

What You Need to Know About SAUL:

“The King with the Unsurrendered Will and the Unrepentant Heart”

Study Number Four – 1 Samuel 13:1-14

The nation Israel wanted to be like everybody else. And that meant God get lost, we're going to have a king. And that hurt Samuel pretty badly because he was the judge and the prophet at that time. And yet the Lord says, “They haven't rejected you Samuel. They've rejected Me. Let them have a king.”

And so Saul, from the tribe of Benjamin, is chosen to be the king. And we saw Saul and Samuel come together in the first episode. We saw him actually anointed as king in the second. And in our last study we saw the battle with the Ammonites.

After the battle it was incredible. It's like we wish that a guy's life would end, right? Ever felt like that? He's on a roll. He's become king, he wins a battle and he attributes it all to the Lord. And that's really neat.

The older we get the more difficult it is to give the glory to God and attribute praise and honor to Him. But Saul in this first battle does that.

So Samuel says, “Let’s take everybody up and have another anointing service for old King Saul.” And they do that. And he gives a speech and his speech of a guy dying out is probably one of the greatest speeches that could be given. It has a spirit of dignity, fidelity—Saul couldn’t ask for anybody to be more faithful to him in supporting him because he’s stepping down.

And he was a man who had purity and piety toward God. Just a giant of a man. No resentment, no hurt over what’s taken place, but just a desire to be concerned about the welfare and the prosperity of the country.

And this is the last statement that he makes:

“Only fear the Lord and serve Him in truth with all your heart. But if you shall still do wickedly, you shall be consumed, both you and your king.” (ref. 1 Samuel 12:24, 25)

And when he finishes that speech to the whole nation after Saul has become king, God punctuates it with an object lesson. It’s really neat because God allows thunder in the heavens and the rains to come down.

God is saying, “Look, this is serious business and what I’m saying I really mean.”

Now we said that was the high point. We’re going to see Saul actually begin to fold. In our last passage we got a little indication of it. Because when he told all the people to come and fight he said, “Come and join Saul and Samuel.”

We think that's kind of petty to say who puts his name first. Well, it isn't. The top dog always has to have his name listed first and Saul's already done that. He's put Samuel in second position already.

He's going to put Samuel out to pasture in just a few minutes. He's not even going to bother with him anymore. He's just going to run right over the top of him because he's not a man who could learn how to live with authority.

Saul is a man whose nature begins to really show up. And what's in the heart eventually begins to come out and we begin to really see it.

A lot of times stress in our life is there by God to reveal how crummy we really are. If we want to put our money where our mouth is, God allows that to just show us really how sinful we are.

A lot of times we get the idea we're such good people and such self-righteous individuals. And then God puts a little stress on us to help us see differently. It's part of the humbling process that takes place in our lives and we don't like that.

Saul is in rebellion against God and his nature starts to show. Let's pick up at verse 1.

v. 1 Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty-two years.

“Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty-two years.”

Now usually what they'd do in the Old Testament books is they'd give us the age that he started reigning and then the period of time that he reigned so that we can figure out how old he was when he died. We're going to see him die on the battlefield forty-two years from now in our study. He'll be seventy-two years old. And that's the count of his life summarized in that capsule study.

v. 2 Saul chose three thousand men from Israel; two thousand were with him at Micmash and in the hill country of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan at Gibeah in Benjamin. The rest of the men he sent back to their homes.

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Now there's some geographical things here that could throw us off. This is the heart of the land that's been talked about right here and these are retaining forces. When they're not on an all-out military alert they let part of the crew go to the house. And here Saul retains three thousand for himself and his son Jonathan has the other thousand. And the rest of the forces go home.

Really when it comes to fighting battles, we need to realize that numerics are very, very inconsequential to God. Whether it's three hundred or three thousand, or three hundred thousand, that is totally incidental. It's whether or not God is in this thing as to whether or not we're going to win or we're going to lose. And Saul is not ever going to learn that lesson sorry to say.

