

Saul Sinned and Was Rejected (1 Samuel 13–15)



Dear families,

The sacrificial system of the Old Testament was the rhythm and practice of the people of God for many generations. It brought about reminders of the authority of God and the sin of the people. God used these sacrifices as temporary atonement for sin and a foreshadowing of the permanent sacrifice of Jesus that was to come.

Some Old Testament figures practiced these sacrifices with precision as prescribed by God. For others, the sacrifices were a good luck charm or “Get Out of Jail Free” card. In 1 Samuel 14–15, Saul built an altar and used sacrifice to try to earn back the favor of both God and Samuel.

Samuel’s response to these things cut Saul deeply. “Does the Lord take pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? Look: to obey is better than sacrifice, to pay attention is better than the fat of rams” (1 Sam. 15:22).

The answer to Samuel’s rhetorical question is a resounding “No!” God does not desire sacrifice more than obedience; He desires obedient sacrifice. Though it was possible to sacrifice and disobey, it was never possible to obey and not sacrifice. God’s desire was for sacrifice to come from a broken and contrite heart that understood the weight of one’s sin and the need for forgiveness before a holy and righteous God. To practice sacrifice with any other motivation was to disobey.

Though we don't live under the ceremonial law of the Old Testament, we do live under the authority of God. And though we don't use the blood and meat of animals to try to satisfy God, we are certainly guilty of trying to please Him with religious practices.

For some Christians, there is a quiet hope that checking the boxes of daily disciplines will satisfy God's wrath toward our sin. For some Christians, the applause of men drives the public display of their faith. In either instance, Christians are seeking to earn the favor of both God and man through their "sacrifice," when God's desire is for our whole-hearted obedience out of love for Him.

Consider today what areas you may be tempted to try and impress God or earn back His love. Confess those things and be reminded that what God wants is your love for Him above all else and your confidence that His sacrifice of Christ is sufficient to make you right before Him.

Check out *The Gospel Project At Home* for resources designed to help you lead a family worship experience as well as suggestions for morning and evening prayer times and family activities.

FAMILY TALKING POINTS

CHRIST CONNECTION

This is the big idea of how this week's Bible story points to Jesus.

- **Babies & Toddlers:** King Jesus obeyed God in everything He did.
- **Younger Preschool:** God made Saul king, but King Saul did not obey God. God sent His Son, Jesus, to be king over everything. King Jesus obeyed God perfectly.
- **Older Preschool:** God made Saul king, but King Saul did not obey God. God sent His Son, Jesus, to be king over everything. King Jesus obeyed God perfectly and died so we can be forgiven.
- **Kids:** God gave the Israelites a king, but Saul did not obey God. God had a plan to send His Son, Jesus. King Jesus trusted and obeyed God perfectly and died so sinners could be forgiven and accepted.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION & ANSWER

This is an important biblical truth that your child will encounter each week of this unit.

- **Younger Preschool:** Why does sin separate us from God? Because God is holy.
- **Older Preschool:** Why does sin separate us from God? Because God is holy.
- **Kids:** Why does sin separate us from God? Because God is holy, sin has broken our relationship with God.

KEY PASSAGE

This is a Bible verse that relates to what your child will encounter each week of this unit.

- **Babies & Toddlers:** My eyes have seen the Lord. Isaiah 6:5
- **Younger Preschool:** My eyes have seen the Lord. Isaiah 6:5
- **Older Preschool:** I said: Woe is me ... because I am a man of unclean lips ... and ... my eyes have seen the ... LORD. Isaiah 6:5
- **Kids:** Then I said: Woe is me for I am ruined because I am a man of unclean lips and live among a people of unclean lips, and because my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Armies. Isaiah 6:5

**** Next week:** God Is Good to Judge Sin (Genesis 18)