



 LifeGroups
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Why Saul Failed as a Leader

Godly Leaders

- Godly leaders have confidence because they trust in the Spirit.
- 1 Samuel 9:1–2, 15–21 and 1 Samuel 10:1–2, 9–11, 17–24
- First Samuel 9 introduces us to Saul. He is described in contrasting ways.
- The description in verses 1 and 2 focuses on things that are considered positives in the eyes of the world: wealth, good looks, great height.
- But in verse 21, Saul described himself as being from the humblest clan in the smallest tribe in Israel.

Godly Leaders

- When God told Samuel that it was Saul who would be king, He described Saul in terms of military strength.
- He would be the one to save God's people from the Philistines (9:16).
- This didn't necessarily mean Saul would be a godly leader.
- Samson was a man of great physical strength who rescued Israel from the Philistines, and the Holy Spirit came upon him mightily several times, but he was a womanizer and a vengeful man (Judges 13–16).

Godly Leaders

- In 1 Samuel 10, Samuel anointed Saul king over Israel, and the Holy Spirit rushed upon him, and he prophesied (verses 1, 10).
- Saul seemed to have everything going for him – he was wealthy, strong and powerful. Not only that, but he was empowered by the Holy Spirit!
- Why then would he hide when Samuel was casting lots for who would be made king (verse 22)?
- If God was with him, what did he have to fear?

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- A few chapters later, we will see a young David facing the giant Goliath with no fear but full confidence that the Lord would deliver Goliath into his hand. This presents a striking contrast to Saul, who hid among the baggage.
- David – not just with Goliath, but throughout his life – trusted in the Lord despite being in many terrifying situations, including being pursued by Saul and later by his own son, Absalom.
- But David would write in Psalm 27, “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” (Psalm 27:1).

Godly Leaders

- To be fair to Saul, many of the prophets responded with a lack of confidence when they were first called by God.
 - Moses said he was not eloquent enough to speak (Exodus 4:10).
 - Jeremiah said he was too young (Jeremiah 1:6).
- But when God reassured them that He would be with them, giving them the words to speak and empowering them to do all He called them to do, they responded to the call.

Godly Leaders

- Saul had already been empowered by the Holy Spirit, and still hid in fear.
- This is a foreshadowing of how Saul would act out of fear during much of his reign, and how his fear would eventually be his downfall (1 Samuel 13:12; 15:24; 18:15; 28:15, 20).
- No one is saying it's wrong to feel fear.
- We all feel fear at various times.
- That feeling is something we can't control.

Godly Leaders

- David felt fear “on every side” at times (Psalm 31:13). But he did not operate out of fear. He chose faith instead. In that same psalm, David also said, “In you, O Lord, do I take refuge ... You are my rock and my fortress ... into your hand I commit my spirit ... I am in distress ... terror on every side ... but I trust in you, O Lord; I say, ‘You are my God.’ My times are in your hand” (Psalm 31:1, 3, 5, 9, 13–15).
- David felt fear, but he chose faith. This is the difference between Saul and David and why David was the right leader for Israel. When he felt fear, he didn’t try to fix the situation in his own power. He chose to trust in God.

Godly Leaders

- Saul did some good things for Israel, but the book paints him as a foil for the character of David. Saul was the kind of king the people wanted – strong and successful in all the worldly ways. They were looking for a “strong man” type of leader to go out and fight their battles for them (1 Samuel 8:20).
- Strength is a great thing for a leader to have. David had it too (1 Samuel 18:7).
- But when leaders rely on their own strength instead of faith in God, they will panic and begin to operate out of fear when that strength starts to fail. But when you rely on God, the times of fear are when you most find your strength in the Lord.

Godly Leaders

- Godly leaders wait on the Lord instead of taking matters into their own hands.
- 1 Samuel 13:1–14
- The beginning of this chapter tells us that Saul chose 3,000 men for his army and defeated the garrison of Philistines (verses 1–4).
- But then the Philistines mustered up 30,000 chariots, 6,000 horseman and a multitude of troops “like the sand on the seashore” (verse 5), and the men of Israel were terrified (verse 7).

Godly Leaders

- Saul waited seven days.
- This was the time in which Samuel had said he would come to Gilgal.
- Samuel would then make an offering that would be used to spiritually prepare the army for battle (verse 8).
- But Samuel was late in coming and the army started to scatter from Saul.
- So Saul offered the sacrifice himself (verses 11–12).
- Saul didn't wait on God's timing.

