

SELECTIVE DISOBEDIENCE

“Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord?” —1 SAMUEL 15:22

The above verse is the Prophet Samuel’s response to King Saul after Saul had disobeyed the Lord’s instructions. He was to totally destroy the Amalekites and everything that belonged to them, including all herds and animals. Saul did this, but saved the Amalekite King and the best of their animals. He reasoned to Samuel, “But I did obey the LORD. I went on the mission the LORD assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king” (1 Samuel 15:20). Though Saul could have reigned as king, this was the beginning of the end for him.

Generally speaking, Saul did what God had told him to do, but with exceptions. This is where many of us make the same mistake. We know what God’s commandments are, and how He wants us to live, but there are certain things that we say are too good or too valuable for us to destroy, so we keep them alive. It’s amazing how we can rationalize this ‘selective disobedience’, and come up with what we think is a compromise agreeable to God. If we engage in the smaller areas of disobedience, such as a little pilfering at work or discourtesy on the road, we are very subtly creating barriers that detach us from God. This is clearly evidenced in verse 21 where Saul said to Samuel, “...in order to sacrifice them to the LORD your God...” God had chosen Saul, anointed and empowered him, but now it was “your God”, and not “our God”. He had already become detached from God.

We cannot reprieve what God has condemned, nor can we compromise, bargain or negotiate our obedience to God. If we do, we can be absolutely sure what we keep alive will have a future that comes back to haunt us. In Saul's case, at the battle of Gilboa, he tried to kill himself with his sword, but ironically, it was an Amalekite who had brought a swift end to his life.

We cannot exercise any veto over the will of God without endangering our walk with Him. If we engage in selective disobedience in the smaller areas, we can be sure it will spill over into the larger areas. We have to be merciless toward sin and self-indulgence if we really mean business with God. That's why we have to deal with our sin, but we're not on our own in this. We bring it to the foot of the cross, confess it, and ask for the Lord's help in removing anything in our lives that is contrary to His will.

PRAYER: Dear Heavenly Father, I ask for your strength in overcoming the little areas of disobedience I find difficult to let go of. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I being true to God or am I being selectively disobedient?