

**Kingmaker: The Qualities of a Godly Influencer**  
**1 Samuel 15**  
**SELF-WORTH**

**Introduction:** Self-worth is “a sense of one’s own value as a human.”<sup>1</sup> By definition, it’s not how others view us but rather how we view ourselves. However, the value we assign ourselves is always the result of our interpretation of at least one person’s assessment of us. As much as we might want to assert that we alone are the sole determining factor of our value, the fact remains that absolute value, as in what something is actually worth, is always determined by, at minimum, someone else. This is why an appraiser never bases the value of your house on how much you are willing to pay for it but rather on what others would be willing to pay for it.

For instance, if you insist that your old car is worth \$100,000 but you would have to pay somebody to take it, it’s clearly not worth \$100,000! For it to be worth \$100,000, somebody in the world would have to be willing to pay you \$100,000 to have it. You could insist on its value all you want, but value, by definition, is determined by what it’s worth to others—at least one other!

Therefore, when measuring our “self-worth,” we are disillusioned if we insist that the assessment or appraisal of our value is based solely on how we view ourselves. No matter how much I shout and scream that my self-worth is entirely based on how I see myself alone, nothing will change the fact that not only by definition is that not true, but also, in practicality, that’s not true. External factors always determine worth; the only choice I have in how I perceive and experience my self-worth is which external factors I value most! The fact of the matter is whatever we believe our self-worth to be is based on the external assessment we value most!

Let me explain this differently. Keeping the car theme, imagine if you went to a car dealership looking for a new car, and the car dealer took you out on the lot and showed you this one:



The vast majority of us would place no value on this car at all! You can forget the idea that any of us would purchase it at any price; in fact, you would have to pay most of us a significant amount of money to take it! However, even though a car in this condition is entirely worthless to me, the car in the picture I just showed you is actually worth a fortune to people who are into collecting old cars! Check this out:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/self-worth>

[https://youtube.com/clip/Ugkx\\_PnLaUsEmuqj4BUsgiwgeg838YTITMhz?si=9ZPJ9pZdO\\_QXhTFS](https://youtube.com/clip/Ugkx_PnLaUsEmuqj4BUsgiwgeg838YTITMhz?si=9ZPJ9pZdO_QXhTFS)

That's right. That car was sold for \$1.9 million in the condition you saw it in! Imagine if the family members who inherited that car had based their opinion of its value on what you and I thought it was rather than on what wealthy car collectors value it!

So, my point is this: just like that car, no matter what we say to others, we know that our self-worth is completely irrelevant and meaningless if an external assessment does not affirm it. Additionally, self-worth can never be based on the cumulative product of how everyone values me. It's simply impossible to honestly know. However, self-worth is most certainly intrinsically determined by the external assessment or appraisal we value the most—that is, by who is worth the most to us!

Now, before we go any further in our conversation about self-worth, I want to walk you through the next chapter in our study of 1 Samuel because, in it, we find a perfect example of a person who tragically valued the wrong assessment of their value.

**Proposition: There are five very clear conclusions you can make in 1 Samuel 15.**

**The first conclusion you can make is that,**

**(1) Samuel made it very clear that God had a specific task for Saul to accomplish and that God had personally chosen Saul to be King of His people! (15:1-3)**

- A. 1 And Samuel said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel; now therefore listen to the words of the LORD. 2 Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I have noted what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way when they came up out of Egypt. 3 Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"**
- B. Samuel reminds Saul of the source and reality of his identity and authority. Saul is the man God chose to be King over HIS people! This sets the backdrop for the harsh criticism Samuel will give later in this chapter.**
- C. In addition, Samuel's words were not only meant to remind Saul of who he was so that he would have the confidence to do what he was supposed to do, but also to remember who was going to ultimately hold him accountable. Saul didn't work for the people; he worked for God!**
- D. "Amalek was a grandson of Esau (Genesis 36:12). His descendants (referred to as Amalek or the Amalekites) had a long history of violent hostility toward the Israelites. They were the first human threat to the people of Israel after the**