Godly Leaders

- Samuel told Saul that because he took matters into his own hands instead of waiting on Samuel to do the sacrifice the way that the Lord had commanded.
- Saul would be removed from his position as king and his family dynasty would not continue.
- Another man, a man after God's own heart, would take his place, and his dynasty would be the one to rule God's kingdom forever (verses 13–14).
- Many of us might think this sounds awfully unfair.

Godly Leaders

- Saul was seeking the favor of the Lord before battle (verse 12). Wasn't that what he was supposed to do?
- Maybe he did the offering the wrong way, but wasn't his heart in the right place? Weren't his intentions good?
- Samuel's response makes it clear that no matter what we may think as we read this story, Saul's heart was not in the right place when he made that offering.
- No matter what he said, he didn't do it out of faith, he did it out of fear.

Godly Leaders

- If he had really been seeking God's favor, he would have waited however long it took to offer the sacrifice the way God commanded him through Samuel (verse 13).
- He would have trusted God's instructions, even if they seemed foolish to him, and done things God's way, like the Israelites had done in the battle of Jericho (Joshua 6).
- "It is ironic – and symptomatic of Saul's spiritual dullness – that the king believed he could obtain the Lord's favor through an act of disobedience."

Godly Leaders

- Not only did Saul operate out of fear instead of faith and take matters into his own hands, but he also tried to shift the blame to Samuel (verse 11).
- Samuel's question to Saul, "What have you done?", also parallels God's question to Eve (Genesis 3:12–13) in the Garden.
- This story links the sins of Saul to the very first sin, both rooted in a lack of trust in God's word and an attempt to take matters into their own hands.
- Adam and Eve lost the opportunity for eternal life in the garden; Saul lost the opportunity for an enduring dynasty in the promised land

Godly Leaders

- Godly leaders look to the Lord for guidance.
- 1 Samuel 28:3–20 and 1 Chronicles 10:13–14
- The Law of Moses strictly prohibited any use of magic or divination to tell the future or to get any supernatural guidance (Leviticus 20:6).
- The Law calls following mediums and spiritualists “prostituting” ourselves.
- It’s “adulterous” to our relationship with God. Scripture often talks about idolatry in terms of “adultery” because of the image of God as our husband.

Godly Leaders

- Trusting in another god or any other source (magic, horoscopes or anything else) for wisdom and guidance is “cheating” on God with “other lovers” (Hosea 2:7).
- Saul knew this. The text even tells us that Saul had expelled the mediums and spiritualists from the land.
- By seeking out a medium, he was not only breaking God’s law, he was also going against his own.

Godly Leaders

- But Saul was desperate. He had sought wisdom from the Lord, but the Lord hadn't answered him. He had tried everything. He had consulted prophets and even the Urim, a special pair of stones the high priest could use to seek God's guidance in making decisions for the people (Exodus 28:30).
- They were used only for big questions that affected the whole nation such as whether to go to battle with a particular nation.
- Only one question could be asked at a time, and it had to be a yes or no question.

