

LESSON 55

Saul Disobeys the Lord

1 SAMUEL 10:1-8; 13:2-14; 15:1-23, 34-35



BIBLE TRUTH

TO OBEY GOD IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. **OPENING REVIEW** **5 MIN**
Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.
2. **BIBLE STORY** **10 MIN**
Read 1 Samuel 13:2–14 from the Scriptures or read story 55, “Saul Disobeys the Lord,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
3. **OBJECT LESSON 1** **10 MIN**
Follow the Directions
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ inexpensive, new flashlight
 - ✓ two sets of batteries for the flashlight (one the correct size and one too small)
4. **TEACHING/DISCUSSION** **10 MIN**
5. **OBJECT LESSON 2** **10 MIN**
To Obey Is Better Than Sacrifice
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ small radio with headphones
 - ✓ CD player with worship music
6. **WORD BIBLE MEMORY** **5 MIN**
7. **ACTIVITY TIME** **10 MIN**
Coloring Activity
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ coloring page 55—one copy for each child
8. **CLOSING PRAYER** **5 MIN**
9. **BONUS OBJECT LESSON** **10 MIN**
I Can Hear the Sheep!
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ simple costumes for Saul and King Agag (Earth-toned fabric remnants with holes cut in the middle and rope belts and a cardboard crown.)

TOTAL 75 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Saul disobeys God—After Samuel first anointed Saul, Samuel tells Saul step-by-step the things that are about to happen to him. It ends with Samuel telling Saul to wait seven days for him at Gilgal. There, Samuel will offer a sacrifice to God.

Saul goes to Gilgal to prepare to fight the Philistines. During the weeklong wait for Samuel to arrive, the Israelite men become afraid and begin to scatter because the Philistines are gathering an enormous army. So Saul becomes impatient and offers a sacrifice to God on behalf of the people, even though God’s law says that he should not. He should have waited for God’s prophet, Samuel, to offer the sacrifice.

Samuel corrects Saul—Samuel tells Saul that God is looking for a king whose motive is to do God’s will, a man after God’s own heart. For this king, God will establish his kingship forever. Saul showed through his disobedience to God that he was not to be this king.

After Saul disobeys again, God rejects Saul—God sends Samuel again to give Saul a step-by-step battle plan for fighting the Amalekites. The instructions are simple: strike Amalek and destroy everyone and everything, including the animals.

Saul defeats the Amalekites, but he and the people spare the Amalekite king and the best of the animals. They only destroy what is despised and worthless. God looks at what Saul has done and tells Samuel that Saul has “turned back from following me” (1 Samuel 15:11). Yet Saul tries to say he has obeyed God when clearly he has not. This represents the end of Saul’s disobedient reign as king.

WHERE IS JESUS?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read Luke 22:42.

As a king, Saul failed. One day God would anoint another Man to be king who would not fail. Even when it was difficult, Jesus (the greatest king) obeyed God. The difficult task in front of Jesus was to die on the cross (see Acts 13:22–23).

When faced with the cross, Jesus prayed to his Father in heaven saying, "not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42). Saul placed his own will above God's; Jesus did not. As a result of Jesus' obedience, we have salvation through his sacrificial death.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read 1 Samuel 13:2–14 from the Scriptures or read story 55, "Saul Disobeys the Lord," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

Follow the Directions

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ inexpensive, new flashlight
- ✓ two sets of batteries for the flashlight (one the correct size and one too small)

Play out the following skit with another teacher. Feel free to ad-lib.

One teacher (the camper) comes in excited about a camping trip he is going on and announces that he has a new flashlight and that he bought brand new batteries. The second teacher reminds him to read the instructions because he has a history of messing things up. The camper replies that he has no need of reading the directions because it is only a flashlight not something complicated like a tent. He proceeds to put the wrong batteries in (too small) and then tries to get the flashlight to work. He blames everything but himself. Finally he accepts the other teacher's help. The other teacher figures out that he used the wrong batteries.

