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SERIES: I Samuel, Part 1 (The Heart of a Leader)

FRIDAY

OPEN

Is a leader always right because the leader is a leader, and leaders are infallible? And what if that leader makes a decision or decides to take a certain path and the people don't think that that really is of God; what is their responsibility? Are they simply to be quiet? Are they simply to say, "Well it's none of our business because we're not the leader"? What do you do in a situation like this, when you think the leadership is wrong? We'll look at it today.

PART ONE

Have you ever heard someone say, "Either lead, follow or get out of the way," or "Either lead, follow and get run over"? Are we always to follow the leader if we think the leader is wrong? Well, we're looking at a very tense situation, and I want you to know it is tense. I mean Saul is trying to decide whether or not he's to go into the camp of the Philistines and take a spoil

and kill anyone that has survived or is laying on the ground bleeding and wounded. He's gone to God to ask God for direction and God has been absolutely silent. And in that silence Saul realizes there's something wrong going on here. So he's going to cast a lot. Let's pick up in 1 Samuel 14, verse 38. "[And] Saul said, 'Draw near here, all you chiefs of the people, and investigate and see how this sin has happened today.'" (1 Samuel 14:38) In other words, God's not answering us, because there's sin in the camp. He says, "'For as the Lord lives, who delivers Israel, though it is in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die.'..." (14:39a) Now if you were with me in the last program you put a tombstone over die. You marked sin; you colored it brown, and you probably marked Jonathan because this is one of those significant places where you want Jonathan to jump out on the page. So you have Jonathan, my son, he shall surely die, with that tombstone over die. "...But not one of...the people answered him." (14:39b) These people that were following Saul who was the king, were absolutely silent; they just kept their mouths shut. And there is a time to keep your mouth shut. "Then he said to all Israel, 'You shall be on one side and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side.' And the people said to Saul, 'Do what seems good to you.'" (14:40) Okay, if that's what you want, go ahead and do it. So they divided the troops and put all the troops on one side and just father and son on the other side. "Therefore, Saul said to the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Give a perfect lot.' And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped." (14:41) Now what does Saul know? Hey, it's either me or it's Jonathan; it's not the people because of the lot. Now remember when we looked at the scriptures regarding the lot, we saw in Proverbs, in Proverbs, chapter 16, in verse 33, and let me just review it for you, not the other scriptures that we looked at, but just this one. It says, "The lot is cast into the lap, But...every decision is from the Lord." (Proverbs 16:33) And we looked at this and we saw this to be true in the incident of Joshua when Joshua had lost a battle, because there was sin in the camp. And they found out through

lot that it was Achan that had taken the things that were under the ban. We saw in Proverbs, chapter 18, verse 18; I guess we are looking at these verses again, that the [“lot puts an end to contentions and decides between the mighty.”](Proverbs 18:18) In other words, okay, let’s just quite fighting about this and let’s draw a lot. And then we saw in Jonah, chapter 1, verse 7, that when the storm was coming and the ship was about to wreck they wanted to know why this calamity had come from the Lord, and they found out it was because of Jonah and they found that out by drawing lots. So now they’re drawing the lot. You say, but that’s just Old Testament. Well I’ve got to take you to Luke, chapter 1, verse 9 and show you that it went into New Testament days. In Luke, chapter 1, well I’ll start at verse 8. “Now it came about while he,” and this is Zacharius, who was of the division of Abijah, ahh, of this high priestly family. “[And] it [came about] while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot...” They drew lots; they cast lots, “...to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.”(Luke 1:8-9) So this is something that is part of the Jewish culture. You got it? And we know that God is the One that brings up the lot. Okay, so now in verse 42 Saul is saying, “...‘Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son.’ And Jonathan was taken.”(1Samuel 14:42) O, God just fingered Jonathan. “Then Saul said to Jonathan, ‘Tell me what you have done.’ So Jonathan told him and said, ‘I indeed tasted a little honey with the end of the staff that was in my hand. Here I am, I must die!’”(14:43) I mean you talk about quite a man of God. Here is Jonathan that is willing to die. Here is Jonathan that is not making any excuse. Here is Jonathan that’s saying I tasted of the honey. He doesn’t say, “But dad, I didn’t hear that you put a curse on anybody that ate anything until evening after the battle. I didn’t hear that, dad, and therefore exempt me.” No, because here is Jonathan wanting the blessing of God. Here is Jonathan wanting the people to be led of God, not just Saul, not just his father, but God. And it’s God

