LESSON FOR WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2026
Rev. Bessie Bukhay

Theme 4: Be Careful About Wanting What Everybody Else Has

Scripture

1 Samuel 8:5, 7 (NIV)

The people tell Samuel:

“Now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.”

God tells Samuel:

“It is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king.”

Biblical Insight

Israel reaches a major turning point.

The people demand a king.

Having a king was not automatically wrong. Deuteronomy had anticipated the possibility of Israel eventually having a king.

The problem in 1 Samuel is connected to **Israel’s motivation**.

They wanted to be:

“like all the other nations.”

Samuel warns them that a king will come with consequences.

But Israel insists.

God allows them to have what they requested.

Digging Deeper: Comparison Can Affect Our Desires

Israel looked around at other nations and began evaluating what they had by what everybody else had.

Their comparison influenced their desires.

Instead of asking whether God's leadership was sufficient, they wanted what they saw around them.

Discussion Question

Israel told Samuel, "Appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have." What does the phrase "such as all the other nations have" reveal about what was influencing Israel's desire for a king?

Samuel warned the people about what having a king would cost them, but in verses 19–20 they refused to listen and said, "We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations." Why do you think they were willing to accept the consequences just to have what the other nations had?

Reflection Question

Have you ever wanted something because you saw other people having or experiencing it, only to discover that you had not considered everything that came with it?

What helps you distinguish between something you genuinely need and something you want because you are comparing yourself with others?

Theme 5: Outward Success Cannot Replace Character

Scripture

1 Samuel 15:22 (NIV)

“To obey is better than sacrifice.”

Biblical Insight

God gives Israel its first king: **Saul**.

Saul initially appears to be an excellent choice.

He is physically impressive.

He experiences early military success.

He looks like what people might expect a king to look like.

But Saul’s story becomes tragic because his outward qualifications are not matched by consistent inward character.

Saul increasingly struggles with obedience, honesty, humility, and accepting responsibility for his actions.

In 1 Samuel 15, Saul fails to completely obey God’s command concerning the Amalekites.

When Samuel confronts him, Saul attempts to justify what happened by saying that some of what was preserved could be sacrificed to God.

Samuel responds:

“To obey is better than sacrifice.”

Digging Deeper: Character Matters

Saul teaches us that gifts, appearance, position, and early success cannot compensate indefinitely for weaknesses in character.

His story also demonstrates the danger of refusing to honestly confront our own failures.

Discussion Questions

When Saul was introduced as Israel's first king, 1 Samuel 9:2 describes him as "as handsome a young man as could be found anywhere in Israel" and says he was a head taller than everyone else. Why do you think those outward qualities might have made Saul seem like the right choice to the people?

Saul had many outward qualities that made him appear to be the right person for leadership, but weaknesses in his character eventually became visible. As you have gotten older, what qualities have you learned matter most when deciding whether someone can be trusted?

When Samuel confronted Saul about his disobedience, Saul first defended what he had done and then blamed the soldiers for keeping the livestock. What does Saul's response reveal about his willingness to take responsibility for his actions?

Reflection Question

Samuel told Saul, "To obey is better than sacrifice." Why can doing something religious sometimes be easier than changing an area of our lives where God is calling us to obedience?

Saul seemed more concerned with explaining his actions than examining his heart. When someone points out something in your life that may need to change, what helps you receive correction rather than immediately becoming defensive?

Saul's story shows that small areas of disobedience can eventually become larger character problems when they are left unaddressed. What have you learned about the importance of dealing with problems in your life before they have an opportunity to grow?