

GREAT LEADERS DEVELOP THOSE AROUND THEM

Text: I Samuel 18:5 – 7 “⁵ And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants. ⁶ And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of musick. ⁷ And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.”

Overview: As we begin to look at the next stage of David's development as a leader, we see him put in charge of an army of men. This would not be the whole of the Israeli army, but rather a group of the army. We have no insight at this stage into the time period involved, but it seems to have been rather quickly since vs 2 says that Saul would not let David return home. The chances are, David was put over these men who had been trained by someone else and he was given orders to be their commander. These men had gone out before under the leadership of another, but something different began to occur, something we will take time to develop in this study – The men became rock stars on the battlefield. The song of our text was not as much about David as about David's men. David did not kill ten thousand Philistines. His men did. But leaders get credit for the accomplishments of those around them. So, what made these men special?

- **GREAT LEADERS LEAD WITH HEART.** I love the label of David, “A man after God's own heart.” Wouldn't you like to be led by a person with God's heart? That's the starting point. Whenever David started on a quest, he did it with all his being. I am the character coach of Centennial High School girls basketball team. Because of circumstances that have occurred, the JV girls are now the varsity team. For the most part, these are girls who would never start for any team we play. The first game they played together they scored 9 points. Things have improved some, but chances of a victory are probably not happening. However, these girls give us their heart every game. I'm so proud of them I can't describe it. I'd rather be a part of those girls than the girls who will win the state championship. They have taught me. They have inspired me. They have made me better. I will never forget them. I love them more than I ever dreamed I could love a group of girls. They have made my heart bigger and have made me a better leader. Great leaders are not necessarily those born with the greatest giftings. They are those who have the greatest hearts.
- **GREAT LEADERS CARE ABOUT OTHERS.** I Samuel 18 starts with the friendship of David and Jonathan, Saul's son. This is important to note and will become a major player in the story of David. What it speaks of the character of David when it comes to relationships. Our previous encounters with David relationally is his care for his sheep, his care for his father, his care for his brothers, his care for King Saul, and his care for God. David cared, and he cared deeply about every relationship recorded.
- **GREAT LEADERS UNDERSTAND SUCCESS BREEDS SUCCESS.** In our overview we considered that David probably did not train the men he was commissioned to lead. So, what happened? David happened. I love the movie Braveheart. In the movie, William Wallace leads a ragtag army of farmers and non-soldiers. But, with him at the front, and he always was at the front, they became more than they were. Success is contagious. I once heard a preacher say, “You are a god to someone.” He wasn't saying that you are God. He was saying that you have a realm of influence in your life and people are watching you. You are showing people how to live life. In that thought line – Your actions influence their actions. Lead well.
- **GREAT LEADERS LEAD FROM THE FRONT.** They never demand of others what they do not expect of themselves. I am the oldest person in my company. I am also the hardest working person in our company. I work more days and more hours in a year than any other person I employ. Why is that important? There are times that we need to go the extra mile as a team. The people the LORD has given me responsibility to lead see that I am not asking them to do what I am unwilling to do. I do not hear

them complain. Quite the opposite is true. They step up and meet the demands. Everyone should be as blessed as me to have the team of men I lead. However, it happened by example.

- **GREAT LEADERS CONTROL THE NARRATIVE.** In the story of David, one would think that the King would be in control of the narrative, but as you read it becomes clear that David controlled. Now, let me say here that David, humanly speaking, was in control of himself which is why he controlled the narrative. Saul's emotions were in control of his mind and body, but he had enough good sense to test the wind before shooting an arrow. The wind around him was clearly on David's side. Though Saul was the king, the people were on David's side because of his controlled actions, activities, and attitude. Those who followed David had confidence in him because he was highly disciplined.
- **GREAT LEADERS SURROUND THEMSELVES WITH GREATNESS.** I cannot teach character and integrity, and those are the two primary ingredients of a great team. I can teach people how to do things, but teaching them the innate qualities required to be the best they can be is a choice they have to make. I can influence them toward that choice, and I do, but at the end of the day they must choose. I can, however, strive to identify those characteristics in the people I choose to surround myself with. My two main men, men who will one day be taking my role, were chosen men of high character. Each has a different skill set, but both are men I would trust with my life. My other team leaders in our company are men of high character traits. Again, I would trust my life to those the LORD has entrusted me to lead. I am surrounded by greatness. When people talk about my company they talk about my men more than the product we produce. They are the ones who make us special. As we work through the life and times of David, we will see this very clearly in his life. His men were willing to lay down their lives for him daily.
- **GREAT LEADERS DEVELOP GREATNESS IN THOSE THEY LEAD.** In David's story, we don't know the how, but we know the results. In Chapter 18 we read about the mighty feats of his army, but later in his story we read about a different group of men who chose him. David had fled from King Saul because Saul was seeking to kill him. It was there, far away from home with seemingly everything gone wrong that we read these words in I Samuel 22:2, "And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and everyone one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men." When we get to I Samuel 23:13, that number had increased to six hundred men. As we go further into the story of David, we read about many acts of heroism and valiance from his men. These men, who society would have written off as worthless, became mighty men of renown who accomplished greatness.
- **GREAT LEADERS BELIEVE IN OTHERS.** Greatness can be developed in anyone who is willing to be great. That is the story of I Samuel 22:2. By all appearances, David was surrounded by losers. We could call it David's D-day. "Distress, Debt, Discontented." We could probably add Discouraged, Disillusioned, Disgusted, Dismayed, and several other D words to the list. Those are not the ingredients of success. But David happened to them. I think of the Wizard of Oz and the ragtag group of misfits that Dorothy inherited along the way to Emerald City. A dummy, a coward, and a heartless tin man, but Dorothy didn't see what society had labeled. She saw greatness in the midst of the hopelessness she faced and believed in them. Then something kinda strange happened – They began to believe in themselves.
- **GREAT LEADERS ARE LOYAL.** In I Samuel 18 we read about the friendship of David and Jonathan. As we make our way through David's story, one thing becomes apparent – David was a loyal friend. However, something that could be missed in this is a different type of loyalty, David and King Saul. Saul was everything to be despised and hated, but David refused to allow his emotions and pursuit of fame and glory to get in the way of his loyalty to Israel, and the leader of Israel was Saul. Though Saul needed killing, David refused to be the person that brought about that accomplishment. When Saul did fall in battle, David grieved. It is one thing to be loyal to a friend. It is quite another to be loyal for loyalty's sake. David was loyal. The result of loyalty is loyalty. His men were loyal.
- **GREAT LEADERS COMMAND RESPECT. POOR LEADERS DEMAND RESPECT.** This is the story of David and King Saul. Because of the accomplishments of David and those who followed him, the people loved and respected their new hero. Because of his failed leadership, Saul had lost the respect of those he led. This, however, did not keep him from demanding the respect and admiration he had long

