

Lesson 2

NO ROOM FOR EXCUSES

And Samuel said, "What have you done?"
Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattered from me,
and that you did not come within the days appointed,
and that the Philistines gathered together at Michmash ...
therefore I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering."
1 Samuel 13:11-12

Benjamin Franklin once said, "The man who's good at making excuses is seldom good for anything else."

What does it mean to excuse our behavior? Making an excuse suggests trying to justify a mistake or failure, or to make it seem less serious, to escape being blamed or punished.

In the Bible, we see how God promises victory for all those who trust in Him. This victory is based on God's faithfulness and His ability to relate to, comfort, and rescue all who call upon Him. Therefore, if we come to God, there are no excuses for our sin.

READ 1 SAMUEL 13:5-14

Saul was the first king of Israel (approximately 1,000 BC). Because Saul failed to trust in the Lord, he did things his own way. Saul disobeyed God by offering a sacrifice to Him, but God had not ordained him to make such a sacrifice. That task was exclusively reserved for the prophet Samuel (verses 8-9). Nevertheless, when Saul disobeyed God, he excused his behavior—and it ultimately cost him everything.

1. Summarize Saul's three excuses? See 1 Samuel 13:11-12.

1.

2.

3.

Because Saul was (1) afraid, (2) impatient, and (3) prideful, he took matters into his own hands. He did not put his trust in God, and this caused him to excuse his behavior.

Saul excused his behavior when he saw the people scattered. He was afraid. This is called the "fear of man." The fear of man is when we fail to trust God during a crisis. Let's look at what God's Word says about the fear of man.

2. Write Proverbs 29:25.

3. Write Proverbs 3:25-26.

4. Write Psalm 34:4.

When Samuel the prophet didn't arrive in the timeframe that Saul expected, he became impatient. When we become impatient, we decide to take matters into our own hands instead of waiting on the Lord. It's like saying we know better than God in a situation.

5. Write Samuel's response to Saul. See 1 Samuel 13:13.

6. Write Proverbs 21:5.

7. Write Psalm 27:14.

We read in 1 Samuel 13:12 that Saul felt compelled to offer a burnt offering. God desires obedience over sacrifice. When facing difficulties, don't be rash or impulsive. This leads to pride and disobedience against God. Follow God's plan regardless of the consequences—even if you think it's the right thing to do. God still wants your obedience.

8. Write Proverbs 12:15.

9. Write Proverbs 16:18.

10. Write Proverbs 29:23.

We must recognize when we are tempted to distrust God. Don't be afraid. Wait patiently for Him to take care of the situation. Don't depend on your own reasoning, but be obedient to His Word. Do what God has asked you to do. Look to Him and pray for the power of His Spirit to help you overcome.

11. Write Ephesians 6:10.

Saul had plenty of excuses for his disobedience. But Samuel zeroed in on the real issue: "You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God." Like Saul, we often gloss over our mistakes and sins, trying to justify our actions because of our "special" circumstances. Our excuses, however, are nothing more than disobedience.

God knows our true motives. He forgives, restores, and blesses only when we are honest about our sins. By trying to hide his sins behind excuses, Saul lost his kingship. When we rely on God's faithfulness and depend upon God's strength, we won't have to excuse our behavior.

12. Write Romans 1:20.