Now with this group of people:

v. 3 Jonathan attacked the Philistine outpost at Geba, and the Philistines heard about it. Then Saul had the trumpet blown throughout the land and said, “Let the Hebrews hear!”

“Jonathan attacked the Philistine outpost at Geba, and the Philistines heard about it. Then Saul had the trumpet blown throughout the land and said, ‘Let the Hebrews hear!’”

Now the Philistines were their worst enemies and of course they're always thorns in their sides. And they had the ability to make iron weapons. So they had the swords and the spears and all the heavy artillery and so they were a dangerous enemy. And it was a very difficult thing for Israel to bring them into subject to them and to run them out of the land.

Now Jonathan, he's the neatest guy. We'll see him a few more times here in this study.

Jonathan is not going to sit around and wait for things to happen. He's young and he's going to get after it. And Saul was going to sit around under his fig tree and watch all it happen, but Jonathan takes off with a thousand and gets the program going.

And now watch Saul, this is what is so creepy about the guy.

v. 4 So all Israel heard the news: “Saul has attacked the Philistine outpost, and now Israel has become a stench to the Philistines.” And the people were summoned to join Saul at Gilgal.

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He who does not toot his own horn, said horn goes untooted.

Saul blows a blast and he says, “Listen folks, I have attacked the Philistine outpost.” No credit to Jonathan, his own son.

What is amazing is that in the last study it was Saul and then Samuel. In this study he is not willing to let one of his own men, his own son, take credit for a victory.

He's threatened. Ever been around people like that? They're just threatened by everybody that comes around. They've got to be in the big middle of everything.

What is wrong with this statement and what is different from this statement than what we saw in our last study? Remember who got the credit when we had the great celebration? What did Saul say? “The Lord has rescued Israel from the Ammonites.”

So now Too Tall Saul has gotten in the big middle of things. He now is taking credit for what the Lord has done.

Now granted, he's a capable military leader. But a guy who's proud and self-centered, basically is always concerned about how he's going to look around people. And so they are self-conscious. And Saul is more concerned about that. He's got to be the center of attention.

A. W. Tozer wrote a book and in it he says this:

Let God alone [In other words, let Him work—don't stop Him] Don't prevent him from kindling your heart from blessing you and leading you out of a common state into that of special longing after Him.

You don't have to coax God. He's not like a reluctant father waiting for his child to beg. The blessings are His to give and He waits for us to let him work. This is a very hard thing for Americans to do because we're naturally born do-it-yourself artists. We don't just hire a plumber and let him do his work, we stand by and tell him how it should be done.

It is amazing really that an America ever lies down and allows the doctor to perform the operation. We always want to

get our finger in.

And that is the way most Christians behave. When we think God does the really hard jobs, but that He is glad to have us along to help out and handle all the little stuff.

Look at Him. Let Him work. Let Him alone. Get your hands down to your side and stop trying to tell God where to cut. Stop trying to tell God what to give you. He is the physician. You are the patient. Let God work. Let Him alone. It is God that works in you. Let Him work and your spiritual life will begin to blaze like the rising of the sun.

(source unknown)

We don't know what happened between our last study and this one. It's an enigma that a guy in one minute can be giving God the glory and the next he's got such a big head that he has to even take credit from one of his own sons for what's happened. Maybe he's sliding into poles or something. It's pretty bad.

v. 5 The Philistines assembled to fight Israel, with three thousand chariots, six thousand charioteers, and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Micmash, east of Beth Aven.

“The Philistines assembled to fight Israel, with three thousand chariots, six thousand charioteers, and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore.”

Don't mess around with a hornet's nest full of Philistines.

They will respond. That's exactly what's happened here.

"They went up and camped at Micmash, east of Beth Aven."

