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**Key Scripture:** "But Samuel replied: "Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams." **1 Samuel 15 v22 (AMP)**

In 1 Samuel 15 v 1- 23, the bible shows us how God values obedience to his instruction(s) over sacrifice. This story highlights Obedience to instructions has a principle that God values and rewards faithfully. Our God is a God of principles, and his principles doesn't break rank or defy the order he has laid down. Every instruction God gave us is tied to our purpose which is the purpose he has called us to fulfill in his divine agenda. To every instruction God gives, obedience is demanded and God's instructions are always clear and oftentimes follow the channel or order he has established. God would not come down to give instructions to his people, No, he sends men that he has set over them as his spokesman to pass these instructions to them. These spokesmen come as spiritual parents, ministers of the gospel & leaders that he has placed over us as his earthly representatives. God is a God of principles, he does not break ranks.

### Bible Case Study of King Saul (1 Samuel 15 v 1- 23)

In verse 3 of the above chapter, God's instruction came to King Saul through the Prophet Samuel " 3 Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy[a] all that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys" The instruction was clear to King Saúl, for this reason God appointed Saul as King over Israel to carry out his purpose. Instructions come to us for God's purpose to be carried out through us. To obey God's instruction is to carry out his purpose on earth! God's instructions to us are not too hard for us nor are they burdensome. We obey God because we love & trust him and this love is demonstrated by our obedience to his commands / instructions. (1 John 5 v3)

### Saul's Disobedience

From vs. 17-23 Saul disobeyed God's the instructions to him, the prophet God sent to deliver this instructions clearly told him not to spare anything. Saul obeyed but not



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completely, he was told to destroy everything including the animals but he spared king Agag of the Amalekites and kept all the livestock's for himself. Let us examine Saul's reply in verse 20 "20 "But I did obey the Lord," Saul said. "I went on the mission the Lord assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king. 21 The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, to sacrifice them to the Lord your God at Gilgal." The Prophet Samuel said to King Saul "God sent you on a mission, saying, 'Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; wage war against them until you have wiped them out.' 19 Why did you not obey the Lord? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the Lord?" Gods' instructions are for doing & it must be done as exact as the instructions. Saul was after sacrifice not obedience and that is disobedience to God. By not following the direct instructions but decided to keep some of the spoils of war and keeping alive Agag the king of the Amalekites, Saul had rejected the word of God. God & his word are one! Saul disobeyed God's instructions thereby, rejecting God and God had no choice than to reject him also.

## **The Character of God: God honors his principles**

**Why did God anoint Saul?** The kingdom of God functions by laws and principles like any other kingdom and these principles are set out by God. God chose Saul as king to carry out his will over his people (Israel); that is the purpose of Saul as King! He also appointed a priest/prophet as his earthly Spokesman to deliver his instructions to the king so that God's divine purposes are carried out according to his will.

God through his prophet Samuel gave instructions to King Saul to destroy the Amalekites because they did not show kindness to the people of Israel and waylaid them when they came out from Egypt (1 Samuel 15 vs 2-3). God wanted to punish the Amalekites for this wickedness. When God spare a man/people; he spares the creation alongside such as livestock's, land and elements of the earth that such man /people has interacted with. Remember in Genesis, God gave dominion over the earth; this means that creation functions under the influence/rulership of man. Therefore, when God wants to destroy a people; he destroys both man & animals and the elements of the earth he had influenced / used alongside, because they also are now corrupted. Likewise, when he spares a nation even the livestock is preserved alongside the people. We understand this more in the New Testament; the bible says the earth in Romans 8 v20 "19 For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that[h] the creation itself will be



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liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. Now we understand why God instructed King Saul to destroy Amalekites and not spare anyone or anything even the animals.

Another character of God portrayed in this story, is that God does not break ranks. God went back to Samuel his priest to tell Saul of his verdict. God did not go directly to Saul rather he went through the channel of authority he laid down for King Saul. Prophet Samuel was not there when Saul carried out his actions of disobedience; but God was watching, he saw everything and because it was Samuel God used to anoint Saul as King, it was also by him he dethroned him from the Kingship position over Israel.

### The Lesson for us

"A teaspoon of obedience is better than a lorry full of prayer" means that obedience supersedes prayer of repentance. Running from God's instruction is futile for there is no hiding place from God, he sees all & everything. As believers in Christ, we must set our heart to obedience; it does not matter who is watching, God is watching, the Holy Spirit bears witness even the angels assigned to us are taking notes of all our actions. Half obedience is no obedience rather our obedience must always be complete. (2 Corinthians 10 v6)

As gatekeepers in God's kingdom, we must make sure to get the instructions rightly by paying attention, and following through every instruction God sends to us. God is not the son of man that he should lie nor repent, it is only men that lies and needs repentance. He is God! The Bible says as many that are led by the spirit of God he called them sons of God, he did not call them children but Sons ! (Romans 8:14 (AMP)) Saul did not allow himself to be led by the spirit of God, but he led himself!

In IWMI, the watchman/prophet set over us is the Executive Director of IWMI. For example, this is a period of intense fasting & God has sent her with instructions for us to fast. The question is are you obediente to this instruction? Is your obedience complete ? Are you fasting according to instructions/or you choose to obey only a part of the instruction? God is not only interested in how long you obeyed , but also how well you obeyed according to his guidelines. . In the case of King Saul, he destroyed everything but kept the King Agag & the livestock alive instead of destroying everything as God had instructed.



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In Proverbs 16 v20 the bible tells us that God blesses those who obey him; happy is the man who puts his trust in the Lord.

**Reflection:** When an instruction is given, do you choose to obey? The bible says the path of the just is like a shining light; who are the just? "the just are the obedient ones".

**In conclusion,** choose to obey God's instructions always. The Bible says there are many things in a man's heart but only the plan of God that will stand. Choose to obey those that God has placed to lead you, be accountable and always remember that God desires your complete obedience at all times. Praise the lord !