The teacher reads the instructions and then brings the correct batteries to the camper. He offers to install the batteries but the camper refuses and then puts them in backward so the flashlight won't light. Again he blames everything else but himself. Finally he reads the instructions and gets it right. In the end he looks to the class and says, "Can you believe this guy? Directions? Who needs directions? It's only a flashlight."

Read the account of Saul's disobedience in 1 Samuel 15:1–24, or read story 55, "Saul Disobeys the Lord," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

Then ask the class the following questions:

What did Saul do wrong?

(Saul didn't follow the directions of the prophet.)

When we don't follow directions what happens?

(Directions are written or spoken for a good purpose. Not following directions usually results in bad consequences.)

Why is it more serious not to follow God's instructions (commandments) than it is not to follow directions for how to install batteries in a flashlight?

(God is our Creator, and we owe him our devotion. A flashlight is just a tool to use, but if we don't follow God's commands, we are saying that we can do things on our own without God. Saul was rejected by God for doing things his own way.)

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN

To Obey Is Better Than Sacrifice

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ small radio with headphones
- ✓ CD player with worship music

This is to help the children apply Samuel’s rebuke of Saul in 1 Samuel 15:22–23.

This skit can be done ad lib. The scene is a church service during worship. The person in the skit doesn’t want to miss the pregame show to a big football game (you name the local team and rival). He hides the earphone in his collar so that no one will be able to tell that he is listening to the game. He clues the class in as though they are coconspirators, and then he goes on to worship the Lord but in the middle of one song he clues the class in again saying in a whisper so as not to disturb worship, “The game is about to start.” Then in the middle of the song he starts yelling “Go! Go! Go! Thirty! Twenty! Ten! Touchdown!” As soon as he realizes he has dropped character he returns to worshipping.

Then ask the class the following questions:

What was wrong with the man in the skit?

(He was trying to listen to a football game while worshipping. Worshipping God is not just being present at a worship service or even singing. Worshipping God is something we do in our heart. We worship God when we obey his Word not just when we are singing.)

How is the man in the skit like Saul?

(When Saul offered the sacrifice and when Saul attacked the Amalekites, his heart was not worshipping God. Saul was thinking of himself. First, he was afraid of the Philistines and second he was afraid to tell the people to destroy all the animals. The man in the skit may have been raising his hands in worship but his heart was thinking of himself and his desire to hear the football game.)

What about our hearts? How should we posture ourselves before God?

(We should obey God and give him our undivided attention. We can’t think that by simply going to church or lifting our hands in worship that we are worshipping God. God is interested in what is going on in our hearts.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page 55—one copy for each child

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

Why were these men afraid?

(They thought the Philistines were going to attack and destroy them.)

What kind of things make you afraid?

(Accept any answer.)

What would a man after God’s heart do in a situation like this one?

(He might have called all the men together to remind them of all God had done in the past so they would not be afraid.)

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day’s scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

I Can Hear the Sheep!

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ simple costumes for Saul and King Agag (Earth-toned fabric remnants with holes cut in the middle and rope belts and a cardboard crown.)

As you read the story from 1 Samuel 15:1–24 or story 55, “Saul Disobeys the Lord,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*, have the children act it out as you go. Before you read, divide the class in half. One half will be the Israelites. Subdivide the other half into Amalekites and sheep. Choose

one Israelite to be Saul, and choose one of the Amalekites to be King Agag. You can play the roles of the narrator and Samuel.

Go through the text, coaching the children through each step. You will have a lot of fun with the part where the sheep are bleating even while Saul is denying their existence. The children should see that Saul disobeyed God's command and even set up a monument to himself. Then he lied about what he did. When you are finished, ask the class about Saul's sins. Then ask them how they have sinned in their lives in similar ways.

Share the gospel. In Jesus, we have a perfect king who never disobeyed God who we can trust completely. (You can use the "Where Is Jesus?" section of this lesson to help you bring this point out.) In Jesus, we have a Savior and Deliverer who conquered our enemies—sin and death. Now God calls us to place our faith and trust in him and obey his Word and live for Christ forever. If we turn from our sin and trust in Jesus, the Bible tells us we will be forgiven and saved from our sin.

LESSON 55 - SAUL DISOBEYS THE LORD