They have the forces and they're ready.

v. 6 When the men of Israel saw that their situation was critical and that their army was hard pressed, they hid in caves and thickets, among the rocks, and in pits and cisterns.

"When the men of Israel saw that their situation was critical and that their army was hard pressed, they hid in caves and thickets, among the rocks, and in pits and cisterns."

What's wrong with that? Now that's the first time in the history of the nation that they scattered like termites in the woodwork. They got scared.

The situation was critical. They don't have any godly leadership. And so everybody's scared.

We can see why Saul is wrong and why this situation is not correct, as far as what it ought to have been if they'd have had a godly leader.

They saw it. They were scared.

Proverbs 29:25

The fear of man brings a snare,
but whoso puts his trust in the Lord shall be safe.

2 Timothy 1:7

God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Saul fails here to lean on the Lord. If he were leaning on the Lord, he could encourage his followers, they could join in prayer and the battle would be the Lord's. And we would wail on the tail of some Philistines because God would give the victory.

That's the difference between David and Saul by the way. Here in just a little bit, at the end of the study, it's going to say, "We want a man after God's own heart. Sorry Saul, goodbye." And when that is said, basically David was a man whenever he went into battle, went in available for God to use him. The battle really belonged to the Lord.

We'll find something true in our life and that is every time we get our eyes on the circumstances that are around us, we'll get scared and we'll make a wrong decision. It's an invaluable principle.

Peter did great when he left the boat on that first water skiing experience—walking out to the Lord. Until he got his eyes on the waves and down he went. And his prayer was, "Lord, save me." That's the shortest prayer that we could ever pray. If we

left out one word we're done. "Lord, save me."

And he got his eyes back on the Lord and he came back up out of it.

Isaiah 26:3

Thou will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.

In the Bible there are numerous illustrations of this. Remember Elisha? When the servant went out in the morning to get the water and the host of the Syrians were all around the camp, when he came back in Elisha says, "They who are with us are more than those who are with them."

And of course, all he can see is the two in the room. Elisha says, "Open his eyes so he can see."

Jehoshaphat is a godly man. In 2 Chronicles 20 he was alarmed because he was surrounded by the enemy. But immediately he calls the people to fast and to pray.

After they have this period of national mourning, fasting and praying, God gives them an answer. And the Lord says, "You will not need to fight. Go down to the valley and watch what I'm going to do. Put the choir out in front and let them sing and we're going to give you the victory."

Jehoshaphat answered it and he said, "Lord, we don't know

what to do, but our eyes are upon You. You're leading in this situation. You're handling it. We're willing to trust You."

When a man fails to pray, he limits himself to his own resources. Saul's got his men in the rocks.

And when they looked at the Philistines, they made a wrong verdict. And they should have looked to the Lord who was ready to deliver His own.

Isaiah 59:19

When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against them.

"We don't know what to do."

Moses had the same problem. Delivered miraculously out of the land of Egypt, they came up to the shores of the Red Sea and the Egyptians got mad and decided to come at them. And they're between a rock and a hard place. Moses just says to the people, "Set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord."

Many times in our lives we fail to be courageous simply because we've got our eyes off the Lord.

Romans 8:37

Nay in all these things we're more than conquerors...

Romans 8:31

If God be for us, who can be against us

2 Chronicles 32:7, 8

... Be strong and courageous and do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. With him is only the arm of the flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles....

Philippians 4:13

I am ready for anything through the strength through the one who indwells me.

If we've had our hide nailed to the wall and we're miserable and we're down today, it wasn't the fault of the source of power. We didn't draw on the grace that was available for us.

“His strength is made perfect in your weakness.” (ref. 2 Corinthians 12:9) And we could sit here in victory if we'd been broken enough to reach out and receive the grace that was available to bring that victory.

Remember the principle from our last study?

With the departure of virtue goes valor.

With the departure of Christian principle goes likewise conviction, character and courage. We're witnesses of it in the United States of America today. And that's exactly what's happening here.