since lost. Never in the story of David do you see David demanding the respect and admiration of people. He didn't have to. People follow and emulate such leaders.

- **GREAT LEADERS CONDUCT THEMSELVES IN A MANNER THAT PRODUCES ADMIRATION.** Four times in I Samuel 18 in the KJV we read that "David behaved himself wisely." The word wisely in Hebrew is SAKAL. It means "to have success, to cross the hands and arms in an extended motion, to have insight, wisdom, understanding; to prosper; the potent capacity to understand and so exercise skill in life, a state caused by proper training and teaching, enhanced by careful observation." (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance). Psalms 101 is an amazing statement of David that gives us insight into how he thought. Psalm 101:1 I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O LORD, will I sing. ²I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. ³I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me. ⁴A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person. ⁵Whoso privily slandereth his neighbor, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer. ⁶Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. ⁷He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight. ⁸I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD.
- **GREAT LEADERS EXPECT GREAT CONDUCT FROM THOSE WHO SURROUND THEM.** Again, look at some of the statements of Psalm 101. "I hate the work of those who turn aside." "I will not know (have relationship with) a wicked person." "He that privately slanders his neighbor will be cut off." "I will not put up with those who have a high look or a proud heart." "He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house." "He that tells lies shall not tarry in my sight." "I will destroy wickedness from my land." In the midst of these statements, however, look at this gem – "Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land that they may dwell with me. He that walketh in a perfect (mature, complete) way, he shall serve me."
- **GREAT LEADERS FOLLOW THE COUNSEL OF WISDOM AND TEACH OTHERS TO DO LIKEWISE.** Let's consider Solomon, David's son, for a moment. Solomon would become David's heir to the throne of Israel at David's death. Upon coming to the throne, God chose to give Solomon anything he wanted in order to rule well. Solomon requested WISDOM. Something about David's training had taught Solomon the importance of following the counsel of wisdom. He wrote an entire book about wisdom called Proverbs. David's first recorded Psalm begins with these words, "Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law doth he meditate day and night." (Psalms 1:1-2) There is a chain of command in life, and wisdom understands the chain of command. Wisdom will follow the leader in front of them unless the leader in front of them has stepped out of line. An example: If a General gives you a command to walk five miles, but a Sargent comes along and tells you not to walk five miles, who do you obey? This was David's dilemma in the leadership of Saul. David knew the Scriptures. That is clear as we follow his life. God's Word trumped man's words, no matter who the man was. This may get you in trouble in human government, but God trumps all of government. Consider the story of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego in Daniel 3. They were put in the dilemma of obeying orders from human authority that contradicted the Word of God. Their story could have ended badly, but quite the opposite happened and God was glorified. The story could have had a different conclusion, but it would not have changed their course of action. This is critical in Great Leadership.
- **GREAT LEADERS LEAD WITH AUTHORITY BECAUSE THEY ARE UNDER AUTHORITY.** There is great confidence in having a clear path to follow. The North Star never wavers. It can be trusted and people could navigate with confidence by following its lead. Whenever one begins to walk down a shady road with questionable signs along the way, the doubt that comes with the path will make one second guess

themselves which is the opposite of confidence. People will follow someone who knows the way. Take great care that your leadership has clarity of direction. Never contradict God's written law to seek a prosperous end. It will always go bad.

- GREAT LEADERS EXERCISE DISCIPLINE IN THEIR LIVES AND DEMAND DISCIPLINE OF THOSE THEY LEAD. This is clear as you look at the story of David and King Saul. What would you do in such a circumstance? You've got a person throwing javelins at you when you are doing nothing wrong. You know you have the power to defeat him and probably be praised for doing so. But David doesn't. As we follow the narrative of the story, there will be later examples of David's opportunities to "get revenge" on a very bad man, but he doesn't. There are other examples of David not seeking revenge on common men who acted badly toward him. But, in the midst of it, his men follow his example and walk disciplined lives. We cannot overemphasize leadership.

Next week: WHEN ADVERSITY COMES