that's not answering. It's God that's not telling him what to do. And Jonathan is so noble. I am so awed with this young man. And you're going to get more awed with him. I mean your mouth is going to hang open even wider as you go through and as you watch this young man in action. You talk about a young man that is selfless. You talk about a young man, whose heart belongs to God, and it is Jonathan. And so he says, "...Here I am, I must die!"(14:43b) Now you're putting a tombstone over die again. "[And] Saul said, 'May God do this to me and more also, for you shall surely die, Jonathan.'"(14:44) In other words, I made a pledge and I'm going to keep that pledge, and may God hold me accountable if I don't put you to death. Well now watch. You've got father and son on one side. You've got the troops on the other side. You've got Jonathan being fingered by God. Jonathan has said, "It is my fault. I'm must die. I dipped my stick in the honey," because he did not know, but he says, "I did it." And Saul is about to put Jonathan his son to death. Here's the leader. The people can keep quiet. The people don't have to say a thing. I mean what's one more man? But watch what happens, because there are lessons for you and me to learn here. Verse 44: "[And] Saul said, 'May God do this to me and more also, for you shall surely die, Jonathan.' But the people said to Saul, 'Must Jonathan die...,' Mark die again. "...who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel? far from it! As the Lord lives, [there shall] not one hair of his head...fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day.' So the people rescued Jonathan and he did not die."(14:44-45) Now just watch what happens. There is a time when the leader is not always right. There is a time when the leader speaks rashly with his mouth. Now we know that even Jonathan felt that his dad spoke rashly when he put that curse on him and he said in 1 Samuel, chapter 14, verse 29, "...'My father has troubled the land. See now, how [much more] my eyes have brightened because I tasted...of this honey. How much more, if only the people had eaten freely of the spoil of their enemies...which they found! For now the slaughter among the

Philistines has not been great.”(14:29-30) So Jonathan knew that his father had acted rashly. The people knew that their king Saul had acted rashly, and they’re not going to let this man die. So what you have is you have them drawing the line and saying, “Sorry, this is not going to happen.” Now I hope you saw that. Let me read it to you once again. “As the Lord lives, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day.” In other words, how did they know he had worked with God? Because Jonathan and his armor bearer had gone up and had weakened the Philistines by attacking that garrison, had killed 20 of those men. And in killing those, the earth trembled and the stage was set for a successful battle. “...So the people rescued Jonathan and he did not die. Then Saul went up from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.”(14:46) Okay, let’s pause now and let’s look at God’s precepts for life for us today. First of all a leader is not always right. And a leader needs people that are going to help that leader see this is a wrong decision. You need to make sure that you do not blindly follow another person, that you don’t overlook things that are biblical standards, that you hold the line for the leader. And you have to be willing then to loose the leader, or you have to be willing to walk away from the group. This is so important. Leadership does not mean that we are infallible. It simply means that God has put us in charge, but we are accountable to Him and to the people we lead.

PART TWO

Welcome back beloved. You know there is so much to be learned about leadership. And as we go through this passage, and as we approach these next chapters it is going to be so critical for you to watch the leadership of Saul, to watch the leadership of Jonathan, and then we’re about to meet David and to watch the leadership of David, so that you can understand what godliness looks like and what the flesh looks like in leadership, because many, many people aspire to be leaders that never should be leaders. And it

