Character Study: Saul
Part 2 – Saul's Downfall
I Samuel 11-15

What's happening?

• Saul gathered an army of <u>330,000</u> Israelites together and led them in a victorious battle over the <u>Ammonites</u>. Afterward, the people gladly reaffirmed Saul as their king. *(11:1-15)*

• Shortly later, Saul faced an attack by the <u>Philistines</u>. He had been given orders from Samuel to wait <u>seven</u> days for him to arrive and offer sacrifices (note *I Sam. 10:8*). But Saul grew impatient and offered the sacrifices himself. Samuel arrived and told him he had disobeyed the Lord and that God's <u>kingdom</u> would not be established through him. Samuel told how the Lord was looking for someone after His own heart. *(13:1-15)*

• The Lord told Saul to attack the <u>Amalekites</u> because they had ambushed Israel back when Israel was leaving Egypt. They were to kill all the people and animals, and destroy all their possessions. Saul attacked them, but he spared their <u>king</u> (Agag) and their best animals. The Lord <u>regretted</u> that He had made Saul king. *(15:1-11)*

• Samuel confronted Saul and asked him why he did not follow the Lord's directions. Saul said that they had spared the best animals to use as <u>sacrifices</u> unto the Lord. However, Samuel told Saul, "to <u>obey</u> is better than <u>sacrifice</u>." *(15:12-35)*

What's God doing?

> God gave Israel a leader in Saul. But despite his great <u>potential</u>, the Lord <u>rejected</u> him as king because of His disobedience.

> God had His hand of blessing on Saul, but once Saul began to do his own thing, God's blessing was removed.

What's to learn?

→ Saul may have thought that bringing back animals to sacrifice was a good thing, but it was clearly not what God wanted him to do. The advice Samuel gave was timeless: <u>obedience</u> is better than sacrifice. Doing what God desires should be our priority, not doing what we think is best.

→ God may have great plans for you, but in order to accomplish what He wants to use you for, you must be <u>obedient</u>.