



# Saul Disobeys God

1 Samuel 13:1–14; 15:1–34



## LESSON GOAL

Students will submit to the authority of God's Word and obey it completely.

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Describe Saul's sinful actions.
- Explain how Saul was punished for his rebellion.
- Analyze why Saul's actions and justification of them displeased the Lord.
- Evaluate whether Saul showed true repentance.

## KEY VERSE

"Then Samuel said, 'Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of lambs'" (1 Samuel 15:22).

## APPLICATION

- Submit to God's Word and obey it completely.
- Examine your life for areas where your obedience is partial and repent.
- Recognize that rebellion and stubbornness are very serious in God's eyes.

## NEXT WEEK

God Sees David's Heart  
Read 1 Samuel 16.

### Symbol Key



Craft



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Activity



Q & A



Work Sheet



2 Grade Level

# Teacher Planning Sheet

## PREPARE

Objectives/Truths to cover this week

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Personal Application

As a result of my study in this passage, God wants me to

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Three ways students need to apply this passage are

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## POINT

Choose from various ideas to point students to the coming Bible lesson.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## PROCLAIM

Choose from various ideas to proclaim the Bible lesson.

### Presentation Ideas

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Praise/Music Ideas

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## PRACTICE

Choose ideas to help review and apply today's lesson.

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### Materials Needed

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## PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

*“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... You shall teach them to your children” (Deuteronomy 11:18–19).*

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here to aid you in understanding the Scripture.

### Bible Background

When the people of Israel sinfully rejected the Lord as their king, He gave them exactly the kind of king they wanted. From man’s perspective, Saul was the perfect king. He was tall and handsome (1 Sam. 9:2) and an adept military leader (1 Sam. 11). He was also well prepared by God to be the king of Israel. The Lord anointed Saul (1 Sam. 10:1) and approved his confirmation through miraculous signs (1 Sam. 10:2–16), special selection (1 Sam. 10:20–24), and the Spirit’s empowerment (1 Sam. 11:6). Even though Israel had spurned the Lord’s right to rule His people, the Lord graciously established Saul as king over Israel. Despite their sin, Israel could still be blessed if both they and their king obeyed the Lord’s commandments (1 Sam. 12:13–15, 20–25). In 1 Samuel 13:1–14 and 15:1–34, Saul revealed that he was not fit to be the king of Israel because he would not totally submit to the Lord’s commandments. Because of his sin, the Lord rejected Saul as king over Israel.

#### Saul’s First Rebellion (1 Sam. 13:1–12)

After Saul’s son Jonathan attacked the Philistines (1 Sam. 13:3), the Philistines launched a massive retaliatory force against Israel (13:5). The overwhelming number and power of the Philistines caused Israel to scatter, some of them even crossing the Jordan to escape (13:6–7). Following Samuel’s command, Saul waited with his assembled troops seven days in Gilgal (13:8). When the seventh day came and Samuel did not arrive, Saul’s “trembling” troops began to leave (13:7–8). Saul decided to offer the burnt and fellowship offerings without waiting for Samuel (13:9). Before Saul could finish the fellowship offering, Samuel arrived (13:10).

The exact nature of Saul’s disobedience is hard to pinpoint. It is unlikely that Saul had sinned in presenting the sacrifice since later both David and Solomon would do so without rebuke (2 Sam. 24:24; 1 Kings 8:62–64). Most likely Saul had disobeyed by not waiting for Samuel to arrive. Saul quickly offered three excuses for his sin: the people were scattering, Samuel had not arrived in the appointed time, and the Philistines were threateningly close (1 Sam. 13:11–12). Saul did not want to enter battle without first offering “supplication to the LORD” and disobeyed God because he “felt compelled” (13:12). Saul exalted his own understanding and his perceived needs above God’s Word.

#### The Beginning of the Lord’s Rejection (1 Sam. 13:13–14)

Samuel’s rebuke of Saul was severe. Samuel said, “You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you” (1 Sam. 13:13). Saul’s rejection of God’s Word had serious consequences. The Lord had been willing to establish Saul’s kingdom if he had obeyed, but now Saul’s kingdom would not continue. Saul’s descendants would not have the privilege of reigning over Israel because of Saul’s sin. Instead, the Lord had chosen a “man after His own heart” and “commanded him to be commander over His

people” (13:14). God already had decided who would be the next king over Israel. What terrible consequences for the family of Saul! Saul attempted to worship the Lord without submitting to His commands. But this dishonors the Lord rather than exalts Him. The king of Israel would not be allowed to so blatantly disregard the sovereign King. The Lord was seeking a king with a high regard for Himself.

