

Lessons in Leadership from the Life of David

Christian Leadership Formation

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Dedication

To Chaplains in Christian Higher Education, Making a Difference in the Lives of Students.

Index

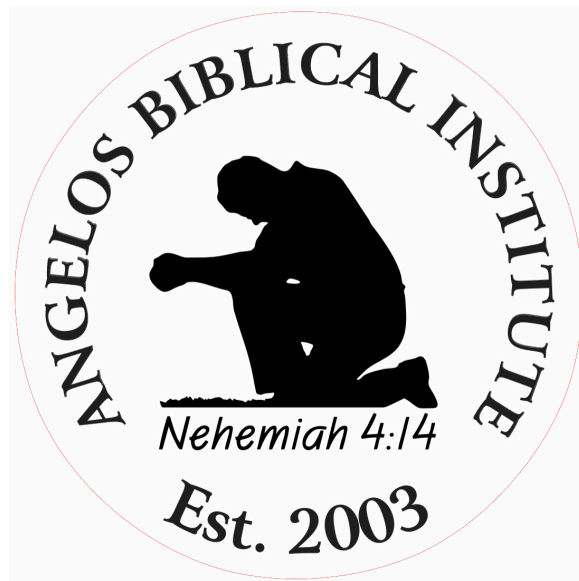
1. Calling in the Ministry: Chosen by God for a Divine Assignment	Page 5
2. Learning to Be a Leader God Can Use	Page 8
3. Serving in a Difficult Ministry	Page 11
4. Dealing with Deceit in the Ministry and Difficult Colleagues	Page 14
5. With Trouble in the Ministry, Who Can You Trust	Page 17
6. A Pivotal Moment in the Ministry	Page 20
7. What Fear Will Make You Do	Page 24
8. Leaders Protect the Community	Page 26
9. Leaders Pray in Difficult Times	Page 30
10. Leaders Develop Strategy for Problem Solving	Page 32
11. Leaders that Prepare Lead Successfully	Page 37
12. How to Learn from Previous Lessons	Page 40
13. Leaders Develop Strategic Partnerships	Page 42
14. Leaders Know How to Encourage Themselves in the Lord	Page 47
15. Handling Your New Leadership Promotion	Page 51
16. How to Lead Others Through Crisis Management	Page 54

17. Leaders know how to surround themselves with good Personnel.

Page 60

18. Leaders use godly Leadership

Page 63



Chapter One

Calling in the Ministry: Chosen by God for a Divine Assignment

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Introduction

In our exploration of calling in the ministry, we turn to the biblical account of David's anointing as king, a profound example of God's selection and the characteristics He values in those He calls to serve Him. This event is found in 1 Samuel 16:1-13 and sheds light on the divine assignment and qualities God looks for in His chosen servants.

I. Samuels Divine Assignment

1 Samuel 16:1-3 outlines the divine assignment given to the prophet Samuel by God. Samuel is tasked with anointing a new king to replace Saul, whom God has rejected due to disobedience. This assignment is significant because it illustrates the need to follow God's instructions, even when dealing with the removal of previously anointed leaders.

Samuel's initial struggle with God's decision to replace Saul serves as a reminder that we, too, may find it challenging to accept changes in leadership, especially when it involves individuals we once revered. However, God's choices are final, and mourning over His decisions serves no purpose.

This text highlights the importance of obeying God's instructions wholeheartedly and not letting personal feelings or fears hinder His divine assignment.

II. Samuels Divine Action

In 1 Samuel 16:4-5, Samuel takes action as he proceeds to Bethlehem. He is instructed to organize a sacrifice and invite Jesse and his family to participate. This action emphasizes the

significance of worship in ministry and how God's anointing often occurs in the context of worship and devotion.

Samuel's actions serve as a reminder that ministry should be rooted in a spirit of worship, and the anointing of God is closely associated with the worship experience. This illustrates the need to maintain a sacred approach to ministry, recognizing that the Lord does His most profound work in the hearts of His people during moments of worship.

III. Samuels Divine Approach

Samuel's approach in 1 Samuel 16:4-5 is marked by peace, sanctification, and consecration. He reassures the elders of Bethlehem that his visit is peaceful and invites them to join in the worship and sacrifice. Samuel's approach underscores the importance of approaching ministry with integrity and care.

In ministry, it is crucial to create an atmosphere of sanctification and consecration, where participants can experience the presence of God. This approach not only fosters an environment for God to move but also serves as a model for conducting ministry with reverence and honor.

