

God will test, but not tempt.

- “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God.’ For God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.” (James 1:13)
- “God left Hezekiah to himself, in order to test him and to know all that was in his heart.” (2 Chronicles 32:31)
- A school exam might expose a lack of understanding, but it does not cause it. Likewise, God’s testing reveals what is inside of you.

Saul’s failure to obey God led to the preparation of a king who would.

- Samuel told Saul, “You have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel.” As Samuel turned to go, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. So Samuel said to him, “The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor, who is better than you.” (1 Samuel 15:26–28)
- Samuel anointed David as the future king.
- In the next 12 years, Saul spiraled downward while David learned to trust and obey God.

In the cave at Engedi, David’s trust in God was demonstrated and developed.

- David chose to obey God’s command to respect anointed rulers. (Exodus 22:28)
- David was not swayed by circumstances or the counsel of others.
- David was prudent in speech.

“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” (Proverbs 15:1)
- David’s right action silenced the ignorance of foolish Saul.

“Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.” (1 Peter 2:13-15)

David retraced the previous testing of Saul, but passed where Saul had failed.

- Saul was swayed from obedience by circumstances.

“Because I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the appointed days, and that the Philistines were assembling... I forced myself and offered the burnt offering.” (1 Samuel 13:11–12)
- Saul was swayed from obedience by the counsel of others.

“I transgressed the commandment of the Lord because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.” (1 Samuel 15:24)
- David passed his test in 1 Samuel 24, and he will face a similar test in chapter 26.

God taught David to *Trust and Obey*.

When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word
What a glory He sheds on our Way.
While we do His good will, He abides with us still
And with all who will trust and obey.
Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey

Questions for Study and Reflection

1. What circumstances threaten to pull you away from obediently trusting God?
2. What counsel from others threatens to pull you away from obediently trusting God?
3. David knew God's command regarding treatment of anointed leaders. How are you regularly exposing yourself to God's Word so that it can guide you?
4. Read the account of Saul's disobedience in 1 Samuel 15:1-28. How did Saul try to justify his actions? To what does Samuel compare disobedience in verses 22–23?