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BCBC Preaching
New Year's Revolution Series
Part 5 Not Following Through
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At the beginning of every year, we all want to try and do certain things differently than in the past year. Those are called resolutions. This year I'm looking for more than a resolution I'm looking for a Revolution.

The past few weeks we have talked about what to do when opposition arises and how to keep on smiling when you are doing the Lord's work. This brings up one of the biggest issues with most followers of Jesus today, it's the following through, the Commitment that they made to Jesus, the commitment they made to the church, the commitment they made to their marriage, and the commitment they made to their family. It simply comes down to the fact that we have trouble following through.

1 Samuel 15:1-19 (NIV) ¹ Samuel said to Saul, "I am the one the LORD sent to anoint you, king, over his people Israel; so listen now to the message from the LORD. ² This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. ³ **Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them.** Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.' " ⁴ So Saul summoned the men and mustered them at Telaim (Tell-am)—two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand

men from Judah. ⁵ Saul went to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the ravine. ⁶ Then he said to the Kenites, "Go away, leave the Amalekites so that I do not destroy you along with them; for you showed kindness to all the Israelites when they came up out of Egypt." So, the Kenites moved away from the Amalekites. ⁷ Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way from Ha-vilah to Shur, to the east of Egypt. ⁸ He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword. ⁹ But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs—everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed. ¹⁰ Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel: ¹¹ "I am grieved that I have made Saul king, because he has **turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions.**" Samuel was troubled, and he cried out to the LORD all that night. ¹² Early in the morning Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, but he was told, "Saul has gone to Carmel. There he has set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal." ¹³ When Samuel reached him, Saul said, "The LORD bless you! I have carried out the LORD's instructions." ¹⁴ But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?" ¹⁵ Saul answered, "The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the LORD your God, but we totally destroyed the rest." ¹⁶ "Stop!" Samuel said to Saul. "Let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night." "Tell me," Saul replied. ¹⁷ Samuel said, "Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you, king, over Israel. ¹⁸ And he sent

you on a mission, saying, 'Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; make war on them until you have wiped them out.'¹⁹ Why did you not obey the LORD? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the LORD?"¹

In order to follow through with things we must make sure of a few things first. The first and most important is....

Getting your Instructions from the Lord.

1 Samuel 15:3 (NIV) ³ Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.' "²

Saul's instructions were to COMPLETELY destroy EVERYTHING that belonged to them.

Saul's instructions were clear. There was no room for error. He knew from the moment that he left Samuel what was to be carried out.

What instructions has the Lord given to his followers, people who have made a commitment to Him?

Hebrews 13:21 (NIV) Jesus will...²¹ equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work

¹ *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. electronic ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, c1984

² *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. electronic ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, c1984

in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. ³

Our instructions are to be a pleasing offering to the Lord. We have been equipped to make known Christ's glory through our everyday life! Has yours been very pleasing lately?

In verses 4-7, we see Saul, and we think, "what an obedient follower of the Lord." But in verse 8 things begin to get off the path that God has laid out. What a difference one verse can make, or one day or even one hour can make in our lives.

1 Samuel 15:8-9 (NIV) ⁸ He took Agag king of the Amalekites **alive**, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword. ⁹ But Saul and the army **spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves, and lambs—everything that was good.** These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed. ⁴

Have you ever looked at Christianity and just wanted the good out of it? Have you ever kind of looked at it as a "Get Out Of Hell Free Card."

Saul began to substitute some things that are sure to keep you from following through.

³ *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. electronic ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, c1984

⁴ *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. electronic ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, c1984

He Substituted Saying For Doing

1 Samuel 15:13 (NIV) ¹³ When Samuel reached him, **Saul said**, "The LORD bless you! I have carried out the LORD's instructions."⁵

Think about the last time that you sang a worship song. For example, "Lord I give you my heart I give you my soul, I live for you alone. Every breath that I take, every moment I'm awake, Lord have your way in me."

How many of us live that song out on a daily basis?

Saul was telling Samuel that he had carried out the instructions, what he didn't tell Saul, is that he had failed to completely do what God had commanded.

Saul got caught up in the power that was given to him, and he failed to recognize whom the power came from.

Think of the many times we commit to the Lord all these wonderful plans only to see them fade the moment we walk out the doors of the worship service.

He Substituted Excuses for Confessions

5 The Holy Bible: New International Version. electronic ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, c1984

1 Samuel 15:15 (NIV) ¹⁵ Saul answered, “The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the LORD your God, but we totally destroyed the rest.” ⁶

1 Samuel 15:21 (NIV) ²¹ The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the LORD your God at Gilgal.” ⁷

Remember God’s instruction: Totally destroy everything.

Have you ever been wrong in the Lord, and begun to make excuses for why you are where you are instead of just breaking down and submitting your mistake? After all, God judges the heart, he knows the truth.

Hebrews 4:12 (NIV) ¹² For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; **it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.** ⁸

I have learned that it is so much better to skip the excuses and skip right to the confessions.

⁶ *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. electronic ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, c1984

⁷ *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. electronic ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, c1984

⁸ *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. electronic ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, c1984

Mason Cooley said, "Excuses change nothing, but make everyone feel better."

He Substituted Sacrifice For Obedience

1 Samuel 15:22 (NIV) ²² But Samuel replied: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? **To obey is better than sacrifice**, and to heed is better than the fat of rams."⁹

Have you ever been caught up in saying, "well Lord I did all this for you?" "I came and helped with, I served at, I sacrificed"?

God wants you to be obedient to his call, and sacrifice is no doubt part of that call, but he searches the heart to see with what attitude did we respond to it.

Saul wanted to cover up his mistake by sacrificing the animals to the Lord when all along God's first plan was to destroy them in battle.

God wants to receive Glory through your life, but we must be willing to be obedient to the call. Saul was so quick to blame others and was unwilling to face and judge his own sins.

9 The Holy Bible: New International Version. electronic ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, c1984

Saul wanted to give God second choice. God is looking for you to be obedient to the call and serve Him as your first choice.