

LIFE OF DAVID 2

Leadership

"Then the LORD said, 'Rise and anoint him; he is the one.' So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power."¹

"He is the one." These four little words changed the course of a lifetime, a nation, and all eternity. As a young boy, probably no more than ten or eleven years old, David had a calling on his life. He was designated as the next king of Israel, the shepherd of God's people, the one through whom the Lord would establish an unending kingdom. That was a big mantle for such small shoulders. Maybe you feel like David, small, young, and insignificant, or perhaps you feel as though the Lord hasn't called you to anything of value. Be assured that feeling is not the reality. We are called to be the sons of God. He has called you to be His chosen ones, a royal priesthood.² As a man of God, you will be called upon to lead in some capacity. As we look at David's journey with God, listen to what the Lord is calling you to.

Even though the Lord had Samuel anoint David as a young boy, He had a lot to do to prepare him for the role of king over Israel. After David had served King Saul for a few years, Saul's jealousy prompted him to try to kill David. That must have been frustrating and depressing. If you're going to be king, who better to study under than the current king, right? But God didn't want another king like Saul, so He sent David out into the desert for a time of unusual testing and training. His first assignment: learning to lead outlaws.

David had never led a force of men before. He had to learn how to organize and train men to realize the calling God had given them. David fled to the caves of Adullam and while he was there "all those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their leader. About four hundred men were with him."³ That had to have been a rowdy crowd to work with: all the discontented, indebted, distressed guys in Israel. Organizing them, gaining their respect, training them to fight, and keeping them in line must have been a crash course in Leadership 101. David wasn't just taking whomever he could get though. God surrounded him with exactly the people he needed to learn to lead.

Out of that bunch (200 more men gathered around David during his time on the run) we have a record of David's mighty men. He didn't only lead malcontents, but apparently he gained the respect of some pretty legit men by the way he handled all the others. His men of renown were guys like Jashobeam, who killed 300 men in one encounter, Eleazar, who singlehandedly struck down all the Philistines attacking in the battle of Pas Dammim.⁴ These guys were literally unstoppable and they followed David! They were so devoted that when David mentioned in passing, he longed for water from his hometown, they went behind enemy lines under the cover of darkness to get it for him! Think Live Free, Die Hard, all for a cup of water! David was so humbled by their loyalty and devotion that he didn't even drink the water they brought to him. He poured it out as an offering before the Lord, recognizing how much that mission could have cost his men.⁵

Pre-Article Questions:

1. What do you think makes a great leader?
2. Name some essential qualities or traits that you think makes a great spiritual leader in God's eyes? Any scripture come to mind as you think through this question?

1. 1 Samuel 16:13 4.1 Chronicles 11:11-13

2. 1 Peter 2:9 5.1 Chronicles 11:17-19

3. 1 Samuel 22:2

Two qualities that God birthed in David: humility and faith, Saul had grievously lacked. Saul's pride was injured when the women of Israel sang, "Saul has killed his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." In fact, he became so incensed that he tried to kill David. On the other hand, David's humility led to his willingness to seek out wise counsel and submit himself to higher authorities for the good of his people. The reason God rejected Saul as king in the first place was because he disregarded His word. When God told Saul He would use him to wipe out the Amalekites, Saul failed to do everything the Lord told him to do. But over and over again, we see David seeking God's counsel and obeying His directives. One of the most famous examples of this action is when his wives have been abducted along with all the women and children of Ziklag. Rather than acting on raw emotion, giving into despair, or cowering in fear of his men (who were threatening to stone him in their bitterness), David inquired of God as to what they should do. He not only asked, but he also listened for an answer and obeyed when he got one.

More than anything, David's faith is what sustained him as a leader. It would have been so easy for him to give up on God's promise when Saul tried to kill him, when he was on the run for so many years, or when his own men turned against him. Instead, he believed the promise of God. David acted like a king long before he got the title. He learned firsthand how to lead, organize, motivate, and train people while earning their respect, long before anyone was bowing to him. Really, titles aren't all that important anyway; Saul was, in name, the king, but he often acted like a coward. Genuine leaders lead regardless of any public recognition.

