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Samuel (Rise of the King) - Lesson 21

When Partial Obedience Is Disobedience (1 Samuel 15:1-15)

I. A CLEAR COMMAND (1 Samuel 15:1-3)

A Clear Command

- Saul's kingship came from God
- Samuel spoke with God's authority
- Saul was commanded to **LISTEN** (1) carefully
- Obedience begins with submitting to God's Word

God Remembers Amalek

- Amalek attacked Israel after Exodus
- Targeted Israel in their weakness
- They refused to **FEAR** (2) God
- God had promised eventual judgment

Supporting Scripture: Exodus 17:8-16; Numbers 24:20; Deuteronomy 25:17-19.

- Amalek opposed Israel persistently
- God's judgment was not impulsive
- God's delayed judgment is not **FORGOTTEN** (3) judgment!

Specific Command

- Attack Amalek
- Completely destroy what belongs to them
- Do not spare **ANYONE** (4) or anything
- No category was left to Saul's discretion.

Do Not Edit God's Word

- Obedience does not edit God's Word
- God clearly defined the command
- Saul was not free to **REVISE** (5) it
- Good intentions could not replace obedience
- Partial obedience is still disobedience

Obedience is not doing most of what God says while reserving the right to change the rest.

II. PREPARING TO OBEY (1 Samuel 15:4-6)

Mobilize The Army

- Saul summoned **TROOPS** (6) for battle
- Israel fielded a large fighting force
- Judah was counted separately
- Saul has ample strength for the mission

Prepare For Battle

- Saul advances toward Amalek
- Positions army near the city
- Prepares for an ambush
- The mission is moving forward as commanded

Kenites Warned

- Kenites lived among the Amalekites
- They showed Israel **KINDNESS** (7)
- Saul warned them to separate
- Judgment was against Amalek not Kenites

III. VICTORY WITHOUT OBEDIENCE (1 Samuel 15:7-9)

Defeats Amalek

- Saul attacked throughout Amalekite territory
- Israel won a decisive military victory
- Agag, king of Amalek, taken **ALIVE** (8)
- Campaign appeared successful

Agag Was Spared

- God's Command - Complete destruction
- Agag taken alive
- The King was treated differently
- Saul began making **EXCEPTIONS** (9)

Obedience becomes compromised when we begin creating exceptions God did not give us.

The Best Was Kept

- The best animals were **SPARED** (10)
- Weak and worthless animals were destroyed
- Saul and the troops chose what to keep
- Their judgment replaced God's command

Unwilling To Destroy

- The command was understood
- Valuable animals deliberately spared
- Saul and troops unwilling to destroy them
- Selective obedience became **REBELLION** (11)

Partial Obedience

- Partial obedience = **DISOBEDIENCE** (12)
- Saul obeyed where it was convenient
- Saul obeyed where it accomplished HIS goal
- Saul obeyed where it cost him nothing he wanted to keep
- Surrender required → He stopped

IV. GOD GRIEVES SAUL (1 Samuel 15:10-11)

God Speaks To Samuel

- Word of the Lord came to Samuel
- God gives true evaluation of the battle
- Saul's victory looked **DIFFERENT** (13) from heaven
- Issue is now spiritual, not military

Saul Had Turned Away

- Saul had turned away from following God
- He failed to carry out **GOD'S** (14) instructions
- His actions revealed a heart problem
- Disobedience → Spiritual departure

I Regret...

- God expresses grief over Saul
- Saul's rebellion changed God's dealing with him
- God was not caught off guard by Saul's failure
- God's character and purpose had **NOT** (15) changed

God's unchanging character does not mean He is unmoved by human rebellion.

Samuel Cries Out

- God's Word deeply troubled Samuel
- He cried out to the Lord all night
- Saul's victory and failure brought **GRIEF** (16) – not satisfaction
- Samuel carried the burden before God

V. SAUL'S VIEW OF VICTORY (1 Samuel 15:12-15)

Saul Builds Monument

- Saul went to Carmel after the victory
- He erected a monument to himself
- Victory became reason for **SELF-HONOR** (17)
- Samuel was coming with God's judgment

I Have Carried Out...

- Saul greets Samuel confidently
- "I have carried out the Lord's instructions."
- Claimed **COMPLETE** (18) obedience
- His words did not match his actions
- Saul appeared convinced he had succeeded

What Is That Sound?

- Samuel heard sheep and cattle
- Evidence contradicted Saul's claim
- What should have been destroyed was still alive
- Saul's actions exposed his words

Saul Shifts The Blame

- "The troops brought them."
- "They spared the best."
- Saul distances himself from the decision
- Responsibility was placed on **OTHERS** (19)

A Religious Excuse

- The best animals were supposed to be saved for **SACRIFICE** (20)
- A spiritual motive offered as an excuse
- God never authorized the change

Destroyed The Rest

- "They" spared what was valuable
- "We" destroyed everything else
- Saul emphasized what had been obeyed
- He **MINIMIZED** (21) what had been withheld

Problem Exposed

- God's command was **CLEAR** (22)
- Saul's victory was real
- His obedience was incomplete
- His explanation shifted blame
- His excuse sounded spiritual

Partial obedience becomes especially dangerous when we convince ourselves it was complete obedience.

ANSWER KEY

1. LISTEN (Slide 12)
2. FEAR (Slide 13)
3. FORGOTTEN (Slide 25)
4. ANYONE (Slide 26)
5. REVISE (Slide 27)
6. TROOPS (Slide 33)
7. KINDNESS (Slide 35)
8. ALIVE (Slide 42)
9. EXCEPTIONS (Slide 43)
10. SPARED (Slide 45)
11. REBELLION (Slide 46)
12. DISOBEDIENCE (Slide 47)
13. DIFFERENT (Slide 51)
14. GOD'S (Slide 52)
15. NOT (Slide 53)
16. GRIEF (Slide 55)
17. SELF-HONOR (Slide 60)
18. COMPLETE (Slide 61)
19. OTHERS (Slide 63)
20. SACRIFICE (Slide 64)
21. MINIMIZED (Slide 65)
22. CLEAR (Slide 66)