

**Digging Deeper Samuel Week 5**

Today we will begin by looking at Samuel's farewell address – one of my favorite parts of this entire study. This is his farewell address to the people of Israel but we will continue to see him involved for many more chapters until his death.

*1 Samuel 12:1-2 And Samuel said to all Israel, "Behold, I have obeyed your voice in all that you have said to me and have made a king over you. 2 And now, behold, the king walks before you, and I am old and gray; and behold, my sons are with you. I have walked before you from my youth until this day.*

J. Vernon McGee in his "Through the Bible Commentary" on 1 Samuel says this, "Samuel was brought up in the tabernacle. His life was spent in a "fish-bowl" – he was always in public view." While this couldn't have been easy, Samuel served God and the people faithfully and he began his ministry at the age of three. Ministers today live in much the same type of fish-bowl as they live and work in the community where they serve and are often under the microscope of those they serve. Living in a fish-bowl is never easy. Have you ever had a time in your life where you were living in a fish-bowl, where everything you did was done under a microscope? What was that like?

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Samuel then goes on to ask the people to examine his life – he opens himself up for the people to judge how he has lived his life. I don't think many of us would be willing to do that, even by our friends or family let alone people we work for or serve.

*1 Samuel 12:3-5 Here I am; testify against me before the Lord and before his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Or whose donkey have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or from whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with it? Testify against me and I will restore it to you." 4 They said, "You have not defrauded us or oppressed us or taken anything from any man's hand." 5 And he said to them, "The Lord is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand." And they said, "He is witness."*

Samuel's focus is on his integrity and I'm guessing that is because his sons took bribes and he was making a distinction between them and him. What would it be like if you were to ask your friends to examine your life or to ask those whom you serve to examine your life? During this season of Lent we should be asking the Lord to examine our lives. What has the Lord revealed to you during Lent? If you are brave enough, ask someone who knows you well how you are serving the Lord or how your life reflects Christ. It is a vulnerable thing to do but can also be eye-opening. There can be little things we do or attitudes we show that we aren't even aware of and small shifts in attitudes or words can make a big difference.

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1 Samuel 12:6-13 *And Samuel said to the people, "The Lord is witness, who appointed Moses and Aaron and brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt. <sup>7</sup> Now therefore stand still that I may plead with you before the Lord concerning all the righteous deeds of the Lord that he performed for you and for your fathers. <sup>8</sup> When Jacob went into Egypt, and the Egyptians oppressed them, then your fathers cried out to the Lord and the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your fathers out of Egypt and made them dwell in this place. <sup>9</sup> But they forgot the Lord their God. And he sold them into the hand of Sisera, commander of the army of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab. And they fought against them. <sup>10</sup> And they cried out to the Lord and said, 'We have sinned, because we have forsaken the Lord and have served the Baals and the Ashtaroth. But now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, that we may serve you.' <sup>11</sup> And the Lord sent Jerubbaal and Barak and Jephthah and Samuel and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and you lived in safety. <sup>12</sup> And when you saw that Nahash the king of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us,' when the Lord your God was your king. <sup>13</sup> And now behold the king whom you have chosen, for whom you have asked; behold, the Lord has set a king over you.*

List all of the reminders Samuel is giving the Israelites of the Lord's faithfulness to them.

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Do we remind others of the faithfulness of God by sharing with them what God has done for us? What is the last thing you shared with someone else about how God has been faithful to you? Do you need to be more intentional about sharing with others or reminding others of the faithfulness of God. At the beginning of this study I said that we are not to just consume – what we learn and what the Lord reveals to us in this study is not just for us – we are not to be hoarders of these things but sharers. What have you shared with others from this study?

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1 Samuel 12:14-15 *If you will fear the Lord and serve him and obey his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the Lord your God, it will be well. <sup>15</sup> But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then the hand of the Lord will be against you and your king.*

There are two things that Samuel says are required of the people – fear of the Lord and obedience. This type of fear is not necessarily a trembling kind of fear but more of an awe and reverence, although it can lead to trembling. Oswald Chambers says, "The remarkable thing about God is that

when you fear God, you fear nothing else. Whereas if you do not fear God, you fear everything else.”  
What do you think about this quote – what do you fear?