becomes a matter of fleshly glory and building your own kingdom. So as we go through watch Saul very carefully, okay. Now remember you need to start keeping a list of the things that you see about Saul, because we're going to make a list on Saul. And when we get to David we're going to make a list on David, and I want you to see who you're more like. Are you more like Saul or are you more like David? And as we go through we're going to see many, many lessons on leadership. And even if you're not a leader, it's important for you to know these things because if you're not a leader and you're going to be following someone or you're going to be an armor bearer so to speak, then you have to follow the right leader, because you're going to be held accountable. And as you study history you see that many, many nations, the whole history of that nation changed because of one person coming to leadership and many times that person that came to leadership; for instance, Hitler and others you find as they come to power that they become a despot, and so you have to watch, because you're going to be held accountable for whomever you follow. And you have to be willing to stand as we saw against a leader, not against them, but you have to be willing to stand and say to the leader, "I think you're wrong and this shouldn't happen or this cannot happen," even as the troops, that were, those 600 men who were with Saul had to say, "No, he is not going to die. As the Lord lives this man is not going to die." So there's time to take a stand no matter what the consequences are. Well they didn't suffer any consequences and Jonathan lived. But let's go on because I want us to wrap up this chapter today. In verse 47 of 1 Samuel, chapter 14, it says, "Now when Saul had taken the kingdom over Israel he fought against all of his enemies on every side, against Moab, the sons of Ammon, and Edom." Do you know what that is? That's present day Jordan. All Ammon, Moab and Edom, all make up present day Jordan today. "The kings of Zobah, and the Philistines; and wherever he turned he inflicted punishment. And he acted valiantly." And so I want you to see that when you have a leader that doesn't always do

everything absolutely right, it doesn't mean that he's a lousy leader. It means that he made a mistake. And so you don't write him off for one mistake. So God is letting you know in His Word that Saul is acting valiantly in what he is doing. It says, "And he acted valiantly and he defeated the Amalekites, and he delivered Israel from the hands of those plundered them." Now we come in the next verse, verse 49 to something that is absolutely important for you to get a hold of as you study through 1 and 2 Samuel. It says, "Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan and Ishvi and Malchi-shua; and the names of his two daughters were these: the name of the first-born Merab and the name of the younger Michal. And the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz. And the name of the captain of his army was Abner." That's one I can pronounce with confidence. "The son of Ner, Saul's uncle. And Kish was the father of Saul and Ner the father of Abner was the son Abiel. Now the war against the Philistines was severe all the days of Saul; and when Saul saw any mighty man or any valiant man, he attached him to his staff." Now God wants you to know and understand all that information or He wouldn't give it to you. You have to know that every word of God is purified as silver in a furnace of fire seven times, and so every word is chosen, and God has a purpose in it all. Now if you downloaded the study guide, if you went to preceptsforlife.com and you downloaded the study guide for 1 Samuel, then you have a chart and it's called Saul's Family Tree, because you're going to find Abner in Saul's life. You're going to find Abner in David's life, and you have to understand who these people are. You have to understand that Kish was the father of Saul and Ner the father of Abner. And when you look at all of this you see that the captain of Saul's army Abner is Saul's cousin. Okay, so when you look at the family tree, you see Ner and you see Kish, and they're the two fathers. Ner is the father of Abner. Kish is the father of Saul and Ner and Kish are brothers. Now I don't want to go into it anymore. I just want you to see and understand that you need to know the players. You also need to know what he said about his

daughters because Merab and Michal are going to play an important role in the life of David. And you're going to see all this unfold in the most incredible way. But let's just go now to this fact that God tells us that when Saul saw any mighty man or any valiant man he attached him to his staff. Now this is important because this is what God warned them that a human king would do. I mean he would just be riding along and if he would see this woman's son or this man's son and he saw that he was mighty, muscular or he heard that he was a valiant, then he was immediately in scripted in Saul's army. And this is exactly what God warned them that the king would do. Now watch what it says in 1 Samuel 9, and we want to look at verse 10. "So Samuel spoke all the words of the Lord to the people who had asked of him a king. And he said, 'This will be the procedure of the king who will reign over you. He will take your sons and place them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots. He will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and of fifties and some to do his plowing and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots.'" In other words, listen, he's going to take the best for himself, and that's usually what a ruler does. And we have to be very careful that whoever follows that ruler is following a man who is a man of God, a man who stands by the principles and precepts of God's Word, because otherwise all you're doing is encouraging a man in his evil intentions in his selfish ambitions, and you are not furthering the kingdom of God. Beloved, watch the leader you follow.