

UNIT 10 | SESSION 3

SAUL DISOBEYED GOD

1 SAMUEL 14–15



KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 103:19

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who is our King? Jesus is our King forever, and He rules over the world.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Saul disobeyed God's commands and was rejected as king. We all disobey God's commands when we sin. Only Jesus perfectly obeyed God at all times. When we believe in Jesus, we are made right with God and accepted by Him.

STORY POINT: God rejected Saul as king because he disobeyed God's commands.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Rather than follow the instructions of the Lord, King Saul relied on his own strength, wisdom, and timeline to achieve success. God had promised to extend favor to Saul on the condition that he remain obedient to His commands. The devastating impact of King Saul's disobedience, however, and its effect on his legacy is seen in 1 Samuel 14-15. Through the disobedience of Saul, we see our need for the sinless, sacrificial Savior—Jesus.

How did Saul's disobedience impact God's people? How did Jesus show His desire to always obey His Father?

Saul's hasty decisions in leadership led the Israelites to pursue uncleanness and irreverence toward the Lord. Saul placed his troops under a strict oath to not eat until the battle was over. The rashness of his oath led to the attempted execution of his son, Jonathan, and the sin of consuming impure food. Later, Saul led his men to disobey God's commands by not completely destroying the Amalekites and everything they had. Saul led his people down a path of destruction, not seeming to care how his disobedience impacted the nation he led.

While Saul, led by pride and impulsiveness, was willing to execute his son to make an example of him, we see a stark contrast between his actions and God's love for us. Jesus, God in flesh, laid down His own life to make redemption possible for those who trust in Him.

Consider Saul's disobedience, which was motivated by foolishness and selfish ambition. Now, reflect on the redemption we receive through Christ's pure and perfect obedience. While Saul's poor leadership and disobedience led to God rejecting him as king, the perfect King Jesus leads us toward redemption and forgiveness of sin. Lead boys and girls to see the reward of obedience to God—yet to see with even greater clarity, the gift of grace we don't deserve through Christ's sacrificial love.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ "Cross It Out" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ paper plates, 1 per kid

Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ balls, 1 per group
- ☐ cups, 10 per group



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ sticky notes

Reflection and Prayer

- ☐ Bible story coloring page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video
- ☐ Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ "Saul Disobeyed God" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- ☐ "Unit 10, Session 3" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ "Medical Missions" missions video

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "The LORD Is Over All (Psalm 103:19)" song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “When have you chosen to ignore something you were told to do? What happened?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Cross It Out” activity page.

| **SAY** “Today, we will see how God told Saul to do something, but Saul disobeyed. Because of this God rejected Saul as king.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: FOLLOW ME



Distribute a paper plate to each kid. Challenge kids to follow the motions you perform while keeping the plate on their heads. Begin with a slow, easy movement, such as moving arms up and down, then progressively make it more challenging. Kids must keep the plate on their heads while following the leader. If a kid's plate falls off her head, she is out for the rest of the round. Also, if a kid fails to follow the leader's movements, he is also out for the rest of the round. Invite kids to be leaders for different rounds. Play as time allows.

| **SAY** “What was the consequence if your plate fell or if you performed the wrong motion? [Allow responses.] You were out of the game for that round. In the Bible, we see how God gave commands to people. God always has a good reason for telling us to do something. Everything He does is good and right. When we disobey His commands, we sin. Sin has consequences. Today, we will learn that **GOD REJECTED SAUL AS KING BECAUSE HE DISOBEYED GOD'S COMMANDS.**”

☐ OPTION 2: ALL OR NOTHING

Form kids into teams of four. Provide each team with a ball and 10 cups. Lead groups to spread out and set up their cups like bowling pins. Then challenge kids on each team to take turns rolling the ball into the cups. Restack the cups after each turn. Tell kids that they only get a point if they knock down all of the cups. Tell groups to keep track of how many points, if any, they get. The group with the most points wins.

| **SAY** “This bowling game was a game of all or nothing. You only received points if you knocked down all of the cups. Today, we will see how God gave Saul instructions and told Saul to obey all of His instructions. However, we'll learn how Saul didn't obey God. God doesn't just want some obedience; He wants all of our obedience.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “Hi, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m so glad to see you. I am excited to learn from God’s Word and hear more about the life of Saul. Saul was the first king of Israel. Today, we’ll learn how **GOD REJECTED SAUL AS KING BECAUSE HE DISOBEYED GOD’S COMMANDS.** [Display the Story Point Poster.]

