

# Path to Discipleship – What we can learn from

## Saul and David - Part 1 | 10/1/17

- Introduction
  - As we strive to become mature disciples and followers of Christ we can turn to the Scriptures to many different examples of what this does and does not look like. We are going to take a look at Saul and David and contrast them to see the differences between one who strives to live life for themselves as opposed to one who lives it out in obedience (albeit not perfect) to Christ.
  - Both of these men were called by God for a purpose, they were both given instruction on what He wanted from them. However, there is significant differences in how they lived out their lives especially when it came to striving to live in the will of God.
  - Scripture records two very different passages that summarizes the main differences between Saul and David which is obedience.
    - 1 Samuel 15:11a
      - “I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has **turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments...**”
    - Acts 13:22
      - “And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, I have found in David the son of Jesse **a man after my heart, who will do all my will.**”
- Saul
  - **So, one might say well the Scriptures do advise on our obedience but how important is that really to God? Are their consequences for not being obedient?**
  - Does God really care if we obey Him and live our lives as He has called us to?
  - These questions are answered in the Scriptures through the life of Saul
  - Saul gives us the example of what NOT to do.
    - **If we want to be mature obedient Christians then Saul is a prime example of what NOT to do.**
    - Saul was arrogant, proud and always thought that he knew best regardless of what God said.
    - Saul saw his life as his own, not a life that God gave him with direction and a purpose. He saw a life that HE was to control and live as he wanted.
    - Saul lived knowing that God was there, knowing that God had given him a direction and specific commands. But despite that, Saul chose to disobey God and went his own way.
  - Saul’s Disobedience to God. | 1 Samuel 15:1-23
    - God gave Saul very specific instructions on what he wanted from him. | 1 Samuel 15:1-3
      - **Read 1 Samuel 15:1-3**
      - Samuel was sent by God to deliver a message to Saul.
      - Samuel reminded him that he was one that God had sent to anoint him king over God’s people (Israel). That Saul needed to truly listen to what he was going to say because it was directly from God.
      - Saul was instructed by God (through Samuel) to attack the Amalekites and completely destroy them.
        - The Amalekites had attacked the Israelites as they came out of Egypt and God pronounced for their demise and that there would be constant war with them.

- Exodus 17:14-16
          - “Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under the heaven. And Moses built an altar and called the name of it, the LORD Is My Banner, saying, “A hand upon the throne of the LORD! The LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”
        - God was tasking Saul (who He chose to be king) to COMPLETELY wipe them out.
          - However, as we this story unfolds we will see that Saul chose NOT to obey God.
          - Saul chose to go his own way.
  - Saul’s disobedience | 1 Samuel 15:4-9
    - **Read 1 Samuel 15:4-9**
    - At first it appears that Saul is setting out to do exactly as God has commanded. He set out to go to war and destroy the Amalekites.
    - Saul however instead of COMPLETELY obeying God he took matters into his own hands.
      - Saul did destroy a majority of the Amalekites and their possessions.
        - Verse 7 – “Saul defeated the Amalekites...”
        - Verse 8 – “...devoted to destruction all the people with the edge of the sword.”
      - But a majority isn’t EVERYTHING.
        - Verse 8 – “And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive...”
        - Verse 9 – “Saul spared...best of the sheep....oxen...fattened calves...lambs, and all that was good....would NOT utterly destroy them.”
    - Saul did not fully fulfill God’s command or directive.
      - God made it clear that he was to destroy EVERYTHING.
        - 1 Samuel 15:3
          - “Now go and strike the Amalek and devote to destruction **ALL that they have. Do NOT spare them**, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, came and donkey”
      - But Saul instead chose to ignore some of God’s commands or he “partially” obeyed God.
      - **Saul kept the BEST of what he saw and would NOT destroy them.**
    - Do you think when Saul began this quest that he had any intention to NOT obey God?
    - Why do you think he decided to not COMPLETELY follow God’s instructions?
    - Do you think Christians can fall into this same trap as Saul?
  - God was aware of Saul’s disobedience | 1 Samuel 15:10-11
    - **Read 1 Samuel 15:10-11**
    - God was fully aware of Saul’s disobedience.
      - God was watching Saul and knew when he had chosen to disobey Him.
      - Let us never think that God is unaware when we disobey Him or we do not fully carry out His instructions.

