

Teaching Plan for April 15, 2018, Lesson 6  
1 Samuel 15, "Obedience is Better than Sacrifice"  
Dr. Williamson

CREATE INTEREST

1. Relate the following story: A lady arrived at home, and related to her husband that she was upset by the fact she had been stopped by a police officer for speeding. She was going 50 in a 45 mph zone. She tried to convince the officer she was a law abiding citizen. For instance, she had her driver's license; her car was registered and inspected; she had her proof of insurance; she had on her seatbelt; she was driving the correct direction in the correct lane; she signaled correctly, and pulled over immediately when told. The officer wrote her a speeding ticket for five miles over the limit. She told her husband she didn't think her offense warranted a ticket.

ASK: In your opinion, who was "right," the woman, or the officer? Why? Discuss.

SAY: The topic of our Bible study today is what qualifies as "obedience" in our faith and actions towards God.

GUIDE BIBLE STUDY

2. Have class turn to I Samuel 15. Review the following events in the life of King Saul from previous studies:

- The Israelites wanted a human king—they wanted to be like the other nations.
- God heard their complaints or cries.
- Saul was chosen by God to be Israel's first king
- Samuel was the prophet God used to announce this decision
- Saul was chosen to be king, even before ever doing something to "earn the right" to be king
- Saul (with God's leadership) led the Israelites to a victory over the Ammonites in his first battle
- Just prior to Saul's second recorded major battle--this time with the Philistines--Saul got nervous and acted without consulting God, offering a sacrifice on his own (not waiting for Samuel).
- Samuel chastised Saul and told Saul that going ahead of God would cost him the royal lineage (meaning Jonathan, his son, would not succeed him as king). Saul would still be allowed to serve as King
- God helped the Israelites defeat the Philistines
- Many Israelites, including Saul's son, Jonathan, disobeyed God's order, of not eating any of the plunder
- God continued to give Saul further chances to show obedience to Him while reigning as King

3. Have everyone read 1 Samuel 15:1-3 silently. ASK: What did Samuel tell Saul that God wanted him to do? Discuss. (Completely destroy the Amalekites). ASK: If you had been king and heard these instructions, what do you think God was asking Saul to do? (Completely destroy the Amalekites).

4. SAY: There are those today who see these instructions from God as being vengeful, even accusing God of genocide. Our commentary gives us this perspective: As the sovereign ruler of the earth, God rightfully expects submission and obedience from ALL of his creations...The ancient Amalekites knew or had heard reports of Yahweh's power. Yet they still chose to fight against Him. The Amalekites were not atheists—they worshipped and served their own gods. They were the ones choosing to fight against Yahweh, the God of the Israelites. Yahweh wasn't bringing the battle to them. The Amalekites were

declaring war on Yahweh by going after His people. They were entering a Holy War against Yahweh God by their own choice. They knew the consequences of defeat. The customs of the day said “to the victor, went everything.” God was the commander in chief of the Israelites (not Saul). Therefore, the battle and whatever the results, were His. No one else, not even Saul nor Samuel, had the right to touch what was rightfully God’s. God made the commands because He was in charge, and He was fighting for and protecting the Israelites.

SAY: if you had cancer, and your doctor could safely remove ALL of the cancer, would you want the doctor to only remove a part of it? Obviously not. That’s kind of the point here. God wanted to remove all of the cancer that was against His people.

5. ASK: When God gives us “clear commands,” what does He expect from us, as disciples and followers? (Obedience).

ASK: Where do we get His “clear commands”? (The Bible is the primary source).

ASK: Based on other studies, what are some of the “clear commands” of God for His disciples and followers today? Discuss. And write answers on marker board. Possible answers:

- Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength (Great commandment)
- Love your neighbor as yourself
- The 10 commandments
- Acts 1:8 (Be witnesses)
- Matt. 28:19-20 (Great Commission)
- Love one another

ASK: What does God expect from His followers (disciples) in these “clear commands”? (obedience).

7. Have volunteer read I Samuel 15:4-5 & 7-9. ASK: In reading the story, how obedient were Saul and the Israelites in your opinion? Discuss.

SAY: It’s sort of like the lady in the first story with the police officer. She obeyed “parts of the law,” but not ALL of them. Partial obedience doesn’t qualify as complete obedience.

8. Have volunteer read vs. 10-14. SAY: We sometimes forget, but God is ALWAYS watching us, just like God was watching Saul and the Israelites. We cannot hide our actions from God, including our disobedience, even when we want to.

9. SAY: When we tell our children to “clean their rooms,” they do one thing (like make the bed) and think they have “obeyed” or “cleaned” the entire room. Our kids often hope that partial obedience counts. They want to do the “least amount of work possible,” and still get credit in the parents’ eyes. Be watching for Saul’s responses to Samuel. Have volunteer reads vs. 14-21.

ASK: How did Saul respond to Samuel’s charges against him? Discuss. Possible answers: He gave excuses; he blamed it on the people. He tried to justify his actions. He said it was all going to be for a sacrifice to Yahweh.

10. Have volunteer read Samuel’s response, vs. 22-23. ASK: What does Samuel mean, or what is he trying to teach Saul (and us) when he says, “To obey is better than sacrifice”? Discuss.

11. Have volunteer read vs. 24-35.

APPLY TO LIFE

12. What lessons do you take away from this Bible story?  
What have you learned about God? What sins are we to avoid?  
What actions or expectations does God have of us?

13. What are some situations or areas in life where you think it is hard for Christ-followers to show “complete obedience” to Jesus? Possible answers: In everything we wrote on the marker board...being witnesses for Jesus; loving one another; avoiding sinful actions; in loving God with all of our heart.

14. As our Pastor said on Easter, we live on this side of the cross. We live by faith, and receive grace. Our relationship with him is not dependent on our works.

15. ASK: Why would (or does) obedience matter to Jesus today, on this side of the cross?