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Samuel makes it clear to the people that their wickedness is great. Look at how the people respond.

*1 Samuel 12:19 And all the people said to Samuel, “Pray for your servants to the Lord your God, that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for ourselves a king.”*

Once again we see the people asking Samuel to pray to the Lord for them. They are acknowledging their sinfulness. The Israelites, much like us, find themselves in a continuous pattern of obedience followed by rebellion and disobedience followed by a crying out to the Lord and a returning to Him. How have you seen that pattern play out in your own life? Where do you find yourself in that cycle today?

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In Samuel’s response we see the graciousness of our God.

*1 Samuel 12:20-21 And Samuel said to the people, “Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil. Yet do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. <sup>21</sup> And do not turn aside after empty things that cannot profit or deliver, for they are empty.*

Take heart if you find yourself in the midst of rebellion and disobedience – there is hope. The Lord says the same thing to us – you have done all this evil – yet do not turn aside from following me, but serve me with all your heart.

Your past doesn’t determine your future. No matter what you have done in your past or what you are currently doing, it is never too late to change course – to choose to follow the Lord and to serve Him. Nothing you have done, are doing, will do and nothing that has been done to you disqualifies you from serving the Lord. The enemy wants nothing more than for us to believe that we cannot be used by God and that is a LIE – John 8:44 says Satan is a liar and the father of lies. **DO NOT LISTEN TO HIM!** Is there something from your past that you feel is holding you back? Confess it, repent and turn from it towards the Lord and accept His amazing grace and love. Is there someone you know that needs to hear this message – reach out to them today in obedience.

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*1 Samuel 12:22 For the Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you a people for himself.*

The Lord will NOT forsake His people – not because of WHO WE ARE but BECAUSE OF WHO HE IS.

Ephesians 1:4 even as he(God the Father) chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him

When does Ephesians say He chose us?

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The Lord is omniscient – He is all knowing. He chose us knowing the mistakes we would make, knowing how unfaithful, rebellious and disobedient we would be. And yet, He chose us. He chose you and He chose me – with all of our faults and flaws. Take a few minutes to thank the Lord for choosing you and ask Him who might need to be reminded of this truth today.

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*John 15:16 Jesus said, You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide*

Jesus chose us first – it starts with Him – not with us. I think we often get that confused when we say I invited Jesus into my heart, I accepted Jesus, I put my faith and trust in Jesus. All of that is true but we couldn't invite Him into our hearts if He didn't choose us first, we couldn't accept Him as our Lord and Savior if He didn't choose us first, we couldn't put our faith and trust in Him if He didn't choose us first. Have you gotten that a bit twisted or turned around? Have you put more emphasis on you choosing Him rather than Him first choosing you? Does your faith story start with Him or you?

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*1 Samuel 12:23 Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you, and I will instruct you in the good and the right way.*

Samuel took his duty to be a prayer warrior for the Israelites seriously. J Vernon McGee in his "Through the Bible Commentary" on 1 Samuel says, "Each one of us has a prayer responsibility." Think about that – we have a prayer responsibility just as Samuel did – who are you responsible for lifting to the Lord in prayer? If you don't know – ask the Lord.

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J. Vernon McGee goes on to say, “You too have a responsibility, Christian friend. We ought to pray for one another. There are many needy people. God forbid that we should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for one another.” Take a minute to take in that responsibility – have you been faithful in prayer? This is not to be guilt inducing and cause you to feel shame – shame is of the enemy and it will paralyze you – it is to be a wake up call that we ALL need to up our prayer game. Samuel was a prayer warrior for the people – do you have prayer warriors? Are you willing to share your prayer needs with others – if not, perhaps you are struggling with pride because asking someone to pray for you requires vulnerability and humility – an admission that you can’t do it yourself that you need help. Spend some time asking the Lord to examine your prayer life and record what He says to you.

