

UNIT 10 • SESSION 3

FOOLISH DEFIANCE

CORE PASSAGE: 1 SAMUEL 15:1-3,7-13,22-23

TIMELINE

Saul Defeats the Ammonites
(1 Samuel 11)

Saul Impatiently Offers a Sacrifice and
Loses His Dynasty (1 Samuel 13)

Samuel Anoints a New King
(1 Samuel 16)

Samuel Challenges Israel to Trust God Alone
(1 Samuel 12)

**SESSION STUDY: Saul Disobeys in His Defeat of the
Amalekites and God Rejects Him as King (1 Samuel 15)**

CONTEXT:

Saul had previously failed to wait for Samuel to make appropriate sacrifices before a battle. In continued disobedience, Saul failed to follow God's instruction to completely destroy the Amalekites and their belongings. God was grieved over Saul's defiance and rejected Saul as king.

- **Half-hearted obedience is not obedience to God.**
- **Living in wickedness and defiance in opposition to God's directives reveals a heart that puts other gods ahead of the one true God in one's life.**

GOD EXPECTS HIS PEOPLE TO OBEY HIS COMMANDS

1 Samuel 15:1-3

¹ Samuel told Saul, "The Lord sent me to anoint you as king over his people Israel. Now, listen to the words of the Lord. ² This is what the Lord of Armies says: 'I witnessed what the Amalekites did to the Israelites when they opposed them along the way as they were coming out of Egypt. ³ Now go and attack the Amalekites and completely destroy everything they have. Do not spare them. Kill men and women, infants and nursing babies, oxen and sheep, camels and donkeys.'"

Do you think God is being unfair or not showing mercy to the Amalekites?

We must remember that God is patient and often allows time for nations to repent (e.g., the Ninevites in Jonah's day). God was fulfilling a promise He made to Joshua, after what they had done to His people when they entered the promised land. (Ex. 17:8-15)

Samuel gave Saul a direct command from God himself. We see in verse 4 that Saul obeyed by gathering his army to destroy the Amalekites. Was there any doubt in the mind of Saul about what God wanted him to do? Was he concerned about the moral result of his assignment?

No! Not even a little doubt, Saul knew that Samuel was God's prophet and spoke the truth. Saul had no regard or doubt about destroying his enemy.

GOD EXPECTS HIS PEOPLE TO OBEY HIS COMMANDS

1 Samuel 15:7-9

⁷ Then Saul struck down the Amalekites from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is next to Egypt. ⁸ He captured King Agag of Amalek alive, but he completely destroyed all the rest of the people with the sword. ⁹ Saul and the troops spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, goats, cattle, and choice animals, as well as the young rams and the best of everything else. They were not willing to destroy them, but they did destroy all the worthless and unwanted things.

What does Saul's behavior tell us about the condition of his heart?

Saul blatantly disobeyed the Lord, keeping the valuable items of the Amalekites (15:9) much like Achan did at Jericho and pridefully erecting a monument to himself (15:12). Pride causes us to focus on ourselves, being concerned with our own image rather than focusing on God and obeying Him.

Saul only did PART of what God had told him to do, which is sin against God. PRIDE was his motivation, not obedience. Do we have the same issues today?

For Christians today, pride causes us to focus on ourselves, being concerned with our own image rather than focusing on God and obeying Him. How many times have we not obeyed because it wasn't part of OUR plans or what WE wanted?

1 Samuel 15:10-13

¹⁰ Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel, ¹¹ “I regret that I made Saul king, for he has turned away from following me and has not carried out my instructions.” So Samuel became angry and cried out to the Lord all night. ¹² Early in the morning, Samuel got up to confront Saul, but it was reported to Samuel, “Saul went to Carmel where he set up a monument for himself. Then he turned around and went down to Gilgal.” ¹³ When Samuel came to him, Saul said, “May the Lord bless you. I have carried out the Lord’s instructions.”

What do you think it means when God said He “regretted” He made Saul King?

The Lord’s “regret” here emphasizes the grievous nature of Saul’s disobedience. Saul was given specific commands that he deliberately defied.

What kind of excuses might we use to allow sin to remain in our lives?

“I did what I was asked to do, what’s wrong if I get a little something for myself?”

“Oh, I thought it was kinda like a bonus.”

“I didn’t hurt anyone else, so what’s the problem?”

Partial obedience is still disobedience!

1 Samuel 15:20-26

20 "But I did obey the LORD," Saul said. "I went on the mission the LORD assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king. **21** The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the LORD your God at Gilgal." **22** Then Samuel said: 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. **23** For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and defiance is like wickedness and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king. **24** Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned. I violated the LORD's command and your instructions. I was afraid of the men and so I gave in to them. **25** Now I beg you, forgive my sin and come back with me, so that I may worship the LORD."

26 But Samuel said to him, "I will not go back with you. You have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you as king over Israel!"

We see excuse after excuse from Saul about his behavior. He then says, "I have sinned." Is just saying I'm sorry going to make a difference really? Why or Why not?

Saul was only sorry for getting caught and lying about it. We cannot fool God or twist words to try and make it up to Him. He only wants true repentance. Anything else is false and centering on SELF!

Was Saul's worship honoring to God? Why or Why Not?

Saul's supposed concern for worship (v. 21) was no worship at all because worship and obedience go hand in hand.

Application for our lives

How do we apply the principles we have learned today?



We must obey God! We must rid ourselves of pride and defiance against God.

We must understand that all sin is defiance against Almighty God.

We must choose to confess and repent when we fall short. (1 John 1:9)

Jesus desires fully devoted followers whose hearts are set on loving God and following Jesus as their King.

Jesus said that the greatest commandment is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matt. 22:37). A key word in this text is "all." We often need to be reminded that we cannot compartmentalize our obedience to God. He deserves our all.

Rejecting God's commands means we are rejecting God. Our relationship with God is fostered through His Word; our response to His Word demonstrates the position of our hearts before Him.

The path of defiance is foolish and costly. We would be wise to pursue the path of faith and obedience to God, which is the path we are called to through the gospel. Through Jesus, God restores our hearts and grants us a new desire to obey Him and trust Him. In Christ, we see the trustworthy character of God, who did not leave us in our sin but saved us from its power.

Application for our lives

Scripture Admonitions on Defiance

1 John 2:16

For everything in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, comes not from the Father, but from the world.

Proverbs 6:16-17

There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood...

Hebrews 10:26

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins...

James 4:17

So, whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

Proverbs 12:1

Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid.

Application for our lives

How do we apply the principles we have learned today?

Have Thine own way, Lord

1. Have Thine own way, Lord, Have Thine own way;
Thou art the Potter, I am the clay.
Mould me and make me after Thy will,
While I am waiting, Yielded and still.

3. Have Thine own way, Lord, Have Thine own way;
Wounded and weary, help me, I pray.
Power, all power, surely is Thine,
Touch me and heal me, Savior divine.

2. Have Thine own way, Lord, Have Thine own way;
Search me and try me, Master, today.
Whiter than snow, Lord, wash me just now,
As in Thy presence, Humbly I bow.

4. Have Thine own way, Lord, Have Thine own way;
Hold o'er my being, Absolute sway.
Fill with Thy Spirit Till all shall see
Christ only, always, living in me.

Lyrics: Adelaide Addison Pollard
Music: George Coles Stebbins
Published in 1907: "Northfield Hymnal
Based on: Jeremiah 18:1-6





Pray for the mission trips that are constantly coming to Clarkston, GA over the next few weeks. Pray that Kinslee would be able to lead them well and for her to continue sharing the gospel through the ESL Ministry.

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