We have our leader, who has literally never sealed a commitment with God, leading God's people.

v. 7 Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul remained at Gilgal, and all the troops with him were quaking with fear.

“Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul remained at Gilgal, and all the troops with him were quaking with fear.”

Some of them got so scared they headed across the river. They get over in the land of Gilead where the big boys are, where they'll be safe, where everything will be alright. And everybody's that there with Saul they just, they're literally having a quake right there. They're “quaking with fear.”

The one thing we're going to learn in the rest of these stories of the life of King Saul is we'll never see him ever humbly depending upon God. We never find him coming and calling upon God and saying, “God please, intervene in this situation. Our eyes are upon You. We're waiting for You to work.”

Creath Davis wrote a book called *Beyond This God Cannot Go*

and he talks about the problem of fear in our lives. He says:

(Beyond This God Cannot Go by Creath Davis)

A paralyzing fear of the unknown can squelch life in us. It blocks the full expression of our potential. As one layman put it on a retreat, “It’s like living with your brakes on. You’re not going very far and you’re burning yourself out in the process.”

(source unknown)

Why all the change? He failed to call upon the Lord in the hour of his need.

Napoleon Hill wrote a book called *Think and Grow Rich*. It has a lot of overtones to spiritual principles. But he says there are six basic fears that all of us have:

(Think and Grow Rich by Napoleon Hill)

... a state of worry through indecision. Relieve yourself [of this fear] the fear of death by reaching a decision to accept death as an inescapable event. Whip the fear of poverty by reaching a decision to get along with whatever wealth you can accumulate without worry. Put your foot upon the neck of the fear of criticism by reaching a decision to accept it, not as a handicap, but as a great blessing which carries with it wisdom, self-control and understanding not known to youth. Acquit yourself of the fear of ill health by the decision to forget the symptoms. Master the fear of the loss of love by reaching a decision to get along with love if that is necessary—without

love if that is necessary. Kill the habit of worry in all of its forms by reaching a general blanket decision that nothing which life has to offer is worth the price of worry. With this decision will come poise, peace of mind, calmness of thought which will bring happiness.

(source unknown)

But he needs the scripture.

Jesus says:

Matthew 11:28, 29

Come unto Me all ye who are weary and heavy laden and I'll give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me for I am meek and lowly of heart, and you'll find rest for your souls.

Philippians 4:6, 7

Don't worry about anything, instead pray about everything, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God will garrison your heart about.

Somebody said:

Worry is accepting the responsibility that God never intended for you to have.

(source unknown)

Paul Adolph says in his book *Release from Tension*:

(Release from Tension by Paul Adolph)

The real remedy is replacing our fear of man and circumstances with the fear of God, which is reverential trust in Him, with hatred of evil. When true trust in God enters, fear of man departs. Trust in God and fear of man cannot abide together. David the psalmist learned the conquest of fear as he roamed the land of Palestine pursued by an insane ruler whose mental aberrations he had formerly appeased with his harm. [Speaking of Saul] Not even music could slow up the alarm system in either Saul or David anymore. The fears had to be dealt with. [And listen, David bursts into song] “What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.” (Psalm 56:3) (source unknown)

Why are these guys scared? They're looking at the Philistines instead of the Lord. They're the Lord's people.

Now look at verse 8. Here we go. We're going to get into trouble now.

v. 8 He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and Saul's men began to scatter.

“He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and Saul's men began to scatter.”

Remember in the first study, just after he anointed him king,

he said to him, “Now when you go down to Gilgal I want you to wait a week and when I get there we’ll offer the sacrifices, get you in fellowship with the Lord and then we’ll send you out in the field of battle against the Philistines.”

“Those are the instructions. This is your job description Saul. This is your first test of obedience. Can you submit and live under divine authority? Can you be comfortable with this?”

Well, what do we do when the circumstances start to press and we don’t like authority anyway? Well, there are two things that come to mind here.

