

Bible Stories for Adults

God Rejects Saul

1 Samuel 12 - 15

Opening

Gathering: Name some things that people do to impress others while hiding their inner selves.

Today's Focus: God not only calls us into His family, but also wants us to remain and grow in a faithful relationship with Him.

Key Verses: *The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.* 1 Samuel 16:7

Be sure to fear the Lord and serve Him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things He has done for you. 1 Samuel 12:24

Opening Prayer

Lesson

The Last Judge (1 Samuel 8)

Who was the last judge of Israel?

1 Samuel 7:13, 15 = Samuel - Also a Nazarite prophet

Why was he the last judge? = Leadership is not inherited, but chosen by God

1 Samuel 8:1, 3-5 = The Israelites wanted a king like the other nations had

What happened after the king that Samuel gave them won a victory for Israel?

1 Samuel 11:15 = They confirmed Saul as king in a big celebration at Gilgal

The Torch is Passed (1 Samuel 12)

How did Samuel prepare for a peaceful transition in leadership? = Acknowledged passing of leadership

1 Samuel 12:1-2, 5 (1-5) = Had Israelites agree he had led honestly – no reason for overthrow

Did Samuel feel by this time that adding a king was a good thing?

1 Samuel 12:12, 17-19 (6-19) = No, they had sinned by rejecting God as their king

What point was Samuel trying to make? = A king could easily lead people astray with his own religion

1 Samuel 12:14-15, 24 = Make sure that you and your king remain faithful

Saul's Army (1 Samuel 13:2)

How many men had responded to Saul's early Call to Arms to save Jabesh Gilead?

1 Samuel 11:6-8 = 330,000 (300,000 Israel & 30,000 Judah)

How many of these volunteers did Saul keep for his permanent army?

1 Samuel 13:2 = 3000 (2000 with Saul, 1000 with Jonathan)

Who was Jonathan?

1 Samuel 14:49 = Saul's oldest son, heir apparent

How did Saul recruit new soldiers during his reign?

1 Samuel 14:52 = *Whenever Saul saw a mighty or brave man, he took him*

How well was the Israelite army outfitted?

1 Samuel 13:19-20, 22 (19-22) = No blacksmiths in Israel, only 2 swords & spears

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Stirring the Hornet's Nest (1 Samuel 13:3-7)

Where did Saul's army turn after the success against the Ammonites?

1 Samuel 13:3-4 = Jonathan's 1000 attacked Philistine outpost at Geba

How did the Philistines respond to this attack?

1 Samuel 13:5 = They assembled 6000 charioteers & countless soldiers

Did this scare the brave Israelites who had God on their side?

1 Samuel 13:6-7 = Yes, some ran away & others hid in caves, etc

How many were left with Saul?

1 Samuel 13:15 = About 600

Good Intentions (1 Samuel 13:8-10)

What were the Israelites to do before entering any battle?

1 Samuel 7:5 = Call upon the Lord and seek His will

What had Samuel told Saul to do at Gilgal?

1 Samuel 10:8 = Wait 7 days for Samuel to come sacrifice & give instructions

What did Saul do when he saw the Philistines and Samuel had not yet come?

1 Samuel 13:8-10 = He offered the burnt offering himself

Rationalize This (1 Samuel 13:11-15)

How did Saul explain this to Samuel?

1 Samuel 13:11-12 = Men were leaving, you were late & I needed to call on the Lord

What was wrong with Saul's good intentions and what was his consequence?

1 Samuel 13:13-14 = He hadn't obeyed God's command, Saul's dynasty would stop

Which is more important, what you believe or how strongly you believe it?

Romans 10:1-4 = Saving faith must be based on trust in God's truth in Jesus

Lopsided Across the Pass (1 Samuel 13:16-14:3)

Where did Saul take his army after calling on God at Gilgal?

1 Samuel 13:16 = Gibeah – Saul's hometown, ~15 miles from Philistine camp at Micmash

Did the Philistines attack the Israelite army when they arrived?

1 Samuel 13:17-18 = No, they sent raiding parties to plunder and demoralize the people

Who was with Saul at Gibeah?

1 Samuel 14:2-3 = 600 men & Ahijah the priest - Eli's great grandson

Where had Jonathan gone?

1 Samuel 13:23-14:1 = Took his armor-bearer to the Philistine outpost

By Many or By Few (1 Samuel 14:4-14)

Was Jonathan trying to become a hero? = Showed his faithfulness

1 Samuel 14:6-7 = No, he trusted that God would give victory - *by many or by few*

He had not inquired of the Lord. How would he know if God was with him?

1 Samuel 14:8-10 = *Come up ... will be a sign to us that the Lord has given them into our hands*

What did the Philistines think when they saw Jonathan and his armor bearer?

1 Samuel 14:11-12 = *The Hebrews are crawling out of their holes*

Was Jonathan correct in trusting God for success?

1 Samuel 14:13-14 = They killed 20 Philistines

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A Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On (1 Samuel 14:15-23)

How did God use Jonathan's success to save Israel from this massive army?

1 Samuel 14:15-16 = God sent earthquake & panic to Philistine army & army melted away

How did Saul again show his weak faith? = Do we sometimes act like we don't have time for God?

1 Samuel 14:17-19 = Didn't inquire of God when he thought it would take too long

Did God withdraw the support He began with Jonathan?

1 Samuel 14:20-23 = No, He caused Philistines to turn on each other, Israel pursued

What a Sweet Son (1 Samuel 14:24-30)

What rash vow had Saul made during the heat of the battle at Gilgal?

