

SERMON APPLICATION GUIDE

PARTIAL OBEDIENCE IS COMPLETE DISOBEDIENCE

I SAMUEL 15:1-35

AUGUST 27TH, 2023

- I. **The Clear but Difficult Assignment: vs. 1-3**
- II. **King Saul's Partial Obedience: vs. 4-11**
- III. **The Blinding Effect of Sin: vs. 12-23**
- IV. **The Final Verdict of King Saul: vs. 24-35**

Questions:

1. Go around and think of what your epitaphs might be (know your group: you could just have each person share what they would want their own epitaph to be or you could have the group share what they think other people's should be).
2. Vs. 1-3 contain a difficult command from the Lord. Open up the discussion to the group about the struggle with this assignment from God.
 - Remember the reasons: ethical cleansing not ethnic cleansing; divine vengeance; pointer to future eternal punishment for those who do not believe; reminder of who the God of the Bible truly is.
3. Again, take a moment to open up the discussion to the group to share difficulties in reconciling vs. 11 and vs. 29. How do we make sense of these two verses (or in what ways are both verses true?)? Why is it healthy to have some mystery in understanding all that God is?
4. Review the various ways Saul demonstrates the blinding effect of sin. Have each person share which effect is one they most consistently struggle with?
 - Blame shift: vs. 15a
 - Minimize the seriousness of sin: vs. 15b
 - Partial obedience is full obedience: vs. 15c
 - Defensiveness: vs. 20-21
5. Take a moment as a group and look at vs. 16 and vs. 19 where Samuel responds to Saul's blinding sin with "Stop!" and "Why?" Is this small group a place where you would encourage one another to stop sinning (if/when you see others sin) and ask heart level questions (why?) to get to the heart of the issue? Why or why not?
6. Why are vs. 22-23 so challenging to you? In what ways can you fall into prioritizing empty religious performance at the expense of true heart obedience?
7. Share some of the ways you responded to the reflection questions at the end of the sermon:
 - In what ways are you allowing the deceitfulness and blinding effect of sin (blame shift, minimize sin, partial obedience, defensiveness) to impact your obedience?

- Are you playing around with sin on any level instead of putting it to death and truly repenting?
- How can you apply the forgiveness of God and use the gospel to help prioritize true heart obedience above empty religious performance?