### **Saul’s Second Rebellion (1 Sam. 15:1–9)**

The Lord was not finished with Saul. Samuel came to him with a special assignment from the Lord and reminded him of the fact that the Lord had anointed him. Samuel called Saul to “heed the voice of the words of the LORD” (1 Sam. 15:1). The Lord had chosen Saul to be the instrument for fulfilling the long-prophesied destruction of the Amalekites, the people who had first attacked Israel after they left Egypt (Ex. 17:8–16). He was commanded to utterly destroy Amalek, killing every person and animal (1 Sam. 15:3). The Lord had rejected Saul’s family from reigning over Israel, but Saul still had the responsibility and privilege of obeying the Lord’s command.

Instead of glorifying God, Saul chose to disobey. “Saul and the people spared Agag [king of the Amalekites] and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good...but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed” (1 Sam. 15:9). God had granted total victory, but Saul fell short of total obedience.

### **Announcement of the Lord’s Rejection (1 Sam. 15:10–34)**

Samuel first heard of Saul’s disobedience from the Lord. The Lord told Samuel, “I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments” (1 Sam. 15:11). How incredible that God, who never changes His mind (15:29), is still moved by the sin of man! Using the same word He used to express His grief over having created man (Gen. 6:6), the Lord expressed to Samuel His sovereign regret over Saul’s sin. The Lord wanted Saul to obey Him! He had known that Saul would disobey, yet He still was grieved over Saul’s rejection of His authority. That night Samuel learned from the Lord Saul’s punishment (1 Sam. 15:16, 23). Samuel was “grieved” by the Lord’s message and “cried out to the LORD all night” (15:11), perhaps interceding for both the people of Israel and their king.

When Samuel met Saul at Gilgal, Saul said, “Blessed are you in the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD” (1 Sam. 15:13). Saul’s greeting reveals either a deceitful heart or a heart that believed God could be pleased with partial obedience. Samuel quickly confronted Saul’s sin by asking where the sheep came from (15:14). Saul began to justify his action by blaming the people and saying that the flocks and cattle were intended as sacrifices to the Lord (15:15). Samuel reminded Saul that he was king only because of the Lord’s choice. He asked him why he had disobeyed and done evil in the Lord’s sight (15:16–19). Again, Saul claimed that he had obeyed the Lord and blamed the people for taking the animals for sacrifices, as if that would justify the action (15:20–21). Samuel destroyed Saul’s justification, proclaiming that the Lord delights in obedience rather than sacrifice (15:22). Saul wanted to worship according to his directions and not the Lord’s. This was not partial obedience but disobedience and rebellion. Samuel’s words are harrowing: “Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry” (15:23). Saul could not hide behind a veneer of worship; he had a heart full of self-exaltation. Samuel announced Saul’s punishment: “Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king” (15:23).

On hearing the Lord’s judgment, Saul admitted that he had sinned, explaining that

he had “feared the people and obeyed their voice” (1 Sam. 15:24). Saul’s confession was followed by a request for Samuel to return with him so he could worship the Lord (15:25). Saul was desperate to have Samuel’s presence so that he would not lose credibility among the people. Samuel understood Saul’s attempt to retain kingship and again pronounced the Lord’s judgment that He had rejected Saul as king (15:26). The realization of the finality of God’s judgment was too much for Saul. As Samuel tried to leave, Saul seized his robe. Referring to the torn piece of robe in Saul’s hand, Samuel said, “The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you” (15:28). Samuel’s admonishment that God is not a man who relents (15:29) revealed what Saul really wanted: for God to change his mind. Saul again admitted he had sinned and more honestly expressed his desire that Samuel accompany him at worship so he would not be dishonored before the elders and the people of Israel. Saul had lost the throne in God’s sight but was not willing to lose the people’s respect. Samuel returned and completed the destruction of the Amalekites by killing King Agag (15:31–33). Samuel and Saul’s relationship was permanently ruptured (15:34–35). The announcement of judgment brought no pleasure to Samuel, who mourned for Saul. Although God never changes His mind and always does what He pleases, He “regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel” (15:35).

### Conclusion

Although God had selected a king for Israel, His sovereign hand never stopped controlling events. He had chosen Saul as king, knowing that he would be too proud to obey God as He required. Saul thought it was better to offer sacrifices than to wait as Samuel had commanded. Saul thought it was better to spare the animals and king than to obey God’s command to totally destroy the Amalekites. Saul’s “worship” was only polished idolatry, and his rebellion was disguised witchcraft. What a sobering evaluation of religious exercise that does not align with God’s commands! Saul was not the right king for Israel because he exalted his will above God’s; his obedience was never complete. God’s rejection of Saul had been decreed in eternity past, but God still desired for Saul to obey. He was grieved by Saul’s sin. God desires that men worship as He commands and not as they wish. Saul never truly repented of his sin, and God instead chose another man to be king, a man after His own heart.

