

King Saul and the Victim Identify

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Identity is important. Often people seek different ways to create or define their identity. Consider our identity like a bookshelf. The various parts of our lives (family, work, hobby, etc.) are the books that we put on that shelf. The shelf is our identity; based on how we format that identity is how we can fit these different things there.

Some mistakenly believe that Christianity is one more book on the bookshelf of their identity. But that is not the case. Instead, Christianity is meant to be the shelf itself; it is meant to be our identity. Consider statements like Paul telling us "I've been crucified with Christ"; his identity had ceased, and now it was purely in Christ.

We live in a world that seeks to encourage us to pursue other identities. Some of those identities are sinful; others are simply not being a Christian. We need to understand that when we become a Christian, there is a slow process of change in our identity (in other words, it does not all happen at once). But there are some identities that the world pushes on us that we cannot accept, as they fail to let us know God.

Once such Identity is seen in King Saul in 1 Samuel 13. In 1 Samuel 13:11-13 (and again in 1 Samuel 15:15) Saul offered an unauthorized sacrifice. In both cases he blamed others; he blamed Samuel, the people, and the Philistines. Saul saw himself as a victim of circumstances, and unable to control his own actions.

Saul is not the first person to suggest that he was a victim and thus not accountable for his actions. Adam told God that it was the woman God gave him that caused the problem. Aaron blamed the people for compelling him to make the golden calf. And the one talent man of Matthew 25 said it was the harshness of the master that provoked him to inaction. In each case the sinner claimed that they had no power over their actions; it was the fault of another.

The world wants us to believe we are all victims of something. Race, gender, age, handicap, health, wealth are all circumstances we may experience unfair treatment or circumstances because of, and the world wants us to give up our ability to act. Victims of circumstances means we are not able to control our situations and therefore not responsible for actions. But the problem is this: this is completely unacceptable to God. If we choose to accept a victim identity, our adversary wins by taking away our ability to repent. **You CANNOT repent of sins you DID NOT commit; If you CANNOT repent, you CANNOT be saved!**

It is easy to define ourselves by limits. We cannot take a victim **identity**. Defining our identity by those limitations. In Jesus Christ there is neither Jew, Greek, Male, Female, Slave Free; we are all one in Christ. Our identity is in Him, for *"....You are not your own, for you were bought at a price...."* 1 Corinthians 6:19b-20a.

Just as there are examples in the Bible of people who claimed to be victims and were rejected by God, there are also examples of those who were in difficult circumstances but chose NOT to be victims. Rahab was a Canaanite and a harlot, yet she rose up and delivered herself and her family. The Ethiopian eunuch was cut off from worshipping God, yet still traveled to Jerusalem (and was chosen by God to hear the word). Tamar the Canaanite, Ruth the Moabitess, Naaman the Syrian, and many others were people who seized God's blessings in spite of difficulties. They are the examples we pursue.

Godly people don't say it is not their fault when they sin. They don't blame others or make excuses for sin. Instead, they own their sins and repent of them. We need to become people ready to improve no matter the circumstance.