

Messenger of Truth

"Holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16)

August 1, 2017

Issue No. 308

"Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power."
– Abraham Lincoln

"Power doesn't corrupt people, people corrupt power." – William Gaddis

"Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely." – Lord Acton

"Power is always dangerous. Power attracts the worst and corrupts the best." – Edward Abbey

"The measure of a man is what he does with power." – Plato

Power is generally defined as, "Possession on control, authority, or influence over others" (Webster, 2nd Definition. People have different ideas as to the concept of power; as some will look at it as physical strength, and yet others, referencing a position of power. But there is also the unfortunate side where people will control others through finances or some addiction, or even through threats.

History is replete with examples of people who allowed their positions of power to change them. One of the most famous is that of Saul, the first king of Israel. When Samuel had revealed the future for Saul, Saul responded, "Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then do you speak like this to me" (1 Sam. 9:21). When the decision had been made for Saul to be king, Scripture says, "But when they sought him, he could not be found? (1 Sam. 10:21). Such a humble man.

We learn then that an occasion arose where the Philistines were gathered at Mickmash, and Samuel had not yet arrived. The people were upset and Saul became impatient, and even offered a burnt offering. When Samuel did arrive he was told that his foolish disobedience would cost him his kingdom (1 Sam. 13:14).

Saul became bitter toward his own son for Jonathan having disobeyed the king's command (1 Sam. 14:44). Saul was told to utterly destroy the Amalekites, but disobeyed the command of God. Later Saul tore the robe of Samuel, and was told because of his rebellion, the kingdom would be torn from him (1 Sam. 15:27-28).

When David arrived on the scene, Saul became jealous and even sought David's life. Then one of the most troubling verses: "But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him" (1 Sam. 16:14).

From the humblest of beginnings, Saul and his power led him slowly away from God. He became disobedient and rebellious. Power can do that to a human being, but not in every case. Be careful of what power can do to you.