## POINT TO THE TRUTH

*"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth" (Psalm 78:1).*

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



### Review Questions

*Use these questions to review and reinforce key truths.*

Who ruled, judged, and fought for Israel?

*God ruled, judged, and fought for Israel.*

How did this make the Israelites different from all other nations?

*All the other nations had mere men ruling, judging, and fighting for them, but Israel had God. No man could ever do as good a job at being king as God.*

Why did the Israelites say they wanted a king?

*The Israelites said that they wanted a human king so that they could be like all the other nations.*

What did God say was the real reason they wanted a human king?

*God said that the people wanted a human king because they were rejecting Him as their king.*

What did Samuel say would happen if they had a human king?

*Samuel told the people that having a king would be very costly. Three words are used again and again in Samuel's speech to the people: "he will take" (see 1 Sam. 8:11, 13–17).*

After God warned the people, through Samuel, of what would happen if they had a human king, did the Israelites still want one?

*Yes; the Israelites still wanted a king. Even though it would cost them a lot, they refused to change their minds.*



### Crown the New King

Materials: paper crown for each student, writing/coloring utensils

Directions: Pass out a crown to each student. Instruct the students to adjust the crowns to fit their head size. Instruct students to write "Saul" on the front of the crown and write 1 Samuel 15:11a across the bottom of the front: "I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments." On the back of the crown, students should draw a question mark, indicating that a new king will be established by God but that the person is currently unknown. Students may decorate the crowns if time permits. Have each student wear the crown during the lesson. At the end of the lesson, have the students turn their crowns to the question mark side to visualize that God has chosen to remove Saul from his position as king. Collect the crowns for use in future lessons when David is revealed as the new king. During a later

lesson, the question mark will be replaced with the word “David,” and students will write 1 Samuel 18:30b across the bottom of the crown: “David behaved more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name became highly esteemed.”



### Keep It! Trash It!

Bring to class three lunch bags, each containing 10–15 items that the students would consider either useful (a rubber ball, crayon, sticker, etc.) or garbage (a candy wrapper, pencil stub, used postage stamp, etc.). Set up a table in front of the class. Before the lesson, prepare three student volunteers with the following instructions: Each student, one at a time, will dump his bag’s contents out on the table and then sort through the items to decide which to keep and which to throw away. Student 1 should throw away the garbage items and keep the useful items for himself. Student 2 should throw away the garbage items and keep the useful items to give to other people or to the church. (He should be prepared to tell the class whom each item will be given to and why.) Student 3 should throw everything away, even the useful items. He will tell the class that he did so because the teacher told him to, and he is obeying the instructions he was given.

Tell the class that you will be playing a game called “Keep It! Trash It!” Tell them that three students will each receive a paper bag full of items that are either useful or garbage. However, they are to throw away everything in the bag, including the useful items. (Emphasize this instruction as the standard of obedience.) Bring the three student volunteers to the front of the class, and give them their bags. Have them follow the instructions you gave them before class time. Once they have sorted their items, they should tell the class why they did what they did. Ask the class which student obeyed the instructions. This should lead to a discussion on rebellion (Student 1); partial obedience, which also is rebellion (Student 2); and obedience (Student 3).



### Justifying Sin

This week’s lesson is a good example of a man’s attempt to justify his sin. We justify sin when we try to make excuses for it or blame someone else. Ask the students for some excuses they sometimes make for their sin. You may have to help them recognize this practice (“I was not listening because Mary was talking to me”; “My sister started the fight”; “I did not clean up because I forgot”; “I am ungrateful because I do not have as much as other children”; etc.) Explain that we make our sin even worse when we try to justify it (1 John 1:8–9). We must confess our sin to God as soon as we become aware of it.



### Obedience Pleases God

Ask the students whether they ever have tried to do something good, only to have it turn out all wrong (for example, trying to bake a cake and it did not come out right; trying to make mom some coffee and then spilling it; helping carry something and then dropping it). If we want to please God, we cannot do it in whatever way we think is right; we must obey God’s Word completely. God is more pleased by our obedience than anything else we can do for Him (1 Sam. 15:22–23). You may want to revisit the story of Achan in Joshua 7, who did not obey God completely; his sin resulted in Israel being defeated in battle.



### Repentance

Repentance means literally to “turn around” or “change one’s mind.” Explain to the students that when we have sinned, God expects us to repent. That means we must confess our sin to God and turn away from it and go in the opposite

direction. Turning away from sin means that we do everything we can to never repeat that sin again. Going in the opposite direction means that we replace that sin with a right action. We can replace selfishness with kindness, lying with telling the truth, laziness with hard work, etc. (Eph. 4:17–32). Use the opportunity to explain to the students that they need to turn to Christ and ask for forgiveness and the ability to obey.



