

2016: Week 6

Sunday, February 7th 2016

*"Lessons from Balaam's Folly:
Believer, Be Careful!"*

1 Peter 2:14–15

¹⁴ "...having a heart trained in greed...¹⁵ forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness." (NASB)

On Sunday, John preached from **Numbers 22–23**. In this passage we read about a prophet named Balaam, but we are probably more prone to remember how God permitted Balaam's donkey to *speak* to him. As phenomenal as it is for an animal to speak to a person, the major application for us comes more by analyzing Balaam's heart, not Balaam's donkey. Deep down to his core, Balaam craved the prestige, acceptance, and wealth that would come from granting the request of King Balak. Balaam's desire to say "yes" to Balak trumped his desire to say "yes" to God.

1. READ Numbers 22:7–35

- What were God's instructions to Balaam when Balak's men came asking for help? (see v.12)

A) Do Not _____ B) Do Not _____ C) Because _____
- When Balak's men came a second time, *why* did Balaam respond the way that he did? (see vs. 18–19).
- Why do you think God allowed Balaam to go (v. 20) when He already told him not to go (v. 12)?
- In our disobedience to God we might be tempted to sin even when we know it is against God's will. Balaam's reasons for wanting to act against the revealed will of God were probably linked with his desires to acquire more money and greater prestige. Balaam also might have feared letting Balak down by saying "no" to him.

****What are your reasons for either "doing" or "wanting to do" something you know God does not want you to do?**

2. On Sunday John stated, "the further *off* the path you go, the harder it is to get back *on* the right path." When you "give in" to sin, it will be much easier for you to commit sin again. Furthermore, it will be much easier to compromise in other areas of your life too. By resisting sin from the beginning, you will probably find it easier to resist sin later on too (although it may still be difficult to resist sin then as well).

FAMILY PRAYER: Ask God to bring to light areas of your heart that need to be realigned with His will. Ask the Lord to take away improper affections and to intensify your affections for Him and your desire to obey Him. Ask the Lord to give you the strength to say "no" to other people when you need to say "yes" to Him.