If you still don't think you are called to leadership, look at Jesus. We are to be like Him, to be conformed to the image of Christ, and He organized, motivated, and trained twelve men over the course of three years that went on to turn the world upside down. He led without any significant earthly title – looking forward to God's fulfillment of His word. Don't have a title? Learn to lead anyway. As men, that's what you were born to do.

1 Samuel 21:10, 22:1-2, NIV

And David rose and fled that day from Saul and went to Achish the king of Gath. David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there. All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their commander. About four hundred men were with him.

1 Chronicles 11:10-19, NIV

10 These were the chiefs of David's mighty warriors—they, together with all Israel, gave his kingship strong support to extend it over the whole land, as the Lord had promised—11 this is the list of David's mighty warriors: Jashobeam, a Hakmonite, was chief of the officers; he raised his spear against three hundred men, whom he killed in one encounter. 12 Next to him was Eleazar son of Dodai the Ahohite, one of the three mighty warriors. 13 He was with David at Pas Dammim when the Philistines gathered there for battle. At a place where there was a field full of barley, the troops fled from the Philistines. 14 But they took their stand in the middle of the field. They defended it and struck the Philistines down, and the Lord brought about a great victory. 15 Three of the thirty chiefs came down to David to the rock at the cave of Adullam, while a band of Philistines was encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. 16 At that time David was in the stronghold, and the Philistine garrison was at Bethlehem. 17 David longed for water and said, "Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem!" 18 So the Three broke through the Philistine lines,

drew water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem and carried it back to David. But he refused to drink it; instead, he poured it out to the Lord. 19 “God forbid that I should do this!” he said. “Should I drink the blood of these men who went at the risk of their lives?” Because they risked their lives to bring it back, David would not drink it. Such were the exploits of the three mighty warriors.

1 Samuel 30:1-8, NIV

David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day. Now the Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag. They had attacked Ziklag and burned it, 2 and had taken captive the women and everyone else in it, both young and old. They killed none of them, but carried them off as they went on their way. 3 When David and his men reached Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. 4 So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep. 5 David’s two wives had been captured, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. 6 David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the Lord his God. 7 Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelek, “Bring me the ephod.” Abiathar brought it to him, 8 and David inquired of the Lord, “Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?” “Pursue them,” he answered. “You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue.”

Scripture Questions:

1. List the qualities of the men described in 1 Samuel 21 and 22 that rallied around David and contrast them with the qualities mentioned or implied in 1 Chronicles 11. How do you think David’s leadership of the first group might have attracted the second group? Hint: Because David led difficult, disgruntled men so well, this leadership ability may have attracted his mighty men to join his “team.”
2. In 1 Chronicles 11:10, what had the Lord promised David? Why did his mighty men gather around him?
3. In 1 Samuel 30, David and his men are returning from battle lines that the Philistines had drawn against Saul and his men. How do you think they felt when they made it back to their hometown and saw what had happened in their absence?
4. What did David do in response to his men’s bitterness of soul?

Application Questions:

1. In what ways is God calling you to lead right now as a college student? What character qualities of a strong leader could our small group stand with you in prayer
2. What are David’s strongest leadership qualities in your opinion?
3. Think back to what the Lord had promised to David as indicated by his anointing and mentioned in 1 Chronicles 11. Yet we see in 1 Samuel 21 and 22 that he is essentially forced to flee the country. Have you ever received a promise from the Lord that your circumstances contradicted? Are you still believing He will bring it to pass? What are some things you can do to keep that hope alive?
4. How might you be called to lead in the future? Do you ever feel like God has given you a dream, but not the right tools to work with? How are you using what God has given you now to prepare for your future?
5. When difficult circumstances confront you, do you react like David and seek the Lord? Or do you look at your circumstances and act in your flesh? What steps can we help you take as a small group to help you respond rather than simply react?

Prayer Partner Assignment:

Memory Verse:

1 Samuel 30:6, "David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the Lord his God."

Read 1 Samuel 13-15, Psalm 34, and Psalm 56

Please meet with your prayer partner from this week to discuss the following questions on the chapters assigned for this week:

1. What are King Saul's character strengths and weaknesses as a leader from these chapters?
2. Why was the role of king taken from Saul according to Samuel's words? How does this impact your view of God as a Just Judge?
3. How can you see similar shortcomings in your own life and what do you need to do to overcome them?
4. How do these two Psalms, written from his experience in 1 Samuel 21, impact you?