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We are now entering the portion of Scripture where we will see clearly the downfall of King Saul begin.

*1 Samuel 13:3-4a Jonathan defeated the garrison of the Philistines that was at Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, “Let the Hebrews hear.”<sup>4</sup> And all Israel heard it said that Saul had defeated the garrison of the Philistines,*

Jonathan is Saul’s son and he has victory over this garrison of the Philistines but who took credit for the victory?

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Surely the soldiers who were with Jonathan knew who won the victory and the soldiers that were with Saul would have known that Saul didn’t fight this battle and yet Saul still takes the credit. It is easy to want to take the credit of what others have done if it will further our career or if it will make people think more highly of us. Even if we don’t take credit, perhaps we exaggerate our role. Have you ever taken credit for something someone else did or perhaps you exaggerated your role? Or has someone else taken credit for something you did? How did you respond?

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The Philistines respond to this defeat by sending 30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen and troops to come against the Israelites. The Israelites responded with fear and dread and hide in caves and tombs and even fled eastward across the Jordan. Let's look at how King Saul handles this.

*1 Samuel 13:8-9 He waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him. <sup>9</sup> So Saul said, "Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings." And he offered the burnt offering.*

Because Samuel didn't come, Saul took matters into his own hands. Saul took over Samuel's job out of impatience. When have you taken over someone's job out of impatience? Think about when a child is learning to dress themselves or tie their shoes – is it hard to let them do it by themselves when we can do it more efficiently. Do you have trouble being patient for your child or grandchild to do tasks themselves?

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*1 Samuel 12:10-12 As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came. And Saul went out to meet him and greet him. <sup>11</sup> Samuel said, "What have you done?" And Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash, <sup>12</sup> I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the favor of the Lord.' So I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering."*

Saul reacted out of fear – fear that the people were scattering from him, fear that Samuel was not there and fear of the approaching Philistines. Reacting out of fear never ends well. Elisabeth Elliot says, "Far arises when we imagine that everything is dependent upon us." Sounds pretty much like Saul. When have you responded or reacted out of fear and how did it go?

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Samuel tells Saul that his kingdom will not continue because Saul has not kept the command of the Lord and the Lord will find a man after His own heart to rule His people. While Saul is not demonstrating his faith in the Lord, we do see his son Jonathan showing his faith.

*1 Samuel 14:5 Jonathan said to the young man who carried his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised. It may be that the Lord will work for us, for nothing can hinder the Lord from saving by many or by few."*

Jonathan trusted the Lord to work for them and knew that nothing was impossible for the Lord – even if they were outnumbered, he trusted the Lord to give them victory.

Luke 1:37 *For nothing will be impossible with God.*  
Romans 8:31 ... *If God is for us, who can be against us?*

Does your faith resemble that of Saul or that of Jonathan? Do you trust the Lord even when it seems like the odds are stacked against you? Do you believe that if the Lord is with you – no one can really be against you?

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Jonathan has success thanks to the Lord.

The Lord has another job for Saul.

*1 Samuel 15:1-3 And Samuel said to Saul, "The Lord sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel; now therefore listen to the words of the Lord. 2 Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'I have noted what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way when they came up out of Egypt. 3 Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"*

While the had military victory over the Amalekites – look at how Saul followed Samuel’s instructions.

*1 Samuel 15:9 **But Saul and the people spared** Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fattened calves and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them. All that was despised and worthless they devoted to destruction.*

Notice that Saul and the people did NOT follow the instructions of the Lord via Samuel completely – they followed it partially. They followed the part they wanted and didn’t follow the rest. Priscilla Shirer says, ‘partial obedience is disobedience’ and we see that played out here. When have you been partially obedient to the Lord and what He asked for you to do?

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We are going to take a few minutes to dig into why the Lord might have ordered the complete destruction of the Amalekites.

