

## **Sept 28/25 Saul's Downfall: How (Not) to Repent – 1 Sam 15**

### **Leader's Guide**

1. This passage begins with a hard-to-stomach command from God. Why do you think the Holy Spirit allowed difficult verses like this to be included in the Bible?

*People may be very uncomfortable with this verse – and that's okay! There's no easy answer to this, but one reason is that perhaps there can be a deepening of faith as we wrestle with the harder passages of Scripture, and a stronger sense of what we know of God's character. Can the group think of others?*

2. Saul's reaction to being confronted was denial, blame, and self-justification. Why do you think those responses are so natural to us? What keeps us from honest confession?

*We are afraid of the consequences of sin, and also what it means (often) for our own self-image when we face what we have done. Are there other excuses that we regularly use?*

3. The sermon referred to Saul's failure as not just disobedience, but a denial of God's power. How might our own disobedience (even in small things) reflect a similar lack of trust in God's character or authority?

*Hebrews 13:5 suggests that a fear of being forsaken by God can be a motivating factor behind greed or idolatry. The same is true of all aspects of God's character. As we rely on God's character as provider, we can turn from greed and idolatry. As we rely on his character as judge, we can turn from unforgiveness. As we rely on his character as merciful, we can turn from our sins. Help the group think of other ways that deepening in our understanding of God's character motivates us to turn from disobedience.*

4. The sermon called God's judgment on Saul "merciful." Can you think of a time in your life when a loss, consequence, or redirection turned out to be God's mercy in disguise?

*Allow the group to share freely. If you are able, think of a story from your own life where this was true.*

5. Karen shared a personal little story of selfishness and excuses, and how admitting the truth brought peace and healing. Is there an area in your life right now where God might be inviting you to stop justifying and start surrendering?

*This can naturally lead into a time of confession and prayer. Remind your group that "There is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:1) and that Jesus offers his own righteousness to them. If there are bigger or more complex things that come up, feel free to refer them to one of the pastors.*