Lesson

Engaging Introduction

Good morning, everyone! Have you ever been asked to do something by your parents or teachers? Maybe it was cleaning your room or finishing your homework. What happens if you only do half the job? Imagine if you cleaned only half of your room and left the rest messy. Your parents might not be very pleased, right? Today, we are going to learn about a man named Saul, who was given a specific job by God but didn't follow through as he was supposed to. This story is found in 1 Samuel 15 in the Bible. It's an important lesson about listening carefully and doing exactly what we're asked to do.

In this story, Saul was king of Israel. God asked him to do something very important. God wanted to teach His people obedience, which means listening to and following directions fully. But sometimes, we might feel like we know better, and that's when the lesson of obedience becomes very important. Have you ever felt that way, like you know what's best and don't need all of the instructions? Today, we'll see what happened to Saul when he chose his own way instead of God's way. Let's dive into this story and find out what we can learn about listening, obeying, and trusting those who give us directions.

Main Teaching Points

1. God Gives Saul a Special Task

Let's start by understanding the big task God gave to King Saul. God told Saul to go and fight against the Amalekites, a group of people who had done wrong things against God's people, the Israelites. God's instructions to Saul were clear: he was to destroy everything and everyone related to the Amalekites. Now, this might sound harsh, but God had a purpose in mind. He needed Israel to learn that when He gives instructions, it's important to follow them exactly. This was a test of obedience.

Imagine your coach tells you how to play the game, and you decide to play however you want. The game might not go as planned—because each instruction is there for a reason. In this same way, Saul was playing an important "game," and he needed to follow God's instructions carefully.

2. Saul Disobeys God's Command

Now, here's what happened next: Saul did go to battle with the Amalekites, but instead of doing exactly what God told him, he decided to do things his own way. He won the battle, but he didn't destroy everything like God had commanded. Instead, he kept the best sheep and cattle, thinking he could offer them as sacrifices to God. Saul also spared the king of the Amalekites, named Agag. It would be like only cleaning half of your room and saying, "It's okay! I'll tidy the rest another time," but then you never do.

Saul believed he was doing something good by offering sacrifices, but he didn't realize he was still disobeying God. Obedience meant doing what God asked, not what Saul thought was better. Sometimes, we think a little disobedience isn't a big deal, but it is.

3. Samuel Confronts Saul

The next part of our story gets serious. God spoke to Samuel, the prophet, and told him that He was unhappy with Saul. Samuel went to meet Saul and discovered all the animals Saul had kept. When Samuel asked Saul about it, Saul said he had saved the best animals to sacrifice to God. But Samuel told Saul that God was more interested in obedience than in sacrifices. He said to Saul, “To obey is better than sacrifice.”

This shows us that God wants our hearts more than anything else—we can’t please Him by just doing half of what He asks or by trying to make up our own rules. When we try to do things our way, thinking we know better, we can mess up the plan that was designed for us to follow through from the start.

4. Consequences of Saul’s Disobedience

Because Saul didn’t obey God fully, there were consequences. Samuel told Saul that God was going to choose another king to lead the people of Israel, someone who would follow His directions closely. Just like you may get into trouble if you keep disobeying your parents or teachers, Saul faced the consequence of losing what was precious to him—his position as king.

This part of the story reminds us that every action has a reaction. When we don’t listen, there can be effects that we didn’t expect or want. God knows what’s best for us, and His instructions are for our benefit.

Personal Application for Elementary Students

Now that we’ve learned about Saul, let’s think about what this means for us. Just like Saul needed to follow God’s instructions, we also need to listen and obey the directions we’re given in our lives.

Firstly, think about your parents and teachers. They often know what’s best because they have experience and love for you. When you wake up in the morning and your parents ask you to get dressed and eat your breakfast, it’s not just for fun; it’s because they want to prepare you for the day. Obeying them shows respect and trust in their wisdom.

Secondly, remember your coach who tells you to practice a specific technique. Maybe you don’t like it, or it’s hard, but by following their instruction, you grow better and stronger in your skills. Similar to Saul, if you only halfway listen, you’ll miss the chance to give your best.

Also, think about your friendships. If a friend tells you something in confidence or asks for your help, being obedient to your promise builds trust and strengthens that friendship. Just like Samuel wanted to help Saul understand obedience, the Bible is full of stories to help us understand doing the right thing.

Lastly, when it comes to what you know is right, like being kind or telling the truth, God’s guidelines are there to keep you on the path of goodness and happiness. Even when you feel tempted to do things your way, trusting in the wisdom of God’s instructions will help you become more respectful, kind, and strong in your heart.

Interactive Discussion Questions

Let’s talk about some ways this story might connect to our own lives. I want you to think and imagine a little, so feel free to share your thoughts.

1. Why might Saul have thought his way was better than God’s command?

- Think about times when you might think you know a better way to do things. How do you feel when someone asks you to do something you don’t want to? Discussing times when you've felt this way can help everyone see angles they hadn’t before.

2. What are some things we do that might seem small but are important in following instructions?
- Sometimes, small tasks like listening carefully when an adult speaks or doing a chore exactly as asked are meaningful. Share some tasks you find important in your daily life and maybe some challenges in fully completing them. Different perspectives will open up new understanding for everyone.

3. How can we remember to obey the first time and follow instructions completely?
- Let’s brainstorm ideas on how to be better listeners. Maybe it’s keeping a checklist or thinking about the happy feeling you get after completing a task. Encourage children to come up with practical ways to remind themselves to obey fully.

4. What should we do if we realize we didn’t complete a task in obedience, like Saul?
- Have a discussion about the importance of asking for forgiveness and trying again. Embodying humility is part of life. By encouraging openness, you’re creating a space where making mistakes isn’t seen as failure, but as a chance for growth.

Each of these questions invites us to bring our lives and experiences into the conversation. Just like Saul had Samuel to guide him, we have each other to learn from and grow with. Through listening, sharing, and understanding, we can become better at following directions and living in a way that brings joy to ourselves and to those around us.