exodus (see Exodus 17:8–16). On that occasion God told Moses to write down this promise: “I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven” (Exodus 17:14). About four decades later, before the Israelites entered the promised land, Moses reminded them: *“Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you came out of Egypt, how he attacked you on the way when you were faint and weary, and cut off your tail, those who were lagging behind you, and he did not fear God. Therefore when the Lord your God has given you rest from all your enemies around you, in the land that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you shall not forget.”* (Deuteronomy 25:17–19) Amalek was a people deeply and consistently set against God and his people. Hostilities from Amalek continued after Israel entered the land of Canaan (see Judges 3:12–14; 6:3–5, 33; 7:12). However the time had now come for the terrible judgment of God to fall on the Amalekites. The sound of the words of God to Saul that day made it clear that God’s king was the one appointed to bring, at last, God’s judgment to the Amalekites. Notice the terrible but clear terms of Saul’s mission in 1 Samuel 15:3. “Devote to destruction” is one word in Hebrew. It is almost a technical term, sometimes referred to as the “ban,” whose precise meaning is much discussed. In this context the term refers to the destruction involved in divine judgment. No one was to be “spared.” There was to be no escape. There is no way to lessen the horror of this moment. The sound of the words of God to Saul that day was terrible. It must be remembered, however, that this was the holy and righteous judgment of God, “the Lord of hosts.” Moments like this in the pages of the Old Testament must not be avoided. They must not, of course, be lifted out of context and caricatured. Sometimes such terrible Biblical incidents are condemned as “genocide” or “ethnic cleansing.” This is to measure the events by modern moral categories, while disregarding the Bible’s own evaluation of them. These episodes should remind us that God always has been and still is “the Judge of all the earth” who does only what is just and right (Genesis 18:25). Israel or Israelites could find themselves falling under this judgment (see Deuteronomy 13:12–18; Joshua 7:10–15), just as those to whom this judgment came could seek and find mercy (see, for example, Joshua 6:25). Nor should we imagine that such episodes are Old Testament phenomena that are best forgotten now that the New Testament has come. Some Bible commentators attempt to come to terms with these horrors by suggesting that the morality of the Old Testament was provisional. This fails to acknowledge that, according to the Old Testament, these discomfiting episodes occurred at *God’s* command. Are we to think that in Old Testament times God’s morality was provisional? A difference comes with the New Testament, but it is not some new morality that does away with the very idea of divine judgment.”<sup>2</sup>

**The second conclusion you can make is that,**

**(2) It is very clear that Saul disobeyed God’s instructions. (15:4-9)**

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<sup>2</sup> Woodhouse, J. (2008). [\*1 Samuel: Looking for a leader\*](#) (pp. 259–262). Crossway Books.

- A. **4 So Saul summoned the people and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand men on foot, and ten thousand men of Judah. 5 And Saul came to the city of Amalek and lay in wait in the valley. 6 Then Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart; go down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the people of Israel when they came up out of Egypt." So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. 7 And Saul defeated the Amalekites from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt. 8 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive and devoted to destruction all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fattened calves and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them. All that was despised and worthless they devoted to destruction.**
- B. You read that right. He ordered everybody to be killed but their King. Why? There's no explanation, but a safe conclusion would be that Saul wanted to keep the King to feed his ego. When people showed up to visit Saul, they saw that one of his servants was the former king of the Amalekites.
- C. Furthermore, they spared the best sheep, ox, calves, lambs, and anything else they considered valuable; in other words, they killed everything they considered worthless and kept everything they considered valuable! There's no need to belabor this nor attempt to explain it as anything other than what it is—blatant outright disobedience of God.
- D. Comparing this act of disobedience to the Lord by Saul with Jonathan's justification for disobeying his father's ridiculous command not to eat until he was avenged, H.A. Hoffner notes,
- E. **"Jonathan rightly considered victory over the Philistines to have priority over honoring a frivolous curse made to Yahweh, while Saul considered personal glory to have priority over a specific mandate of Yahweh. The contrast could not be greater."**<sup>3</sup>

**The third conclusion you can make is that,**

**(3) It is very clear that both God and Samuel sincerely wanted Saul to succeed. (15:10-11)**

- A. **10 The word of the LORD came to Samuel: 11 "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments." And Samuel was angry, and he cried to the LORD all night.**

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<sup>3</sup> Hoffner, H. A., Jr. (2015). [1 & 2 Samuel](#) (1 Sa 15:4–9). Lexham Press.

