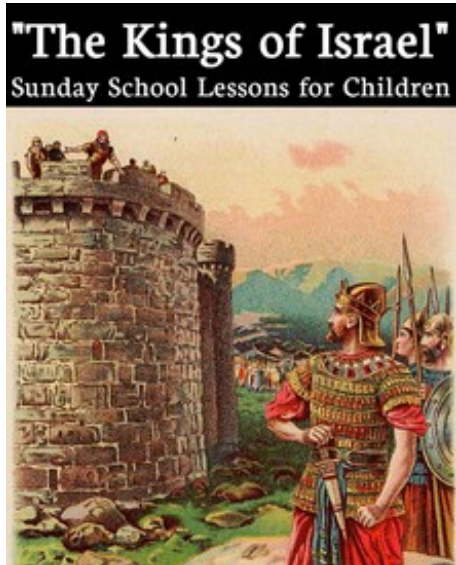


Bible Lesson: King Saul's Rebellious Heart

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Kelly Henderson

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This is the follow-up lesson about King Saul and continues our series on the Kings of Israel. [Click here](#) to see the lesson index.

God gave Israel their request to have a king and Saul was a true reflection of their hearts. He looked good on the outside but was disobedient in his heart. Students will learn from Saul's life that although he looked good on the outside his heart was rebellious and disobedient to God. The lesson can be modified for other teaching contexts.

Bible Story: King Saul's Rebellious Heart Revealed

Scripture: [1 Samuel 13:1-15](#); [15:1-34](#)

Target Age Group: Age 9 – 11 (U.S. 3rd – 5th Grade)

Learning Context: Sunday School

Target Time Frame: 60 minutes

Printer Friendly Bible Lesson:  [PRINT](#) this lesson plan

You Can Help: Please share your feedback and suggestions to improve this children's Bible lesson. [Click here to respond](#)

Supply List: Bibles, wrapped gifts, recipe, ingredients to make a snack, cards with names of Bible characters on them.

Learning Goal: Students will learn that God wants an obedient heart from His followers.

Learning Indicator: Students will demonstrate their understanding of the lesson by answering review questions.

Learning Activity #1: "Don't Judge a Book by its Cover": Before class prepare two gifts. The nice gift (bookmarks, snacks or something that the students would enjoy) is put in a wrinkled brown paper bag. The bad gift (something no one would want-dirty sock, etc.) is put in a nicely wrapped gift box. Ask the children which gift they would choose and why. Open the nicely wrapped gift first and reveal what's inside then open the brown paper bag gift. When we chose the nicely wrapped gift we thought it would be a nice gift because it looked good on the outside. What looked good on the outside had a bad gift inside. When God looks at us He is looking at what's in our hearts not if we look and act right on the outside.

Learning Activity #2: Following directions. Bring ingredients to make a snack for the students. Bring some ingredients that would make the snack inedible or not very tasty. Have students follow the recipe and create the snack. Then after the snack has been made properly

follow the recipe this time and substitute ingredients with other items. Which of the snacks are you going to want to eat, the one where we followed the recipe exactly or the one we substituted ingredients? Why? God is our Father and He knows exactly what He is doing in our lives. When He gives us clear instructions we need to obey completely His instructions.

Learning Activity #3: This activity allows students who are familiar with the Bible think of men and women who faced difficulties and what their heart revealed about their trust and obedience to God. Make cards with names of Bible characters who faced difficulties (Joseph, Pharaoh, Job, Ruth, Mary, Joseph, Peter, Paul, etc.). As students draw a card they describe the difficulty the individual faced and think about what their response revealed about their trust and obedience to God.

Test: Review Questions

Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 15:22 “But Samuel replied: “Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.”

Bible Lesson: King Saul: Rebellious Heart Revealed

(Provide Bibles for students who need one. Begin lesson with prayer asking God to help you teach in the power of His Holy Spirit and that each person would hear and obey what God teaches from His Word.)

Last week we talked about how life as a Christian is like a race. We start the race when we put our faith in Jesus. Each day we walk in obedience to God’s word until we go home to be with Jesus is like staying on track in the race. We should continue to run the race by growing in our understanding of Jesus and obeying His Word so we can finish the race well.

Saul was chosen to be king over Israel. He started the race as king over God’s people well. He was a humble man and looked like he was going to be the perfect king to lead God’s people.

What Saul looked like on the outside was not a true reflection of who he was on the inside. As Saul ruled over Israel as their king his responses in difficult situations revealed his trust and obedience in God as his leader.

Let’s turn to 1 Samuel 13. Choose volunteers to read 1 Samuel 13:5-6. Saul has led his army to battle against the Philistines. The Philistine army far outnumbers Israel’s army. The soldiers were frightened and began to scatter to hide from the Philistines.

Samuel had instructed Saul to wait for him in Gilgal (1 Samuel 10:8) where they would offer sacrifices to God and ask for his help. Samuel was God’s servant and it was his job to be present and oversee the offering of sacrifices and be a part of that ceremony.

Read 1 Samuel 13:7-9. Saul is in a difficult situation. A huge army is attacking Israel and his soldiers are running away out of fear. Difficult situations reveal how much a person trusts and obeys God. Samuel gave Saul clear instructions but Saul didn't follow them exactly. The seventh day wasn't completely over and as soon as Saul takes things into his own hands and offers the sacrifice against Samuel's instructions, Samuel shows up. (1 Samuel 13:10) Saul's actions reveal his lack of faith in God and his disobedience to God's commands.

Saul makes excuses as to why he disobeyed God's commands. Disobedience is sin and there is never a good reason why we can not follow God's instructions.

