

What If the Leader Blows It

By John Babler

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, students will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Read the comments related to 1 Samuel 13:11–14 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: What was a time in your life when you blamed somebody else for your sin? What consequences, if any, came from this situation?

Assignment Two

Read again the memory verse for this week, 1 Samuel 15:22. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: What are two or three different ways people today might try to rationalize disobeying God based on the fact that they are sacrificing something?

Assignment Three

Read the comments related to 1 Samuel 13:11–14 and John 18:25–27 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: What are at least three differences between these two situations?

Scripture to Memorize

“Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.” 1 Samuel 15:22

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will understand that when a leader blows it reconciliation and restoration are possible but not automatic.

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It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Think of a time in your life when you “blew it.”

- What was your initial reaction?
- Were you defensive or open to correction?
- How did the situation ultimately turn out?

Read 1 Samuel 13:11–14 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 11–14

Verse 11. But Samuel said, “What have you done?” Samuel had been delayed in coming to meet Saul in Gilgal, and the people had begun to scatter. Saul had offered the burnt offering himself instead of waiting for Samuel.

Verses 11–12. And Saul said, “Because I saw . . . I forced myself and offered the burnt offering.” Saul knew he had blown it. After Samuel’s question he began making excuses and blaming others.

Verses 13–14. Samuel said to Saul, “You have acted foolishly . . . your kingdom shall not endure.” Saul’s disobedience had consequences.

Verse 14. The LORD has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart . . . because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you. Saul’s behavior was disobedience to God, but the more significant issue was his heart. Samuel told him that God had sought out a replacement for him, a man who had the right heart. When Scripture speaks of *heart*, it usually refers to our inner being—our mind, will, and emotions (see Matthew 15:18–19). God is concerned with our hearts.

Assignment One Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now share answers to the following questions: What was a time in your life when you blamed somebody else for your sin? What consequences, if any, came from this situation?

On Your Own

Read 1 Samuel 15:13–26. In the space below, write what you think are the most important verses in this passage. Then write an explanation of why those verses are important.

Read 1 Samuel 15:13–26 out loud.

Studying the Passage, vv. 13–26

Verses 13–14. I have carried out the command of the LORD. . . . What then is this bleating? After defeating the Amalekites in battle, Saul and the people (v. 9) spared the best of the animals and the king. When Samuel came to meet him, Saul told him he had obeyed the Lord’s commands. But to the contrary, Samuel confronted Saul by asking about the animals that had been disobediently spared.

Verse 15. for the people spared. Once again Saul blamed the people for his sin.

Verses 20–21. I did obey the voice of the LORD. . . . But the people. Saul continued to justify himself and blame the people.

Verse 22. Has the LORD as much delight . . . to obey is better than sacrifice. Samuel reminded Saul that no matter how he might rationalize his sin or blame others, God desires obedience.

Verse 26. But Samuel said to Saul, “. . . the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel.” While Saul did repent, the consequences of his ongoing sin and not seeking God included his being rejected as king by God.

Assignment Two Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now share answers to the following question: What are two or three different ways people today might try to rationalize disobeying God based on the fact that they are sacrificing something?

Discussion Question

How would you respond to someone who says they understand why Saul did what he did and that God seems a little harsh in this situation?

Read John 18:25–27 out loud.

Studying the Passage, John 18:25–27

Verses 25–27. Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. . . . Peter then denied it again, and immediately a rooster crowed. Peter was clearly a leader. When Jesus asked who the disciples said He was, Peter was the one who testified that Jesus was, “The Christ, the Son of the Living God” (Matthew 16:15–17).

After Jesus was arrested, Peter alone followed Jesus at a distance and entered the courtyard of the high priest where he could observe the events. Just a short time earlier, Jesus had told Peter that he would deny him three times before a rooster crowed (Matthew 26:34). Peter wept bitterly after he denied Christ (Matthew 26:75).

Assignment Three Feedback

The student who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now share answers to the following question: What are at least three differences between the two situations in 1 Samuel 13:11–14 and John 18:25–27?

On Your Own

In the space below, write your answer to this question: When I am leading or influencing others and I sin or disobey, I generally:

A. Make excuses and try to blame my failure on others.

B. Take responsibility for my failure, confess it to God with a humble heart, and then move forward in leadership again.

Remember that you serve a God of second chances.

Read John 21:15–19 out loud.

Studying the Passage, John 21:15–19

Verses 15–19. “Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?” . . . when He had spoken this, He said to him, “Follow Me!” After Jesus’s resurrection some of the disciples went fishing. Jesus met them on the shore and had this encounter with Peter. Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved Him; and as Peter replied, Jesus challenged him to care for His sheep. Finally, Jesus commanded Peter, “Follow Me!” After Peter “blew it” by denying Christ, Jesus reconciled the relationship and restored him to ministry.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven.

Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something in your life for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit says to you below, and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: “In our last session I made a commitment to. . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . .”

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to King Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

King Saul and Peter were both leaders who blew it.

- Saul blew it because of his fear and insecurity and lack of trust in God.
- Peter blew it because of his pride and trust in himself.

These examples (along with many others in the Bible) demonstrate that God's leaders are not perfect and sometimes fail. Even though both Saul and Peter failed, the outcome and consequences in their lives were different.

- Peter was restored.
- Saul lost his crown.

We should strive not to fail, but when we do, we need to:

- humble ourselves.
- be open to godly teaching.
- confess and repent of sin.
- ask the Spirit to give us a right heart before God.

Parent Question

How do you plan to respond to God and others when you realize you have blown it as a leader?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to teenagers who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.

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