- B.** What does it mean that God regretted His decision to make Saul King? It doesn't mean that God felt He made a mistake. It means it broke God's heart to see Saul fail, and that's a great thing! No one gets brokenhearted about the failures of a person they don't know or care about. For instance, if you told me that a husband and father named Matt who lives in Idaho took some money and refused to repent, I would feel a sense of sadness for his wife and kids, but in a very, very small way because I have no idea who Matt in Idaho is.
- C.** However, if you tell me Matt in Idaho is the Lead Pastor of a church, well, the emotions go up a notch for me. Even though I don't know Matt in Idaho, I do know and care about Christ's church and its integrity in proclaiming the Gospel. Furthermore, I care about family; thus, all those who are in Christ's family. Therefore, if there is a Matt in Idaho who claims to be a follower of Jesus and, on top of that, has the exact position of trust and responsibility of shepherding Christ's people that I have, then it doesn't matter that I don't know Matt, his refusal to repent can harden hearts towards God and bring pain and suffering on his family and the family of God, so yeah, I feel a much greater sense of brokenness and even anger when I hear those kinds of stories. It's not judgementalism because I feel much more broken and angrier over my own sin, but because I care about Christ and His church, stories like that evoke emotions within me!
- D.** This is precisely what's happening with God and Samuel here because both love Saul and Israel. Saul's leadership is damaging himself and the people! God and Samuel want Saul and Israel to abound in the prosperity and life that only comes from obeying God. However, both are walking, if not running, from it, and it is all because the guy with all the talent and potential in the world is needlessly and recklessly leading them off a cliff!
- E.** I've quoted an interesting discussion below from R.D. Philips addressing the idea that verse eleven demonstrates that God wasn't in control and/or didn't know Saul would fail.
- F.** "In 1 Samuel 13, Saul failed in the first task given to him as Israel's king, offering the sacrifice to the Lord on his own rather than waiting for the prophet as he had been told to do. This failure meant that Saul would not be permitted to found a dynasty of kings. Saul's failure in chapter 15, disobeying God by sparing the life of Agag and his livestock, resulted in the Lord's complete rejection of Saul as Israel's king: "The word of the Lord came to Samuel: 'I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments' " (1 Sam. 15:10-11). This statement raises some legitimate questions, particularly as to how God can be said to "regret" or "repent" of his actions. For some readers, this and other statements of divine regret in the Bible (there are twenty-nine of them that use a verbal construction similar to that of verse 11) undermine the traditional Reformed teaching of God's foreknowledge

and sovereignty. This has been the recent position of scholars promoting what they call *open theism*. Open theism results from a radical emphasis on human free will, teaching that God does not know future events until they happen, since events do not exist until created by human choices. Thus God is said to be “open” to future events, learning them along with us as our sovereign choices determine—at least in large part—the course of history. Open theism thus not only undermines the Bible’s overall portrait of God, which emphasizes God’s predestinating sovereignty over all things (Isa. 46:9–10; Rom. 9:1–23; Eph. 1:4–11), but radically undercuts believers’ confidence in God’s ability to fulfill his promises and triumph in the end for our salvation. God’s repentance over his choice of Saul as king is seen by open theists as a classic text that proves their point regarding God’s ignorance of the future. John Sanders says this passage proves “that the future is in some respects an indefinite event for God.... God is not following a blueprint in working with us.” Gregory Boyd writes that God’s regret proves that God was not sovereign over Saul’s choices. He writes, “Common sense tells us that we can only regret a decision we made if the decision resulted in an outcome other than what we expected.”<sup>6</sup> The problem with openness theology is that it conflicts with so many clear statements regarding God’s perfect foreknowledge of and sovereignty over all things. Consider, for instance, Isaiah 46:9–10, where the Lord says, “I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.’” Such a statement would be impossible under open theism, since God could not declare from the beginning an end of which he had no knowledge, and he could not claim to accomplish all his purpose if he does not know how history ends (on the macro and micro scale). Likewise, Jesus assures believers of God’s care for their souls by asking: “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father” (Matt. 10:29). God is sovereign in the smallest of details in his creation so that small birds live and die according to his will, predestining and actively controlling history so that Paul is able to say that God “works all things according to the counsel of his will” (Eph. 1:11). How, then, do we handle the Bible’s statements of God’s sorrow or repentance over sinful events? Bruce Ware provides three answers. First, he notes that such statements indicate that God is aware of and involved in changes to the human situation and responds in appropriate ways. Thus, when Saul persistently fails to obey, God responds by repenting of Saul as Israel’s king. Second, divine repentance “indicates [God’s] real experience, in historically unfolding relationships with people ... Just because God knows in advance that some event will occur, this does not preclude God from experiencing appropriate emotions and expressing appropriate reactions when it actually happens.” This is why it is not sufficient to dismiss God’s statements of repentance as instances of anthropomorphism—which means that even though God does not really feel the way the Bible says he does, human descriptions are used as an accommodation to us. But the Bible says that God really did sorrow and really did repent over Saul’s selection as king, just as he was sorry he had made the human race prior to Noah’s flood (Gen. 6:6) and just as God relented in his judgment when Nineveh