- Saul turned away from following God and did not do as God had instructed.
  - Saul essentially turned his back on God, he did not perform the commandments that God had asked of him.
- Not only was God aware of Saul's disobedience but it also caused God to "regret" that He had made him king of Israel.
  - This passage speaks volumes to how important our obedience is to God.
  - **Saul's disobedience was so significant that God said "I regret" in making Saul King.**
    - God is Holy and all His decisions are just and perfect. When God chooses to do something (like make Saul King) it is for a purpose and part of His plan.
    - And God desires that we obey His instructions and do as He has commanded us.
    - **However, His creation has a will, and they are not robots. God wants us to obey Him but He does not make us do so.**
    - The Lord was grieved because of Saul's disobedience.
- **Do you think that is possible that Christians when we willfully disobey that God has a similar reaction as He did to Saul?**
- Saul arrogantly thought that he had obeyed God. | 1 Samuel 15:12-13
  - **Read 1 Samuel 15:12-13**
  - Saul so proud of himself setup a monument to himself.
    - Saul is certainly not known for his humility. He being so proud of what he had done has put up a monument to himself.
  - Saul told Samuel that "I have performed the commandment of the LORD"
    - In Saul's mind, he acted in obedience to God, that he did what was asked of him.
    - However, his actions clearly were in disobedience.
      - 1 Samuel 15:11b
        - "...and has not performed my commandments"
  - **What do you think Saul was thinking when he said that he obeyed God when he clearly did not?**
- Saul's excuse for his disobedience was that he "partially obeyed" and that in his mind he knew better than God. | 1 Samuel 15:14-15
  - **Read 1 Samuel 15:14-15**
  - Samuel knowing that God's command was to destroy everything asked why he could hear the sounds of the animals that were supposed to be destroyed.
  - **Saul made sure to use the words "they" and "the people" to describe who was responsible.**
  - Saul responds in arrogance that they chose to save them so they could be used to sacrifice to God.
    - So, Saul took it upon himself to "modify" God's original commandment.
    - Saul thought well "I know better" and it would be best to keep them even though this was in disobedience to God.
    - **Saul justified this action of disobedience.**
  - **Saul shows us the dangers of "partial obedience" which truly isn't obedience at all.**
    - Saul thought that his "partial obedience" (which is disobedience) was good enough.

- Saul thought that since he did MOST of what God has asked, that what he did was in obedience but this was not how God saw it.
- For Saul to “mostly” do what God had asked was not enough, he by keeping King Agag, the animals and possessions he directly disobeyed Him.
- The folly of partial obedience
  - **Christians can fall into the same mindset as Saul, that as long as we are MOSTLY obedient then that is OK in our minds.**
    - Example: We think it’s OK that we obey MOST of the 10 commandments but if we miss a few we don’t need to worry much.
  - But our partial obedience is still disobedience and sin to God.
    - To be a disciple we must put aside what we want and submit to Him
- **Do we at times disobey God thinking that perhaps we know better than Him?**
- **In what ways do we as Christians show “partial obedience” to God?**
- Samuel calls out Saul’s disobedience | 1 Samuel 15:16-19
  - **Read 1 Samuel 15:16-19**
  - Samuel made it clear to Saul that God did not approve of his actions, his partial obedience was simply disobedience.
  - Samuel said that Saul’s disobedience was evil in the sight of the Lord.
    - His disobedience was sin and evil in the eyes of God. That is how God see’s our disobedience, it is evil.
- Saul responds with defiance and a lie. | 1 Samuel 15:20-21
  - **1 Samuel 15:20-21**
  - The best response we can have when we have been called out for our disobedience, is to own up to it and repent.
  - However, Saul responds in defiance and tries to put the blame on others.
    - **Saul 4 times says “ I have”**
    - **Saul said “I have obeyed” which was a lie as he admits that when he said he kept king Agag alive.**
    - Then he tries to put the blame on “the people” for keeping the spoils and animals.
  - Saul still clung to his “partial obedience” and tried to justify it.
  - Saul thought that what he did was good and perhaps even better than what God wanted.
  - **A true disciple of Christ will check their arrogance for humility.**
    - Saul’s arrogance to God is astounding and is not a trait of a Christian who is striving to be a disciple.
      - A disciple does not say “I have done great things for God, I have obeyed, I am a great and wonderful Christian, I have done mighty works”
    - Saul saw himself as the center and not Christ, a disciple sees Christ as the center and themselves as a servant.
- To God our obedience is greater than any work/action or sacrifice. | 1 Samuel 15:22-23
  - **Read 1 Samuel 15:22-23**
  - **God would rather have our attention and our complete obedience rather than any sacrifice, offering or work that we could give him.**

- This passage tells us exactly how God feels about obedience especially in relation to doing good works for Him.
- To obey is by far greater than doing “good things” if they are not what He has asked or called us to do.
  - **If God has called or commanded us to do something and we disobey and do something else instead (even though it’s “for the Lord”) that doesn’t make it right.**
- God rejected Saul as king because of his disobedience
  - For Saul God rejected him as king because of his disobedience, let us strive as Christians to not do the same.
- **“To obey is better than sacrifice” what might this look like in our lives today?**
- **Is it possible for us to be rejected from a position or task like Saul because of our disobedience?**