

When You Refuse to Do What's Right

Everything written in the Scriptures was written to teach us.

Romans 15:4 (Today's English Version)

As Samuel turned to go, Saul tried to hold him back and tore the hem of his robe. And Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to someone else—one who is better than you.

1 Samuel 15:27-28 (New Living Translation)

1. Saul was tormented by an evil spirit. (1 Samuel 16:23)

The LORD sent a tormenting spirit that filled . . . [Saul] with depression and fear. Some of Saul's servants said to him, "A tormenting spirit from God is troubling you. Let us find a good musician to play the harp whenever the tormenting spirit troubles you. He will play soothing music, and you will soon be well again." "All right," Saul said. "Find me someone who plays well, and bring him here." One of the servants said to Saul, "One of Jesse's sons from Bethlehem is a talented harp player. Not only that—he is a brave warrior, a man of war, and has good judgment. He is also a fine-looking young man, and the LORD is with him." So Saul sent messengers to Jesse to say, "Send me your son David, the shepherd." . . . So David went to Saul and began serving him. Saul loved David very much, and David became his armor bearer.

1 Samuel 16:14-21 (NLT, emphasis added)

2. Saul's breaking point came when David was praised more than he was praised.

When the victorious Israelite army was returning home after David had killed the Philistine, women from all the towns of Israel came out to meet King Saul. They sang and danced for joy with tambourines and cymbals. This was their song: "Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands!" This made Saul very angry. "What's this?" he said. "They credit David with ten thousands and me with only thousands. Next they'll be making him their king!" So from that time on, Saul kept a jealous eye on David.

1 Samuel 18:6-9 (NLT, emphasis added)

So Saul watched David jealously from that day forward.

1 Samuel 18:9 (Holman Christian Standard Bible, emphasis added)

Promotion and power come . . . only from God. He promotes one and deposes another.

Psalms 75:6 (The Living Bible)

3. Saul refused to humble himself and became violent.

The very next day a tormenting spirit from God overwhelmed Saul, and he began to rave in his house like a madman. David was playing the harp, as he did each day. But Saul had a spear in his hand, and he suddenly hurled it at David, intending to pin him to the wall. But David escaped him twice.

1 Samuel 18:10-11 (NLT, emphasis added)

David continued to succeed in everything he did, for the LORD was with him. When Saul

recognized this, he became even more afraid of him.

1 Samuel 18:14-15 (NLT)

4. Saul lays two death traps for David: Merab and Michal.

5. Saul vows not to hurt David.

The next morning Jonathan spoke with his father about David, saying many good things about him. "The king must not sin against his servant David," Jonathan said. "He's never done anything to harm you. He has always helped you in any way he could. Have you forgotten about the time he risked his life to kill the Philistine giant and how the LORD brought a great victory to all Israel as a result? You were certainly happy about it then. Why should you murder an innocent man like David? There is no reason for it at all!" So Saul listened to Jonathan and vowed, "As surely as the LORD lives, David will not be killed."

Samuel 19:4-6 (NLT)

6. Saul tries to kill David six more times.

But one day when Saul was sitting at home, with spear in hand, the tormenting spirit from the LORD suddenly came upon him again. As David played his harp, Saul hurled his spear at David. But David dodged out of the way, and leaving the spear stuck in the wall, he fled and escaped into the night.

1 Samuel 19:9-10 (NLT)

Then Saul sent troops to watch David's house. They were told to kill David when he came out the next morning. But Michal, David's wife, warned him, "If you don't escape tonight, you will be dead by morning."

1 Samuel 19:11 (NLT, emphasis added)

When the report reached Saul that David was at Naioth in Ramah, he sent troops to capture him. But when they arrived and saw Samuel leading a group of prophets who were prophesying, the Spirit of God came upon Saul's men, and they also began to prophesy.

1 Samuel 19:19-20 (NLT)

7. Saul, in a fit of anger, even tried to kill his own son, Jonathan.

Saul boiled with rage at Jonathan. "You stupid son of a whore!" he swore at him. "Do you think I don't know that you want him to be king in your place, shaming yourself and your mother? As long as that son of Jesse is alive, you'll never be king. Now go and get him so I can kill him!" "But why should he be put to death?" Jonathan asked his father. "What has he done?" Then Saul hurled his spear at Jonathan, intending to kill him.

1 Samuel 20:30-33 (NLT)

Lessons for a Better Life

1. You can start over today. Now.

If we judged ourselves, we would not come under [God's] judgment.

1 Corinthians 11:31 (New International Version)

2. We can all become like Saul.

Be careful. If you are thinking, "Oh, I would never behave like that"—let this be a warning to you. For you too may fall into sin.

1 Corinthians 10:12 (TLB)

3. If you refuse to respond to God's pleading, your life will become increasingly painful.

"The way of the transgressor is hard."

Proverbs 13:15 (American Standard Version)

If you hear God's voice today, do not be stubborn.

Hebrews 3:15 (TEV)

4. There is time when God's patience is exhausted and judgment is certain.

If you get more stubborn every time you are corrected, one day you will be crushed and never recover.

Proverbs 29:1 (TEV)

I called you so often, but you wouldn't come. I reached out to you, but you paid no attention. You ignored my advice and rejected the correction I offered. When they cry for help, I will not answer. Though they anxiously search for me, they will not find me.

Proverbs 1:24-29 (NLT)