

UNIT 10 | SESSION 3

SAUL DISOBEYED GOD

1 SAMUEL 14–15



KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 103:19

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who is our King? Jesus is our King forever, and He rules over the world.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Saul disobeyed God's commands and was rejected as king. We all disobey God's commands when we sin. Only Jesus perfectly obeyed God at all times. When we believe in Jesus, we are made right with God and accepted by Him.

STORY POINT: God rejected Saul as king because he disobeyed God's commands.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Rather than follow the instructions of the Lord, King Saul relied on his own strength, wisdom, and timeline to achieve success. God had promised to extend favor to Saul on the condition that he remain obedient to His commands. The devastating impact of King Saul's disobedience, however, and its effect on his legacy is seen in 1 Samuel 14-15. Through the disobedience of Saul, we see our need for the sinless, sacrificial Savior—Jesus.

How did Saul's disobedience impact God's people? How did Jesus show His desire to always obey His Father?

Saul's hasty decisions in leadership led the Israelites to pursue uncleanness and irreverence toward the Lord. Saul placed his troops under a strict oath to not eat until the battle was over. The rashness of his oath led to the attempted execution of his son, Jonathan, and the sin of consuming impure food. Later, Saul led his men to disobey God's commands by not completely destroying the Amalekites and everything they had. Saul led his people down a path of destruction, not seeming to care how his disobedience impacted the nation he led.

While Saul, led by pride and impulsiveness, was willing to execute his son to make an example of him, we see a stark contrast between his actions and God's love for us. Jesus, God in flesh, laid down His own life to make redemption possible for those who trust in Him.

Consider Saul's disobedience, which was motivated by foolishness and selfish ambition. Now, reflect on the redemption we receive through Christ's pure and perfect obedience. While Saul's poor leadership and disobedience led to God rejecting him as king, the perfect King Jesus leads us toward redemption and forgiveness of sin. Lead boys and girls to see the reward of obedience to God—yet to see with even greater clarity, the gift of grace we don't deserve through Christ's sacrificial love.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ "What Does It Say?" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ hats, 2
- ☐ scarves, 2
- ☐ socks, 2
- ☐ oven mitts, 2
- ☐ backpacks, 2



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video
- ☐ Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ "Saul Disobeyed God" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- ☐ "Unit 10, Session 3" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ "Medical Missions" missions video

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "The LORD Is Over All (Psalm 103:19)" song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)
- ☐ tongs, 1 set per group
- ☐ index cards



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set
- ☐ world map



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ 3% hydrogen peroxide solution
- ☐ dish soap
- ☐ empty water bottle
- ☐ tray
- ☐ food color
- ☐ empty cup
- ☐ spoon
- ☐ baker's yeast
- ☐ warm water

Journal and Prayer

- ☐ Journal Page
- ☐ "Rejected" activity page



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “Can you name some rules in sports or other games that would cause you to be disqualified if you broke them? Why is it important to have rules in sports and games?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “What Does It Say?” activity page.

SAY “Today, we will learn how Saul once again disobeyed God and why God desires obedience.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: LISTEN CAREFULLY RELAY

Before the session, place two lines of masking tape on the floor to serve as starting lines for each team. Place all the relay items across from each team’s starting line.

Form kids into two teams and direct them to line up one behind the other. Challenge them to listen very carefully, and tell them that you will only explain these instructions once. Direct kids to put on the items in the following order: First put the hat on. Then, put on the scarf. Next, put a sock on your right foot. Then place an oven mitt on your left hand. Lastly, put on the backpack.

Each team member will run to the items, put them on in the correct order, take them off, and then run back to his or her team. The first team to follow the instructions in the correct order and complete the relay wins. If a kid does not follow the directions correctly, a teammate can offer guidance.

SAY “Sometimes we don’t always listen carefully and follow the directions we are given. Today, we will see that Saul disobeyed God’s commands and did what he wanted to do. Let’s learn how God responded to Saul’s disobedience.”

☐ OPTION 2: WHAT ARE THE RULES?



Form kids into groups of three or four, and provide each group with paper and pens. Challenge groups to create a new game. It could be a sport, a card game, a board game, or another type of game. Tell groups they must write out a description of the game, the materials needed, and the rules of the game. Then invite each group to present their game to everyone, explaining the rules of the game.