### Rebellion

Rebellion is very serious in God’s eyes. In 1 Samuel 15:23, it is compared to the sin of divination. Divination is any mystical or metaphysical attempt to determine the future or to contact the spiritual realm. Divination was practiced by the surrounding pagan nations and is described in other Scriptures as an “abomination” to the Lord (Deut. 18:11–12). It was forbidden and punishable by death (Ex. 22:18). For God to equate rebellion with the sin of divination was a very serious indictment.



### Who Is Smarter, Man or God?

Throughout history, there have been some very smart people. They have been able to discover new galaxies and cures for diseases. But none of those people is as smart as God. God not only knows everything, but He also created everything. In today’s lesson, we see that Saul thought that he was smarter than God. He thought that he knew what would be better to do than what God had commanded. He did not listen perfectly to God and God took that very seriously. God felt that it was so serious that He would no longer allow Saul or his future family to rule the kingdom of Israel.



### Following Instructions

Place a piece of candy in front of each student while he sits coloring or waiting for class to start. Tell the students not to touch the candy until you say that they can. If any students disobey, take away their candy. Explain that they lost the candy because they did what they wanted instead of following instructions. In today’s story, Saul was rejected as king because he disobeyed instructions.



# PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

*“Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done” (Psalm 78:4).*

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students’ understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use during the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done directly from the Bible.

## Bible Lesson

### Reading of the Text

Read portions of 1 Samuel 13:1–14 and 15:1–34.

### Introduction

Everyone knows that they should be obedient to God. And everyone knows what God wants them to do and not to do. But does everyone always obey? No! We disobey so often that we forget how sinful and wrong it is to disobey God. In this lesson, we learn about what happened when Saul disobeyed God.



### Leadoff Questions

**LOQ:** What happened after Saul and his son Jonathan attacked the Philistines?

**Answer:** After the attack, the Philistines fought back even harder and frightened the Israelites, causing them to scatter.

**LOQ:** How did Saul react to the weakening of Israel’s forces?

**Answer:** Saul was afraid that Israel would not be able to fight the Philistines if the Israelites began to scatter. He was told to wait seven days until Samuel came to present the burnt and fellowship offerings. Samuel did not arrive when Saul expected, so Saul decided to do it on his own. Just as he presented it, Samuel arrived.

**LOQ:** What did Samuel say to Saul when he arrived?

**Answer:** Samuel rebuked Saul for his disobedience. He said, “You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you” (1 Sam. 13:13).

**LOQ:** What were the consequences for Saul’s disobedience?

**Answer:** Samuel told Saul that now his kingdom would not continue. Saul’s descendants would not have the privilege of reigning over Israel because of his sin. Saul tried to worship the Lord without submitting to His commands. God says that He prefers obedience over sacrifice.

**LOQ:** At the beginning of 1 Samuel 15, who was speaking to Saul?

**Answer:** Samuel the prophet was speaking to King Saul. But Samuel was not saying whatever he wanted; he was telling Saul the words of the Lord. The Lord had given him a message to give to Saul.

**LOQ:** What was the first part of the Lord's message that Samuel gave to Saul?

**Answer:** Saul was supposed to put to death every man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey. Even though it may seem strange that God wanted all these people and animals to be killed, we must remember that God always does what is right, even when it is beyond our understanding. In this case, God was punishing the Amalekites because they had done something bad to His people, the Israelites. Also, the Amalekites were not good people; they were wicked. This is similar to what God told the people to do to the city of Jericho and many other cities and peoples in the Promised Land (Josh. 6; 8).

**LOQ:** How many foot soldiers and men of Judah joined with Saul?

**Answer:** The Bible says that 200,000 foot soldiers and 10,000 men of Judah joined with Saul.

**LOQ:** What did Saul do before he attacked the Amalekites?

**Answer:** Saul warned the Kenites to leave so that when he attacked and destroyed the Amalekites, none of the Kenites would be destroyed with them.

**LOQ:** Did Saul kill all the people of Amalek?

**Answer:** No! Saul killed everyone except the king of the Amalekites, whose name was Agag.

**LOQ:** Did Saul kill all the animals that the Lord had told him to kill?

**Answer:** No! Saul killed all the animals that were worthless. But he did not kill "the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good" (1 Sam. 15:9).

**LOQ:** Did Saul obey the Lord?

**Answer:** No! God had told him to destroy all the people, the oxen, the sheep, the camels, and the donkeys, but he let some live (1 Sam. 15:8-9).

**LOQ:** When Samuel went to see Saul, what did Saul say to him?

**Answer:** Saul told Samuel, "I have carried out the command of the LORD" (1 Sam. 15:13).

**LOQ:** How did Samuel know that Saul hadn't done what the Lord had commanded?

**Answer:** Samuel heard the bleating of sheep and the lowing of oxen (1 Sam. 15:14). Samuel heard the noises that those animals make.

