

Session 07

Saul's
FAILURE

CENTRAL TRUTH | Anything less than full, immediate obedience to the Lord is disobedience.

Have you ever done something halfway and considered it good enough? Maybe your parents or guardians told you that you could invite a friend over if you cleaned your room, so you pushed everything into a pile in your closet. Or maybe you forgot to do your homework and copied answers from a friend or from the back of the book. These things may stay secret from your parents, guardians, or teachers, but they are never a secret from God. In this week's passage, King Saul knew he needed to seek God's favor before battle, but he didn't do things the right way. Instead of waiting on Samuel to offer the burnt offering to God, Saul became impatient and did it himself—which was not what God had commanded. Because of his disobedience, God chose a new king who would obey Him. Saul's story shows us that anything less than full, immediate obedience to the Lord is disobedience.



REFLECT

What questions do I have about God?

What questions do I have about myself?

What questions do I have about the world and those around me?



1 SAMUEL 13:1-5

¹ Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty-two years over Israel. ² He chose three thousand men from Israel for himself: two thousand were with Saul at Michmash and in Bethel's hill country, and one thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. He sent the rest of the troops away, each to his own tent. ³ Jonathan attacked the Philistine garrison in Gibeah, and the Philistines heard about it. So Saul blew the ram's horn throughout

the land saying, "Let the Hebrews hear!"

⁴ And all Israel heard the news, "Saul has attacked the Philistine garrison, and Israel is now repulsive to the Philistines." Then the troops were summoned to join Saul at Gilgal.

⁵ The Philistines also gathered to fight against Israel: three thousand chariots, six thousand horsemen, and troops as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Michmash, east of Beth-aven.

1 SAMUEL 13:6-12

⁶ The men of Israel saw that they were in trouble because the troops were in a difficult situation. They hid in caves, in thickets, among rocks, and in holes and cisterns. ⁷ Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul, however, was still at Gilgal, and all his troops were gripped with fear. ⁸ He waited seven days for the appointed time that Samuel had set, but Samuel didn't come to Gilgal, and the troops were deserting him. ⁹ So Saul said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship

offerings." Then he offered the burnt offering.

¹⁰ Just as he finished offering the burnt offering, Samuel arrived. So Saul went out to greet him, ¹¹ and Samuel asked, "What have you done?" Saul answered, "When I saw that the troops were deserting me and you didn't come within the appointed days and the Philistines were gathering at Michmash, ¹² I thought, 'The Philistines will now descend on me at Gilgal, and I haven't sought the LORD's favor.' So I forced myself to offer the burnt offering."

1 SAMUEL 13:13-14

¹³ Samuel said to Saul, "You have been foolish. You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you. It was at this time that the LORD would have permanently established your reign over Israel, ¹⁴ but now your reign will not

endure. The LORD has found a man after his own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over his people, because you have not done what the LORD commanded."

Day 01

1 SAMUEL 13:1-5



Refer to page 5 for a description of the 7 Arrows of Bible Reading.

📍 READ & RESPOND

Saul was the warrior king that the Israelites had *wanted*, but he was not the godly leader that Israel *needed*. Today's passage lands us in the middle of a campaign to remove the Philistines from Israel. In this initial attack of the enemy garrison, Jonathan, Saul's son, and his warriors were successful. When Saul hears, he blows the horn so that all of Israel would know about the success, but in verse 4, the word being passed around is that Saul attacked the garrison, taking credit or glory for the success against the enemy. Saul's stolen valor isn't just against Jonathan but against the Lord. We must recognize that all our victories and successes are from the Lord.

↓ Saul relied on his own strategy and soldiers. Why do we often choose to rely on our own plans instead of waiting on God?

→ Where in your life are you taking credit for a victory that isn't really yours?

↻ Ask God to help you trust His plan more than your own instincts. Journal your prayer here.

📍 MEMORIZE

Write out **1 Samuel 13:14** on a notecard. Read the passage out loud five times. Next, read it in a whisper five times. Finally, say it in your head with your eyes closed five times.

📍 PRAY

Lord, keep me from acting out of fear or my own agenda. Replace my urge to control with the courage to wait on You. Lead me in Your timing today.

Day02

1 SAMUEL 13:6-12

📍 READ & RESPOND

Saul anxiously waited for Samuel, who had directed him to Gilgal and told him to wait for his arrival to offer sacrifices for God's favor. Samuel did not come quickly enough for Saul, so he decided to do it himself. Samuel arrived after Saul had offered the burnt offering. In his explanation to Samuel, Saul felt compelled to seek God's favor before the enemy attacked and his men deserted him—more evidence of Saul's lack of spiritual leadership. Saul thought the Lord would grant him favor in his disobedience. Partial obedience is still disobedience. We cannot hope to gain God's favor while also ignoring His instructions.