*1 Samuel 15:2 Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'I have noted what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way when they came up out of Egypt.*

*Deuteronomy 25:17-18 "Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you came out of Egypt, 18 how he attacked you on the way when you were faint and weary, and cut off your tail, those who were lagging behind you, and he did not fear God. "*

The Amalekites had a history with God’s people and not a good one. The Amalekites did not show kindness to the Israelites and they would pay the ultimate price.

1 Samuel 15:5-6 *And Saul came to the city of Amalek and lay in wait in the valley. <sup>6</sup> Then Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart; go down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the people of Israel when they came up out of Egypt." So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.*

The Kenites were treated very differently from the Amalekites for two reasons – one is they showed kindness to the people of Israel where the Amalekites did not. The other reason why the Kenites were probably shown kindness was because they were descendants of Moses' father-in-law Jethro.

Judges 1:16 *And the descendants of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up with the people of Judah from the city of palms into the wilderness of Judah, which lies in the Negeb near Arad, and they went and settled with the people.*

We also know that Saul did not completely destroy all of the Amalekites because we see them on the scene again in the book of Esther. If you will recall, Haman, wants to kill all of God's people and Haman was an Amalekite.

Esther 3:1 *After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, and advanced him and set his throne above all the officials who were with him.*

The Agagites were named after King Agag and were believed to be part of the Amalekites. That's a lot of history but the important thing for us to remember is that we are to be COMPLETELY obedient to the Lord. If Saul had followed the Lord's instructions, there wouldn't have been any Agagites or Amalekites to bring further trouble on God's people in the time of Esther.

A report of what Saul has done comes to Samuel.

1 Samuel 15:10-11 *The word of the Lord came to Samuel: <sup>11</sup> "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments." And Samuel was angry, and he cried to the Lord all night.*

Samuel regretted having anything to do with Saul being king. He was angry but look at how he handled his anger – he cried out to the Lord all night. Have do you handle your anger? Do you take it out on someone else or do you take it to the Lord? Have you ever cried out to the Lord all night?

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This discussion continues between Samuel and Saul – much like a discussion between a parent and a child who is caught doing something wrong.

Samuel 15:16-21 *Then Samuel said to Saul, "Stop! I will tell you what the Lord said to me this night." And he said to him, "Speak." <sup>17</sup> And Samuel said, "Though you are little in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel? The Lord anointed you king over Israel. <sup>18</sup> And*



*the Lord sent you on a mission and said, 'Go, devote to destruction the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.' <sup>19</sup> Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Why did you pounce on the spoil and do what was evil in the sight of the Lord?" <sup>20</sup> And Saul said to Samuel, "I have obeyed the voice of the Lord. I have gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me. I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and I have devoted the Amalekites to destruction. <sup>21</sup> But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal."*

J. Vernon McGee in his "Through the Bible Commentary" on 1 Samuel says "Saul was the king and the one responsible." If you will recall in 1 Samuel 15:9 it states Saul and the people spared – not just the people. Remember Samuel wrote down the rights and responsibilities of the king and laid it out before the Lord? Saul had responsibilities as king. Rick Warren says "Leadership starts with understanding responsibility not ability. Leadership is a stewardship, not a show." Saul wanted the rewards and rights of being king but not the responsibility. When have you wanted the role and not the responsibility that went along with it – or maybe it was a title or a position that you desired but didn't want to have to do the work or deal with the headaches that went along with it?

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There is more back and forth between Samuel and Saul and this time Saul is begging for forgiveness and restoration.

*1 Samuel 15:24 Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice."*

Saul explains that he acted in disobedience to the Lord out of fear – not fear of the Lord but fear of the people.

*Galatians 1:10 For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.*

Whose approval are you trying to get, man or God? When have you wanted man's approval and when is an example of when you wanted the Lord's approval?

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Saul allowed his fear to trump his faith. When have you allowed your fear to trump your faith?

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I want to close with a verse from 1 Samuel 12.

*1 Samuel 12:24 Only fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you.*

What great things has the Lord done for you?

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