

## **Spiritual Warning Signs**

### **1 Samuel 14**

#### **Introduction:**

1. We are very accustomed to the concept of warning signs (dashboard of your vehicle, smoke alarm in your house, construction and detour signs on road, you get physical exams and have blood work done to look for any warning signs, etc.).
2. By the same token, there are spiritual warning signs that we need to be aware of in our lives. They are warning signs that tell us that we are spiritually **not** where we need to be. At this point, we have a choice. We can choose to ignore the warning signs, or recognize them and do something about them.
3. When we were introduced to King Saul of Israel, we saw a very humble and obedient man. But, there were some warning signs that began to pop up on Saul's dashboard.
4. In chapters 13 and 14, Saul was in a time of distress as his chief enemy, the Philistines, had surrounded his men with thousands of chariots and soldiers.
5. Many times, it is during times of trial that the warning signs will pop up, revealing spiritual issues and problems in our lives that need to be dealt with. Every believer must deal with these spiritual warning signs before it is too late.
  - Saul did not deal with them, and they led to his total demise.
6. What are these spiritual warning signs that we see in Saul? May God give us the grace to see and recognize these warning signs if they are present in us.

#### **First warning sign: Arrogancy (13:8-10)**

1. We covered this text a couple of weeks ago, so I just want to mention this quickly. But, I feel that we do need to be reminded of this.
2. Samuel didn't show up when Saul thought he should have, so Saul just took priestly privileges that were not his. He arrogantly took matters into his own hands. 2:3
3. When we get full of ourselves, and our words begin to show it, we know we are headed down the wrong path. Proverbs 8:13; Isaiah 13:11
4. God simply can not, and will not use people with an arrogant spirit, but He delights in using those with a humble and contrite spirit. Isaiah 57:15
5. Have you developed an arrogant spirit towards your co-workers, fellow church members, your spouse, your friends, your enemies, etc.? This is a true spiritual warning sign. Proverbs 16:18

#### **Second warning sign: Hesitancy (14:2, 16-23)**

1. Do you remember what we learned in the last message? There were two swords in all of Israel, King Saul's and his son, Jonathan's.
2. Jonathan took his sword, trusted God, and went out and won a mighty battle against the Philistines (14:6, 13). What did Saul do with his sword? 14:2

3. Then when it became obvious that something was happening and that the Philistines were in disarray, how did Saul respond? (vs. 15-17)
  - What? He was the King, the enemy was in retreat. What does it matter who is leading the charge? Get out there and help and fight!
4. Then, when he realizes that his own son, Jonathan, is the one, he wants the priest to bring the ark. He is still wondering if he should go and fight. Why so hesitant?
5. Finally, when the noise keeps getting louder and louder, Saul says to the priest, "Forget it," and he goes out and fights the battle that his son started. vs. 19-20, 23
6. Saul was a man that was riding the fencepost. He didn't know whether to commit or not.
7. This sounds like us, so many times. God has given us His Word, His Holy Spirit, His spiritual armor, spiritual gifts, and yet we sit and wait. We can come up with more excuses why **not** to serve the Lord and get involved in the fight.
  - They say there are three types of people in the church: those who **make** things happen, those who **watch** things happen, and those who don't have a clue that anything **is** happening.
8. We are hesitant to commit to the things of God. We sit with our swords leaned up against the tree. Where is the urgency? Where is the fire and fervency? "Well I'm just not sure what God wants me to do? I'm just waiting on God." Let's see what He has said. Romans 12:11; Colossians 4:12; 1 Peter 1:22
9. While you are waiting on God, why not do something to help the cause of Christ!

### **Third warning sign: Legalism (14:24-52)**

1. Legalism is when we attempt to live the Christian life by a rule or set of rules. This is what Saul did (vs. 24). What a stupid religious rule! How smart is it to starve your soldiers? Do they fight well when they are hungry, tired, and weak?
2. Saul either did this to make himself look spiritual, or perhaps he foolishly thought that his rule would gain him favor with God. He probably thought both. This is legalism.
3. Legalism is when people do "religious things" out of fear of breaking the rules, rather than out of their sincere love of God. vs. 25-26
4. After the time of Saul's oath was over, the people were so famished that they took animals and ate them without taking the time to drain the blood as God had strictly commanded them. This was a total transgression of God's Word. vs. 31-33
5. This is what legalism does. We are so concerned with keeping the rules of the church or some other person, that we can violate God's Word in spirit and deed and not even realize it or be convicted by it. "I'm keeping the rule, so I'm okay!"
6. God allowed the sheer idiocy of Saul's legalism to be revealed in this chapter (through these events), as Saul's own son, Jonathan, violated Saul's rule without even knowing it. vs. 27-29
7. People who get ensnared into a form of legalism tend to lose all spiritual perspective. When Saul found out what Jonathan did, he was prepared to kill his own son so the rule would be kept. vs. 43-44

- Jonathan is the one who trusted God and led the victory that day. Saul was the one with the sin problem in this chapter, not Jonathan. But, he was too blind to see it. He was ready to cut off his own son rather than acknowledge that his rule was stupid to begin with.
  - Legalism doesn't allow for relationships. It's all about the rules.
  - Legalism always brings a snare, and brings contention and strife. Legalism may make sense to us, but others can see right through the hypocrisy of it. vs. 45
8. Legalism (living by rules) will never bring complete victory in our Christian lives (vs. 30, 46). Saul could have totally destroyed the Philistines that day, but because of his legalism, they were a source of problems to him the rest of his life. vs. 52
  9. Legalism leads away from true life and brings lousy spiritual results. What results are you getting in your spiritual life? It should be the fruit of Galatians 5:22-23.
    - Do we have joy in abundance? Do we have love flowing freely from us? Do we have an abiding peace?
    - If not, perhaps it is because we are following someone's rules instead of walking with Christ.

### **In Conclusion:**

1. Saul chose to ignore the warning signs. The next chapter will reveal the result of his neglect, and was not good. His position as king was stripped from him. He ended up losing everything.
2. It didn't have to be this way. He could have made a decision to change.
3. If the warning lights light up on our dashboards to say that we are low on oil, and if our engines burn up because we ignored the warning lights, we certainly have nobody to blame but ourselves. We could have done something.
4. Has God dealt with your heart today, in some way? What decisions do you need to make in response to God's Word today?
5. As we heed these spiritual warning signs, a right choice today can prevent a catastrophe in the future.