Alternatively, you can provide certain materials (a ball, cones, painter’s tape, etc.) and invite kids to create a game out of the materials provided. Groups could then demonstrate the game to everyone or invite others to play.

SAY “Game rules help us know how to play a game and make sure the game is fun for all. God has given His people specific instructions to follow in the Bible. Today, we will see how God gave King Saul a very specific command. We’ll learn that **GOD REJECTED SAUL AS KING BECAUSE HE DISOBEYED GOD’S COMMANDS**. God’s commands are never meant to keep us from joy. God’s instructions are perfect and lead His people to what is best.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “Hi, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m so glad to see you. For the past couple of weeks, we have learned about a man named Saul who became Israel’s first king. Saul had victories in battle during his time as king, but he was also disobedient to God. Today, we’ll learn how **GOD REJECTED SAUL AS KING BECAUSE HE DISOBEYED GOD’S COMMANDS.** [Display the Story Point Poster.]

If you have a Bible with you, will you take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Let’s pray and ask God to prepare our hearts to hear from Him: ‘Lord, thank You for Your Word. Please give us hearts that believe Your Word and desire to obey You. In Jesus’ name, amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “What is the big picture question we have learned? [Allow responses.] **Who is our King?** Do you remember the answer? [Allow responses.] **Jesus is our King forever, and He rules over the world.**

Only Jesus is the perfect King. He perfectly obeyed God. After Jesus died for the sinners and rose again, Jesus sat down at the right hand of God (Hebrews 1:3). Jesus is exalted as King forever. Today, we will see how King Saul failed to be the perfect king God’s people needed. We’ll see how God’s plan was always to send King Jesus to save people from their sin. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “In foolishness, God’s people begged for a king like the nations around them. Though Israel rejected God as their king, God mercifully warned them and gave them the king they desired—King Saul. However, Saul was not the king the people needed. Today, we will learn how **GOD REJECTED SAUL AS KING BECAUSE HE DISOBEYED GOD’S COMMANDS.** ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to 1 Samuel 14–15. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Saul Disobeyed God.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

SAUL DISOBEYED GOD

“Saul and his son, Jonathan, led the Israelite troops to fight God’s enemies—the Philistines. Earlier in the day, Jonathan and his servant won a great battle, and the Philistine army was scared.

Saul was eager to attack while they were scared. **Saul made his troops promise not to eat any food until the battle was over. Saul said, “The man who eats food before I punish my enemies is cursed.”** So, none of the troops ate any food.

Saul’s son Jonathan saw some honey on the ground. **He had not heard the instructions from his father Saul, so he ate some of the honey.** When Saul learned what he had done, he **wanted to punish Jonathan. But the rest of the Israelite army defended Jonathan so that Saul did not harm him.** Then Saul stopped chasing after the Philistines, and the Philistines went back to their land.

Later, Samuel came and shared the words of the Lord with Saul. God said, “I remember what the Amalekites did to Israel many years ago. Now attack the Amalekites and completely destroy them. Do not leave any of their animals alive.”

Saul and his army attacked the Amalekites. **They captured King Agag, and they kept the best of the sheep, cattle, and other animals alive. They were not willing to destroy them; they only destroyed the worthless or unwanted things.**

The Lord said to Samuel, “I regret that I made Saul king because he did not obey My instructions.” Samuel was angry.

Early in the morning, **Samuel went to confront Saul.** When Saul saw Samuel coming, he **said, “May the LORD bless you! I have done what God asked!”**

Samuel replied, “Why then do I hear the sounds of sheep, goats, and cattle?”

Saul said, “The troops brought those animals from the Amalekites. We plan to sacrifice them to the LORD.”

“Stop!”, exclaimed Samuel. “Last night, the LORD told me that he called you, an unimportant young man, to become the leader of all Israel. Then he sent you on a mission and told you to completely destroy the Amalekites. So why didn’t you obey the LORD?”

“But I did obey the LORD!”, Saul answered. “I went on the mission and defeated the Amalekites. The troops took the animals to sacrifice to the LORD.”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Assign it: Invite three or four kids to read a few sentences from the Bible story.

