

In Step with the Spirit

If we live by the Spirit, then let us keep in step with the Spirit

Opening Prayer & Introduction:

This week we took a break from the Hebrews study to look at the life and kingship of King Saul. Saul stands out as an example in scripture of someone who began with the anointing of God, but whose partial obedience and disobedience cost him everything. After several initial victories, the discovery of his gifts, and living with the favor and anointing of God, Saul drifted by taking reasoned steps, instead of steps informed by God. Saul's story reminds us how important it is to stay in the footprints of God.

Ice Breaker Questions: Share about a time when you felt clearly led by God in a decision. What was that experience like, and how did you know it was God's leading? Similarly, has there ever been a time when you took a step without God, and regretted it?

Key Scriptures:

- Romans 8:14 - "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."
- Galatians 5:25 - "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

Discussion Questions:

1. Pastor Joel described walking in the Spirit as "putting your feet in the footprints of Jesus." What does this picture mean to you practically?
2. What's the difference between saying "I'm going to do something great for God" versus "God can do something great through me"? Why does this distinction matter?
3. Saul had everything going for him—appearance, family influence, God's anointing, and early victories. What dangers come with early success in ministry or Christian life?
4. Saul acted first and sought God last. When are you most tempted to make decisions without first seeking God's direction?
5. After losing God's favor, Saul continued in leadership but without the anointing. What are the signs that someone is leading in their own strength rather than in God's power?
6. Read 1 Samuel 15:22-23. Samuel tells Saul that "rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." Why does God take disobedience so seriously?

7. Saul surrounded himself with spiritually bankrupt counsel (Ahijah from Eli's cursed line). How important is it to have spiritually healthy people speaking into our lives? Who are those people for you?

Practical Applications: Choose one of the following to practice this week:

1. Option 1: The "Seek First" Practice: Before making any significant decision this week (even small ones), pause and pray first. Ask God, "What do You want me to do?" Wait for peace before proceeding.
2. Option 2: The Obedience Audit: Identify one area where you know God has been prompting you to obey but you've been hesitant. Take one concrete step of obedience this week.
3. Option 3: The Waiting Exercise: If you're facing a situation where you're tempted to rush ahead, commit to a specific period of waiting (3 days, 1 week, etc.) to seek God's direction through prayer, Scripture, and godly counsel.
4. Option 4: The Accountability Connection: Reach out to a spiritually mature friend or mentor and ask them to help you discern God's leading in a current situation.

Key Takeaways:

- It's not the first step that defines success—it's keeping in step for the long haul that matters most.
- A little success can be dangerous if it leads us to think we can operate independently of God's Spirit.
- Seek God first, then act in faith. Don't step off a cliff and cry out to God on the way down.
- Wait on the Lord's timing. Impatience and fear lead to rash decisions that can cost us dearly.
- There is no substitute for the genuine anointing of God. Position without anointing is empty leadership.
- God doesn't have to use any of us. If we won't keep in step with His Spirit, He will find someone who will.

Closing Prayer: Pray that the Lord would remind you often of the importance of keeping in step with His Spirit. As we look to the example of Saul and others in the Bible, pray that God would prevent you from walking in your own footprints.