

## Poor Choices & Painful Consequences



- Are you presently living with regrets from poor choices? Do you wish you were wiser in decision-making?

The central theme of 1 Samuel is—**when we leave God out of our lives & out of our decision-making process, we make poor choices that result in painful consequences.** The book of 1 Samuel is the story of a series of poor choices and the resulting painful consequences. These stories teach important lessons to help us be wiser in decision-making and living our lives. There are three major poor choices in the book of 1 Samuel.

### Central Lesson

**Ignoring God and His guidance results in poor choices & painful consequences.**

#### 1. Eli the Priest - Neglected to **DISCIPLINE** His Sons.

*“I have warned him that judgment is coming upon his family forever, because his sons are blaspheming God and he hasn’t disciplined them.”* (3:13 NLT)

The story of poor choices begins with **Eli**, who may have been an excellent priest in the temple but was a poor parent in his home. He neglected to discipline his two sons, and they brought him grief and eventual ruin (1 Sam. 2:12, 17, 22-25, 29-30; 3:13).

The *Life Application Bible* explains: “Eli had a difficult time rearing his sons. He apparently did not take any strong disciplinary action with them when he became aware of their wrongdoing. But Eli was not just a father trying to handle his rebellious sons; he was the high priest ignoring the sins of priests under his jurisdiction. As a result, the Lord took the necessary disciplinary action that Eli would not.... Is there a situation in your life, family, or work that you allow to continue even though you know it is wrong? If so, you may become as guilty as those engaged in the wrong act.” (p. 438 NIV)

The story of Eli teaches us the importance of making wise choices in our family life. We must not allow ourselves to be preoccupied with our jobs to the neglect of our family. We also must take seriously the responsibility of parenting. Children need our time, love, and discipline (cf. Proverbs 22:6; 13:24; 29:15, 17 [also 29:19, 21, which is not directly speaking about children, but the principle applies]).

#### 2. The Nation of Israel - **REJECTED** God’s Rule & Demanded A Human King Like the Godless World Nations.

*“<sup>5</sup> ‘...Give us a king to judge us like all the other nations have.’ <sup>6</sup> Samuel was displeased with their request and went to the Lord for guidance. <sup>7</sup> ‘Do everything they say to you,’ the Lord replied, ‘for they are rejecting me, not you. They don’t want me to be their king any longer. <sup>8</sup> Ever since I brought them from Egypt they have continually abandoned me and followed other gods. And now they are giving you the same treatment.’”* (8:5-8 NLT)

Also, we see **the Nation of Israel** making a poor choice when they demanded that Samuel give them a King. They wanted to be like the world’s Godless nations (1 Sam. 8:5-22). They did not want to be ruled by a perfect God that they could not see. They would rather have an imperfect king that they could see, even though it may result in hardship. God granted their request, and hardship followed. We, too, make poor choices that result in unnecessary hardship when we live by our fleshly desires rather than follow the wise counsel of God & the leading of His Spirit. Also, we must guard against wanting to be like the world in its ungodly morals, values, behavior, and attitudes (cf. 1 John 2:15-17; Romans 12:2; James 4:4; 2 Peter 1:3-4).

Bruce Wilkinson adds: “Saul quickly disobeyed God and became a tyrant. David became the first real theocratic king—he allowed God to rule through him... God had intended to give Israel a king (see Gen. 49:10; Deut. 17:14-20), but the people insisted on the king of their choice instead of waiting for God’s king.” (*Talk Thru the Bible*, p. 72).

#### 3. King Saul - Repeatedly **Disobeyed** God’s Instruction.

*“But Samuel replied, ‘What is more pleasing to the Lord: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams.’”* (15:22 NLT)

Outside appearances said that King Saul would be an excellent King, but later the flaws of his inner character became apparent. King Saul made a series of poor choices that hurt not only him but the entire nation of Israel. The worst choice was when Saul tried to act on his own and deliberately disobeyed what God had told him to do (1 Sam. 15:17-26).

Also, Saul decided to consult the medium of Endor to contact Samuel, who had died. Such practices were strictly forbidden in Israel (Deut. 18:9-14). It was punishable by death (Exodus 22:18). Saul had previously expelled mediums from Israel (1 Sam. 28:3, 9). Saul sought guidance in an upcoming battle with the Philistines (1 Sam. 28:8-20). God allowed Samuel to come to Saul and pronounce his doom and Israel’s defeat. Saul’s poor choice in consulting the occult for guidance warns us to avoid it and its practices. God speaks through the Bible and the Holy Spirit.

### God Blesses **WISE** Decision Making

Although 1 Samuel’s central message is about poor decisions that resulted in painful consequences, the book also shows how **God blesses wise decisions that seek His will and obediently follow His ways.**

- Hannah sought the Lord’s intervention concerning her infertility (1 Sam. 1).
- Samuel was faithful to God, resulting in a respected reputation at the end of his life (1 Sam. 12).
- David honored God & confronted Goliath with bold faith (1 Sam. 17).
- Jonathan was honored for his loyalty & love to David rather than supporting his father, Saul, who was doing wrong (1 Sam. 18-20).
- Abigail wisely prevented David from taking rash vengeance against wicked Nabal, which would have harmed many innocent people (1 Sam. 25).

**Central Lesson: Ignoring God and His guidance results in poor choices & painful consequences.**

► Accept Christ as your Savior. ► As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ► Invite someone to next Sunday’s study. ► Attend a small group. ► Read the Bible this week ► Pray for friends that need Jesus.