↑ What does God's reaction show us about His view of "obedience" versus "convenience"?

↓ How do fear and pressure often tempt us to take control instead of waiting on God?

→ In what area of life are you currently tempted to force an outcome rather than trust God's timing?

📍 MEMORIZE

Write out **1 Samuel 13:14** on a piece of paper or notecard. On the back, write only the first letter of every word, including punctuation. Keep attempting this until you get every word in the right order.

📍 PRAY

Lord, forgive me for rushing ahead when I should be waiting on You. Replace my panic with peace, and help me value Your commands more than my own comfort.

Day**03**

1 SAMUEL 13:13-14

📍 READ & RESPOND

Samuel told Saul that his disobedience was unacceptable and would cost him dearly. Saul's dynasty would not be established, meaning that the royal line of kings would not come from him. Secondly, the Lord would replace Saul with "a man after his own heart" who would follow His commands. Saul had been the most impressive Israelite man (see 1 Sam. 9:2), chosen from a warrior tribe to be a warrior king, but God demanded obedience and a heart surrendered to Him. While Saul may have looked kingly on the outside, he was not royal on the inside. Like Saul, we can wear a mask that looks like we have it all together. We can look super spiritual and Christlike, but on the inside, we are far from what we present to others. God wants you to be a guy or girl "after his own heart." He demands our hearts be surrendered to Him alone.

↑ What does this passage reveal about God's conditions for those He chooses to lead?

↓ How does Saul's impatience show our human tendency to rely on self instead of God?

↻ How can you ask God to shape your heart to match His own?

📍 MEMORIZE

Instead of writing out **1 Samuel 13:14** in words, draw the verse using icons or symbols. Translating the passage into images helps you to process the meaning of the words.

📍 PRAY

Lord, thank You for wanting my heart, not just my performance. Please replace my impatience with Your wisdom. Help me to be a person who follows You fully, regardless of the cost.

Day 04

PSALM 93:1-5

📍 READ & RESPOND

This psalm is called a kingship psalm, which describes God as the ultimate King. He is the eternal king who rules over the whole world. The Israelites requested a human king, rejecting the supreme King. God was giving them Him, and they asked for someone powerless, mortal, and weak. It is easy to make the lesser choice when it's right in front of us, easier, or less complicated. We choose what looks good by the world's standard, but against God's standard, the lesser choice is always bad. We often settle for a "human king"—a relationship, a reputation, or a quick fix—because we can see it and control it. But 1 Samuel shows us that a king you can control is a king who cannot save you.

← Why was it important for Israelites to remember God is King while surrounded by chaotic, idol-worshipping nations?

↓ If God is the ultimate King, why do we often act like we are in charge of our own lives?

↓ How are you allowing a "lesser choice" to rob you of the King's best for you tomorrow?

📍 MEMORIZE

Record yourself reading **1 Samuel 13:14** different ways: (1) in a normal voice, (2) in a whisper, (3) as fast as you possibly can. Can you think of other ways? Be sure to listen back to the recordings.

📍 PRAY

Lord, You are the King above every storm. When my world feels chaotic, help me trust that Your throne is established forever. Give me peace, knowing You are in control of everything.

Day**05**

1 SAMUEL 15:22-23

📍 READ & RESPOND

Saul's reign was littered with moments of partial obedience. In today's passage, he tried to justify himself by claiming to have saved the best livestock to sacrifice to God. But Saul didn't understand. God wanted his obedience and his attention. Instead, Saul only offered rebellion and defiance. Saul thought a religious performance would overshadow his refusal to obey instructions. God doesn't want our performance. He wants our integrity. He doesn't want rituals, but our hearts. God cannot be bribed or distracted from our disobedience by good deeds. Saul failed to realize that we can't truly love God while ignoring His instructions.

↑ What does God's reaction reveal about His priority: our "religious acts" or our heart's obedience?

↓ Why are we so often quick to offer God excuses instead of simple obedience?

↔ How does this passage change how you handle conflict or leadership with your friends or teammates?

📍 MEMORIZE

Rewrite **1 Samuel 13:14** in today's modern language. You could even text-speak it, but be sure to keep the theology accurate! Paraphrasing in everyday language ensures we comprehend what we're memorizing.

📍 PRAY

Lord, forgive me for trying to impress You with my busyness while ignoring Your clear instructions. Strip away my excuses and give me a heart that values Your voice more than my own comfort.