

Saul's Failures

The story of King Saul is one of the more interesting and overlooked stories in the Bible.

Background on Saul:

- Israel wants a **king** (1 Samuel 8). God gave them Saul.
- Saul is described as **tall** and **handsome** (1 Samuel 9:2).
- But he has several **character flaws**.
- God was going to use Saul to make a point. God wanted them to understand that they would have been better off letting Him be their king!
- Saul had some **success** in the beginning (1 Samuel 11). Unfortunately, that success wouldn't last long.

Consider three ways in which Saul failed as a king and servant of God.

I. A failure in **obedience** (1 Samuel 15)

- A. God commanded Saul to completely wipe out the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15:1-3).
 - 1. This was punishment on these heathen people for how harshly they treated Israel (Exodus 17). Saul did most of what God said, but he spared King Agag and the best of the sheep and oxen (1 Samuel 15:9-15).
 - 2. As a result, God decided to take Saul's kingdom away from him (1 Samuel 15:26).
- B. Key Observations:
 - 1. Saul is a weak **leader**. He feared the people (1 Samuel 15:24).
 - 2. The ends do not justify the **means**. God was more concerned with obedience than those sacrifices of the best animals (1 Samuel 15:22-23).
 - 3. God is **strict**! (See 2 Samuel 6:7; Leviticus 10:1-3; Genesis 3:1-19).
- C. Simple obedience is what God requires (Genesis 6:22; Exodus 40:16; Luke 6:46; John 14:15; Matthew 7:21; 2 John 9).

II. A failure in **trust** (1 Samuel 13)

- A. Saul was supposed to wait for Samuel to tell him what God wanted him to do.
 - 1. When Samuel was delayed, Saul got nervous and offered a sacrifice (1 Samuel 13:8-14).
 - 2. Saul demonstrated disobedience and lack of faith in the Lord's will.
- B. Where is our **trust**? (See Psalm 20:1-2; 18:1-2; Proverbs 3:5-6).

III. A heart consumed in **jealousy** (1 Samuel 18)

- A. Even though they started out as friends, Saul became jealous of the success of David (1 Samuel 18:6-9). On several occasions he tried to kill David!
- B. This is a **heart** problem (1 Corinthians 13:4; Galatians 5:21; Mark 15:10).
 - 1. Christians are to be happy for the successes of others.
 - 2. Jealous and envy need to be stamped out of the lives of God's people!

Conclusion: Saul's story is one of **disappointment**, shame and wasted potential. It ends with him committing suicide on Mount Gilboa (1 Samuel 31). What about our **story**?

- Shawn Jeffries