



### *Sandy Wild*

I have been the daughter of a King for over 36 years. My husband, Dick, and I have been married 39 years and have two grown sons and four exceptionally bright grandchildren. I have directed Women's Ministries at Anthem (formerly Hayden Lake) Friends for 15 years and am a teaching leader of Courtship Bible Study, a community-wide study written just for women.

I call this picture "Solidarity!" In 2009, a diagnosis of aggressive breast cancer rocked my world. Two surgeries, seven months of chemotherapy, and six weeks of radiation can make a person a little grumpy. I could not have gotten through that long year without a little help from my friends. These two young women stepped in to teach for me on days when I was too sick to come in to work. Others cooked, cleaned, and painted my office. I will forever be grateful for God's love through his obedient servants.

The most important thing I want you to know is how smitten I am by the Bridegroom and I anxiously await the day when I can see him face to face.

*BIBLE READING: 1 Samuel 8:1-7*

From the beginning of time, Israel had lived under a theocratic form of government. The dictionary describes theocracy as “a government recognizing the immediate sovereignty of God.” It was God’s will that Israel would look to God for his promise of protection and provision. Yet, it seems that each time his children felt threatened, they would turn away from their King and focus their attention on the current circumstances.

The prophet Samuel went before the Lord, telling him that his people were demanding a new leader—a man of flesh and blood—so they could be like all the other nations. This was troubling to Samuel. In his compassion, the Lord explained to the aged leader that his people were not rejecting Samuel or his sons as their prophet; instead, Israel was rejecting God as their King.

As I read this account today, I wonder how many times I have traveled the same path as these Israelites. I have to ask myself if I look to flesh and blood for help before looking to my King. Turning to self or others may, at times, offer a quicker solution to some of life’s problems; but when I turn to the Lord and wait for his answer, I surrender to his sovereign reign in my life.

*SONG: All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Father, please remind me of your great sufficiency the next time I’m being tempted to seek a more temporal solution rather than turn my heart to your eternal reign.*

—Sandy Wild

*BIBLE READING: 1 Samuel 10:17-24*

In response to their cry, God looked for a man who would lead his people—and along came Saul. The name *Saul* actually means “asked of God.” A better choice could not have been found to impress the surrounding nations. Saul stood head and shoulders above them all. The Scripture tells us that Saul was impressive and without equal among the men of Israel. In other words, he simply *looked* like a king. But as we continue to reflect on Saul’s life this week, we will be reminded that it takes more than height and good looks to lead people. It takes courage.

Seven days earlier Samuel anointed Saul, and now it was time to appoint Israel’s first king publicly. I can almost hear the drums roll as all the tribes of Israel parade one by one before Samuel. Out of the twelve, the tribe of Benjamin was separated out. Each clan within the tribe of Benjamin was presented before Samuel, with Matri’s clan brought forward. The air had to be electric with anticipation—nothing like this had ever happened in Israel. Finally, from all the members of the clan of Matri, Saul was chosen. However, Israel’s new king was nowhere to be found.

Was it fear or insecurity that motivated Saul to hide among the baggage that day? As with Saul, both emotions have the power to keep us from doing the God-appointed works he has for us.

*SONG: Be Still, My Soul*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Almighty King, open my eyes to the emotions that keep me from doing the good works you have prepared in advance for me this day.*

—Sandy Wild

*BIBLE READING: 1 Samuel 11:6-11*

While returning home from working in the fields, Saul receives word that the city of Jabesh has fallen under the mighty Ammonite army. The city's elders are ready to throw in the towel. A proposal is sent to Nahash, the crazed leader of the Ammonites, offering their surrender. Nahash accepts the offer on one condition: he would be allowed to further humiliate the city by gouging out each man's right eye.

Up to this point, Saul was somewhat frightened by the daunting task of leading God's children. Yet now under the shadow of imminent harm to his people, a mighty king emerges. I wish Saul's story could have ended here. He was at the top of his game! Three hundred thirty thousand men responded to the king's call to battle.

Saul divided the army into three companies of fighting men and led them to go against the Ammonites. In one day, the army of God slew their enemy so completely that the Ammonites were scattered—any soldier left standing fled alone. Saul's victory was swift and complete, thereby establishing him as Israel's first king. Saul was just 30 years old when he delivered Jabesh-Gilead from Ammonite oppression. This would be the first of many battles fought over the next 40 years of Saul's reign.

In spite of his fear, Saul was moved to fight for the downtrodden. Empowered by the Spirit of God, Israel's king brought justice to the besieged city. What acts of injustice compel you to action?

