

How The Good Go Bad

SPOILER ALERT!

2 Peter 2:15 Jude 1:11 Revelation 2:14 Numbers 31:8 & 16

- (1) Balaam was a **GENUINE PROPHET**.
- (2) His **GREED** led to foolish & sinful decisions.
- (3) His decisions turned him into a **FALSE** prophet and an **ENEMY** of God.

BALAAM'S STORY

Numbers 22-24 Numbers 25:1-3 Numbers 31:8 & 16 Revelation 2:14

HOW THE GOOD GO BAD

Like Balaam...

- (1) We don't believe God the **FIRST TIME**
Numbers 22:12 Judges 6:11-40 & 8:27 Joshua 8:9-10 Romans 1:28-32
- (2) We look for a **LOOPHOLE**
Numbers 25:1-3 & 31:1-16 1 Samuel 15:1-26
- (3) We confuse God's presence with his **APPROVAL**
Numbers 23:5, 16; 24:2 Judges 15:20 Romans 2:4 Romans 8:28
- (4) We pursue the wrong **TREASURE**
2 Peter 2:15 Colossians 3:5 Matthew 6:33 Matthew 6:19-24 1 Timothy 6:9-10

Food for Thought

For the week of July 17, 2016

(Questions and Scriptures for further study)

1. Larry mentioned that greed can be a roadblock to generosity. Read the verses below and note the category that God puts greed into and the other sins he equates it with.

Romans 1:29-31 *New International Version (NIV)*

²⁹ They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy.

Ephesians 5:3 *New International Version (NIV)*

³ But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

Colossians 3:5 *New International Version (NIV)*

⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

Why do you think God considers greed as serious as the other sins in these passages?

2. We heard this weekend about King Saul as an example of someone who demonstrated partial obedience. In 1 Samuel 15, we read about God giving him a mission that he failed to carry out completely. Because of that, God sent the prophet Samuel to confront him. Read 1 Samuel 15:6-26 and answer the questions below.

1 Samuel 15:6-26 *New International Version (NIV)*

⁶ Then he said to the Kenites, "Go away, leave the Amalekites so that I do not destroy you along with them; for you showed kindness to all the Israelites when they came up out of Egypt." So the Kenites moved away from the Amalekites.

⁷ Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way from Havilah to Shur, near the eastern border of Egypt. ⁸ He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword. ⁹ But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs—everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed.

¹⁰ Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel: ¹¹ "I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions." Samuel was angry, and he cried out to the LORD all that night.

¹² Early in the morning Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, but he was told, "Saul has gone to Carmel. There he has set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal."

¹³ When Samuel reached him, Saul said, "The LORD bless you! I have carried out the LORD's instructions."

¹⁴ But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?"

¹⁵ Saul answered, "The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the LORD your God, but we totally destroyed the rest."

¹⁶ "Enough!" Samuel said to Saul. "Let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night."

"Tell me," Saul replied.

¹⁷ Samuel said, "Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel. ¹⁸ And he sent you on a mission, saying, 'Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; wage war against them until you have wiped them out.' ¹⁹ Why did you not obey the LORD? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the LORD?"

²⁰ "But I did obey the LORD," Saul said. "I went on the mission the LORD assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king. ²¹ The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the LORD your God at Gilgal."

²² But Samuel replied:

"Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices
as much as in obeying the LORD?

To obey is better than sacrifice,
and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

²³ For rebellion is like the sin of divination,
and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.

Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,
he has rejected you as king."

²⁴ Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned. I violated the LORD's command and your instructions. I was afraid of the men and so I gave in to them. ²⁵ Now I beg you, forgive my sin and come back with me, so that I may worship the LORD."

²⁶ But Samuel said to him, "I will not go back with you. You have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you as king over Israel!"

What do you learn about compromise, good intentions and God in this passage?

How do Saul's actions demonstrate his half-hearted obedience?

In what ways does Saul try to justify his actions?

Can you think of any ways Christians might be tempted to partially obey God's commands in their lives?

3. Take a moment to examine your own life. Are there any areas in your life where you are trying to nuance what God has clearly called you to do? Potential areas could be:

- Honesty
- Forgiveness
- Entertainment
- Finances
- Sexuality
- Relationships
- Employment
- Other _____