repented through Jonah's ministry (Jonah 3:10). Dale Ralph Davis rightly comments: "Nonchalance is never listed as an attribute of the true God.... Verse 11 does not intend to suggest Yahweh's fickleness of purpose but his sorrow over sin; it does not depict Yahweh flustered over lack of foresight but Yahweh grieved over lack of obedience." Third, Ware notes that God often expresses repentance and sorrow in order to elicit a response that he desires from his audience. God was making a point to his readers—including us—by expressing his repentance over making Saul king. What was God's point in telling us this? His point was that he demands careful obedience to his commands from those who would serve on his behalf. One of the chief points of the Bible's record of Saul's reign was to make clear to God's people their obligation to obey the Lord. Saul "has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments," lamented the Lord (1 Sam. 15:11). The message for us is that faith in the Lord obliges us to careful obedience to the whole of his Word. Probably the best commentary on God's repentance is given by Samuel toward the end of this very chapter. Verse 11 tells us that Samuel responded to God's message with great passion: "Samuel was angry, and he cried to the Lord all night." What distressed Samuel? At a minimum, the prophet shared God's remorse that the man who enjoyed such privileges as Israel's anointed king should respond with disobedience. But he may also have struggled to accept God's statement of repentance and sorrow over Saul. In the end, Samuel is reconciled to God's unchanging sovereignty, for he declares that "the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret" (1 Sam. 15:29). This is a fascinating statement, for when Samuel says that the Lord does not regret, he uses the same verb that the Lord used when he said that God did regret making Saul king. Some object to this apparent contradiction, arguing that it seems that God really does not feel repentance and regret the way that humans do. This is, of course, true. For he is, after all, God and not a man. John Piper writes, "He is not a man to experience 'repentance' [the way that humans do]. He experiences it his way—the way one experiences 'repentance' when one is all-wise and foreknows the entire future perfectly. The experience is real, but it is not like finite man experiences it." The God who predestines and foreknows the future had ordained all the events of this chapter, including his own regret and sorrow over Saul's disobedience. These events were a small part of a much greater history, also predestined and foreknown by God—a history centered not only on God's regretting sin but on God's bearing sin for his people on the cross in the person of his Son. For while the penal sacrifice of the blessed and sinless Son of God, Jesus Christ, was the most loathsome and hateful event ever to occur on planet Earth—so that the furies of God's wrath poured out on the hard-hearted city that rejected Jesus—it also took place "according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23). The full purpose of history is that God might be glorified, so that the perfections of the glories of all the attributes of God might be known and displayed to men and angels—attributes such as holiness, mercy, justice, forbearance, love, and wrath. God is glorified by means of a history in which he

displays his full hatred of sin even while displaying such boundless grace in saving sinners through the death of Christ.”<sup>4</sup>

**The fourth conclusion you can make is that,**

**(4) It is very clear that Saul had a serious identity issue. (15:12-24)**

**A. 12 And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning. And it was told Samuel, "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself and turned and passed on and went down to Gilgal."**

1. “By going to Gilgal instead of Ramah, Saul seems to have been trying to avoid appearing before Samuel, through whom Yahweh had given him his orders and to whom an accounting after the battle needed to be made.”<sup>5</sup>
2. Once again, you just read that right. Saul set up a monument for himself, as in, to himself! So, not only had he totally disobeyed God, but now he’s also building monuments to memorialize himself!