**LOQ:** Even though Saul said that he had obeyed the Lord, what did the Lord say (through Samuel)?

**Answer:** The Lord said that Saul had not obeyed Him.

**LOQ:** What was Saul's excuse for not killing all the animals?

**Answer:** Saul said that the best of the animals had been spared in order to sacrifice them to God.

**LOQ:** What does 1 Samuel 15:22 say about what Saul did?

**Answer:** Verse 22 says, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams." In God's eyes, obedience would have been better than all the

sacrifices of the best animals that Saul had spared. Saul should have obeyed God and done exactly what He had commanded. Saul should not have done anything else. When people made sacrifices to God, sometimes it was because they had sinned and a sacrifice was necessary. Other times it was because they wanted to worship God. But God doesn't want people to worship Him instead of being obedient. God wants people to worship Him and be obedient. Saul could have done exactly what God had commanded him to do; then he could have made sacrifices to God from the best of his own animals.

**LOQ:** What did God do because Saul had disobeyed?

**Answer:** Samuel told Saul that because he had rejected the word of the Lord, God had rejected him from being king (1 Sam. 15:23). Because Saul did not listen to God and was rebellious, God rejected Saul from being king over Israel.

**LOQ:** What did Samuel do to Agag, king of the Amalekites?

**Answer:** He killed Agag.

**LOQ:** Why did Samuel kill Agag?

**Answer:** It was very important to Samuel that the Lord's commandments be obeyed. Even after Samuel had rebuked Saul about being disobedient, Saul did not kill Agag. Samuel did. Many things are different now than in the time of Saul. But there is one thing that always remains true: we must be obedient to God. Saul did not think it was very important to obey God and did what he wanted to do instead. Usually it was a good thing to make sacrifices to God and give Him the best. But in this case, God did not want sacrifices; He wanted obedience.

### Summary

God commanded King Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites. But Saul decided that he did not want to kill Agag, the king of the Amalekites, or destroy the best of the Amalekites' sheep and oxen. Even though Saul told Samuel that he had been obedient to the command of God, God told Saul, through Samuel, that he had not done what was commanded of him. For this, God judged Saul and rejected him as the king of Israel. And finally, since Saul hadn't killed Agag, Samuel did. Samuel knew that obedience to God was important, and so he did what Saul refused to do.

### Application

Sometimes we do the same thing Saul did. We do not obey God and think that doing good things will make everything okay. We think that God will be happy with our good works and forget about our sin, our disobedience. But God says different. First Samuel 15:22 says that no matter what sacrifice or good work is done for God, He wants us to be obedient first. For example, if your parents asked you to take out the garbage, but you mowed the lawn instead, you disobeyed your parents. Mowing the lawn is a very nice thing to do for your parents, but it is not what they asked for. First take out the garbage, and if you can, then mow the lawn. Not only will your parents be happy, but God will be pleased with you, too.

## Presentation Ideas

### A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards

Use appropriate A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards with the lesson.





### Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannelgraph pieces with the lesson.



### The Clock

As you begin to teach about Saul's first rebellion in 1 Samuel 13:1–12, show the students an alarm clock or timer. Set the timer, and tell them to wait for it to go off before doing something (such as eating the snack you have already handed them, or talking). Talk about Samuel's instructions to Saul, referred to in verse 8. Also talk about how long Saul did wait but in the end took matters into his own hands.



### Can You Wait?

Saul disobeyed God when he became impatient waiting for Samuel. Snack time may be used to demonstrate how this might have felt for Saul. Hand the students their snacks, but give them specific instructions (only once) not to eat them until they are given permission. You may want to teach a part of the lesson and then highlight for the students how difficult it was for them not to eat their cookies. Some may have failed to obey completely. This is exactly what happened to Saul. It is important to realize that every time we choose to sin, it is very serious to God.



### Doing It Just Right

Obedience means following God's instructions completely. To illustrate this, bake three kinds of cookies: one that contains wrong ingredients, one that was not left in the oven long enough, and one that is just right. Show the cookies to the students, or have a few come and sample them. Explain what is wrong with each of the cookies. God requires us to follow His "recipe" book very carefully. This may be a good opportunity to present the gospel to the students, explaining that only Jesus could follow God's instructions perfectly.



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### Obey Completely

Bring to class a tape or CD with sounds of sheep or cows. This can be downloaded from the Internet or recorded at home. (You may even be able to find a toy that makes these sounds.) At the appropriate point in today's lesson (1 Sam. 15:13–14), have someone play the tape or CD from a place where the students cannot see it. At the exact time when Saul was saying that he had obeyed, Samuel heard the animals and knew that God's instructions had not been followed.