Godly Leaders

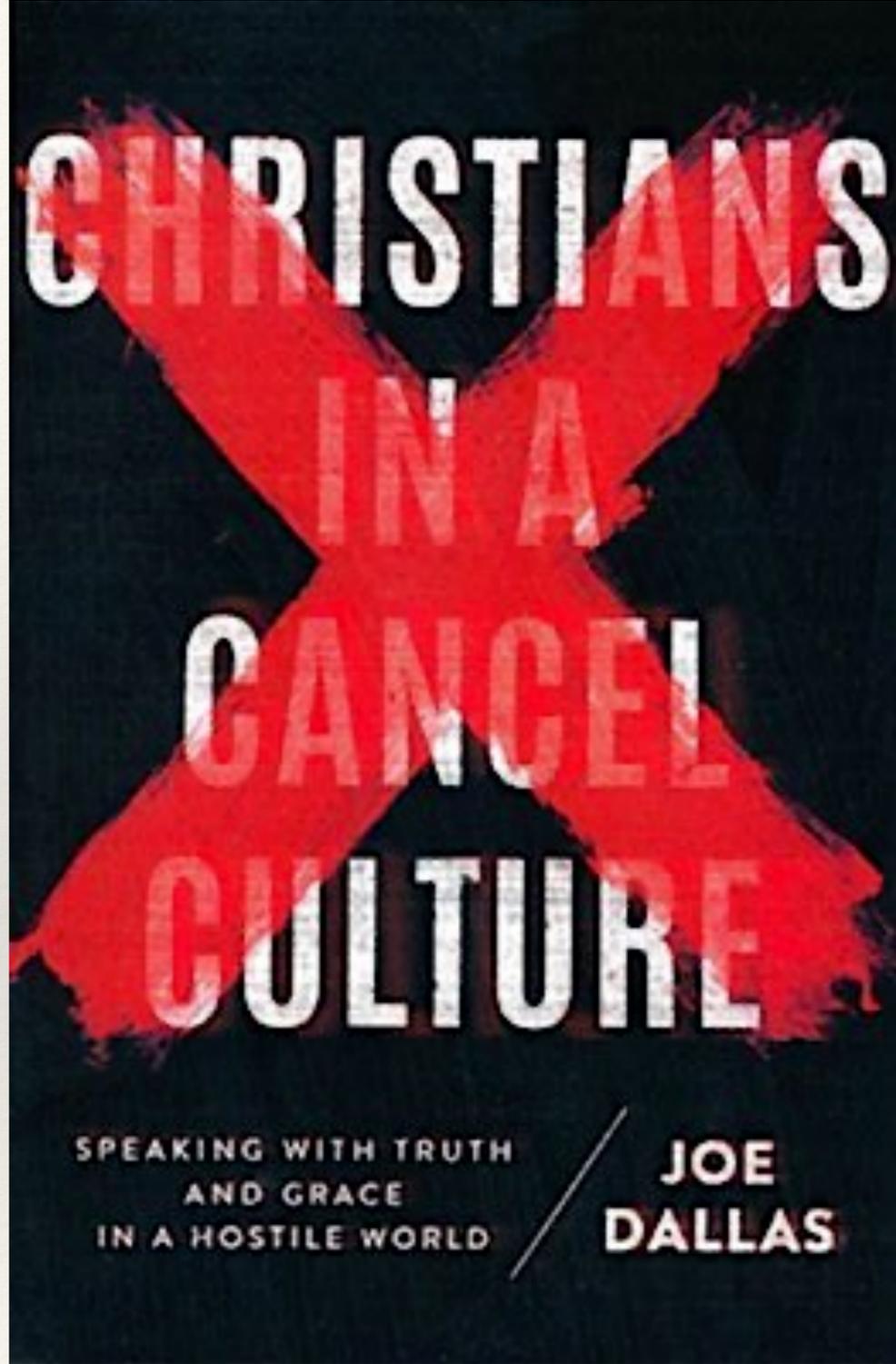
- Saul had been cut off from the prophetic wisdom of the Lord.
- God had rejected him as king because of his disobedience, both in the story we read above and again in chapter 15, when he kept the best of the spoils from battle instead of destroying it all as God had commanded (15:15; 16:1).
- The Holy Spirit had departed from Saul by the time David was anointed (16:13–14).
- God was so upset at Saul's disobedience that the text says He "regretted" making Saul king (15:35).

Godly Leaders

- The word literally means to “be sorry” or “console yourself.” God wasn’t saying He shouldn’t have made Saul king, but that He was saddened by how it had turned out, even though He knew this is what would happen.
- The only other time Scripture says the Lord had regret was right before the flood, when He said He was sorry He had made mankind (Genesis 6:7). But as with the flood, God didn’t completely give up on His people.
- Just as He saved Noah and his family and started humanity anew with them, God anointed David and started the monarchy anew with him.

Godly Leaders

- We see Saul's great fear of the Philistines that caused him to make this desperate move, but after Samuel's words, Saul fell flat on the ground in an even greater fear.
- This reminds us of what Jesus would later say in the Gospels: do not fear man, who can only kill the body, but only fear God who can destroy both body and soul (Matthew 10:28).
- Saul lived in an unholy fear of all the wrong things, but what God calls us to is the godly "fear of the Lord" that is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 1:7).