*SONG: Make Me a Blessing*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Dear God, may the Light of Christ shine from my life. Will you make me a blessing to someone this day?*

—Sandy Wild

*BIBLE READING: 1 Samuel 13:5-13*

The Philistine army stood assembled against Israel with horses, chariots, and soldiers as far as any eye could see. An overwhelming sense of doom drove God's people to cower behind rocks, hide themselves in caves, and slink down into cisterns; they trembled with fear. The prophet Samuel had promised to come within seven days to offer the sacrifices needed for Israel to go to war. Saul waited a full week and still no prophet. With his people crossing the Jordan in search of security offered in the distant land of Gad and Gilead, the king realized he was faced with a decision.

Today's passage finds Saul in the middle of a predicament. What will rise to the top when the king's mettle is tested? Will his true colors be exposed? When describing a person as showing his "true colors," we are usually referring to an individual who has been living one way, then acts or behaves in a manner in keeping with his real nature.

Waiting another day for God's prophet could mean that more of Saul's men would scatter. What if Samuel had been detained in some way? Somewhere in Saul's mind he believed he had to do something. Falling back on his natural bent, Saul did the unthinkable: he took on the priestly office and offered the sacrifice himself. Saul's unwillingness to wait for the Lord revealed him as a man with no regard for the sovereign will of God.

*SONG: They That Wait Upon the Lord*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Father, reveal to me those times when I act in accordance with my natural bent. Help me live as a faith-filled believer.*

—Sandy Wild

*BIBLE READING: 1 Samuel 15:1-14*

What kind of man was Saul? When I consider Saul's life 20 years before this event, I might characterize him as being a God-fearing man whose life was marked with strength and humility. No other leader rivaled this king in the early days of his reign; he was anointed by God as the deliverer of Israel. But as we delve further into his life, we find that the years of victorious accomplishments in battle have filled Saul's heart with a false sense of sufficiency.

Though God had given Saul his triumphs in war, it is becoming apparent that Israel's king was forgetting the source of his accomplishments. Following his victory over the Amalekites, Saul travels to Mount Carmel where he erects a monument in his own honor.

Pride has created a sense of self-sufficiency within his heart. When given a direct command to rid the world of every trace of the Amalekites, Saul thought it prudent to ignore the word of the Lord and instead direct his army to spare the finest of the spoils for themselves. In other words, Saul believed he understood what was best for Israel.

As I read this account in the life of Saul, I wonder how often I have spurned the ways of the Lord to follow that which makes sense to me. Thankfully, when the bleating of sheep threaten to expose me, it is the bleeding of a Lamb on a cross that covers my sin.

*SONG: Behold the Lamb of God*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Thank you, precious Savior, for dying to cover my rebellion and sin. Remind me daily of your all sufficient work in my heart. Jesus, you are my King!*

—Sandy Wild

*BIBLE READING: 1 Samuel 15:15-24*

Saul's confession was strange, to say the least. First, he tried to shift the blame for his act of rebellion onto the shoulders of the very soldiers who served him. Next, Saul tries to spiritualize his sin by explaining that the sheep and cattle were reserved as sacrifices for the Lord. And when that didn't work, Saul tells Samuel that he gave in to the wishes of the people because he was afraid of them. No matter how you slice it, this was not the confession of a repentant man.

Repentance means to turn away from the sin. It requires change; we must amend our behavior in some manner. Saul was simply trying to excuse his rebellion against God's command.

Many years later, another king would be confronted by a prophet regarding his sin. Nathan came to David with the word of the Lord which exposed his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba. Both Saul and David were chosen by God to lead his people; both men were sinners. Only one confessed and repented of his sin; only one had a heart after God.

This realization challenges me to seek the watchful eye of the Holy Spirit in my life. How many times have I excused an action as being anything other than what it really is—sin? Oh, how I long for a heart like that of David.

*SONG: Just As I Am*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in life everlasting. Amen.*

—Sandy Wild

*BIBLE READING: 1 Samuel 15:25-35*

First Samuel 15 ends on a note of great sadness as Samuel mourns the loss of a very close friend. Never again would the aging prophet speak with Saul in an official capacity. The voice of God was withdrawn from the king of Israel. The last verse tells us that both Samuel and the Lord grieved this loss.

Why was the Lord grieved? The answer to this question is given earlier in the chapter. According to verse 11, Saul had turned away from the Lord. The fact that Israel's king was no longer a God-follower is evident in verses 21 and 30 when Saul says "the Lord *your* God" (emphasis added). Saul no longer considered the Lord to be *his* God.

This is a pivotal point in Saul's reign. He has been leading the Lord's people with no respect for God's order and without regard for God's voice. The consequence was severe. In the same way that Samuel's robe was torn, so the kingdom would be torn from Saul's hand and given to another.

I believe we learn just as much from the failures recorded in Scripture as we do from acts of great faith. This event in Saul's life is a painful reminder of the cost to our ministry when we allow the busyness of life to create a slow fade of our faith.

*SONG: I Have Decided to Follow Jesus*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Precious Father, are there things in my life that grieve you? Enable me to live the life you have prepared for me. Lead me in living a life worthy of the manner for which you have called me.*

—Sandy Wild