

Sin Deceives/Blinds

Key Scriptures: 1 Sam. 15:12-23

¹² And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning. And it was told Samuel, "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself and turned and passed on and went down to Gilgal." ¹³ And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed be you to the LORD. I have performed the commandment of the LORD." ¹⁴ And Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears and the lowing of the oxen that I hear?" ¹⁵ Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice to the LORD your God, and the rest we have devoted to destruction." ¹⁶ Then Samuel said to Saul, "Stop! I will tell you what the LORD said to me this night." And he said to him, "Speak." ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ 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.' ¹⁹ 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?" ²⁰ 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. ²¹ 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." ²² And Samuel said, "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. ²³ For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king."

Key Point: Sin deceives us into defending the very things we should be confessing—but God's grace invites us to face the truth and find forgiveness and freedom in Jesus.

TALK IT OVER

Start talking: Pick a conversation starter for your group.

- Have you ever confidently told someone how to do something, only to discover you were doing it wrong yourself? What happened?
- What's a household chore or responsibility you are especially good at finding excuses to avoid?

Reflect, Think, & Share: Read through the key scriptures and share any observations or questions with the group.

- What stands out to you about Saul's response when Samuel confronts him? How can someone be convinced they are doing the right thing when they are actually disobeying God? (compare v. 11)
- Where in the passage do you see Saul blame shifting and magnifying his goodness to minimize his sin? How many times does Saul lie?
- Why is it so easy to point to someone else's actions or circumstances instead of taking responsibility for our own choices? What might this look like in our lives?
- How might we use our good deeds (church involvement, service etc.) to excuse areas of disobedience in our lives?
- What does Psalm 19:12-13 tell us about the self-deceptiveness of sin and our proper response?
- What are the things Samuel is telling Saul in v.22-23?
- If rebellion is like divination/witchcraft, what does that mean? What are the implications? Why do you think God takes such a strong stand against it?
- No sin with the magnitude of rebellion "just happens." It's not an overnight occurrence. What prompts it? Are there hints that it is brewing before it surfaces?
- What are some of the benefits and values to having true and trusted Christian relationships where people speak into our lives? Do you feel you have these kinds of relationships? Why or why not?
- Do you see a parallel with how Saul acted, and what we discovered about sin last week in Genesis 4:6-7?

Start doing: Is there an area of your life where you might be defending yourself instead of allowing God to change you? If so, confess this immediately to God, and chose to speak about it with a friend who will both listen and help hold you accountable.

Prayer: Do you have any specific decisions or areas of life where you could use prayer from others? If you feel comfortable, share these issues with your study group so that they can pray with you and for you.

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