

Getting to the Root

In Scripture, we see the analogy of the fruit of our lives and the root that supplies the growth of that fruit. The fruit from a bad tree will be bad, and the fruit from a good tree will be good. Plucking off the bad fruit will not make good fruit grow if the tree is bad at its roots.

Saul had some rotten fruit—disobedience, rebellion, and arrogance! You may have some rotten fruit in your life. In order to correct the bad fruit that is presenting itself as sin in our lives, we need to understand what the underlying causes are—the root. You are going to diagnose Saul’s sinful actions and try to get at the root of the problem.

1. From the accounts in 1 Samuel 13 and 15, what actions did Saul commit that were sin against God?
2. What is the common term that could be applied to both of these situations?
3. Look at the account in chapter 13. What do you know about Saul’s motives for offering the sacrifice?
4. Whom did Saul fear more than God?
5. Look at the account in chapter 15. In verse 24, what did Saul reveal about his motive for saving the livestock?
6. What motive might have caused Saul to keep King Agag alive and bring him back to Gilgal?
7. What connection can you make among these three sinful manifestations? What might be at the root of Saul’s disobedience?
8. If you were offering counsel to a friend with similar sinful attitudes, how would you help him pinpoint his sin in order to repent and correct his behavior? Would this be more helpful to him than simply saying, “Stop being disobedient”?
9. Consider a sin that presents itself regularly in your life (lying, anger, slander, laziness, covetousness, lust, etc.). How can you get to the root of this sin?
10. For later in the week: spend time in prayer asking God to help you see the root of your sin. Consider sitting down with a trusted brother or sister in Christ who can help you diagnose the problem and put a clear biblical definition to the root cause of your sin. Read over Colossians 3:1–17 and consider how you can “put off” your sinful habits and “put on” habits in their place that will honor Christ.