

GOOD IDEAS ARE NOT ALWAYS GOD IDEAS

1 Samuel 7:15-8:21

Samuel was growing old and the prospect of his sons being judges over Israel didn't look too promising to the people. The elders noticed their improprieties and dishonesty. They started getting a little worried about what would happen to Israel after Samuel's death. So, they came up with what seemed like a great idea. Instead of having Joel and Abijah run the country, let's get a king. I'm guessing they figured this was the best solution to what was sure to be a disastrous alternative. They probably thought it through, weighed the pros and cons, perhaps even mulled it over for a week or so to be certain there weren't any better ideas they could come up with. Yep, other nations were doing pretty well with kings, it was time for Israel to step into "modern" times and catch up with those other countries. A king would be the perfect remedy to a couple of judges that were destined to be Israel's worst nightmare.

The problem with their plan surfaces immediately. God doesn't think it's a good idea. God warns them that they taxes are going to kill them. He gives them a heads up regarding the status of their property, children and future. However, none of the warnings make a difference. They know what they want. They're positive they've discovered the best possible route and they are insistent that Israel take that path.

I don't know why they thought God's way of raising up judges in the past few decades wasn't working. It seems the Creator had done a pretty good job with Deborah and Gideon. They'd come on the scene at just the right time to bail the people of Israel out of tough situations. The elders must have thought the system needed some adjustments, because they had some forward thinking plans they intended to carry out. And at first glance, it looks like a reasonable request.

The whole scene makes me wonder how many "solutions" I've come up with in my past that were good ideas but not GOD ideas. Seriously, I've always got the answer to tough problems. I sit and think about all the possibilities, weigh the options and consider every scenario. By the time I have a plan, you can be sure it's the best answer humanly possible. And right THERE is where I run into trouble. I come up with the best answer HUMANLY possible. But my heavenly Father has the plan that is MORE than humanly possible. In fact, His plans are only SUPERNATURALLY possible.

Knowing this, I have to wonder why we humans spend so much time scheming, dreaming and leading instead of praying, listening and following. I call it running ahead of God. It's much like King Saul in 1 Samuel 13. Saul was in such a hurry to please God, He offered a sacrifice without waiting on Samuel as he was instructed.

Here are a few questions to help you discover if you have GOOD ideas or GOD ideas:

- What ideas do we have that we haven't cleared with the Almighty?
- What instructions from God are we willing to ignore to have things our way?
- Who do I respect enough in Christ to get confirmation of God's will before I carry out my "good" idea?

The leaders of Samuel's day got stuck in their "good idea." Even after Samuel shared all the consequences of their request, they wanted to move ahead. As you make decisions this week, consider Samuel and the Israelite elders. Pray about your ideas and get the opinion of an "elder" who isn't afraid to speak the unpopular truth to you. We can learn the difference between our "Good" ideas and the better "God" ideas.

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