IV. Samuels Divine Assessment

As Samuel encounters Jesse's sons in 1 Samuel 16:6-10, he initially misjudges them based on their outward appearances. God reminds Samuel that He does not see as man sees and emphasizes the significance of the heart over physical attributes.

This divine assessment highlights the need to evaluate individuals for ministry based on their character and heart, rather than superficial characteristics. God's standards for choosing servants often differ from human standards, and recognizing this is vital in the process of calling individuals to serve in the ministry.

The story of David's anointing as king is a powerful example of divine calling in the ministry. It emphasizes the importance of following God's instructions in carrying out His divine assignments, conducting ministry in the context of worship, approaching ministry with sanctification and consecration, and assessing individuals for ministry based on their heart and character.

As we reflect on this account, we should be encouraged to seek and recognize God's calling in our lives and the lives of others, understanding that His choices are not based on outward appearances but on the condition of the heart. God continues to call and anoint individuals for various ministries, and it is our responsibility to discern His will and follow His divine assignments with humility and obedience.

Chapter 2

Learning to Be a Leader God Can Use

1 Samuel 17:40-54

Introduction

Life is filled with battles, both in the physical and spiritual realms, that every Christian must face. Some battles are won, and others result in defeat. These battles can wound us, and sometimes we barely escape unscathed. As believers, it's essential to understand that these battles are part of our journey. To be victorious in these battles and to lead in a way that God can use, we must learn from the life of David and his epic encounter with Goliath.

In this sermon, we will explore the story of David and Goliath and draw valuable lessons for becoming leaders whom God can use. We will focus on three key principles:

I. Fight from Familiarity

When we find David in the story, he is in the spotlight as a young man unafraid to face the Philistine giant, Goliath. David had already faced other challenges as a shepherd, such as lions and bears, to protect his sheep. He was confident and not intimidated by Goliath because he knew that the Lord would deliver the one who accepted the challenge.

David's preparation was minimal but focused. He chose to use what was familiar to him and rejected King Saul's armor. He had five smooth stones from a brook, a shepherd's bag, a sling, and faith in the Lord. David had a track record of relying on God, having previously experienced God's deliverance.

Lessons for us:

- Use only what is necessary for the battle.

- Rely on the Lord and keep your faith in Him.
- Don't complicate your approach, and stick to what you are skilled with.
- Learn to lean on the Lord in the time of need.

II. Face Your Foes

As Goliath approached David, he was not alone; he had an armor-bearer and a huge physical advantage over David. Goliath aimed to intimidate David with his size and words, cursing and mocking him. But David faced this foe head-on, refusing to be discouraged.

Just as Goliath confronted David, we, too, face foes in our lives. These foes may threaten, intimidate, and ridicule us. They challenge us with words, actions, or circumstances. However, we must stand our ground and not be intimidated. Remember that the battle is not yours; it belongs to the Lord.

Lessons for us:

- Expect confrontation and intimidation from the enemy.
- Do not shrink back but stand your ground in the face of adversity.
- Understand that the battle ultimately belongs to the Lord, and He will provide the victory.

III. Fight with Faith

David's response to Goliath's taunts was filled with faith. He declared that Goliath came with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but he came in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel. David believed that God would deliver Goliath into his hands and that the world would witness God's power.

David understood the spiritual nature of the battle and had absolute faith that the victory was God's. He was unshaken by the physical and verbal threats and had complete confidence in God's strength.

Lessons for us:

- Approach battles with unwavering faith in God's power.
- Focus on God's ability rather than the enemy's threats.
- Recognize that the victory in spiritual battles is won by faith.

Conclusion

David's fearless faith in God allowed him to conquer Goliath, and this victory inspired the entire nation to overcome their fear and pursue the Philistines. One man's victory turned into a collective triumph. David's victory served as a testimony of God's power and faithfulness.

As we face our own giants, remember that we have a greater King in Jesus Christ, who overcame all challenges and enemies. His victory is our source of strength and inspiration. By following David's example, we can become leaders that God can use, leading with faith, courage, and reliance on His power.

In our battles, let's use only what we need, face our foes with unwavering faith, and trust that God will provide the victory, just as He did for David. Ultimately, as leaders, let us be conquerors in the name of our King, Jesus Christ, who is the true Giant Slayer.