If you have a Bible with you, will you take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] We’ll be learning from the Old Testament book of 1 Samuel. Let’s pray and ask God to prepare our hearts to hear from Him: ‘Lord, thank You for Your Word. Please give us hearts that believe Your Word and desire to obey You. In Jesus’ name, amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “What is our big picture question? [Allow responses.] **Who is our King?** Do you remember the answer? [Allow responses.] **Jesus is our King forever, and He rules over the world.** Let’s say the answer again: **Jesus is our King forever, and He rules over the world.**

Today, as we hear about King Saul’s disobedience, we will be reminded that only one person ever perfectly obeyed God: Jesus. Jesus is the better King because He always did what God said. And because Jesus is King, He rules over the world. We can trust that Jesus is a good King and obey Him because He died for our sins so we can be saved. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “Saul became the first king of Israel when the people rejected God as their King. Samuel told the people they had sinned, but he also reminded them that God would not leave His people. God was with Saul and helped Saul fight Israel’s enemies. Last week, we learned that Saul was a great warrior but chose to disobey God. Today, we will see how **GOD REJECTED SAUL AS KING BECAUSE HE DISOBEYED GOD’S COMMANDS.** ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to 1 Samuel 14–15. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Saul Disobeyed God.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

SAUL DISOBEYED GOD

“Saul and his son, Jonathan, led the Israelite troops to fight God’s enemies—the Philistines. Earlier in the day, Jonathan and his servant won a great battle, and the Philistine army was scared.

Saul was eager to attack while they were scared. **Saul made his troops promise not to eat any food until the battle was over. Saul said, “The man who eats food before I punish my enemies is cursed.”** So, none of the troops ate any food.

Saul’s son Jonathan saw some honey on the ground. **He had not heard the instructions from his father Saul, so he ate some of the honey.** When Saul learned what he had done, he **wanted to punish Jonathan. But the rest of the Israelite army defended Jonathan so that Saul did not harm him.** Then Saul stopped chasing after the Philistines, and the Philistines went back to their land.

Later, Samuel came and shared the words of the Lord with Saul. God said, “I remember what the Amalekites did to Israel many years ago. Now attack the Amalekites and completely destroy them. Do not leave any of their animals alive.”

Saul and his army attacked the Amalekites. **They captured King Agag, and they kept the best of the sheep, cattle, and other animals alive. They were not willing to destroy them; they only destroyed the worthless or unwanted things.**

The Lord said to Samuel, “I regret that I made Saul king because he did not obey My instructions.” Samuel was angry.

Early in the morning, Samuel went to confront Saul. When Saul saw Samuel coming, he said, “May the LORD bless you! I have done what God asked!”

Samuel replied, “Why then do I hear the sounds of sheep, goats, and cattle?”

Saul said, “The troops brought those animals from the Amalekites. We plan to sacrifice them to the LORD.”

“Stop!”, exclaimed Samuel. “Last night, the LORD told me that he called you, an unimportant young man, to become the leader of all Israel. Then he sent you on a mission and told you to completely destroy the Amalekites. So why didn’t you obey the LORD?”

“But I did obey the LORD!”, Saul answered. “I went on the mission and defeated the Amalekites. The troops took the animals to sacrifice to the LORD.”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Map It: Point out the area of the Philistines (H2) on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map.

Use facial expressions: Exaggerate facial expressions to emphasize certain emotions or events in the story.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

Samuel replied, “Does the LORD take more pleasure in sacrifices of animals or in obedience? To obey is better than sacrifice. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has rejected you as king.”

Christ Connection: Saul disobeyed God’s commands and was rejected as king. We all disobey God’s commands when we sin. Only Jesus perfectly obeyed God at all times. When we believe in Jesus, we are made right with God and accepted by Him. ”

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “Saul again showed that he was a great warrior by defeating the Philistine and Amalekite armies. God was with Saul and gave him these victories. Before Saul went to fight the Amalekites, what specific instructions did God give Saul? [Allow responses.] God told Saul to destroy all the Amalekites and all of their animals. But Saul disobeyed God. Saul did not destroy everything like God commanded. He saved King Agog and the best animals.

Saul made the excuse that he saved the animals to sacrifice to the Lord. But did God accept this excuse? What was the consequence of Saul’s disobedience? [Allow responses.] **GOD REJECTED SAUL AS KING BECAUSE HE DISOBEYED GOD’S COMMANDS.** God takes sin seriously. God will not accept excuses for our sin or ignore our disobedience. God will only take away our sin when we trust in Jesus, repent of our sin, and ask for forgiveness.

What did Samuel say was better than sacrifice? [Allow responses.] Samuel said ‘to obey is better than sacrifice.’ Even when we don’t understand why God tells us to do something, we obey Him anyway because we trust His character. We know from the Bible that God always does what is right.

Saul disobeyed God’s commands and was rejected as king. We all disobey God’s commands when we sin. Only Jesus perfectly obeyed God at all times. When we believe in Jesus, we are made right with God and accepted by Him. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “The consequence of Saul’s sin was for God to reject him as king. The ultimate consequence for sin is eternal death. But God loves us and made the way for us to be forgiven and made right with Him. When we trust Jesus as Savior, we are saved from sin and death. I’d love to answer any questions you have about trusting in Jesus. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 10, Session 3” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Why do people reject God’s Word when it’s the good news?
2. Who can you share the good news of Jesus with?