Draw it: Lead kids to draw pictures at certain parts of the story. When Saul tells his troops not to eat food until the battle was over, direct kids to draw a circle with a line through it. When the Israelites fight the Amalekites, challenge kids to draw a shield. When Saul keeps the best animals, direct kids to draw a sheep, cow, or other animal. When the Lord rejects Saul as king, encourage kids to draw a crown with a line through it.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

Samuel replied, “Does the LORD take more pleasure in sacrifices of animals or in obedience? To obey is better than sacrifice. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has rejected you as king.”

Christ Connection: Saul disobeyed God’s commands and was rejected as king. We all disobey God’s commands when we sin. Only Jesus perfectly obeyed God at all times. When we believe in Jesus, we are made right with God and accepted by Him. ”

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Samuel came to Saul and told him to go attack the Amalekites for the things they did to Israel many years before. God gave Saul specific instructions that he must destroy all the Amalekites and not bring anything home with them when they win the battle. Saul, once again, led Israel to victory over their enemy, but he disobeyed the Lord. What did he do? Look at 1 Samuel 15:9. [Ask a volunteer to read aloud 1 Samuel 15:9.] Saul did what he thought was right and saved the best animals instead of destroying them like God had instructed him to do.

When Samuel confronted Saul about his disobedience, Saul made the excuse that he saved the animals to sacrifice to the Lord. What happened because of Saul’s disobedience? Look at 1 Samuel 15:23. [Ask a volunteer to read aloud 1 Samuel 15:23.] **GOD REJECTED SAUL AS KING BECAUSE HE DISOBEYED GOD’S COMMANDS.** Saul’s response to his sin was to make excuses to God. Yet, sin is serious. God will not overlook sin when we try to make excuses for it. God will only take away our sin when we trust in Jesus, repent of our sin, and ask for forgiveness.

What did Samuel say pleases God? Look at 1 Samuel 15:22. [Ask a volunteer to read aloud 1 Samuel 15:22.] Samuel said ‘to obey is better than sacrifice.’ When we obey God, we are showing we love Him and trust in His ways above our own. Obedience is an act of faith because we are choosing to trust the Lord knows better than we do. Obedience doesn’t make God love us, but rather shows a heart that loves God. Saul disobeyed God’s commands and was rejected as king. We all disobey God’s commands when we sin. Only Jesus perfectly obeyed God at all times. When we believe in Jesus, we are made right with God and accepted by Him. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ When we sin by rejecting God, we are separated from Him. But through His great love for us, God made the way for us to no longer be separated. God sent His Son, King Jesus, to take the punishment our sin deserves so that we can be with God forever. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 10, Session 3” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Why do people reject God’s Word when it’s the good news?
2. Who can you share the good news of Jesus with?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Explain to kids that medical volunteers from the United States often go to Thailand to help people while also sharing the good news about Jesus. Tell kids that Dr. Derbyshire works as a full-time medical missionary in Thailand. Share how Dr. Karalynne Blockberger went on a short-term mission trip to Thailand to help Dr. Derbyshire and his mobile medical clinic. Play the missions video.

SAY “One place that Dr. Derbyshire has taken medical teams is Baan Po. It was a place Dr. Derbyshire was specifically concerned about because it had no Christians and no churches. A few years ago, Dr. Derbyshire, other missionaries, Thai Christians, and doctors from the United States traveled to Baan Po again. This time, three people became Christians on the first day the mobile clinic was opened. Others said they wanted to learn more about Jesus.”

Pray for the work of the medical teams who host mobile clinics in Thailand. Pray that more Thai people who visit the clinics will want to know about Jesus and trust in Him.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Before the session write one or two words of the key passage on index cards. Form a set of cards for each group of three or four kids. Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 103:19 together.

SAY “God’s Word is good and best. Let’s practice remembering our key passage.”

Form kids into groups of three or four kids, and distribute a card set and a set of tongs to each group. Direct kids to spread out their cards so they can see each word of the key passage. When you say “Go,” challenge groups to use the tongs to arrange the cards in the correct order of the key passage. Kids must only use the tongs to arrange the cards. The first team to put their cards in order wins. Repeat as time allows.