Chapter Three

Serving in a Difficult Ministry

1 Samuel 18:15-56

Ministry often comes with challenges, but it becomes particularly difficult when it transitions from being favorable to arduous. Serving in a hostile environment can be daunting, but it can also be a profound learning experience that prepares individuals for their future roles. This chapter explores the narrative of David, a biblical figure, and his experiences serving in a challenging ministry. Drawing from 1 Samuel 18:5-16, we will analyze the strategies David employed to navigate a hostile ministry, focusing on his obedience, humility, and unwavering commitment to God.

I. Davids Ministry Strategy

David's journey into a difficult ministry began when he was promoted to serve King Saul in the military. The key to his successful navigation of this new role was his ministry strategy. He displayed obedience, faithfulness, and wisdom in his actions:

- **Obedience:** David went wherever Saul sent him. He recognized the authority of his leader and followed orders diligently. This obedience is a crucial aspect of any ministry, emphasizing submission to a higher purpose or authority.
- **Faithful and Wise Behavior:** David's conduct was marked by wisdom. He didn't overstep his boundaries or misuse his position. His actions were guided by the knowledge that he was representing not only himself but also King Saul and, ultimately, God.

David's strategy serves as a lesson for modern believers, reminding us that faithfulness, reliability, and accountability are essential elements of ministry. We should behave wisely and only act and speak in accordance with the directives of the higher authority.

II. Davids Ministry Silence

Despite achieving heroic feats and gaining popularity, David maintained his humility and avoided self-promotion. His ministry silence reflected his understanding of the importance of humility:

- **Remaining Humble:** David did not allow the public's adoration to inflate his ego. He didn't let fame or success change his character. He continued to serve without seeking personal glory.
- **Staying in His Lane:** David knew that it wasn't yet his time to become king. He refrained from trying to seize Saul's throne or overshadow his king, demonstrating patience and respect for the appointed authority.

This aspect of David's ministry strategy underscores the significance of staying humble and patient, recognizing that promotion comes from God, not from self-promotion or the adoration of others. Whether as parents, professionals, or in any other capacity, humility in serving others is a valuable principle to follow.

III. Davids Ministry to Saul

David faced a significant challenge when King Saul's jealousy turned to hatred, and he was driven to harm David. In this scenario, David had to serve someone who had become his enemy. This phase of David's journey teaches us about ministering to those who harbor ill will:

- **Ministering to the Enemy:** Despite the hostile environment and the evil influence upon Saul, David continued to fulfill his ministry. He served his king even when Saul sought to harm him, demonstrating unwavering commitment to his duty.
- **Engaging in Spiritual Warfare:** David faced not only a physical threat but also spiritual warfare. The evil spirit in Saul tried to use him to thwart God's anointed servant. David stood firm and relied on God's protection.

This part of the narrative reminds us that ministry sometimes involves serving even those who wish us harm. Just as David remained faithful, believers should strive to serve those who oppose them, trusting that God's protection is their refuge.

IV. Davids Ministry Success

David's success in a challenging ministry was marked by his humility and unwavering commitment to God. As Saul's fear of David grew, he was eventually removed from Saul's presence, and God continued to exalt David:

- Fear of God's Presence: Saul's fear of David was rooted in the recognition that God was with him. This fear made Saul understand the distinction between David, God's anointed, and himself, a fallen king.
- Victory Through Humility: David's humility and faithfulness eventually led to his exaltation. He continued to behave wisely, even in the face of adversity, and remained God's chosen one.

This part of the story highlights the ultimate success of David's ministry. When we maintain humility, unwavering commitment to God, and faithfulness in our service, we can trust that God will promote and protect us.

Conclusion

The Chronicles of David provide valuable insights into serving in a difficult ministry. David's journey is a testimony to the importance of obedience, humility, and faithfulness. His story reveals that successful ministry involves staying true to one's strategy, remaining humble, serving even when facing opposition, and relying on God's protection. Just as David's journey led to his ultimate exaltation, believers can find encouragement in their own ministries, knowing that God rewards those who serve with dedication and integrity. Like David, we should strive to maintain our ministry strategy, display humility, and trust in God's guidance, ultimately finding success in our service.

Chapter Four

Dealing with Deceit in the Ministry and Difficult Colleagues

1 Samuel 19:17-30

Introduction

Persecution and trouble are recurring themes in the lives of those called to serve in ministry. Serving God and His people often means facing difficulties and challenges. In this chapter, we will explore the story of David from 1 Samuel 19:17-30, focusing on his interactions with King Saul, who sought to harm him. Through this narrative, we can glean valuable lessons on how to navigate deceit in the ministry and handle difficult colleagues.