Read 1 Samuel 13:13-14. Samuel tells Saul that he has made a foolish mistake by not obeying God's commands. A leader needs to be a good example to the people they lead. Saul was king and a leader of God's people. He needed to set an example of complete obedience to God's commands. God knew Saul's heart and knew that he was not going to be an obedient king to lead God's people.

If you were able to study the lesson about Israel asking for a king you may remember that Israel's request for a king revealed what was in their hearts. They wanted a king so they could look like other countries. Their request for a king revealed that they did not fully trust God to lead them as their King. King Saul their very first king is a reflection of the Israelite's hearts. Just as they didn't fully trust and obey God, neither did Saul.

King Saul had the opportunity to get back on track with God. He could have been heart broken at the words that Samuel spoke to him about not remaining as the king. He could have confessed his disobedience and prayed for forgiveness and trusted God to lead him as the king. Unfortunately God knew Saul's heart and his heart was not repentant. As we flip over to 1 Samuel 15. We will see what God already knew about Saul's heart.

Just like Saul as believers run in the race following Jesus sometimes we will disobey. Disobedience is like falling down or going off the track in a different direction. Believers don't have to stay down when they sin against God. When we confess our sins and turn away from them and ask for God's help we get back up and begin to run the race headed in the right direction.

Let's read 1 Samuel 15:1-3. The Amalekites were enemies to God's people. (Exodus 17:14; Deuteronomy 25:17-19) When the Israelites left Egypt and were tired and weary from travelling they attacked those that were lagging behind. Their actions toward God's people showed that they did not fear and honor God. God said that one day He would punish the Amalekites and they would be completely destroyed.

Over 400 years had passed and now God was going to fulfill what He said he would do in the time of Moses. The Amalekites were wicked people and didn't fear God. They did not repent and turn away from their sin and the consequence was for God to punish all the Amalekites.

What were the instructions from the Lord that Samuel gave to King Saul in 1 Samuel 15:1-3?

In most battles the soldiers were allowed to take plunder from their enemies. They would capture the king to show how powerful they were in battle. This battle for the Israelites was going to be different. King Saul was given clear instructions of what to do as he goes to battle with Amalek. What were those clear instructions again? (Totally destroy everything)

King Saul gathers an army and attacks the Amalekites just as he was instructed. Saul has been given another opportunity to reveal his trust and obedience in God. Let's read 15:7-9. What do his actions reveal about his character? (Disobedient, led God's people to disobey)

When Samuel confronted Saul about his disobedience he makes excuses. He blames the soldiers and says that the best things were spared to offer as sacrifices to God.

When God shows you that you are guilty of sin how do you respond? Do you agree with God and confess and repent from your sin or do you make excuses?

Samuel isn't interested in Saul's excuses and tells him to stop talking. He goes on to share what God thinks of his actions. Read 1 Samuel 15:17-19.

Saul was not repentant of his disobedience to God. He was still full of excuses (1 Samuel 15:20-21).

Read 1 Samuel 15:22-23. Verse 23 is our memory verse for this lesson. Samuel told Saul that God isn't interested in our outward attempts to look like we are worshiping Him. The most important thing God is interested in is an obedient heart. That pleases God more than anything else.

Do you look good on the outside? Others think that you are a good person but inside you have never believed that Jesus died on the cross for your sins, was buried, and rose again the third day so your sins could be forgiven. Others might think you look good, but God sees that you are a sinner and your sins separate you from Him. He isn't looking for your good deeds and actions He is interested in you obeying by faith that the only way you can be pleasing in His sight it by believing in Jesus as your Savior. If you are a believer does everyone at church see you as a "good Christian" because you know all the answers and can say the right things but when you are outside of church you are disobedient to what God commands you to do in His Word? You might look good to others but God sees your disobedience in your heart.

The consequence of Saul's disobedient heart was that he lost the opportunity to serve as Israel's king. He is now recorded for all history to see that he chose to do things partly God's way and partly his and he lost his position as king as a result.

As we close our lesson we need to keep in mind that God promises to never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5) even if we disobey Him. God also promises to forgive and cleanse us from all unrighteousness if we come to Him with a sincere, repentant heart. (1 John 1:9) When we disobey God it is sin but we are not destined to stay in that place of disobedience. We can call out to God for forgiveness and turn away from our sin.

As believers we need to stay in the race following Jesus. Trusting Him and obeying Him every day keeps us on track. We don't have to go down in history as someone who started out well and let sin keep us out of the race. If there is anything that you know you are doing that is disobedience toward God will you confess that to Him and turn away from that sin today? We will have a time of silence to allow you time to talk with God about what He is speaking to you about from our time in His Word.

If you have never believed in Jesus as your Savior you are not in the race following Christ. Today you can be saved if you believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sins, was buried and rose again the third day. If you have any questions about becoming a Christian please talk to us today.

Close in prayer.

Review Questions:

1. Why was it wrong for Saul to offer sacrifices when the enemy was attacking? (Samuel instructed him to wait for him before offering sacrifices)
2. When Saul didn't wait for Samuel what did his actions reveal about his heart? (He wasn't trusting in God and wasn't obedient to His commands)
3. Why were the Amalekites going to be punished by God? (They treated His people badly when they were weary and tired traveling from Egypt and they didn't fear and honor Him)
4. What were God's instructions to Saul? (Totally destroy everything)
5. How well did Saul follow God's instructions? (He didn't destroy the best things and spared the king's life)
6. What is God looking for more than outward forms of worship to Him? (Obedience)
7. What was the consequence to Saul's disobedience? (He would not be king over Israel)
8. What are some things God commands us to do that are hard to obey? Will you pray and ask Him to help you obey Him fully?

3 ratings 4 stars on average