

Armed For War

Lessons 3-4: True Character: Saul vs. David

John 15

- 1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.
- 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.
- 3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.
- 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.
- 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.
- 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.
- 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.
- 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

What is Fruit?

Many view fruit as:

1. Wealth (See **Matt. 16:26**)
2. Miracles (See **Matt. 7:21-23**)
3. Crowds
 - a. Winning without INTEGRITY is actually losing
 - b. Truth is not always (or usually) popular
 - c. If we don't sacrifice the popular and benign for the Truth (although it can be offensive), we are not legitimate

Galatians 5

- 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
- 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Philippians 2

- 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

God is focused on the transformation of your CHARACTER, rather than your bank account or popularity.

Romans 8

- 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be *conformed* to the *image* of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Personality = your public persona

Character = your private self

1 Samuel 16

6 And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD'S anointed is before him.

7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

Eliab looked the part, but God looked at the HEART. Men commit to personality, but the Church must commit to character. Many use their personality as a reason why they cannot witness, however the loudest sermon we preach is the one without words. Our character and its resemblance to Christ is what will reach a lost and dying world.

Today in the Western, Unpersecuted, Denominal Church there are many with the character of Saul and few with the heart of David.

- Musicians who get high before “Christian” performances
- Ministers who fall into sexual immorality and financial scandal
- Lukewarm “saints” who are too hung over to attend Church on Sunday
- Pastors who wink at sin and appoint leaders with rampant sin in their lives to positions based upon talent rather than character

1 Samuel 8

5 And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

Israel wanted the respect of the world. They saw a king as a symbol of progress and acceptance among the nations surrounding them. They wanted to be what the world thought was appropriate.

1 Samuel 8

6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD.

7 And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

The Moment you want the approval of the world is the moment you begin to reject the reign of God in your life.

Israel said: “Give us a leader that is popular, powerful and influential so that we can feel important.” More than a Godly leader, they wanted one that would be accepted by the world. *Leaders like Saul come to power whenever God’s people want to be valued in the eyes of the world.* God warned them that a king would take the very best things for himself. They may do good things for the people to keep them happy, but it is always about building up their own kingdom. A Saul-type will use his influence for himself. Quick exaltation almost always leads to self-destruction (See **1Tim. 3:2,6**).

Sauls have the personality to gain power, but lack the character to handle it! Their true motives will manifest over time. They deal in deception and are even self-deceived (See

1 Sam. 15: 1-23). When confronted, they use politics as a reason for their disobedience: “We can’t do everything God says because the people don’t like it.”

1 Samuel 24

2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats.

3 And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.

4 And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily.

5 And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt.

6 And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD.

7 So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way.

David, despite the influence of the people, chose God’s favor over an opportunity to exalt himself. He was willing to be viewed as a failure by the people in order to remain a “man after God’s heart”. David restrained the people from doing what they thought was the will of God. It could not have been viewed as wise or intelligent by his advisors. David did not need their consent, he only desired God’s acceptance.

If we are afraid of offending men, we have already offended God.

We should not aim to thumb our noses at those who disagree or be belligerent in our presentation of the Gospel. However, Jesus said that it is impossible not to offend some with the Truth. With this in mind, we cannot be so concerned with popular opinion that we are not honest or complete in our declaration of what God’s Word states. He does not require us to angrily shove His Views down people’s throats. He DOES demand that we clearly and accurately show His Truth to all we encounter. This is planting good seed and it can grow into a transformed life if it is watered by the Spirit of God.

What kind of leader do you want to become?

Personality based like Saul?

Character based like David?

Saul will be more popular and more widely accepted by people. David may have to live in a cave and be rejected by his own. One kingdom will die after one generation. The other will remain forever.