

Obedience Over Excuses

In this chapter, Samuel reminds us of the crucial importance of following God's commands without compromise. Samuel begins by telling Saul,

“The LORD sent me to anoint you to be king over His people, over Israel; now hearken to the voice of the words of the LORD.” (1st Samuel 15:1 NKJV)

God had given Saul a clear mission—to utterly destroy the Amalekites, sparing nothing that could continue to harm His people. This command wasn't just about military victory; it was about leaving no room for the sinful practices and corrupt influences that the Amalekites represented. Yet, when Saul went into battle, he did not fully obey. Instead of destroying everything, he spared the best of the cattle and even kept Agag, the Amalekite king. His heart, swayed by the allure of the spoils, led him away from God's clear directive.

When Samuel confronted Saul, he declared,

“You have done foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God which He commanded you.” (1 Samuel 15:13 NKJV)

Samuel's rebuke was more than a warning—it was a declaration that God values complete obedience over half-hearted efforts or religious rituals. Saul's excuses—that he acted because the people were pressing him and that he had “obeyed” in part—fall flat in the face of God's standard. Samuel reminds us,

“To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” (1 Samuel 15:22 NKJV)

This powerful message challenges me personally. There have been times when I've tempted to justify my own choices—making excuses when I fall short or trying to pick and choose which parts of God's instructions I follow. But Saul's story warns that such compromises can have lasting consequences. God desires our whole-hearted obedience. It isn't enough to do things in part or to hide behind our excuses. True repentance means turning away from our selfish impulses completely and aligning our actions with His word.

Saul's failure wasn't just about a military campaign—it marked the beginning of a pattern of disobedience that ultimately cost him God's favor. Samuel's sorrowful words, as he tore his coat and declared, ***“The LORD has torn the kingdom from you today,”*** serve as a stark reminder: when we stray from God's commands, we risk losing the blessings and calling He has placed on our lives.

In reflecting on this, I ask myself:

- **Do I sometimes choose my own desires over God's clear instructions?**
- **Am I quick to justify my actions instead of owning up to my mistakes and seeking complete change?**
- **How can I better align my heart with God's will, even when it calls for difficult or counter-cultural choices?**

07-Bible Reading Study Notes

1st Samuel Chapter 15

May this account inspire me—and you—to pursue total obedience in our walk with God. Let's remember that our relationship with Him isn't measured by our sacrifices or our good intentions, but by our willingness to follow His commands without reservation. True faith means trusting that His ways are best, even when they challenge our own understanding, and that He will honor our complete submission to His will.