

David's Spiritual Secret-- How NOT to serve the Lord or, How to waste your life 1st Samuel 15

There is a chorus we often sing, "The greatest thing in all my life—is loving You, knowing You, serving You..."

Those are precious words, if they are true, and they are. And if the Bible ends with those who know, love and serve the Lord doing so forever—and it does. Then the most important element in our life is that knowing, loving, and serving the Lord!

So we could say the greatest way we could invest our lives and live them well would be serving God.

But then the opposite would also be true. ***The worst way to live, and the greatest waste of a life would be to live for anything but serving the Lord!***

We have been considering the greatest servant in the Bible named David. His life is recorded more completely than any other—so we know more about how he served the Lord than any of Biblical character.

God's Word often teaches us by mean of contrasts. This morning I'd like you to join me looking at one of the sharpest in the Bible—the comparison of David and Saul. It is also one of the most sobering.

Side by side in God's Word is the amazing record God left us of the life of David who served God all his days—and the equally amazing record of Saul who didn't serve God all his days. This proximity of 'how to serve' and 'how not to serve' is very insightful.

I Samuel 17 is the record of the boy who stood all alone for God and saw the reality of what God can do through a person who is completely His—David had a heart to stand.

1st Samuel 16 is the record of the boy who would grow into the man after God's own heart—David was a servant who loved and served God. But what happens in the chapter before all that? What precipitated the anointing of David by Samuel?

1st Samuel 15 tells us that David was chosen because of King Saul's unwillingness to serve the Lord. Remember that this book the Bible is God's Word—and is also supernaturally engineered by God. The Spirit of God planned every word, every verse,

and every chapter of every book. There is no place, person or event that just happened to get included. The Lord has master planned this book, engineering it to point to Christ in every way possible.

This morning may I challenge you about how to NOT serve God? That is exactly what we see when we start in 1st Samuel 15. This chapter captures why God picked David, and why God rejected Saul. If you ever want to be sure that you are on God's Team and stay there—be sure you understand this chapter.

Please stand with me and listen to one of the saddest chapters in the Bible—First Samuel 15.

Now go back with me through this chapter and note the glaring examples God records for us in ways to fail, waste your life. Here is how not to serve the Lord!

1. **Ignore clear and direct statements about what God wants you to do.** 1 Samuel 15: 1-7 Samuel also said to Saul, "The Lord sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the Lord. 2 Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt. 3 Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.' " 4 So Saul gathered the people together and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men of Judah. 5 And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and lay in wait in the valley. 6 Then Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart, get down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt." So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. 7 And Saul attacked the Amalekites, from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt. NKJV

What are some real clear and direct statements from God about what He wants us to do?

- *Mark 16: 15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. NKJV*
- *John 15: 12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. NKJV*
- *Romans 12: 1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. NKJV*

If you want to fail what God made you to do and be and waste your life—**just ignore clear and direct statements about what God wants you to do.**

2. **Pick and choose from what God clearly tells you to do so that you offer**

God selective and partial obedience. 1 Samuel 15:8 He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. NKJV

Remember that the clearest way to declare that you love the Lord is by obedience.

- *John 14:21 He who has My commandments **and keeps them**, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” NKJV*

If you want to fail what God made you to do and be and waste your life—**just pick and choose from what God clearly tells you to do so that you offer God selective and partial obedience.**

3. **Hold on to the best and nicest parts of what God hates and has asked for you to destroy, and keep them for your own use.** 1 Samuel 15:9a But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them...NKJV

Jesus told us what He thinks of loving what He hates—

James 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. NKJV

If you want to fail what God made you to do and be and waste your life—**just Hold on to the best and nicest parts of what God hates and has asked for you to destroy, and keep them for your own use.**

4. **Only give God what you don't want anyway and is worthless to you.** 1 Samuel 15:9b ... But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed. NKJV

Jesus told us how to live for eternal gain—

Matthew 16:24-27 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. NKJV

God deserves the first, the best, the costliest of our time, treasures, and talents. If you want to fail what God made you to do and be and waste your life—**just give God what you don't want anyway and is worthless to you.**

5. **Honor yourself before others and remind people of your accomplishments instead of honoring the Lord.** 1 Samuel 15:12 So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, “Saul went to Carmel, and

indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal." NKJV

Jesus' harshest criticisms were for the proud religious leaders.

Matthew 23: 1-12 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, 2 saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3 Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. 4 For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. 5 But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. 6 They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, 7 greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.' 8 But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. 9 Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. 10 And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. 11 But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. NKJV

If you want to fail what God made you to do and be and waste your life—**just Honor yourself before others and remind people of your accomplishments instead of honoring the Lord.**

6. **Be deceptive about the true condition of your spiritual life by making false claims about your dedication to God.** 1 Samuel 15:13 Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the Lord! I have performed the commandment of the Lord." NKJV

Jesus honored honesty and condemned hypocrisy.

Luke 18: 9-14 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' 13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." NKJV

If you want to fail what God made you to do and be and waste your life—**just Be deceptive about the true condition of your spiritual life by making false claims about your dedication to God.**

7. **Blame others for your own personal failures.** 1 Samuel 15:15a And Saul said, “**They** have brought them from the Amalekites; **for the people spared** the best of the sheep and the oxen...NKJV

If you want to fail what God made you to do and be and waste your life—**just Blame others for your own personal failures.**

The ominous warning of Saul’s life is that he had everything going for him possible. He was big, strong, blessed, gifted, chosen, empowered, and given every opportunity to serve God. But he didn’t. Saul failed because there were severe deficiencies in his character.

- God doesn’t need brains—He wants character.
- God doesn’t need brawn (huge strong muscles)—He wants integrity.
- God doesn’t need anyone’s wisdom, power, or wealth—He wants obedience.
- God doesn’t need ambitious confidence—He wants humble dependence.

Saul had money, muscles, and charisma—but he didn’t have integrity, humility, and a servant’s heart. So Saul was a colossal failure. Why not look at Saul’s ending as we begin our lesson in How NOT to serve the Lord this morning? Turn with me to 1st Samuel 31. Look at Saul’s end—his last supper with a witch (1st Samuel 28:3-8) and his death surrounded by his dead sons (1st Samuel 31:2).