

ARMED FOR WAR Discipleship Course

SECTION 2 – True Character: Saul vs David

God wants the character and nature of Christ to be formed and forged in us. The Spirit of God is going to draw a clear line between the hot-hearted, born-again, sold-out children of God and everybody else.

It's time for a generation of Davids (those that are after His own heart) to rise up. But, right now, there is a significant number of Sauls that are at the helm of the leadership of the Church.

NKJV – 1 Samuel 8:1-5

¹Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. ²The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; *they were judges in Beersheba.* ³But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice. ⁴Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, ⁵and said to him, “Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.”

The people of Israel were not seen so much as a nation but as nomads. They were seen as wanderers for so much of their history, yet they wanted to be seen as a nation and have the respect of the world.

What was the sign of being a nation like all the other nations?

[A sign of a nation is that they have a king.](#)

NKJV – 1 Samuel 8:6&7

⁶But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.” So Samuel prayed to the LORD. ⁷And the LORD said to Samuel, “Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.

God said (paraphrasing):

*The moment you want to get the approval of the world,
you have begun to reject the authority of God over your life.*

But they rejected (just as we are now rejecting) God by saying, “No, no, no, no. We want to be somebody in this world. We want to be seen with respect. We don't want to be the church on the other side of the tracks. We don't want to be the ones that have been spoken of as ‘extreme’ or just ‘out there’, or spoken of as nobodies, just wanderers and as if we are nothing.”

The Bible says (paraphrasing): “We are foreigners and aliens in this world. We are strangers just journeying through.”

But just like the children of Israel, we're crying out, “God, give us a king. God, give us leaders (those in authority) who are powerful, famous, and influential so we can feel important.”

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And God told Samuel (See NKJV – 1 Samuel 8:7 above) (paraphrasing), “You tell them. You tell them they’ve rejected Me. (See NKJV – 1 Samuel 8:8-18 below) You warn them, that this is going to lead to bondage. This is going to lead to loss.”

NKJV – 1 Samuel 8:8-17 (reference)

⁸According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day—with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. ⁹Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them.” ¹⁰So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who asked him for a king. ¹¹And he said, “This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint *them* for his own chariots and *to be* his horsemen, and *some* will run before his chariots. ¹²He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, *will set some* to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and *some* to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. ¹³He will take your daughters *to be* perfumers, cooks, and bakers. ¹⁴And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give *them* to his servants. ¹⁵He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. ¹⁶And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put *them* to his work. ¹⁷He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants.”

*Sauls get into power
when God’s people want to be valued
in the eyes of the world.*

A Saul will always use his influence for himself. He will use his power to influence. He may do good things for the people to keep them happy, but ultimately it’s about himself. Remember, Sauls get into power when God’s people want to be valued in the eyes of the world.

*Sauls have the personality to gain power,
but not the character to handle it.*

We have many leaders out there who have the spirit of Saul on them, not the spirit of David. They are personality driven, but they are not character driven. Sauls can completely reject the true Word of God and at the exact same moment believe that they have fully and completely obeyed God. Sauls have the personality to get power, but they do not have the character to handle it.

Why is it not recommended for a novice to be appointed too quickly into leadership?

When someone is a novice, they have not gone through enough in life for the transformation of their character to be Christ like.

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Quick exaltation almost always leads to self destruction.

NKJV – 1 Timothy 3:2&6

²A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach...⁶not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil.

Sauls need the approval of the people. They find out ways how to get the people to like them, how to get the people to respond to them, how to keep the people happy, and how to keep the people coming back. Davids need only the approval of God.

A Saul personality influences people for empowerment.

NKJV – 1 Samuel 15:1-9

¹Samuel 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. ²Thus 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. ³Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, [God gave them specific instructions.] and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.’” ⁴So Saul gathered the people together and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men of Judah. ⁵And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and lay in wait in the valley. ⁶Then 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. ⁷And Saul attacked the Amalekites, from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt. [Watch this!] ⁸He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. ⁹But 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. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.

But God said (verse 3) (paraphrasing), “You go in there and destroy it all.” But they said (verse 9) (paraphrasing), “No, no, no. We’re going to do it a different way.

NKJV – 1 Samuel 15:10-13

¹⁰Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, ¹¹“I greatly regret that I have set up Saul *as* king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments.” And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the LORD all night. ¹²So 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.” ¹³Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, “Blessed *are* you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD.”

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Now we have just read that Saul clearly disobeyed God. He clearly did not do what God had told him to do. He clearly violated the commands of God. God spoke these instructions to the Prophet Samuel who told Saul what God had said.

Sauls always live in a realm of deception and are leaders of God's people, and they believe that they are doing the will of God when they've completely violated the Word of God. And Saul said (verse 13), "...I've done the commandment of the Lord."

