

# Monday - Week Eighteen

## Lesson fifty-One: King Saul rejected for rejecting the Lord

Read: 1 Samuel 13-15

**Summary:** Saul's good beginning as a king did not ensure a good end. He rejected the Lord through his disobedience and found himself rejected by the Lord.

### Background and Comments

- Saul and Jonathon only managed to raise 3,000 men to fight against the huge Philistine army. Verses 16-22 in chapter 13 tell us why hardly any Israelites came to fight: they didn't even have weapons to fight with! The Philistines so dominated the Israelites that they were able to stop the blacksmiths from building weapons.
- At first Saul's disobedience doesn't seem like such a big deal; after all, he sacrificed an animal himself instead of waiting for Samuel because even his small 3,000 man force was beginning to desert him. Saul thought that by making the sacrifice he could rally the troops into at least staying there! Saul's sin was so serious because it showed what was in his heart - a trust in himself instead of a trust in God. He should have trusted that God and His prophet Samuel would have things under control.

### Lessons for Today

- Saul's situation certainly looked dismal. His army had no weapons, he had no army to speak of, and even they were abandoning him! To make matters worse the Philistines had assembled to attack him with three thousand chariots and countless foot soldiers. What was poor Saul supposed to do? Quite simply he was to trust in God. When we find our backs against the wall it's tempting for us to forget about God and trust in ourselves (often by taking matters into our own hands and acting in ways that God does not want us to). Especially at those tough times in life we need to trust in our God. He has promised to take care of us.
- In chapter 14 we again see how stupid it is to take rash oaths.

**Read:** Psalm 86; 2 Corinthians 11.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, keep me faithful to You today and every day. When tough situations develop in my life cause me to quickly turn to You for help, Lord. Let me see the solutions that You will provide, solutions that will work out for my best. Help me to be patient until You give me a solution to my problems, Lord. And if no earthly solution is forthcoming, remind me that the ultimate solution is coming in heaven. In Jesus' name I pray these things; Amen.

## Tuesday - Week Eighteen

### Lesson Fifty-two: David, God's anointed king

Read: 1 Samuel 16.

**Summary:** Today we begin to study the man God considered to be "close to His heart": David. David certainly was sinful - but he is also an excellent example of a humble believer.

#### Background and Comments

- David was anointed in secret to protect him against King Saul. How David's brothers must have pondered the fact that "little David" would be the king of Israel!
- God's sense of irony comes out at the end of this chapter. The newly anointed king served in the throne room! Imagine what David must have learned while attending to Saul!
- David was humble. He was anointed king and went back to his sheep!

#### Lessons for Today

- Samuel was so wrapped up in mourning for King Saul that he became useless to God. Finally God told him to knock it off and get back to work. When is the last time that grief has paralyzed you? The death of a loved one or a serious illness can certainly plunge us into deep despair. Yet we need to remember that the time comes for us to refocus ourselves on God's love and His promises (even while we miss our loved one or struggle through an illness). God's love and wisdom stand strong ... no matter what the situation. Do you know someone who needs to hear those words?
- At first Samuel only looked at outward appearances when he lined up the sons of Jesse before him. God told him: *The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.* What golden advice for us to remember. Obviously the only problem is that we cannot look into someone's heart. Yet we can remember what sort of things are important in God's eyes. Are you more impressed with someone if they are incredibly rich or if they have taught Sunday school for five years. Does Christian humility impress you more than brash business skills?

**Read:** Psalm 87; 2 Corinthians 12.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, as I study the life of King David help me to learn from his humility and great faith. In Jesus' name I pray; Amen.

# Wednesday - Week Eighteen

## Catechism Review

Read Questions 126-132

1. The human heart is not pretty. The Bible says that it is filled with evil, hostile to God and unable to please God. We won't get rid of that evil until we die and go to heaven. Take a few minutes and jot down a few examples of just how evil your heart can be.

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2. Guilt is an incredibly powerful emotion because God built human beings to know that if they sin they deserve to be punished. In your experience, how do non-Christians try to deal with guilt?

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3. When the Holy Spirit worked faith in our heart He did a number of miracles. Not only did He take away our sin and guilt He put pure and holy desires in our heart. Take a few minutes and jot down a few of the holy desires you've had in the past few days.