### The Bad News

Have adult helpers act out the part of today's story where Samuel tries to leave after telling Saul that the kingdom will be taken away from him. The person playing Saul should be on his knees. The person playing Samuel will wear an old robe or costume that has been prepared to tear at the corner. The person playing Saul can reach out and tear off the corner of the robe. He should have the piece in his hand. Have the person playing Samuel read 1 Samuel 15:28.



### True Obedience

What is obedience? Obedience is completely following an instruction you have been given. We often do not obey perfectly. We add what we think is right or do not complete aspects of the instruction that we think are unnecessary. But this is not perfect obedience. As you teach through the lesson, stop at crucial points to ask the students what was instructed and whether what was being done was true obedience.

**Variation:** You may want to illustrate true obedience more clearly before teaching the passage. To do so, think of some scenarios that illustrate partial obedience and others that illustrate true obedience. Ask the student whether the person in each scenario is being obedient. After these illustrations, proceed to teach the text.



### Patience on the Lord

Being patient can be a difficult. Discuss with the students times when they have had to be patient. Explain that God's timing is always best, even when we think that we know best. Saul was not patient for the Lord's timing. He felt it was better to be disobedient in one area in order to do what he thought was right. During the Practice time, make this lesson practical to the students by discussing ways that they can be patient when they know they must wait on the Lord rather than trusting in their own intellect.

### Praise and Worship

*Cleanse Me*

*Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*

*Holy, Holy*

*Humble Thyself in the Sight of the Lord*

*O-B-E-D-I-E-N-C-E*

*Seek Ye First*

*The B-I-B-L-E*

*Trust and Obey*

*Undivided Heart*

## PRACTICE THE TRUTH

*"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments" (Psalm 78:7).*

Choose ideas from this section to review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



### "Saul's Incomplete Obedience"

Materials: copies of the "Saul's Incomplete Obedience" craft page on cardstock, cotton balls, hay or strips of yellow or brown construction paper, glue, scissors

Directions: Cut off the side strip and fold in quarters so that words are on inside. Decorate sheep with cotton balls. Glue folded strip in marked rectangular area, and decorate as a bale of hay by gluing on hay or strips of yellow or brown construction paper.



### "Motive Locomotive"

Materials: copies of the "Motive Locomotive" craft sheet, brads, scissors, crayons

Directions: Have students color each of the train pieces. Then have them cut out the pieces and assemble the trains using brads.



### Perfect Obedience

Discuss with the students what it means to obey perfectly. To illustrate obedience, tell the following story: A young son of a missionary couple in Zaire was playing in the yard. Suddenly the voice of the boy's father rang out from the porch, "Philip, obey me instantly! Drop to your stomach!" Immediately he did as his father commanded. "Now crawl toward me as fast as you can!" The boy obeyed. "Stand up and run to me!" Philip responded unquestioningly and ran to his father's arms. As he turned to look at the tree by which he had been playing, he saw a large deadly snake hanging from one of the branches! At the first command of his father, Philip could have hesitated and asked, "Why do you want me to do that?" Or he could have casually replied, "In a minute." But his instant obedience without questioning saved his life! (This story was told by the Bible teacher Donald Grey Barnhouse [1895–1960].) God requires perfect obedience the first time. We should not question His instructions or think that we know better than He does. In what ways can we be perfectly obedient to God today?



### "Saul Disobeys God"

Use this work sheet to reinforce the key truths of today's lesson. The work sheet is located at the back of the lesson.



2  
3

### Journal Page: "Disobedience"

Give each student a copy of the journal page at the back of this lesson. The students can complete the page individually, in small groups, or at home.

### Coloring Sheets

Give each student copies of the coloring sheets at the back of the lesson. Students can color the pages in class or at home.



### MEMORY VERSE

"Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Samuel 15:22).