Lead kids to sing “The LORD Is Over All (Psalm 103:19).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “Lord, thank You for sending the perfect King, Jesus, so we can be forgiven of our sins. Help us trust You and follow You, obeying what You say. Amen.”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles, and display the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to 1 Samuel 15. Explain that 1 Samuel falls under the history division of the Old Testament. Tell kids that other books like Joshua, Esther, and 1 Kings also are in the history division.

Consider comparing the Old Testament Mediterranean Map to a modern-day map to help kids understand where this story took place. (Tip: Locate the areas in and around modern-day Israel [F10]). Choose a volunteer to read aloud 1 Samuel 15:22, or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY “ Samuel told Saul that God desired Saul’s obedience more than any sacrifice he could offer. However, Saul was sinful and chose to disobey God. He was not a perfect king.

Only Jesus perfectly obeyed God at all times. Jesus is the perfect King who became the perfect sacrifice for our sin. When we believe in Jesus, we are made right with God and accepted by Him. Our obedience is not what God requires for salvation—faith in Jesus is—but a heart that desires to obey God shows we have been changed by Jesus. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ Why is obedience to God important? ”

Discuss how God values obedience in the lives of His children. Our obedience to the Lord is how we show our love for Him. When we obey God, we also show our trust in Him, knowing that His way is the best way. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 John 2:3-6.)

SAY “ Will Christians be perfect here on earth? Why not? ”

Tell kids that while we live on the fallen earth, we will continue to sin because Jesus has not yet come back to fully make everything new. Share that the Bible tells us believers are new creations in Jesus, meaning we have been forgiven of sin and have new hearts that desire to obey God. When we become a Christ follower, we put our old, sinful life behind us. Sin no longer enslaves believers, and through the Holy Spirit, they have power to obey God. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 6:1-4.)

SAY “ What might tempt us to disobey God? ”

Remind kids that Saul thought his way was greater than God’s way. Share how pride can keep us from obeying God. Discuss how we might think God’s ways are too hard or don’t really lead us to what is best. Share how we can ask God to give us wisdom to know His ways through His Word as well as ask Him to help our hearts love Him more than our selfish desires. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 John 5:3.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: IS IT A FAILURE?

Tell kids you are going to create foam. Perform an object lesson by filling an empty water bottle half full of hydrogen peroxide solution. Set the water bottle on the tray. Add in 1–2 tablespoons of dish soap. Gently swirl the hydrogen peroxide and dish soap so they are mixed together. Give the illusion that something dramatic is about to happen as you add a drop or two of food color.

When nothing happens, tell kids you forgot to follow the directions perfectly. Pour the packet of yeast in the cup. Then add 2 tablespoons of warm water, and mix well. Then pour the yeast into the water bottle. Watch as the foamy solution will now seep up out of the water bottle.

SAY “When I didn’t follow all of the directions, the experiment failed. This reminds me of Saul, who failed to follow God’s commands perfectly. When Jesus came to earth, He always obeyed God. Jesus is our perfect King who is able to forgive our sinful failures and make us right with God.”

☐ OPTION 2: HOW CAN WE OBEY?



Form kids into five groups, and provide each kid with a Bible. Lead each group to read one of the following Bible verses, and then share what motivates us to obey Him or ways God us calls to obey Him: John 14:15; 2 John 1:5; Galatians 2:20; Matthew 5:21-24; Matthew 5:43-45.

Tell kids that before we can obey God, we must know Him and His Word. Discuss how the Bible helps us know God and His commands. Then share how faith in Jesus transforms our hearts to want to obey God and turn away from sin. Help kids understand how our trust in God fuels our obedience to His Word.

SAY “Today, we learned how **GOD REJECTED SAUL AS KING BECAUSE HE DISOBEYED GOD’S COMMANDS**. Like Saul, we all disobey God and can never obey God perfectly. But when we trust in Jesus, God accepts us and transforms our hearts so we desire to obey God. Obeying God is always best for us and brings Him glory.”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel, and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, praising God for how we are accepted through Christ and given hearts that want to obey Him. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Rejected” on the activity page.