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4. Obviously there is a great war going on between our sinful nature and our new person. Explain: "We defeat our sinful nature by remembering who we are."

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**Read:** Psalm 88; 2 Corinthians 13.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, I praise You for bringing me to faith and making me a new person. Fill me with God-pleasing thoughts and desires. I pray in the name of Jesus; Amen.



# Thursday - Week eighteen

## Lesson fifty-three: David and Goliath

Read: 1 Samuel 17

**Summary:** David demonstrated his childlike trust in the Lord by against all odds killing the giant Goliath.

### Background and Comments

- Goliath wanted one of the Israelites to engage in “representative combat”. Instead of both armies fighting, the battle would be decided by a single encounter between two people. Goliath’s ultimate purpose was to discourage the Israelites. He hadn’t counted on a “little” soldier with a “big” God behind him!
- David must have looked funny in that oversized armor. Can’t you just hear David saying, “You know what, guys? I won’t need any of this stuff anyway. Let’s get it off.”?
- In verse 55 it appears that Saul didn’t know much about David. How could that be since David played the harp for Saul? Obviously Saul didn’t know too much about his harp player (just as the president probably doesn’t know too much about some members of the White House staff). It could also be the case that Saul was asking rhetorical questions, basically asking those around him why he didn’t know that David had these characteristics.

### Lessons for Today

- The key verse in the chapter is verse 47: *The battle is the LORD’s, and he will give all of you into our hands.* David’s simple (but powerful) faith in the Lord astounds us. He saw an enemy of God and then attacked. Sometimes we are too afraid to stand up to someone using the Lord’s name in vain; David was ready to battle a real life giant! Pray that God will strip away everything that hinders your faith. Pray that God will glue your eyes on His promises and nothing else.
- Everything was so simple for David. His brother saw David’s simple faith and felt guilty so he attacked David. Has it ever happened to you that you tried to put someone down because they had done the right thing and made you feel guilty?

**Read:** Psalm 89; Galatians 1.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, help me to battle the Goliaths in my life: guilt, worry, challenges at work and school, and others. Keep my eyes focused on You. Amen.

# Friday - Week eighteen

## Life Questions

**Topic/Question:** Is it wrong to get drunk? I've heard that drunkenness is a disease - how can it be wrong?

### Bible References and Considerations

- God is perfectly clear when it comes to drunkenness. In Galatians 5:19-21 Paul lists drunkenness as a "work of the flesh" along with sexual sin, wild living, anger, selfishness and hatred. Drunkenness is clearly a self-destructive behavior that God has forbidden.
- Some Christian churches teach that drinking any alcohol is a sin. God has not said that in the Bible. In fact, Jesus made wine at a wedding He attended early in His ministry. Paul told Timothy to drink a little wine to quiet his stomach. God has given us alcohol (as well as all other blessings) for our pleasure ... not for abuse.
- Doctors and researchers have shown that in some ways alcoholism is passed along biologically (not just through behavior) from parents to children. This is nothing new at all. For thousands of years the Bible has told us that we inherited our sinful nature from our parents. Is alcoholism a disease that can be inherited or is it a sin? The answer is yes.

### Practically Speaking

- Are there times when we need to refrain from drinking alcohol (even though it's not wrong to drink in moderation)? Yes. If we are around people who have problems with drinking too much alcohol it would be a good idea for us to refrain from alcohol so that we do not tempt them to join us. If we are making visits on behalf of our congregation we might refrain from drinking alcohol because we don't know what impact our drinking might have on the situation (for example, perhaps someone in that home is an alcoholic. That person would later say, "It's OK if I drink - even that person from the church drank!").
- How does someone stop drinking? Obviously this is a bigger question than can be answered on one page in a devotion guide but the answer must start with law and gospel - with our sin and God's forgiveness.

**Read:** Psalm 90; Galatians 2.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, guide families who struggle with the alcoholism every day. Let them get the help they need. There are many things that addict people, Lord. Help all the people in my church family as they struggle with their own personal addictions. Let them get the help they need. Give them discipline and strength of faith, Lord. In Jesus' name; Amen.