

Rebellion by Charles Stanley

Scripture: 1 Samuel 15:1-28

I. Introduction: God has our best interests in mind. His commands are for our benefit, not to keep us from enjoying life. Disobeying the Lord usually makes our lives more difficult and complicated. Only when we are submitted to Him can we be assured of the full measure of His blessing.

II. The Nature of Rebellion

A. Definition: Rebellion is an act against established order and authority. It can be defiance against God's will or resistance to leadership He has ordained. When we insist on doing things our way, we reveal our pride and selfishness.

B. Biblical example: Saul, the first king of Israel, paid a price for his rebellion against God. The Lord wanted to punish the nation of Amalek for how they had treated the Israelites. He commanded Saul to destroy the nation completely—putting to death not just their army, but all the people and animals as well. However, Saul spared the king and the best of the livestock.

III. God's View of Rebellion

A. Disobeying God is as serious as idolatry and witchcraft. Scripture says, "Rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry" (1 Sam. 15:23).

B. Rebellion isn't limited to disregarding the Lord's specific commands to us. It includes transgressing the moral guidelines given in His Word. They are designed to protect us in every area of our lives.

C. God has ordained two primary types of authority. He is the ultimate authority (Matt. 28:18). However, the Lord delegates authority to governments, business leaders, parents, pastors, coaches, and other leaders. Otherwise, we would have anarchy.

IV. We rebel against God by . . .

A. Refusing to obey His calling. Instead, we should follow the specific instructions God gives us.

B. Pursuing what He forbids. When we violate the commands of Scripture, we are in rebellion. For instance, a man should not seek an intimate relationship with someone else's wife.

C. Pursuing the right things, but in the wrong way. There is nothing wrong with wanting a promotion at work. But if we criticize and gossip about others in order to appear more competent, our actions become rebellion.

D. Pursuing godly goals, but on our schedule. God has not only a correct way for us to pursue our objectives, but also a specific time. For instance, a 16-year-old may find a wonderful young man she wants to marry, but most teenagers aren't ready for the life-long commitment of marriage.

Before making any major decision, ask yourself, "What is the wisest thing to do?" Don't make a move until you get a clear answer. Resist the temptation to compare your possessions with someone else's. Instead, ask God what *He* wants you to have. When you surrender to the Lord Jesus, you will have life at its very best.

V. The reasons for our rebellion include . . .

A. Doubting the Word of God. At particular crossroads, disobedience to God can ruin our lives. He will forgive us but won't always choose to eliminate the consequences. For instance, Eve's life changed dramatically because she ate the forbidden fruit (Gen. 2:17).

B. Pride. Arrogant people demand their own way—and want it immediately. The Devil lies to us and says that unless we get something *now*, we will never have it.

C. Bitterness and resentment. Some people rebel against God because they've been unable to let go of the past—they have an unforgiving spirit.

D. Selfishness. Many people see biblical guidelines as restricting. But no one can live in defiance of God's laws and have genuine peace.

VI. The Results of Rebellion

A. There are always consequences for rebelling against the Lord (Ps. 107:17-18).

- When the Israelites let fear prevent them from fighting for Canaan, God judged that generation and allowed them to die off in the wilderness.
- When Korah conspired against Moses, God caused the ground to open up and swallow the rebel and his family (Num. 16:1-40).
- King Saul paid a high price for his disobedience. Not only did the Spirit depart from him, but he also became mentally disturbed. Consumed with jealousy and bitterness, Saul spent his life chasing David.

B. What happens in your life when you rebel against God?

- Immediately, fellowship with Him is broken.
- Genuine happiness, peace, and joy will disappear from your life.
- You will make foolish mistakes and as a result, you'll start to doubt that the Father really loves and cares for you.
- Your physical well-being may suffer. People tend to make unhealthy decisions when they are living in disobedience to the Lord.

VII. Conclusion: Our choice is simple—submit to the Father or rebel against Him. Either way, we will reap what we sow. But remember that obedience brings blessing; disobedience has consequences. No one who is in rebellion against the Lord has true peace, joy, contentment, or success in life. They may look successful from the outside, but they usually aren't satisfied with their lives. Wise men and women choose to obey God and leave the consequences to Him.