1. “He waited seven days” and
2. his army was beginning “to scatter” through fear and discouragement as he hadn’t called upon the Lord.

“You wait until I come and tell you what you are to do.”

It says “He waited seven days.” He waited seven days wanting to jump in on the first day. He’s one of these kinds of guys that wants to take over.

“I mean this business of just being king is for the birds. I’ve been a prophet now all I need to do is be a priest. And I can be a prophet, priest and king. I can pitch and catch and manage and play first base and do the whole thing, you know. I’m a one-man band. I want to be a priest! I want to do it.”

Now there's something here that we need to remember and that is if we're running our life, we're probably running way ahead of the Lord. And we are heading toward a slide of frustration, failure, and hurt, simply because we're running it. We're out of the will of God. And oh that hurts.

One of the very first basic essential lessons in the relationship with God is to learn to live comfortably under His authority. Obedience is the number one thing! Everything else takes second place to that.

Do we have an obedient heart? Do we desire to be obedient?

Some of us tend to compromise with the Lord on that. We've got little areas of the Bible that we're obedient to and then there are other areas where we aren't obedient. But that's not holiness. Holiness is a total abandonment to be obedient in every area as the word speaks to us.

v. 9 So he said, “Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings.” And Saul offered up the burnt offering.

“So he said, ‘Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings.’ And Saul offered up the burnt offering.”

Notice he didn't do anything with the fellowship offering.

We talked about being in RELATIONSHIP and out of FELLOWSHIP. And they had the following offerings. He

doesn't do that. He just does the burnt offering and he forgets the other.

Now there's something terribly tragic here. This is a man trying to come to God on his terms. And now if we can do that, we can neglect a relationship to Jesus Christ, we can do it on our own terms by working our way to glory by all the sacrifices we make and all the things we do, we ain't going to make it.

We should never come to God on our terms. And here is a violation, a blatant violation to the Levitical Law in what's being done. But he's in religious activity. He's at the tabernacle and he's offering a burnt offering. He's just walking like a man of the cloth through the thing and doing his thing. He looks good on the outside.

Principle—big one:

When we get our eyes off the Lord and on our circumstances, we will always have an uncontrollable desire to act in some way.

When we get our eyes off the Lord and on our circumstances, we will always have an uncontrollable desire to act in some way and it'll be wrong, because we're looking at our circumstances instead of the Lord.

Uzziah also presumed he could perform the priestly duty and God judged him severely. He became a leper.

Now notice there are three good reasons that Saul's got here:

1. the people were scattered,
2. the Philistines were coming against them, and
3. Samuel was a little late. It was still the seventh day.

So now he can blame everything on old Samuel for not checking his watch and getting there just exactly when he felt like he ought to be there.

Ever noticed how people are like that? Just the first opportunity to jump into it and take a little authority. Boy, do they ever get after it.

Diotrephes loved to have the preeminence in 3 John.

Here he's playing every situation. His PRIDE, his PASSION and his POWER all come to play here.

F. B. Meyer said it so well:

When you are most eager to act, is when you will make the most pitiful mistakes in your life. Satan rushes men, God leads them. Never act in panic, nor allow man to dictate to you. Calm yourself. Force yourself into the closet.
(source unknown)

Stress will always reveal what's in the heart. Isn't that amazing?

As soon as we get under just a little bit of stress and we face running uphill into the wind, it's always going to show us what's in our heart.

Always wait to render a verdict on whether a person has come to know Christ until after they've had one good wail on the tail. And if they're still on their feet running, after they got hit on the blind side with the first test the Lord brought in their lives to see whether they're going to be submissive and obedient or not, then we're able to say, if that guy's still praising the Lord and rejoicing in God's goodness and His faithfulness, "They know the Lord. They have come to a relationship with Jesus Christ."

Want another principle?

When our circumstances say GO, learn to wait on God.

