

Small Group Study

OUR VISION

To know God and enjoy Him forever.

OUR MISSION

To build a Christian community by making fully devoted disciples of non-religious and nominally religious people



DISCUSSION

Questions of Faith: Growing in Faith through Obedience

Read 1 Samuel 15:1-3.

As chapter 15 opens, the prophet Samuel brings a critical message to King Saul. We recall that Samuel had anointed Saul as king at the direction of the LORD. Now, the Lord has a direct command for Saul and delivers it through Samuel. The Amalekites are enemies of Israel and had been a hindrance to them when the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt. The LORD now commands Saul to kill all the Amalekites, including their women and children, and all of their livestock.

1. Has God ever directed you to do something that seemed impossible? What was it?
2. Is God directing you to do something now that appears too big or too outlandish? What is it?

Read 1 Samuel 15:4-12.

Saul goes to war against the Amalekites and sets an ambush against them. But, Saul redefines the Lord's command. Instead of killing all the Amalekites, he spares their king, Agag. Instead of slaughtering all their livestock, he saves the best animals. Then, he goes to Carmel and erects a monument to himself.

3. Why do you think Saul decided to spare King Agag? What do you think were Saul's reasons for keeping the best livestock, even after he was told to slaughter them all?

ICE BREAKER

Use ONE of the questions to help people open up and to focus your meeting. It is very helpful to go around in a circle with the leader going first. (Remember if you have new members or guests you should take time to introduce everyone.)

1. If we were to have met you as a teenager, describe the kind of person we would have met.
2. Tell us about a time when you won a trophy or a prize. Or tell us about something that you're pretty good at.
3. What's one thing you've had to do in life that you really didn't want to do? Tell us about it.

4. In what areas in your life do you redefine your obedience to God? How do you rationalize your "redefined" obedience? In what areas of your life do you have the most difficulty obeying God?

Read 1 Samuel 15:13-21

The LORD regrets that He made Saul king. He reveals His feelings to Samuel. When Samuel confronts him, Saul immediately protests his innocence. He claims that he kept the prize sheep and cattle so he could make a sacrifice to Samuel's LORD. Besides, he claims it really wasn't his idea in the first place. He blames his army.

5. How did Saul try to rationalize that his disobedience was really obedience?

6. How do you rationalize when you are disobedient and don't want to admit it?

7. In what way do you believe that living a completely obedient life could cost you your career, friendships, and social status?

8. In what areas are you using your hard work, sacrifice, or generosity to make up for being disobedient?

Read 1 Samuel 15:22-35.

Samuel rebukes Saul, declaring that the LORD values obedience over sacrifice and rejects rebellious and presumptuous leaders as much as sorcerers and idolaters. The Lord rejects Saul as king, promising to anoint another. Saul pleads with Samuel, saying that the real reason he was disobedient was his fear of the men in his army. Nevertheless, Samuel tells Saul that the LORD does not go back on His word and that he indeed was rejected.

9. What must you give up in order to be obedient to God in all things? Specifically, what price must you pay to be obedient to God in all areas of your life?

10. Are there any monuments to yourself that you must tear down?

Christ sets the ultimate standard for obedience.

Read Matthew 26:36 - 39.

Jesus knows that the hour has come when He will be betrayed, mocked, scourged, stripped naked, nailed to the cross, forsaken by His Father, and die. As the Son of God, Jesus has the power to do whatever He wants. During His agony in Gethsemane, Jesus is in brutal anguish and distress. He throws Himself to the ground and calls out to His Father, "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine." (v. 39). And again He cries out, "My Father! If this cup cannot be taken away unless I drink it, your will be done." (v. 42). In obedience, Jesus goes to the cross.

11. Is there a cup that God is calling you to drink? What is it?
12. What are you doing today that is a reflection of your will and not God's will?
13. What steps are you taking today to be Christ-like in your obedience?
14. Who is helping you take these steps on a daily basis?

God bless,
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