**CHRISTIANS
IN A
CANCEL
CULTURE**

SPEAKING WITH TRUTH
AND GRACE
IN A HOSTILE WORLD

**JOE
DALLAS**

Christians in a Cancel Culture

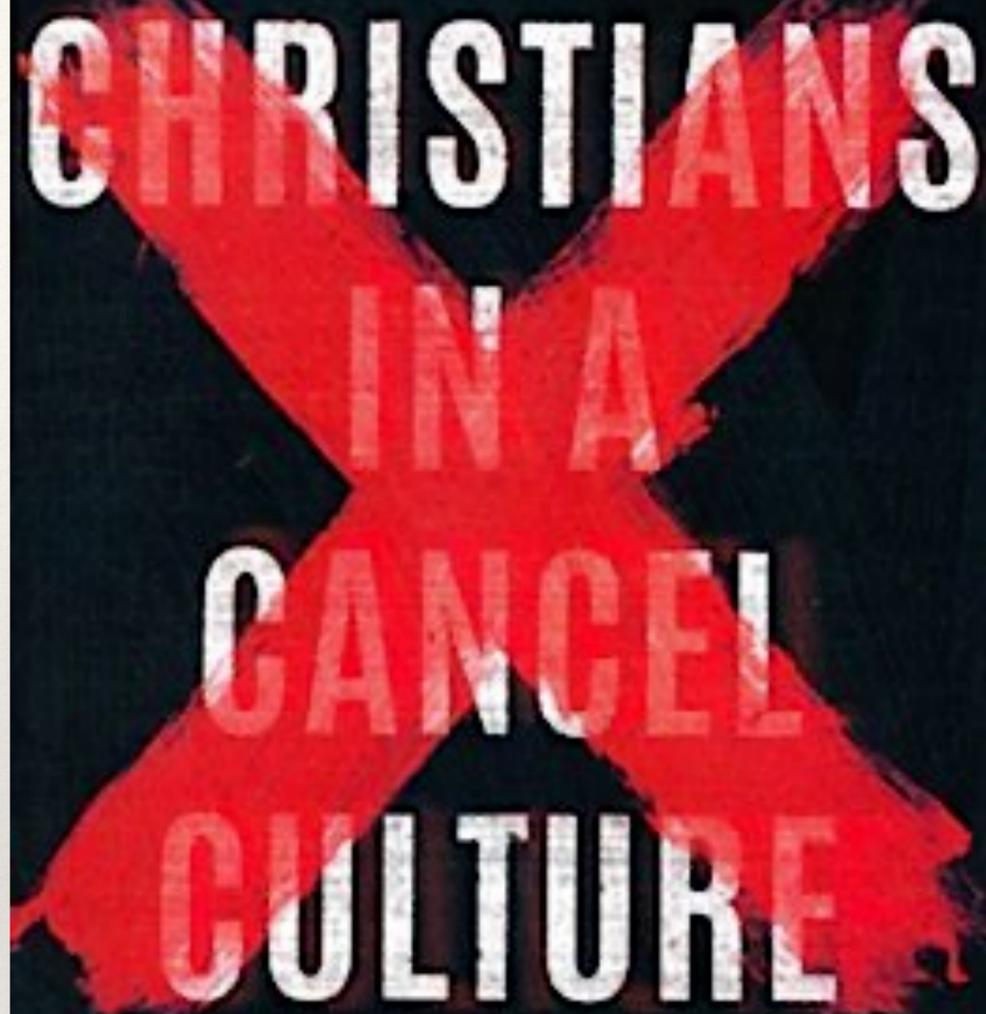
- Joe Dallas has been on the receiving end of criticism and experienced the cancel culture before the phrase gained popularity.
- The first few chapters talk about criticism and persecution of Christians, as well as many other figures who are not Christians.
- He then provides some suggestions on how to address contemporary issues like abortion, homosexuality, racial relations, transgenderism, and progressive Christianity.
- Each chapter concludes with practical, biblical instruction.

Why the Hostility?

- One chapter answers the question, Why the hostility?
- The first is convenience. Whenever truth is told, someone is inconvenienced. Former worshippers of the Goddess Diana were upset when the gospel was preached in Ephesus. The silversmith who made money selling shrines was affected. Elijah's words to Ahab were an inconvenience to the King
- The teachings of Jesus were certainly troubling to the religious leaders of His day. He rebuked their hypocrisy (Matthew 23) and presented Himself as Savior (John 3:16) and the way to salvation (John 14:6).

Why the Hostility?

- The second is conscience. Presenting biblical truth can prick the conscience of unbelievers and carnal Christians. The accusers of the adulterous woman who were convicted of their own sins (John 8) because that conviction can be found in both Christians and non-Christians (Romans 2:15).
- The third is conviction. Not all hostility toward biblical truth springs from an inconvenienced agenda or a pricked conscience. Saul of Tarsus had strong convictions. He “persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it” (Galatians 1:13). But after his conversion was able to later say that he “lived in all good conscience before God until this day” (Acts 23:1).



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