Because if it is God leading in those circumstances, He will make the chips fall into place and we'll know it. Restraint.

Elijah's a classic illustration. God said, "Go up there and tell Ahab and Jezebel it's coming. It isn't going to rain for three and a half years." Boy it did. And then God said, as soon as he walked out of the palace, "Go down to the Brook Cherith. You can drink from the brook and after you drink from the brook the ravens are going to fly in with the food for you every day.

That's your own airmail food service."

And every day he got food. But what happens? God starts answering his prayer and the brook dries up. What are we doing when we're sitting by a drying brook? Circumstances say, "Go man and look for other brooks!" Especially when it's a muddy little puddle and we're in need of water.

But he waits until the word of the Lord comes to him saying, "Arise and go to Zarephath."

If he had looked at his circumstances, nobody would have sat by a drying brook. They get up and get on with it. He would have been out of the will of God.

And so what we're saying is, WAIT.

Psalm 27:14

Wait on the Lord, be of courage,
He'll strengthen your heart,
Wait I say on the Lord.

v. 10 Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him.

"Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him."

See, he failed the test. Just at the end of his disobedience here

comes Samuel the priest to do exactly what he said he was going to do. And he goes out with a big grin on his face to greet Samuel as though nothing had happened.

“I took care of it for you Sam. You’re a little late. I knew you needed me. I just went in there and did it for you. I know you don’t mind. Now give us a little blessing and we’ll get after the Philistines.”

He’s totally oblivious to what he’s done. In one of our future studies, he does the same thing. He’s oblivious to the disobedience in his heart.

Samuel isn’t.

v. 11 “What have you done?” asked Samuel. Saul replied, “When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Micmash,

“What have you done?” asked Samuel. Saul replied, ‘When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Micmash,’

Three big things:

1. “I saw that the men were leaving,”
2. “you did not come,” and then

3. “the Philistines were assembling.”

There's no blame on him. Isn't that comfortable?

“Well, I saw them scattering and I looked at the Philistines and you weren't here so I have every right to act.”

Verse 12—Look at the “I's.”

v. 12 I thought, ‘Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the Lord's favor.’ So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering.”

“I thought, “Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the Lord's favor.””

He doesn't need the Lord to do the battle. He only needs the Lord's favor now.

“So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering.””

That's human nature. We all have blind spots in our lives that are an irritation to everybody else, but we don't want to change them, because we're not teachable.

Like one guy said:

“It's awfully tough for my wife to live with somebody who's

perfect.”

That's the way it is. That perfect guy can't ever make a mistake.

Well, whenever we look at the circumstances, we'll always make a wrong decision. And here he does. He's got all kinds of excuses, all kinds of expediency about it. God could have given a victory like He did for Gideon with 300.

“So what if the soldiers are going to the house? Those guys who go to the house are the losers. They're not going to be ones who are going to get to see the Lord give the victory!”

That should have been his attitude.

“I'm waiting till Samuel gets here. And as soon as he does, we're going to go for it!”

But we're living in the same kind of day. We are plagued with Fletcher's situation ethics—When we're in a given situation it's alright to be disobedient if the circumstances demand it.

Whether it's immoral or moral. Whether it's right or wrong.

Situation ethics. It's right to do wrong in order that right might be accomplished. The end justifies the means.

Principle:

It is never right to do wrong to accomplish that which we think is good.

This is sad. When we act with the limitations of our own wisdom and circumstances we will always act foolishly. If we're just using our wisdom and we're trying to work our way through the maze, we are going to act foolishly.

Psalm 14:1

The fool has said in his heart,
there is no God.

v. 13 “You have acted foolishly,” Samuel said. “You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time.

“You have acted foolishly,’ Samuel said. ‘You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time.”

What does that verse tell us? The supreme test is obedience.

If we have an obedient heart we are at peace knowing that if the Lord came at this minute, we're ready to meet Him face-to-face.

