



**Chapter 9 of 1 Samuel** shows us a picture of just how far God will go to address and arrange a life path in a scenario of which is not His express and primary will. Does this mean that God can be molded to our own plans and desires? **No**. But God has, in essence, a supreme and primary will for us, but will accommodate another path if we refuse and reject the blessings and the created plan of His first will. So while it was not God's desire that the people have a king, He allowed it because of their insistent desire and their unmitigated push for such .

We must not perceive this as case of "wearing down the will of God" through our passionate insistence, like our arguing with mom to receive a cookie before dinner. But rather we must see this as the loving grace of God expressed into the lives of His children, even when those children are less than they could be or less than they should be. However, let us also not make light of such a stance either. Do we really want less than the full plan of God for our individual lives? Do we want "2nd best" in our living and compromise in our loving? Sadly, the answer for many of us is *yes*. But for a few, nothing will suffice except the provincial and primary plan for which we were created. The "*meaning of life*." The "*reason we are here*."

So God allows the people to have their king, knowing that ultimately it would not go well. Yes, God certainly allows that to come to pass at times. He allows us to get banged up once in awhile to bring humility, submissiveness, and holiness to our lives for the long run. And such is not a light thing! Samuel, and ultimately God and His Word says that such a pursuit was in essence a "rejection of God." So let us not think that the pursuit of God's "permissive will" is without consequence or significance!

This man Saul came from 'good roots.' His family had standing and wealth. He was handsome and carried a significant 'presence' through stature and form. He was 'mister GQ.' He was what the world would call an "obvious choice." He was nothing like the small youthful shepherd boy named David that would also soon appear on the scene. And of course, this is so often how **we** make decisions and choices in our lives! How many of us, when perhaps questioned about a decision or a decision process in our walk would answer just that..."*well the answer, the choice, was obvious!*" How often that is the case with **us**, but not with **God!**

Let's face it, the Bible is full of unlikely scenarios and surprise outcomes! Because with God "*nothing is impossible!*" (Luke 1:37) We tend to make decisions through the use of perceived 'logic' and based on events as well as comfort and ease in which the decisions will play out. We tend then to call that the "**open door.**" Yet the truth is that God's will is seldom found through such human reasoning nor is it the "obvious " or the "easy" road. The journey to the cross was none of those things, and neither is the decision for us to "*pick up our cross and to follow Him!*"

We are herein opening a page in the history of Israel as well as humanity in general, where we will see that following God's will is seldom easy, comfortable or expedient in the grand scheme of our faith walk. Yet we all must honestly face the question: *Do we want what WE want? The comfortable, the 'feel good,' the flesh pleasing path that may be allowed by God but is not His true will? Or do we want to know God's express and specific will and plan for us on this earth?* Such encompasses grand issues of control, lordship, servanthood, and stewardship, not to mention true love and a broken spirit before our Savior! The ramifications and manifestations of such life decisions...the impact of how we play this thing, will resonate down through the years of our lives and on into our eternity!

Again, Saul *appeared* in every way to be "**the** man." But appearances can be deceitful! Saul appeared as an impressive choice for the roll in which the people placed Him. John 7:24 tells us "*Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.*" Such "righteous judgment" is seldom easy or found without deep searching and honest evaluation! And even then, God may inexplicably direct you contrary to all human reasoning. Church history is full of such examples! Stories of crazy missionary journeys, inexplicable sacrifices to further the kingdom of God, and the total surrender of worldly goods and comforts to minister Christ in inhospitable surroundings. People who never possessed family or a house or a 401K. Who "surrendered all" for God and Kingdom! No doubt family and friends thought them mad for such choices. Yet what a different world we would likely live in if not for the likes of Amy Carmichael, William Carey, C.T. Studd and Hudson Taylor, who left everything to go to inhospitable environments to answer the call of God upon their lives in dangerous mission fields.

While young Saul had a good heart and a humble spirit at this point, he still had much to learn about life and about God. Even as he moved to visit this renowned "seer", he thought he needed to bring some "reward" or "price" to him in order to acquire his services, but the truth is that a real prophet would never accept such a payment for the exercise of his gifts. Such a man...a *real* prophet, would clearly grasp that God was the author and the originator of any gifts he possessed and such could never be bought. So Saul was young and impetuous. But God would still place him in the seat of authority. Such is God's inexplicable choices at times! From verses 15-17 in chapter 9, God calls this nation "my people" four times. Therein lies the critical element with God. It is God who chooses for us if we are "His people." God chooses for us. Ours is merely to choose whether we want His **permissive** choice or His **express** choice!

