

TOOLS FOR PARENTS



The Story of Saul, Part 1

QUESTIONS FOR CUBS

NOTE TO PARENTS/TEACHERS:

The goal of this questions-and-answers section is to initiate interaction between you and your kids. Please do not just read the questions and answers to your kids. These answers are given for you at an adult level to think about and to process. Once that is accomplished, you can then translate them into appropriate answers for your kids.

LESSON

Responding to God's call

KEY VERSE

"We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope." (Rom. 5:3-4 NIV)

EAR CHECK (STORY COMPREHENSION)

- Q: Whom do the elders of Israel come to talk to?
A: *Samuel, the prophet*
- Q: What do the elders ask Samuel?
A: *To ask God to provide them with a king so that they can be like the rest of the nations*
- Q: What was Saul sent out by his father to look for?
A: *Donkeys*
- Q: Who did Samuel anoint as King of Israel?
A: *Saul*
- Q: What happens when Samuel announces that Saul is the new king?
A: *Saul hides*

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HEART CHECK (SPIRITUAL APPLICATION)

Q: There are times when I am scared and overwhelmed. I pray for these times to end, but they just go on and on. At those times I feel like God is far away. What does God think in those times, and why does He seem so far away?

A: There will be times when we are scared and overwhelmed, but these times are not a punishment from God. In fact it may be the largest blessing you've had for a long time. The greatest struggle we have as followers of Christ is that we do not depend enough on God. When God allows us to be overwhelmed, it is an opportunity for us. We can realize that we have moved away from God and have begun to depend entirely upon ourselves, and then we can return to God in prayer and humility and once again rely fully on God. That is what God desires; that is why He allowed us to be overwhelmed so that we would get back under his protection—in the place of His greatest blessing for us. Unfortunately we can also choose to shake our fist at God because we are overwhelmed and uncomfortable, and we move further away from Him than we were before. This is disastrous. We would be wise if, when we feel overwhelmed and scared, we call out to God and thank Him for reminding us of our dependence on Him.

Q: I do want to do big things for God, but I'm just a kid. How do I know when I'm ready, and how will I know what God wants me to do?

A: Let's start with the first question. How do I know when I'm ready? You will probably not be ready in the way you think. You may not think that you're capable of doing big things for God. You may think you're too young or that you haven't learned enough yet. You might feel scared, overwhelmed, and unsure whether you should even try. That's normal. But here's a simple answer. You're ready when you realize God wants you to do something. This may be revealed in a hundred ways. You might feel a burden on your heart to help someone; you might feel the desire to use the gifts that you have forgotten. Or someone may simply ask you for help. Often this is the way God calls you to a task, but it is always wise to have someone older and more experienced to help guide you. And remember, you probably won't feel confident. You probably won't know exactly what to do, and there is a good chance it will not end the way you hope. This is your test. I encourage you to go ahead—to take the risk and depend on God. And He will give you the ability, knowledge, and strength you need.

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“I” CHECK (PERSONAL APPLICATION)

1. The Bible story of Saul is a tragedy. Use a dictionary to look up the definition of the word tragedy. Many of the things we can learn from the story of Saul are by understanding what not to do. Can you think of other instances where we learn from someone’s bad example? The lessons for the Story of Saul episodes are designed to be encouragements to us in how we should respond if God called us to do something special. Unfortunately, Saul doesn’t respond to God as he should at each opportunity.
2. We encourage you to take some time to read the story of Saul in the Bible. Our story covers the events described between 1 Samuel, chapters 8 through 16, verse 13. If you don’t want to spoil the surprises, read the Bible passages after listening to each episode.

Here are the sections of Scripture and the lessons that each episode in the series covers:

- The Story of Saul, Part 1
- 1 Samuel 8-10
- Responding to God’s Calling
- The Story of Saul, Part 2
- Samuel 11:1-13:15
- Stepping-up to the Challenge of Doing God’s Will
- The Story of Saul, Part 3
- 1 Samuel 13:16-14
- Avoiding Distractions When Doing God’s Will
- The Story of Saul, Part 4
- 1 Samuel 15:1-16:13
- Getting Back on Track When You Fail

3. Read Jeremiah 29:11 and Ephesians 2:10. God has a plan for each of us. Throughout your life God will want to use you. He may want you to do a big thing, like lead a nation or something small, like do something nice for an elderly person in your church. The Bible tells us that God has already prepared good works for each of us to do. Isn’t that an amazing thought? It’s important to point out that the Bible tells us how we can obey God and follow His will. The more familiar we are with God’s Word, the more we will know what He wants us to do and how to please Him. What are some things the Bible says God wants us to do?
4. Throughout our version of the Story of Saul, Odeda remains a close friend of Saul’s. The Bible doesn’t tell us if Saul’s servant remained close to Saul throughout his life, but from what we read it seemed like he loved Saul and gave him good advice. Do you have any close friends? Why do you think it is important to have good friends?

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DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The story of Saul is not a happy one. It's not even bittersweet; it's a tragedy of epic proportions. He could have been great, but like many of us, he chose to fail. Let me be clear; he did not sit down and draw up plans to fail—the bad choices he made as he went along set him on a course of certain failure.

Saul's sad story of failure actually began filled with hope and promise. Preparing this lesson, I was struck by how often God chooses the most unlikely people to accomplish His plan. In the ancient Hebrew culture, the first-born male was expected to go on to do great things. But God often works outside of our expectations. Joseph had ten older brothers, but he was chosen to become the second-in-command of Egypt. David was not the oldest either, but he was anointed king of Israel while he was still a shepherd boy. Gideon was from the least-important family in the least-important tribe of Israel, but he was chosen by God to save the nation from oppression. God chooses who He wants to choose. Though Saul was not from the kingly tribe of Judah, he was chosen to be God's king.

When he was first chosen, Saul was scared, then he was excited, and then he was crushed by the responsibility.

He had a good start. To his credit, he knew that his new role was going to be tough. Israel had a great need; they were being attacked all of the time, and they didn't have anything to fight with! They didn't have a palace, an army, or even any weapons.

The pattern I see for everyone that God chooses is that they are all, without exception, not ready for the job. Saul, Gideon, David, and Joseph—none of them were ready for the job when they were called. They had some of the raw materials, but they didn't know how to use them. When we are called by God to a task, the proper question is not "Am I capable?" but "Am I willing?" You are not ready; I guarantee it! God wants you to be overwhelmed; He wants to change you into something entirely different than you are now. He will make you ready if you will let Him.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David B. Carl', is written in a cursive style.

David B. Carl
Creative Director
Paws & Tales