

1 Samuel 15:22 - Obedience vs. Religion

Samuel said,

"Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices

As in obeying the voice of the LORD?

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,

And to heed than the fat of rams.

QUESTIONS: [Read 1 Samuel 15:1-24]

What two types of activities are contrasted in this passage?

Sacrifices and burnt offerings were commanded by God in the Old Testament. Why was God displeased with them in this instance? What is more important to God?

We do not have sacrifices and burnt offerings today. What other types of religious activities do we practice? Do these activities please God? Are they sometimes displeasing to God? Explain.

Did Saul sin? How bad was Saul's sin? What does God think of it? What does God think of *our* sins?

Compare v. 20 and v. 24. What was Saul doing in v. 20? Do we sometimes do the same type of things? Think of some examples.

Sin has consequences. What happened because of Saul's sin? Think of some examples in which sin has had consequences in your own life. Saul thought he could sin and *not* have bad consequences. Do you ever think the same way Saul did? (Think about it. One example: Do you ever choose to sin, planning to "confess" it later and be forgiven?) Why do such thoughts enter our minds?

Look at v. 25-29. Apparently Saul thought that he could perform some religious activities and God would change his mind - that Saul's sin would no longer have any consequences. Does this reveal anything about Saul's attitude toward sin? toward God? If so, compare his attitude with yours.

Over all, what can you learn from Saul's example? What are some other verses that illustrate or teach the same principle that this passage teaches?

Examine your own life. Are there changes that you need to make? "Obey" and "heed" are two of the key words in this passage. Based on what you have learned in this study, give some examples of commands mentioned in the Bible, that you need to start obeying. Give some examples of statements in the Bible that you need to heed (pay attention to).

Think about these things today. Observe how you react in situations that may involve these issues.

Psalm 51:10

Create in me a clean heart, O God,

And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

VALUES CHART:

Classify the contrasting values and principles that you learned in this study. [You may want to use the term "religious activities" in reference to the burnt offerings and sacrifices. This would focus on the *general* principle rather than on the *specific* activities that were part of the Old Testament system of worship.] Note: you won't necessarily use all the sections of the chart.