1 Samuel 14:24 = Curse on anyone who eats before evening

How did this vow make things difficult on the men?

1 Samuel 14:25-26 = There was sweet honey ready to eat all over and men were tired & hungry

Did anyone disobey Saul and eat any of the honey?

1 Samuel 14:27-28 = Jonathan did without knowing about the curse

How did Jonathan respond when he learned what he had done?

1 Samuel 14:29-30 = He said his father had made a stupid and costly command

Blood Hungry (1 Samuel 14:31-34)

How was the situation worsened when evening fell and the men were able to eat?

1 Samuel 14:31-33a = They were famished and ate meat without first draining the blood

Why was eating meat with blood in it a problem?

Leviticus 17:10-11 (10-14) = Life is in the blood and to be used only for atonement with God

How did Saul solve the problem?

1 Samuel 14:33b-34 = Set up a stone for the animals to be properly slaughtered

Jonathan or God? (1 Samuel 14:35-45)

Did Saul recognize God's hand in the victory and continued pursuit?

1 Samuel 14:35-37 = Built an altar in thanks, but didn't inquire of God until priest recommended it

How did Saul use bad judgment in handling God's lack of response?

1 Samuel 14:38-40 = Said that whoever sinned must die, even if it was Jonathan

How did they find who was responsible?

1 Samuel 14:41-42 = They threw lots, Fell to Jonathan

Did Saul regret and try to take back his word to protect his son?

1 Samuel 14:43-44 = No, he called God's curse on himself if he didn't kill Jonathan

How long did Saul wait before he killed Jonathan as he had promised? = Men over faithfulness to God

1 Samuel 14:45 = Men didn't want their hero killed, Saul broke his promise to God

Why was it wrong for Saul not to kill his son? = We're responsible for consequences of our sinful actions

Judges 11:30-31, 35 = Worse to break a promise to God, Better to have never made the vow

Saul's Enemies (1 Samuel 14:46-52)

How much longer did Saul fight the Philistines?

1 Samuel 14:46, 52 = Stopped now, but continued to fight them all of his life

Did Saul contend with any other enemies? = Enemies on every side

1 Samuel 14:47-48 = Moab & Ammon (east), Edom (south), Philistia (west), Zobah (north)

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Yet Another Strike (1 Samuel 15:1-11)

What was Saul's next command from God? = Amalekites were descendants of Esau (Genesis 36:9-12)

1 Samuel 15:1-3 = Wipe out the Amalekites, destroy everything

Why did God want the Amalekites wiped out? = God had promised to blot out memory of Amalek
Exodus 17:8, 11-14 (Deut. 25:17-19) = Amalekites attacked Israel at beginning of exodus

Did Saul follow God's instructions?

1 Samuel 15:7-9 = No, he spared Agag & best of livestock

How did God and Samuel feel about Saul's disobedience?

1 Samuel 15:10-11 = God was sorry he'd made Saul king, Samuel mourned

Good Intentions - Part 2 (1 Samuel 15:12-23)

How did Saul explain his actions to Samuel?

1 Samuel 15:13-15 = We saved the best to sacrifice to God

Had Saul really won this battle for the glory of God?

1 Samuel 15:12 = Saul made a monument to himself in Carmel

How did Samuel remind Saul that he had become great from nothing?

1 Samuel 15:17-19 (16-19) = You were small, God anointed you king, you disobeyed

Did Saul then confess his mistake or try to pass the blame?

1 Samuel 15:20-21 = The soldiers kept the best things...for sacrifice

What was wrong with the good intentions Saul said he had?

1 Samuel 15:22-23 (Matthew 23:23-24; Amos 4:4-5; Isaiah 1) = *To obey is better than sacrifice*

Reject God and Be Rejected (1 Samuel 15:24-35)

Did Saul then come clean and confess his guilt?

1 Samuel 15:24-25 = He said he was wrong, but blamed it on the people

What was Saul's consequence for rejecting God's instructions?

1 Samuel 15:26-28 (26-19) = God would take the kingdom and give it to another

Was Saul concerned with getting right with God? = Wanted to look good to others

1 Samuel 15:30-31 = *Honor me before the elders ... and before Israel*

What important job did Samuel personally make sure was completed?

1 Samuel 15:32-33 = He killed Agag

Why did Samuel never meet with Saul again?

1 Samuel 15:34-35 = He mourned that God had rejected Saul as king

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. After I'm gone, will others say I lived an honest and faithful life?
(1 Samuel 12:1-5; 2 Kings 12:15; Job 1:8; Proverbs 21:29; Matthew 25:21; Acts 20:24)
2. What sins have I excused because I did them with what I thought were good intentions?
(1 Samuel 13:5-14; Psalm 119:29-30; Proverbs 14:12; Acts 26:9-18; Hebrews 4:12)
3. When have I seen God use few to accomplish what should take many?
(1 Samuel 14:6-14; Judges 7, 2 Kings 6:15-17; Matthew 14:15-21; Romans 8:31)
4. When have I said or done something that caused someone else to sin?
(1 Samuel 14:24-30; 2 Kings 21:22, 25; Matthew 5:29-30; 23:13-14; Luke 17:1-2)
5. When have I gone through the motions rather than truly worshiping God?
(1 Samuel 15:22; Psalm 51:16-17; Proverbs 21:3; Amos 4:4-5; Isaiah 1; Matthew 23)