**B. 13 And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed be you to the LORD. I have performed the commandment of the LORD."**

**Note:** Again, let me assure you that you read that correctly. Saul, like a kid whose parents came home and found them doing something they weren’t supposed to do, acted as if he was doing it for the Lord! He literally says, “I have performed the commandment of the LORD,” with a straight face and possibly even with emphasis!

**C. 14 And Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears and the lowing of the oxen that I hear?" 15 Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice to the LORD your God, and the rest we have devoted to destruction."**

1. First, you need to see that Saul completely distanced himself from what was happening. He says, “They,” as in the Israelites, not him, did this!
2. Second, Saul literally tries to claim all these animals are for the Lord! He said, “Before we feast on the best-tasting meat the Amalekites had, we will be sure to cook them on the altar of the Lord, which should nullify the fact we disobeyed God in having this in the first place.” It’s the equivalent of stealing money from the church, then tithing out of it, and thinking that

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<sup>4</sup> Phillips, R. D. (2012). [1 Samuel](#) (P. G. Ryken & R. D. Phillips, Duguid Iain M., Eds.; 1st ed., pp. 233–236). P&R Publishing.

<sup>5</sup> Hoffner, H. A., Jr. (2015). [1 & 2 Samuel](#) (1 Sa 15:12–15). Lexham Press.



makes everything suitable with God! So let's be clear here: they weren't offering these as sacrifices that would be fully consumed on the altar, but rather, like the lambs at Passover, they were using an altar ritual to cook the meat they were going to eat! They were about to consume meat that was explicitly supposed to be devoted to the Lord through destruction, not consumption!

**D. 16 Then Samuel said to Saul, "Stop! I will tell you what the LORD said to me this night." And he said to him, "Speak." 17 And Samuel said, "Though you are little in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel. 18 And the LORD sent you on a mission and said, 'Go, devote to destruction the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.' 19 Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you pounce on the spoil and do what was evil in the sight of the LORD?"**

1. Saul is not a little man, not just because he's a big, strong, good-looking, talented leader, but more importantly, because the LORD chose SAUL as KING. Saul is not little in God's eyes; Saul is little in His own eyes! God LOVES Saul! Going back to the very first verse in this chapter, Saul was God's CHOICE!!!! If God chooses you, there is no safer or more confident place to be! You're on His team because He wants you there. You are in his family!
2. Additionally, just like us, when God calls us to repent and follow Him, it's not because there is something better about us than somebody else. Saul has no reason to be arrogant about God calling him to be King because Saul had nothing to do with that choice. Remember what Saul was doing when Samuel found him; he was out chasing donkeys! The point is that Saul had done nothing to earn the right to be chosen as King, BUT the fact that he had been chosen and anointed by GOD to be KING should have been all the confidence he needed to do whatever it was that God told him to do no matter what the people felt about it.
3. Saul then doubles down on his rebellion by continuing to insist he has actually obeyed God! You will seriously wonder if you are reading these next couple of verses right, but I assure you that you are correct in what you will see them say!

**A. 20 And Saul said to Samuel, "I have obeyed the voice of the LORD. I have gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me. I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and I have devoted the Amalekites to destruction. 21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal."**

**Note:** He literally speaks of not killing King Agag as if it is somehow NOT obvious disobedience. He then once again justifies the taking of the best

livestock as something he had nothing to do with, and even if he did, their disobedience was really for God, so that should justify it!

**B. 22 And Samuel said, "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king."**

1. Woodhouse noted,
2. **"If God has spoken, then to fail to obey him is *presumptuous arrogance of the highest order*. If God has spoken, disobedience is in the same category as "the sin of divination" and "iniquity and idolatry"—the effective rejection of God and the adoption of another religion. Saul's disobedience was a rejection of the word of God, which was a rejection of God himself. The consequence was God's rejection of Saul as king over his people."<sup>6</sup>**
3. It's also crucial to note that the consequence was that Saul was being rejected as king, not from being in God's family. Just like Eli could have done earlier in the book, even though he would be removed from his privileged position of authority and responsibility over the people, Saul could have enjoyed a relationship with God and the blessings that come with it if he had just repented.

