

I. Intro

A. Series Focus: **Matt. 16:24**

²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” (Matt. 16:24)

B. Pray

C. Main Verse Overview

1. Biblical discipleship is predicated on self-denial
 - a. Placing Kingdom interests above all others.
2. Discipleship is predicated on taking up your own cross
 - a. Renouncing all self-centered ambitions, desires, dreams and gratifications in exchange for self-focus for passionate focus on the Person of Jesus Christ.

*This type of sacrifice (annihilating self-focus in exchange for Christ focus) results in incredible freedom and victory.

D. **Cultural Dilemma**: *How do you exchange Self-Focus for Christ Focus in a self-centered world?*

II. Selfie Generation

A. Selfie Explanation

B. Saul looked the part

1. The Requested One
2. He was tall and handsome (**1 Sam. 9:1-2**)

¹Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power.

*²And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people. (**1 Sam. 9:1-2**)*

III. Saul had a selfie problem

A. Did all that was within His strength to put a cosmetic fix on a deep-rooted problem (**1 Sam. 13**)

1. Saul mounts for war against the Philistines
2. 3,000 men of war (**1 Sam. 13:2**)
 - a. 2,000 with Saul
 - b. 1,000 with Johnathan
3. Philistines came against Israel (**1 Sam. 13:5**)
 - a. 3,000 chariots
 - b. 6,000 horsemen
 - c. Innumerable foot soldiers (as the sand of the sea)
4. Israelites hid in caves, holes, behind rocks, etc. Some left and crossed the Jordan toward Gilead (**1 Sam. 13:6-7**)

B. Wanted to make a sacrifice to the Lord, but Samuel had never showed up. (**1 Sam. 13:8**)

1. Motives for the sacrifice were all wrong
 - a. You can do the right thing (for the wrong reason) and it's all bad.
2. Wrong focus
 - a. You can do the right thing (but rely on the wrong resources to do it) and it's all bad.

C. Selfie Mode: Did his own sacrifice (**1 Sam. 13:9**)

1. Saul was worried about how this looked for his reputation.
2. Saul was worried about his Kingdom, not the Kingdom of God.

D. As soon as Saul got done doing Him... (**1 Sam 13:10**)

1. Ever been in the middle of doing what you know is wrong, and the Pastor show up?
2. Saul was actually set out to do good, but the spiritual leader was too slow. So he just went on ahead.
 - a. Ever had a great idea (a God idea), but the spiritual leadership that God placed in your life was a little too slow to bless it and provide wisdom (so you went on and did it anyway)?

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- b. Good things done out of order.
 - E. Even a good work is polluted when it's out of order. It's all bad when our motive is self-preservation and self-promotion (**1 Sam. 13:11-12**)
 - 1. When we pray and ask. Ask and pray (but we ask amiss)
 - 2. When we preach and teach, with the intention to please people.
 - 3. When we sing songs of worship, but the object of our adoration is actually ourself...
 - F. Everything God does in you, requires His way, His will, His timing (**1 Sam. 13:13**)
 - 1. You know what we can do to help God out?
 - a. Surrender!
 - b. Obey!
 - G. Water cut off (**1 Sam. 13:14**)
 - 1. The Lord is seeking a man after His own heart.
 - a. Passionate about the things that the Father is passionate about.
 - b. Aggressive in desire to make much of God.

*Self-Centered Barometer: How do you respond when your sin is exposed?

IV. Do You Cover Up When Your Sin is Exposed (Saul)?

A. Saul's Sin (**1 Sam. 15**)

- 1. Instructions: Kill all the Amalekites (**1 Sam. 15:2-3**)
 - a. Men, women, children, donkeys, oxen, camels, donkeys
- 2. Actions: Utterly destroyed all that was worthless, but they spared the best. (**1 Sam. 15:7-9**)
 - a. King of Amalek (Agag).
 - b. Sheep, oxen

B. Saul's Rebuke by Samuel (**1 Sam. 15:22-23**)

*"Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. ²³For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king." (**1 Sam. 15:22-23**)*

C. Saul's Response

²⁴ Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. ²⁵ Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD." (1 Sam. 15:24-25)

1. I did it for the fear of man, so look past my sin and return with me to the people (1 Sam. 15:24-25)

²⁶ But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."

²⁷ And as Samuel turned around to go away, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. ²⁸ So Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you. ²⁹ And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He is not a man, that He should relent."

³⁰ Then he said, "I have sinned; yet honor me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD your God." (1 Sam. 15:26-30)

2. Just honor me before the elders of my people (1 Sam. 15:30)
 - a. Saul was more worried about His position before man, than his position with God.
 - b. More worried about his image than honoring of the Most High God.
 - c. More worried about his personal reputation than in raising up the Name that is above every other name.
3. Repented: But repented with himself in mind. Focus was his own selfish desires.

V. Do you Repent When Your Sin is Exposed (David)

A. David's Sin

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1. Spring Time: The time when Kings go out to battle (**1 Sam. 11:1**)
 2. David's focus was a completely off (self-gratification).
 - a. Surveying other men's stuff from His lofty rooftop.
 3. Committed adultery with Bathsheba.
 4. Conspired her husband's murder.
 5. Married with a baby on the way

B. David's Rebuke by Nathan (**1 Sam. 12:1-12**)

1. Parable (**1 Sam. 12:1-6**)
2. You are that man (**12:7**)
3. The sword shall never depart from your house.
 - a. I will bring adversity from your own house.

C. David's Response: Self-Centered Focus ➡ God-thirsty Focus

1. Acknowledged Sin:
 - a. **1 Sam. 12:13**: *"So David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.'"*
 - b. **Ps. 51:3**: *"For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me."*
2. Plea for an exchanged heart.
 - a. **Ps. 51:10a**: *"Create in me a clean heart, O God"*
3. Genuine Concern (not for tangible Positions, but) for the tangible Presence of God
 - a. **Ps. 51:11**: *"Do not cast me away from Your Presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me"*