

How to Leave a Godly Legacy When You Leave this Earth **1 Samuel 31**

Introduction:

1. Do you ever have appointments that you would like to skip out on? You might miss an appointment at the doctor or dentist, or you may cancel a dinner appointment, but there is one appointment that we all will keep. Hebrews 9:27
2. We will all keep our appointment with death. You cannot change this fact, but there is one thing that you **can** control. You can control how you live right now!
3. All of us will leave a testimony, or legacy, behind when we die. The decisions we are making **now**, and the lives we are living now will determine that legacy.
4. Here in our text, King Saul finally dies. King Saul died in utter disgrace. Saul started out well, but since chapter 13 Saul had been making one bad choice after another.
5. Saul left behind a testimony of prideful, arrogant rebellion. He was thick-headed and led a life in which he self-destructed time and time again.
6. Saul could have changed **until** this chapter, because here, he dies. Once death comes a-knocking on our door, it is too late to change.
7. How can we live lives without regrets? How can we live lives in which we leave behind a godly legacy for those who will come behind us? Let's turn Saul's negative example into some positive principles.

First, deal with any sin issues while there is still time.

1. Here in our text, Saul went into battle against the Philistines (vs. 1). This would be Saul's final battle. An arrow hit him, and he was wounded (vs. 2-3). Saul then took his own sword and fell on it so the enemy wouldn't be able to kill him.
vs. 4-5
2. We discover in 2 Samuel 1:6-7 that a young man found Saul, and he wasn't completely dead after all. Saul had revived and was in terrible pain. Saul asked the young man to kill him, and the young man did. Do you know what this man was?
3. How ironic is this? Do you remember where Saul's problems all started? In chapter 15, he was instructed to utterly destroy the wicked and idolatrous Amalekites. But Saul rebelled against God's command because he thought he knew better than God.
 - The sin that he failed to deal with ended up leading to his demise.
4. What a lesson for us! The sin that we fail to deal with now can eventually be the very thing that destroys us, or at least tarnishes our testimony after we die.
 - This is why we need to deal with sin issues quickly and swiftly. Don't wait, don't delay, don't put it off.
5. Saul was full of pride and wouldn't admit he had a problem. Saul blamed others for his sin issues. But eventually, Saul's sin came back to bite him. Our sinful choices eventually catch up with us if we don't repent and decide to seek God and change.

- Illustration: You can decide to never change the oil in your car. You may think you are getting away with it, but eventually it will catch up with you.
 - James 1:14-15 is very insightful. The order is lust, sin, and death. Somewhere in there, it has to be dealt with, or the equation equals death.
6. Are there sin issues that you need to deal with? There are two aspects to this:
- Before salvation, the sin issue concerns your eternal destiny. Your need is to believe on Christ (His cross-work) and receive forgiveness of your sins.
 - After salvation, the sin issue concerns your daily living. It impacts you, others, and it impacts the testimony you will leave behind when you die. Your need is to repent of that sin, agree with God about it, and trust God to help you overcome it through Christ in you.

Second, make faithfulness to the Lord the goal of your life.

1. Saul left a definite legacy behind him that is still associated with his name, even today. The legacy he left behind was one of unfaithfulness to the Lord.
2. Compare this to the man who would assume the throne after him, David. David is known to this day as being a faithful man who was a man after God's own heart.
3. Here is what is interesting. As did Saul, David also committed sins and made mistakes. Here is the difference:
 - When Saul was confronted with his sins, he refused to repent and continued on in rebellion against the Lord.
 - When David was confronted with his sins, he repented, he sought God, and he continued to serve the Lord and have a heart for God.
4. Faithfulness does not mean perfection. None of us in here are going to leave behind us a testimony of sinless perfection. But, we can all be faithful. This is what God is looking for. 1 Corinthians 4:2
 - Moses is said to be "*faithful in all his house*" (Hebrews 3:3, 5). Yet, we know Moses was not perfect, and Moses made mistakes.
5. When Saul died, the Amalekite stole his crown. 2 Samuel 1:10
6. Did you know that the apostle Paul taught that there is a crown in heaven awaiting those who are faithful? 2 Timothy 4:6-8
7. Don't let anybody steal your crown. Stay faithful; don't quit. If you sin and mess up, quickly turn to the Lord, admit where you were wrong, and continue serving Him.
8. When you die, may those who knew you be able to say, "He/she was faithful to the end."

Third, live in a way that magnifies the Lord even after your death.

1. Satan was glorified when King Saul died. Israel, Saul, his sons, and the God of Israel was disgraced. 1 Samuel 31:9-10
2. May this not be true of you and me when our time comes to leave this earth.
3. Paul's passion was that, whether he lived or died, Christ would be magnified. Philippians 1:20-21
4. Oh that people can say about us after we die, for him to live was Christ...

- There are some people that, when they die, people will think, “For him to live was money, sports, his car, his house, golf, fishing, clothes....”
5. If you can say, “I live to magnify and glorify Christ,” then one day you can have the peace and calm assurance to say, “...*to die is gain.*” Saul couldn't say this.

In Conclusion:

1. You may think, “It doesn't matter how I live or how I die. I don't care. I'm not hurting anybody but myself.” This is not true. Saul's choices affected so many others. vs. 6
2. The legacy you leave behind will have an impact on those who come after you.