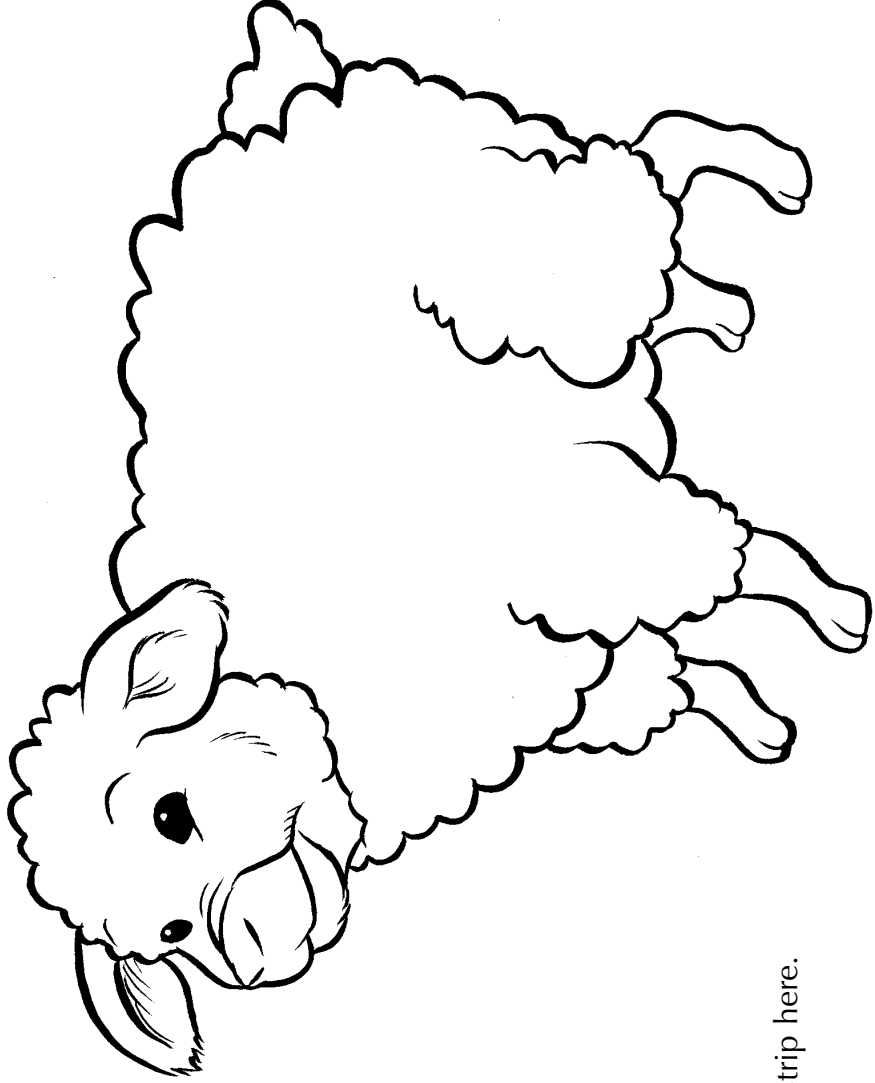
# Saul's Incomplete Obedience

God told Saul to destroy all that Amalek had, including ox, sheep, donkey, and camel (1 Sam. 15:3).

But Saul said, "...the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen...but the rest we have utterly destroyed" (1 Sam 15:15).

"And Samuel said, 'Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD?'

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the the fat of rams'" (1 Sam. 15:22).



Glue folded strip here.



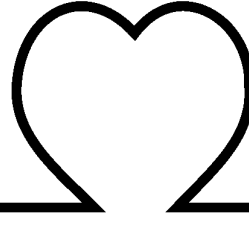


# Motive Locomotive

**Your motives drive  
what you do.**

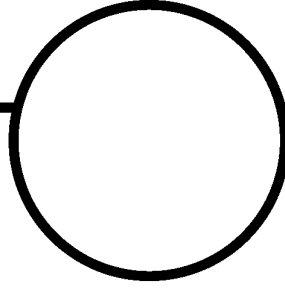
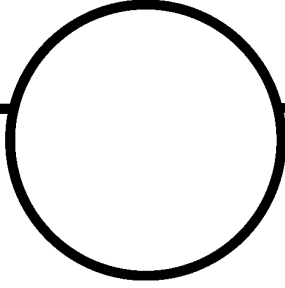
**Your motives move  
you to action.**

**Motive  
Locomotive**



**What are your motives?**

- To love God and obey Him**
- To serve yourself or please  
other people**





# Saul *Disobeys* God



1 Samuel 13:1–14; 15:1–34

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. First Samuel 10:8 tells us that Saul was to wait \_\_\_\_\_ days to offer the sacrifice after attacking the Philistines.
2. Did Saul do as Samuel had commanded? \_\_\_\_\_
3. True or False: Saul did the right thing when he offered the sacrifice and Samuel was pleased. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Because Saul had disobeyed the Lord's command, his \_\_\_\_\_ would not continue (1 Sam. 13:14).
5. In 1 Samuel 15, Saul was commanded to destroy \_\_\_\_\_ of the Amalekites.  
all                  half                  most                  none
6. Was Saul obedient to God's command? \_\_\_\_\_
7. First Samuel 15:22 says that to " \_\_\_\_\_ is better than \_\_\_\_\_."



# Disobedience

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“Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king” (1 Samuel 15:22–23).

When an artist makes a mistake, he sometimes can paint over it and make a beautiful masterpiece. Sometimes when people sin, they try to be like an artist. They try to paint over sin with words that make their sin look like a good deed, but sin can never be painted over with beautiful words because God knows the heart. Saul thought he could give his sin a noble purpose. He said to Samuel, “I have performed the commandment of the Lord.” Disobedience is sin. By sacrificing the sheep he had taken, which God had told him not to take, Saul was justifying his sin. Do you think he fooled God?