Notice in chapter 10 how the "spirit of the Lord" came upon Saul and released God's innate gifting from within him. It is always God's Spirit who comes upon us to enable us to live life to the fullest. To realize our gifts and to find application and opportunity for those gifts. Without such intervention, we are left to slosh through life on our own accord, hoping to not make a mess of things. And yet so very often we do! There will come crisis and questions and destiny for which we have no answers or power to affect.

Sadly, even a lot of Christians will attempt to have the comfort of God's presence and be redeemed by His Son, and yet fail to allow the Spirit of that same God to fill up our very beings and allow that Spirit to control us...to decide for us...to lead us. Instead we tend to be out front, trying to get God to follow us and support us in the decisions and desires we have. The fact is, this is not merely a good idea or a passive investment in successful Christian living! This is a mandatory aspect of redeemed Christianity. Unless He is our Lord and His Spirit consumes our lives and the decisions we make, then we are still effectively on our own. What's the point of seeking His salvation if we promptly shut the door of our lives to His control and His leading us into the divine destiny of our lives?

In verse 9 of chapter 10, the text says God "*gave Saul another heart.*" That is likened to salvation for us! That is the essence of true redemption. We are given 'another heart.' This speaks into our passions, our drives and desires. Something happens which inexplicably changes not only our direction but even the thoughts and hearts behind such. That does not mean that we will never be torn or in a decisional quandary. But before such a transformation there would have been no such indecision! We would have simply done what we wanted and chased our dreams and worldly aspirations without an issue of the heart.

But post salvation we find ourselves suddenly desiring lives of service and lives of holiness. We want community and fellowship with other believers. We inexplicably seek for purpose and design, understanding that "*...we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*" (Eph 2:10) *Workmanship* therein is the word 'poiema'...it means we are His *poem*. I'm God's poem? As I come to understand that fact after He has come unto me, I want to hear that poem read. I want to attend the performance...the reading of that poem. I now have 'another heart.' That of the "*poem of God...*"

In verse 6 of chapter 10 we read the following: "*Then the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man.*" The NLV says this: "*At that time the Spirit of the LORD will come powerfully upon you, and you will prophesy with them. You will be changed into a different person.*" This is the profound effect of the presence of the Holy Spirit upon an individual. You become "a different person...*another man or woman.*" Such paints a radically different picture than that of the corporate church today. We want to play it down. Or present it as a life elixer or maybe magic pixy dust that will allow you to speak in tongues. But the fact is, the primary roll of the Holy Spirit is to change you into "another person," and the fact is many of us simply don't want that! We want God's love and favor. We want heaven and to avoid hell. We want a good life and the comforts and attributes that our American entitlement affords. But we still want our own control and to call the shots of our lives.

In chapter 10, verse 22, we read how Saul...despite all that had transpired between him and God, still found himself fearful and apprehensive to make that step of faith and obedience. The truth is, we can easily feel inadequate and insufficient for the task at hand...for the calling upon our lives. And yet, in reality, I would be very worried if you did not! But such apprehension is much different than running...vastly different from attempting to hide from God and His people.

**Matthew 25:24 - 30** *"Then the servant with the one bag of silver came and said, 'Master, I knew you were a harsh man, harvesting crops you didn't plant and gathering crops you didn't cultivate. I was afraid I would lose your money, so I hid it in the earth. Look, here is your money back.' "But the master replied, 'You wicked and lazy servant! If you knew I harvested crops I didn't plant and gathered crops I didn't cultivate, why didn't you deposit my money in the bank? At least I could have gotten some interest on it.' "Then he ordered, 'Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one with the ten bags of silver. To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away. Now throw this useless servant into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

**Luke 12:47** *“And a servant who knows what the master wants, but isn’t prepared and doesn’t carry out those instructions, will be severely punished.*

God wanted all of the people, and He didn't get it. He wanted all of Saul, and he ultimately would not get that either. David would come later and be anointed king. And despite all his grievous mistakes and errors and failures, God said he was "a man after my own heart." Ironically, God would get "all of David." Even the mis-steps. Because David was a "new man..."