Cor 5:21). So Jesus' example should challenge you to obey God's word by obeying your parents. But His perfect life should also comfort you. Despite your sin, His righteousness can count for you, so that you can be saved.

ASK

1. What was Jesus doing when His parents found Him in the temple?
Asking and answering questions with the leading teachers of Israel.
2. Where did Jesus tell His parents He had to be?
In His Father's house (temple).
3. Did Jesus obey His parents?
Yes. He returned home with them to Nazareth.
4. What is the fifth commandment?
Honor your father and mother (Exod 20:12).

DISCUSS

1. How can you honor your father and mother this week (Exod 20:12)?
2. Why did Jesus have to perfectly obey God's word (2 Cor 5:21)?

NEXT WEEK

God sees David's heart

1 Samuel 16:1–23