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Explain to kids that medical volunteers from the United States often go to Thailand to help people while also sharing the good news about Jesus. Tell kids that Dr. Derbyshire works as a full-time medical missionary in Thailand. Share how Dr. Karalynne Blockberger went on a short-term mission trip to Thailand to help Dr. Derbyshire and his mobile medical clinic. Play the missions video.

SAY “One place that Dr. Derbyshire has taken medical teams is Baan Po. It was a place Dr. Derbyshire was specifically concerned about because it had no Christians and no churches. A few years ago, Dr. Derbyshire, other missionaries, Thai Christians, and doctors from the United States traveled to Baan Po again. This time, three people became Christians on the first day the mobile clinic was opened. Others said they wanted to learn more about Jesus.”

Pray for the work of the medical teams who host mobile clinics in Thailand. Pray that more Thai people who visit the clinics will want to know about Jesus and trust in Him.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 103:19 together.

SAY “God rules over everything. He is a good King who wants us to live with Him forever. Only trusting in King Jesus can save us from sin.”

Form kids into groups of three or four. Direct groups to make up motions to the words of the key passage. Then, invite each group to share their motions with everyone while saying the key passage aloud.

Lead kids to sing “The LORD Is Over All (Psalm 103:19).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “Dear heavenly Father, we praise You for being a good and wise King who always knows what is best. Help us trust You and follow You all the days of our lives. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles, and display the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to 1 Samuel 15. Tell kids that the chapter numbers are the larger numbers found in each book of the Bible while the smaller numbers within the chapter are the verse numbers. Practice finding 1 Samuel 15:19,20,24.

Consider pointing out the location of Israel (F10) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud 1 Samuel 15:19-21,24 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY “What did Saul say when Samuel asked him why he didn’t obey the Lord? [Allow responses.] Saul said he did obey and destroyed everything. But Saul did not obey. He made an excuse and said he was going to sacrifice the animals he saved to the Lord. Eventually, Saul recognized he sinned because he did not completely obey God.

We don’t know better than God. He is King! He always does what is good and right. We obey God because we trust He will always do what is best for us. But we need transformed hearts to obey God. Faith in Jesus creates the desire to obey God as we remember His great love for us.”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “Have you ever made an excuse for your sin? Why?”

Answers will vary. Tell kids that making excuses for sin is as old as the Garden of Eden where Eve blamed the snake for her sin and Adam blamed Eve for his sin. Explain how we make excuses to shift the blame or to defend our sin. When we bring our sin into the light and confess it to God, He will forgive us.

SAY “Why is it important to obey God completely?”

Remind kids how Saul didn’t fully obey God and that God equated this to disobedience. Discuss how our complete obedience shows that we trust and love God completely. Encourage kids to think about ways they can obey God this week.

SAY “Why is King Jesus greater than King Saul?”

Discuss how King Jesus never disobeyed God. He is perfect and without sin. Share how Jesus came to earth and lived a sinless life, fulfilling every command of God—including dying on the cross for our sin. Jesus is the King who rules over everything. Remind kids that God desires to show them grace for their sin and disobedience through faith in Jesus.

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: ANIMAL ROUND UP

Choose one kid to be the “shepherd.” Place sticky notes on the backs of kids, labeling half as “sheep” and the other half as “goats.” Direct the “goats” and “sheep” to roam about the room. Then tell the shepherd to find all of the “sheep” and bring them to you. Once a “sheep” is brought to you, the kid must sit down. When all the sheep have been found, invite a new kid to be the “shepherd.” Play as time allows, allowing kids to switch from being sheep to goats and vice versa.

SAY “ When Jesus was on earth, He taught that He is the good Shepherd (John 10:14). He told a story about how the sheep follow the shepherd because they know his voice. King Saul didn’t listen to the voice of the Lord. He disobeyed God and followed his own way.

GOD REJECTED SAUL AS KING BECAUSE HE DISOBEYED GOD’S COMMANDS. Followers of Jesus know His words and obey them. They trust that Jesus will lead them to what is best—that He will give them a full life. ”

☐ OPTION 2: SHOW ME...



Form kids into groups of three or four and provide each group with a Bible. Challenge groups to find a book of the Bible that starts with a letter you call out. Say, “show me a book of the Bible that starts with J.” Kids will then work together in their group to find a Bible book that starts with J (Joshua, Judges, Jeremiah, etc.). When they find the book, they can raise their hand to show you. Repeat, as time allows, calling out a new letter each time.

SAY “ One way we can grow in obedience to God is by knowing His Word. We can’t obey who we don’t know. When we read the Bible, we learn more about the character of God and His desires for our lives. We see how God’s perfect character helps us trust Him so that we more willingly obey Him. Even when we struggle to obey or don’t understand all of God’s commands, we put our faith in His perfect character, remembering how much He loves us and how He proved His love through His Son, Jesus. ”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.