



# ***The Crowns We Choose***

## **Control**

**Main Point:** *Fear that isn't surrendered always produces control, and control always leads us away from freedom and faith. Surrendering the entirety of our lives to Christ is foundational to the true revelation of His goodness.*

### **🔑 1. RECAP: Fear Is the Root**

***"They have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me..."*** – 1 Samuel 8:7 (AMP)

- Israel demanded a king because they feared instability.
- Saul was the product of their fear—and he operated in that same fear.
- Fear, if not surrendered to God, becomes the foundation for control.

***"For God did not give us a spirit of timidity or fear, but [of] power and love and sound judgment."*** – 2 Timothy 1:7 (AMP)

**Fear → Rejection of God → Control**

### **🔍 2. Saul's Pattern of Fear-Based Control**

#### **a. 1 Samuel 13 – Sacrifice Without Samuel**

***"The people were scattering... so I forced myself and offered the burnt offering."***  
Saul feared losing his people, so he took God's role into his own hands.

#### **b. 1 Samuel 14:24 – The Oath of Starvation**

***"Cursed is the man who eats before evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies."***

- This is not divine strategy—it’s human desperation.
- Saul tries to hold the army together by binding them with fear.
- In ancient Israel, an oath wasn’t casual. It was a spiritually binding curse.

The army didn’t need motivation—they needed strength.  
Instead, they got manipulation.

### ! 3. The Psychology of Control: Why Saul Did It

Control is rarely about dominance—it’s almost always about self-protection. In Saul’s case, his instinct to control situations, people, and outcomes came from deep-rooted fear.

Here’s what the text shows us about his inner life:

#### ♥ a. He Feared Abandonment

1 Samuel 13:6–7 – *“When the men of Israel saw that they were in a tight situation... they hid in caves, thickets, cliffs, cellars, and pits.”*

- Saul watched his army disintegrate. The people were leaving. His strength was fading.
- From his view, influence was tied to numbers, and when people walked away, his identity went with them.
- He felt abandoned—and like many leaders, that translated into fear of losing relevance.

So he responded not by turning to God in patience, but by forcing action (v.12): *“I forced myself and offered the burnt offering.”*

Control became a substitute for trust.

#### ★ b. He Feared Public Failure

1 Samuel 13:11–12 – Saul explains to Samuel that the pressure of the people leaving and the Philistines gathering made him act.

1 Samuel 15:30 – After being confronted for disobedience, Saul says:

*“I have sinned; yet please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel...”*

This is staggering.

- He’s just been told the kingdom is being torn from him.
- But he’s still clinging to public image.

Fear of being exposed as weak or wrong drove him to value reputation over repentance.  
His need for external validation crushed his ability to walk in internal obedience.

He didn’t want to lose.

But he also didn’t want to look like he lost.

So he chose the appearance of strength over the reality of surrender.

## c. He Feared Being Replaced

1 Samuel 18:8–9 – *“Saul became very angry... and from that day forward, Saul looked at David with suspicion.”*

- This is after David kills Goliath and the people sing, *“Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.”*
- Saul had the crown, but not the peace.
- He saw the people’s affection shift—and it triggered his insecurity.

Instead of celebrating God’s hand on David, Saul began clutching what wasn’t his to keep. Fear of being replaced caused him to spiral into jealousy, manipulation, and eventually paranoia.

### Summary of Saul’s Inner Pattern:

Fear	Response	Fruit
Abandonment	Forceful decisions	Compromise
Public failure	Protecting image	Hypocrisy, people-pleasing
Replacement/insecurity	Clutching position	Jealousy, relational breakdown

### The Cost of Saul’s Control:

- **Trust: Lost.** He couldn’t wait on God. He took spiritual matters into his own hands.
- **Relationship: Fractured.** His connection with Samuel, Jonathan, David—even the people—was sabotaged by fear.
- **Spiritual Integrity: Eroded.** He obeyed halfway, repented weakly, and used worship to preserve reputation.

Control *felt* like protection.

But it was actually the pathway to spiritual ruin.

## The Bad News: We Are Saul

We love to see ourselves in the Davids, the Samuels, the Jonathans—those who trust, who fight with faith, who wait on God.

But if we’re honest...

We are the Sauls.

- We choose crowns instead of submission.
- We give power to fear, rejection, and image management.
- We try to stay in control when things begin sliding out of alignment with the will of the Lord.

Like Saul:

- We offer worship while holding back obedience.
- We make rash vows trying to keep things from falling apart.
- We fear what others will think more than we fear the Lord.

Saul's story didn't end with repentance. It ended with him falling on his own sword (1 Samuel 31:4).

The man who tried to hold it all together couldn't hold himself together.

Church... it should not be so.

## The Better News: There Is a Better King

Praise God... the story doesn't end with Saul.

Because God was already preparing a better David.

But even that David—*the son of Jesse*—wasn't the final answer.

He too would fall short.

That's why we look to Jesus, the truer and better King:

- The One who did not take matters into His own hands.
- The One who laid down His power in obedience, even unto death.
- The One who wears many crowns, and yet gave His life for those who rejected Him.

## The Gospel Twist: God Turns Sauls into Pauls

The Saul of 1 Samuel reminds us of our brokenness.

But the Saul of the book of Acts reminds us of redemption.

God is in the business of taking:

- Controlling, violent, blind men...
- And making them humble, Spirit-filled, world-changing sons.

He does it by grace.

By the Spirit.

By the blood of Jesus.

So if you see Saul in your heart today... don't despair.

He can turn your fear into faith.  
Your failure into testimony.  
Your pride into purpose.  
Your Saul into Paul.

1<sup>st</sup> Sam 12 12-25

## Take-Home Reflection & Challenge

The story of Saul holds up a mirror.  
Not to shame us—but to reveal us.

This week, resist the urge to dismiss Saul as a cautionary tale for someone else.  
Let the Holy Spirit search you and bring you back ready.

### Reflective Journal Questions:

1. **Where in my life am I choosing control instead of trust?**
  - What fear is feeding that choice?
2. **Am I more concerned with how things look than how obedient I am to God?**
  - Where have I been performing instead of surrendering?
3. **In what areas am I forcing things instead of waiting on the Lord?**
  - What would it look like to wait well?
4. **Do I trust God's leadership more than my own ability to fix things?**
  - If not, what needs to shift?
5. **What crown am I wearing this week—faith or fear?**

### Challenge for Next Week:

Come back ready. Bring your journal. Bring your heart.  
We're going deeper.

Next week: "Compromise" – the crown that feels safe, but kills slowly.

God is still writing your story.

And if you're willing to trade control for surrender, He can still turn Saul into Paul.  
You just have to let go.