Principle:

It is never a right time to take matters into our own hands, as far as God is concerned.

If there is delay, God has some reason for that so hang on and wait. When Sarah couldn't wait any longer, she took matters into her own hands and sent Hagar in. Ishmael was born and they suffered dire and serious consequences.

When God is delaying it doesn't necessarily mean denial. He's got something bigger and better things in mind. Be willing to wait until He brings it to fruition.

v. 14 But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the Lord's command.”

What a sad statement.

“But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the Lord's command.”

He's looking for a man after God's own heart. He's a ruler who is going to be ruled by the Lord.

It's always a mistake to desert principles under pressure.

Mark 8:36

What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

A person who is a man after God's own heart is the example of a person who lives comfortably with divine authority. He's willing to live under the Lord's authority in his life.

The stage is now set for all of his future failures. He's doubly vulnerable and things are going to really happen.

There's one more principle spelled out:

Our dependence or our lack of dependence will always be revealed in the times of delay.

Ever thought of that?

These were perfect circumstances designed to reveal his disobedient heart and also his lack of dependence upon the Lord. Which we've already assumed simply because he was not willing to wait until it happened. And he certainly did not exercise any leadership with the men.

B.J. Thomas in *Home Where I Belong* says:

(Home Where I Belong by B.J. Thomas)

I can't be perfect and it's futile to try to be. What I do try to do is be surrendered. It's not easy and I fail often—too often. But I know where to go for healing and a new slate. I

don't have to be shot down to ground level every time I sin. I can get things right with God, ask his forgiveness and strength, and pick up where I left off. The dying to self and the growing are what it's all about. It's not the trying, it's the dying.

p. 142

And that's a classic statement by a guy who's learning it.

Dying to ourselves that we might live comfortably under divine authority.

Wee got several lessons out of this passage.

Lesson #1: Saul has begun to take the credit for what the Lord has done.

Lesson #2: Fear and discouragement are the result of getting our eyes on our circumstances.

Lesson #3: Saul is being tested with regard to divine authority and the obedient heart.

One of the first lessons we learn in God's school, after we become a Christian and get serious about spiritual things, is we're going to be tested in that very area. It's the area of divine authority and the obedient heart.

Lesson #4: Expediency never takes priority over obedience.

Lesson #5: Self-justification often accompanies the disobedient heart.

Lesson #6: You will always make a mistake when you take matters into your own hands.

Lesson #7: Dependence or lack of it will be revealed in times of stress.

Galatians 6:7

... Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Lesson #8: When you act with the limitations of your own wisdom and circumstances you will always act foolishly.

Lesson #9: The Lord wants to do His thing in the midst of impossible circumstances.

So if we're bringing some impossible circumstances let the Master take over.

1 Peter 5:7

Casting all your care upon Him for he cares for you.

Just throw it in His lap. Let Him have it. Don't pick it up.

Lesson #10: When you get your eyes off the Lord and on your circumstances, you'll have an uncontrollable urge to act in

some way.

Ecclesiastes 3:11

He makes all things beautiful in His time.

Ever wonder about that little phrase?

The Lord is seeking for a man who is a man after His own heart.

Would we like to be that kind of person? Would we really like to be a man or a woman after God's own heart? If we want to be that kind of person, three things have got to be true of us:

1. We have to be **CONTENT** to be a servant.

We're going to give a whole lot more than we receive. We are going to take the towel and wash some feet. We're going to be a servant.

2. We're going to be **SUBMISSIVE** to divine authority.

3. We're going to be **SUPPORTIVE** of the divine plan, even though we don't understand it.

We don't have any place for bitterness or questions. We're supportive of it even though we don't understand it.

God's working all things together for good. We have that

confidence so we can sing a song even in the midst of all the stress and the circumstances that surround us.

