

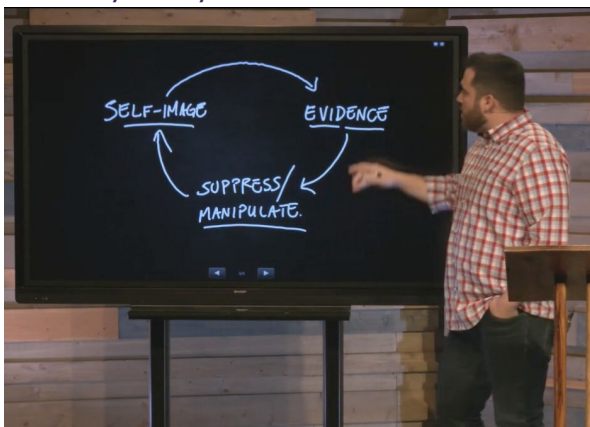
1 Samuel: Obedience Over Sacrifice

1 Samuel 15:1-35

God commands Saul to destroy the Amalekites to bring justice and for no selfish gain, but Saul disobeys and keeps for himself any animal of benefit to him. Although Saul repents after he is caught, God rejects him as king because Saul disobeyed the command that was supposed to set Israel apart and bring God's righteous wrath upon the Amalekites. Saul has been deceiving himself and others for so long that he no longer thinks rationally. And even though our sin isn't written in Scriptures for all to see, we are much more like Saul than we would like to admit.

Application

1. When thinking about how Saul is self-deceived, could you think of a time where you were caught up in self-deception? What was your primary goal rather than truth? (self-image, approval, success, greed, etc.)
2. When you read through 1 Samuel 15, is there anything in the story that you struggle to grasp about God's character? What was the context behind God's command to destroy the Amalekites? How does taking a deeper look at this passage help your understanding of who God is?
3. What are you tempted to build your self-image on other than God? What are the things around you that you find tempting to use as a foundation for your self-image and worth?
4. In order to maintain that self-image, you have to live in denial in some capacity. When the evidence or reality of your image is exposed, how do you deal with it? What is your cycle?



Key Points

- Self-deception seems to be Saul's downfall as he loses his rationality and truth ceases to be his primary goal. Instead of truth, he aims for a manipulated self-image and the approval of those around him.
- We tend to raise God's love and mercy above the other elements of God's character like justice and righteousness, but *all* of God's attributes work perfectly and equally together. We can't dismantle who God is.
- Through self-deception, Saul ends up adopting the customs and values of the very nation he was sent by God to destroy.
- Saul's self-deception is rooted in a self-image that is created and rooted in something other than God.
- The solution to self-deception is that God chooses us unconditionally and we have access to biblical community that loves us freely through Christ. We don't have to bring anything to the table ([Deuteronomy 7:6-8](#)).
- God loves us because he loves us. The basis of our self-image is his love alone.
- If you are not in biblical community, please fill out a [digital connect card](#).

Other Scripture References

[Deuteronomy 25:17-29](#)

[Deuteronomy 7:6-8](#)