Continuing (verses 14&15):

NKJV – 1 Samuel 15:14&15

¹⁴But Samuel said, "What then *is* this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" ¹⁵And Saul said, "[Oh, they, the people] They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people [not Saul] spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed."

Saul didn't say, "The Lord **our** God." He didn't say, "The Lord **my** God." He said, "The Lord **your** God." Saul said (paraphrasing), "Samuel, oh no, no, no – it's going to be alright. We know God said to destroy the best, but you know what, we had a better plan. We're going to gather all the best and we're going to give it to God. Oh God is going to be so happy with us!"

Continuing (verses 16-21):

NKJV – 1 Samuel 15:16-21

¹⁶Then Samuel said to Saul, "Be quiet! [That wouldn't go over in our seeker-sensitive churches... "Shut up king!"] And I will tell you what the LORD said to me last night." And he said to him, "Speak on." ¹⁷So Samuel said, "When you *were* little in your own eyes, *were* you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the LORD anoint you king over Israel? ¹⁸Now the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.' ¹⁹Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the LORD?" ²⁰And Saul said to Samuel, "But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. ²¹But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal."

Saul in essence was saying, "Hey Samuel, listen. You don't understand. Ministry and leading God's people is about politics. You've got to have some political aspects about you. You've got to be a little political. You've got to know how to motivate the people. Sometimes people want things but they have a good heart. They don't want it for themselves. They just wanted to sacrifice to God. And so I let them do that. It's OK. God doesn't mind. God understands."

Modern Sauls might say, "This is what leadership in His people (in His Church) takes. Leadership means for us to water down the Word sometimes. Leadership means for us to not demand God's people to do fully what God said. Leadership means for us to have a little compromise and a little understanding of the deal." Saul continued to plead his case by saying (paraphrasing), "See Samuel, you don't understand. These people are not as mature as maybe

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you are because you are a Prophet of God. You can clearly do it, but these people need to have a little more freedom and we've gotta have a little mercy on them.”

Saul was afraid that if he stood up and said, “No, you need to utterly destroy...”, that the people would revolt against him and he would lose his power. Remember, this is because Sauls need the approval of people in order to retain power and position (and wealth).

*Sauls need the crowd, they need the fame, they need the popularity,
and they need to feel like they are somebody.*

Let's quickly look at David in contrast to Saul:

NKJV – 1 Samuel 24:2-7

²Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David [to kill him] and his men on the Rocks of the Wild Goats. ³So he came to the sheepfolds by the road, where there *was* a cave; and Saul went in to attend to his needs. [David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave.] ⁴Then the men of David said to him, “This is the day of which the LORD said to you, ‘Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it seems good to you.’” And David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul’s robe. ⁵Now it happened afterward that David’s heart troubled him because he had cut Saul’s robe. ⁶And he said to his men, “The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the LORD’s anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he *is* the anointed of the LORD.” ⁷So David restrained his servants with *these* words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul. And Saul got up from the cave and went on *his* way.

How did David respond to the pressure of the people?

He was not going to be pressured by the people, or need their approval. He only needed the approval of God.

NKJV – 1 Chronicles 11:15-19 (reference)

¹⁵Now three of the thirty chief men went down to the rock to David, into the cave of Adullam; and the army of the Philistines encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. ¹⁶David *was* then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines *was* then in Bethlehem. ¹⁷And David said with longing, “Oh, that someone would give me a drink of water from the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!” ¹⁸So the three broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well of Bethlehem that *was* by the gate, and took *it* and brought *it* to David. Nevertheless David would not drink it, but poured it out to the LORD. ¹⁹And he said, “Far be it from me, O my God, that I should do this! Shall I drink the blood of these men *who have put* their lives *in jeopardy*? For at the risk of their lives they brought it.” Therefore he would not drink it. These things were done by the three mighty men.

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David understood what kind of character a leader needs. He understood that who God wanted was one who says, “ I’m not going to just suck everything out of the people. I’m not going to require you to sacrifice so that I can have a little bit of comfort.”

A Saul heart, a Saul spirit (as God indicated) will always do things to get it for himself. The spirit of Saul is always concerned about keeping the people happy so the people will stay with them.

*At the moment you begin to become afraid of offending men,
you have already begun to offend Me (God).*

Sauls always love and always will love and hate the Davids at the same time. Sauls will love the anointing on the Davids, but they will hate the character of the Davids. Sauls will love elements that the Davids bring. Saul loved it when David played his harp, but he hated that David’s humility became more famous. When the Davids start getting the popularity or attention of the people, the Sauls will at the same time rise up and try to kill the Davids.

Are you going to be a Saul, or are you going to be a David?

For further study:

Re-read 1 Samuel 8, 15 and 24 and contrast the attitudes and character of Saul and David.