



# Kings of Israel

Saul – 1 Samuel 15:1 – 35

## Sermon Discussion Guide

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### STUDY NOTES

**Kenites (15:6).** Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, was of the Kenite tribe. Once, he gave Moses administrative advice (Ex. 18:20 – 23). He also traveled with Moses to help as a guide (Numbers 10:29 – 32).

**They were unwilling to destroy completely (15:9).** God had commanded the destruction of everything, but Saul seems to be saving the best for himself. He was acting like worshippers who promised God the best sacrifices, but brought blemished animals instead, keeping the best for themselves. This was blatant disobedience. God was grieved, because of the disobedience and lack of respect.

**The soldiers (15:15).** Without much subtlety, Saul passed the blame. He blamed his soldiers and took no responsibility himself. Saul was like Adam when he said, "The woman you put here" and "The serpent deceived me" (Genesis 3:12 – 13).

Perhaps one of the cleverest schemes of the Enemy is to convince us that doing most of God's will is enough, and that by doing just enough we will receive God's blessings. Some people call it compromise in order to make it sound better as though we can make bargains with God. However, compromise with God is nothing less than disobedience.

King Saul fell into such a temptation. Instructed by God to fight and to destroy the Amalekites, he succumbed to the wishes of his fighting men and did only part of God's command.

1. Why do you think we often compromise and settle for doing only part of God's will?
  

**Read 1 Samuel 15:1-35.**

2. What message from the Lord does Samuel deliver to Saul, and why (1 Samuel 15:1-3)?
  
3. How does Saul begin to obey God but later change his mind (1 Samuel 15:4-9)?
  
4. Compromise is defined as making a deal between different parties where each party gives up part of their demand. Do you see anything in this section of scripture that indicates that Saul had negotiated with God to bring back the animals to make a sacrifice – or to bring back Agag? Do you believe that in his mind Saul felt that he had followed God's directions?
  
5. What factors probably contributed to Saul's unwillingness to carry out God's explicit command (1 Samuel 15:12, 24, 30)?
  
6. Why is it so difficult for Saul to realize the seriousness of his sin against God (1 Samuel 15:20-21)?

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### **Compromise and Obedience**

**(15:22).** Samuel drew a distinction between an attitude of worship and the outward appearance of worship. Saul was banking on rote obedience (when it was also convenient), rather than the genuine obedience with wholehearted respect for God's will.

### **Arrogance ... Idolatry**

**(15:23).** Saul put his own interests before God's kingdom. In that way he rejected God's leadership. In return, God rejected Saul's leadership.

### **Afraid of the people (15:24).**

First, Saul lied to Samuel (v. 13). Then he tried to lay the blame on his soldiers (v. 15). In this weak confession, he blamed the people. In each case Saul refused to take responsibility.

### **The Lord was grieved (15:35).**

This was not the first time God was grieved. Before Noah and the flood, God was grieved that he had even created humankind (Genesis 6:6 – 8).

7. How does Samuel describe Saul's disobedience (1 Samuel 15:22-23)?

8. How does this description differ from the way we view our sin when we do not do all of God's will?

9. What "burnt offerings" and "sacrifices" do we sometimes offer to compensate for our lack of obedience?

10. Although Saul finally confesses his sin in 1 Samuel 15:24, what do his actions suggest about the sincerity of his repentance (1 Samuel 15:24-30)?

What continues to be his primary concern?

11. What do we observe in this account about the nature and character of God (1 Samuel 15:10-11, 22-23, 28, 35)?

12. What difference should these things make in our conduct or attitude when we are tempted to compromise and carry out only part of God's command?

13. Identify one area where your heart has been content to do almost all of God's will.

14. If we were only concerned with seeking God's glory and not our own, how would our lives be different?