**The fifth conclusion you can make is that,**

**(5) It is very clear that Saul was more concerned with being King of Israel than knowing God. (15:25-35)**

**A. 24 Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. 25 Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me that I may worship the LORD."**

1. It will become clear that Saul's desire to worship the Lord is not because he wants a relationship with God; it's because he wants to be king! It is now abundantly clear that Saul doesn't find his value in his standing with God but rather in his standing as King before the people.
2. Saul tried to justify his actions by stating he believed the consequences of not doing what the people wanted were more severe than not doing what

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<sup>6</sup> Woodhouse, J. (2008). [\*1 Samuel: Looking for a leader\*](#) (pp. 272-274). Crossway Books.

God wanted. Furthermore, he is essentially also saying that doing what the people wanted was more rewarding than what God offered! He then continued the downward spiral of ridiculous justification and said because he feared the people more than God, he should be pardoned; that is, his behavior should be understood and forgiven! It appears Saul is speaking these things with total confidence in his logic! This is absolutely absurd, but it shows you just how weak and twisted Saul was as a man. It shows you that a full-grown, powerfully talented man like Saul, who inwardly sees himself as a very small person, will justify even the most ridiculous actions imaginable that attempt to fill in the void of their self-worth.

- B. 26 And Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you. For you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel." 27 As Samuel turned to go away, Saul seized the skirt of his robe, and it tore. 28 And Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you. 29 And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret."**

Note: God had made it clear in 1 Samuel 12:15 that if the King or the people rebelled, He would punish them; literally, His hand would turn from being against their enemies to being against them! So, Samuel says to Saul, "Did you think God was kidding?" "Do you actually believe you can break the heart of God over and over again, and rebel against Him, and expect Him not to do what He said He would do?" But Saul still didn't get it. Watch what he says next.

- C. 30 Then he said, "I have sinned; yet honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may bow before the LORD your God."**

**Note:** It leaps off the page that Saul doesn't even consider God to be his own God! He says, "Your God." Furthermore, in saying, "Honor me now before the elders of my people," he is once again making it clear where his heart is! He's not concerned about his relationship with God at all; he's worried about what the people will think of him! He finds his sense of self-worth in the people's affirmation of Him, not God's!

- C. 31 So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul bowed before the LORD. 32 Then Samuel said, "Bring here to me Agag the king of the Amalekites." And Agag came to him cheerfully. Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past." 33 And Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hacked Agag to pieces before the LORD in Gilgal. 34 Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house in Gibeah of Saul. 35 And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel.**

- D. Note:** Again, this doesn't mean God is saying He made the wrong decision, but rather that God loves Saul and the people of Israel, and therefore it breaks His heart. God grieved over this as a parent grieves a child who is rebelling and destroying their own life.

Ultimately, it's very easy to conclude that Saul had a pretty low view of himself, and that view was entirely determined by how he perceived the people's love for him instead of God's. Let me quickly give you some practical food for thought on this subject: how we end up foolishly defining our self-worth and how we can do it wisely.

### **How do we foolishly define our self-worth?**

- (1) We value the assessment of those who don't love us over those who do.**
- (2) We insist on seeing ourselves as worthless no matter how much others value us.**
- (3) We consider the assessment of abusive people.**
- (4) We base our self-worth on our talents, personality, appearance, financial well-being, etc.**
- (5) We base our self-worth on our societal status (cumulative value to society).**

**How do we wisely establish our self-worth? – When we, above every assessment, cherish, meditate on, and refuse to alter anything about the value our Creator, Eternal Father, and Redeemer has clearly declared about us, then and only then will we be able to see and wisely consider the value others place on us.**

It's not that how my wife, kids, and friends value me shouldn't matter to me at all, but rather that I can't correctly evaluate and apply this value to my life until I genuinely define my worth by the proper authority on my value ... the one who knows me beyond all others and also truly loves me beyond all others.

It's not that King Saul shouldn't have cared about how Israel viewed him—that's arrogant. Instead, for him to wisely care about how Israel viewed him, he needed to define his self-worth by what God had declared about him rather than what he perceived Israel to feel about him.

Unlike Saul, David, the one who would eventually replace Saul, wisely formulated his self-worth based on God's love for him! He wrote,

**13 For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from you when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. 17 How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! (Psalm 139:13-17)**

And here's what's really cool: God has more clearly testified to us how He values us than He did with David. We have full access to the knowledge of what we are worth to God! The Bible says,

**16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)**

Just in case you don't understand what that means, listen to this,

**3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. 11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. 13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:6-14)**

**Challenge: Which assessment of your value do your actions and attitude say is worth the most to you?**