Father, we come to You and thank You for this passage that is loaded with so much trouble. We realize that Saul did so well and now he did so poorly. These chapters set one against the other frightens us. Your word says, “Watch yourself, take heed lest you fall.” We realize that Elijah in one moment was victorious on Mount Carmel and the next minute he was under a juniper tree asking to die in the midst of the wilderness. We’re the most vulnerable when we’re the most victorious. And we pray that You’d enable us to relate to these things and ask You with David, “Search me, oh God and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in me, and then lead me in the way everlasting.” Lord, there are many lives that are fouled up and hurt, some people that are ready to throw in the towel. We would pray that they’d lift their eyes heavenward. Thank You that Your grace is sufficient, that they can be on victory ground simply by yielding to what You’ve allowed to come into their lives to accomplish some purpose that they don’t know about. And Lord if there’s someone who has never come to know Jesus Christ in a personal way, we would pray that they would realize that that’s where it all begins, receiving Christ as a Savior from sin, inviting Him into their lives so that they can begin this new relationship with You. We love You and thank You for the warmth we feel, the closeness, the sense that each of us have been taught by Your Spirit. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

What You Need to Know About SAUL:

“The King with the Unsurrendered Will and the Unrepentant Heart”

Study Number Four – 1 Samuel 13:1-14

NOTES

v. 1 Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty-two years.

v. 2 Saul chose three thousand men from Israel; two thousand were with him at Micmash and in the hill country of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan at Gibeah in Benjamin. The rest of the men he sent back to their homes.

v. 3 Jonathan attacked the Philistine outpost at Geba, and the Philistines heard about it. Then Saul had the trumpet blown throughout the land and said, “Let the Hebrews hear!”

v. 4 So all Israel heard the news: “Saul has attacked the Philistine outpost, and now Israel has become a stench to the Philistines.” And the people were summoned to join Saul at Gilgal.

v. 5 The Philistines assembled to fight Israel, with three thousand chariots, six thousand charioteers, and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Micmash, east of Beth Aven.

v. 6 When the men of Israel saw that their situation was critical and that their army was hard pressed, they hid in caves and thickets, among the rocks, and in pits and cisterns.

v. 7 Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul remained at Gilgal, and all the troops with him were quaking with fear.

v. 8 He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and Saul’s men began to scatter.

v. 9 So he said, “Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings.” And Saul offered up the burnt offering.

v. 10 Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him.

NOTES

v. 11 “What have you done?” asked Samuel. Saul replied, “When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Micmash, v. 12 I thought, ‘Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the Lord’s favor.’ So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering.”

v. 13 “You have acted foolishly,” Samuel said. “You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time.

v. 14 But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the Lord’s command.”

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QUESTIONS:

1. Read 1 Samuel 13:1-14 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What are the statistics of Saul’s age and reign, according to verse 1?

3. Describe Saul’s military preparations in verse 2.

4. Describe the military preparations by the Philistines in verses 5-7.

5. What does Saul do because Samuel delays in his coming, according to verse 9?

6. How does Saul explain himself to Samuel in verses 11 & 12?

7. What is Samuel's response in verses 13 & 14?

8. What action has the Lord taken, according to verse 14?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Saul has begun to take credit for what the Lord has done through Jonathan.

LESSON #2: Fear and discouragement are the result of getting our eyes on circumstances.

LESSON #3: Saul is being tested with regard to divine authority and the obedient heart.

LESSON #4: Expediency never takes priority over obedience.

LESSON #5: Self-justification often accompanies the disobedient heart.

LESSON #6: You will always make a mistake when you take matters into your own hands.

LESSON #7: Dependence or lack of it is revealed in periods of delay (Galatians 5:16, 17).

LESSON #8: When you act with the limitations of your own wisdom and circumstances you will always act foolishly.

LESSON #9: The Lord wants to do His thing in the midst of impossible circumstances.

LESSON #10: When you get your eyes off the Lord and on your circumstances, you'll have an uncontrollable urge to act in some way.