From some of our previous lessons, can you name the people who gave the following excuses for their sins?

1. “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Gen. 4:9). \_\_\_\_\_
2. “The LORD your God brought it [the wild game] to me” (Gen. 27:20). \_\_\_\_\_
3. “They gave it [the gold] to me and I cast it in the fire, and this calf came out” (Ex. 32:24). \_\_\_\_\_

Unscramble Saul’s three excuses:

1. The people were (GNSCTTAERI) \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Samuel had not (RIRVEDA) \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The Philistines were (OSCLE) \_\_\_\_\_.

What did Saul lose because of his disobedience? \_\_\_\_\_

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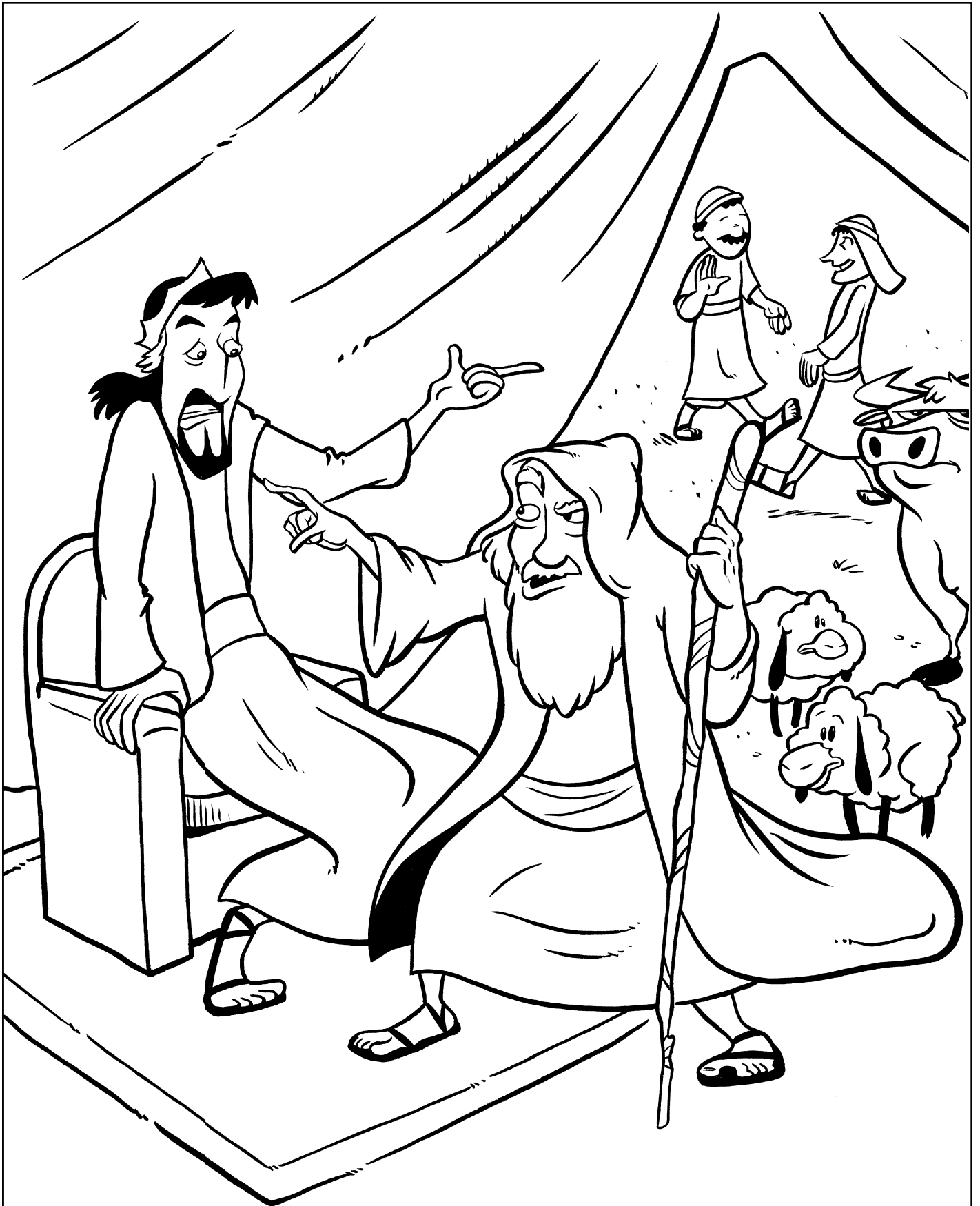






**“So Saul said, ‘Bring a burnt offering and peace offerings here to me.’  
And he offered the burnt offering” (1 Samuel 13:9).**





**“So Samuel said: ‘Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams’” (1 Samuel 15:22).**