I. Saul's Diabolical Gift (1 Samuel 19:17-19)

In this part of the text, we witness Saul's deceitful intentions towards David. Saul had promised his daughter Merab to David as a wife in exchange for his valor in battle. However, when the time came for the marriage, Saul reneged on his promise, giving Merab to another man.

Observation:

- The enemy's promises are often unreliable and self-serving.
- Saul used the promise of marriage to manipulate and control David.
- David responded to the injustice with humility and integrity.

Application:

Believers should be aware of deceitful tactics used against them, even when the offer seems tempting. In ministry, we may encounter broken promises and mistreatment. It's crucial to maintain our integrity and trust in God.

II. Saul's Deceptive Game (1 Samuel 19:20-26)

Saul further schemed against David, using his daughter Michal's love for David to set a trap. He sent his servants to deceive David into thinking he would be made the king's son-in-law. David, unaware of the malicious intent, willingly accepted the proposal to become Saul's son-in-law by avenging the king on his enemies, the Philistines.

Observation:

- Saul devised a cunning plan to use Michal's love to ensnare David.
- David's eagerness to please Saul blinded him to the trap.
- The enemy often manipulates people through their desires and affections.

Application:

We must be cautious not to fall into traps set by the enemy, even when offers seem attractive. Temptations may come in the guise of opportunities, but we should discern and seek God's guidance.

III. Saul's Davidic Grace (1 Samuel 19:27-30)

David responded to Saul's demand for 100 Philistine foreskins as a dowry for Michal. Instead, he brought back 200 foreskins, displaying an abundance of grace and a willingness to go above and beyond. This act of grace, coupled with David's wisdom and humility, led to Saul realizing that the Lord was with David, and Michal's love for him was genuine.

Observation:

David's extraordinary grace toward Saul, his enemy, is exemplary.
Grace can transform enemies and change their perspective.
David's wisdom and humility contributed to his growing reputation.

Application:

Demonstrating grace even to those who oppose us is a powerful testimony.

Grace can influence and soften the hearts of those who are against us.

Wisdom and humility are key attributes in handling difficult relationships in ministry.

In conclusion, David's encounters with deceit and a difficult colleague, King Saul, offer valuable lessons for those serving in ministry. Saul's deceptive actions served as a backdrop to highlight David's unwavering grace, wisdom, and humility. When dealing with deceit and difficult colleagues in ministry, remember to:

- Stay true to your integrity in the face of broken promises.
- Be cautious of traps and deceitful schemes.
- Extend grace to your enemies, as grace has the power to transform hearts.

Just as David's grace influenced Saul and the people's perception of him, may we reflect the grace of God in our ministry and relationships, allowing His grace to prevail even in the most challenging circumstances.

Chapter Five

With Trouble in the Ministry, Who Can You Trust

1 Samuel 19: 1-24

Introduction:

In this chapter, we dive deeper into the tumultuous journey of David as he grapples with the challenges of serving a king who desires his death. The Bible passage for this chapter is 1 Samuel 19:1-24. It sheds light on the importance of trust, the perilous nature of ministry, and the ultimate reliance on God in times of trouble.

Trouble in the Ministry:

Serving in the ministry can be a challenging endeavor. Sometimes, God places us in situations where we are called to serve individuals who harbor animosity towards us and wish for our failure. David's calling to become the next king of Israel unfolds against the backdrop of King Saul's disobedience to God. David's service includes being a part of Saul's court, army, and even his family. It seems that David is being prepared for kingship by observing firsthand what a king should be, even though he is serving someone who wants him dead.

David's Trust in Jonathan:

David's first encounter with the dilemma of whom to trust is with his dear friend, Jonathan. Although Saul openly sought David's death, Jonathan remained loyal to their friendship. Jonathan tries to mediate between his father, King Saul, and his friend David. He reminds Saul of David's loyalty and the great victories he achieved for Israel. Saul heeds Jonathan's advice and swears not to kill David. This temporary respite allows David to serve in Saul's court again. But the momentary peace doesn't last long.

The Untrustworthiness of Saul:

Saul's underlying envy and fear of David resurface. Saul makes multiple attempts to murder David, once even throwing a spear at him. He then sends messengers to David's house with the intent to kill him. However, Michal, David's wife and Saul's daughter, warns David of the impending danger. She assists David in escaping, even going as far as deceiving her father by placing an image in the bed to create a false impression that David is ill. When Saul discovers the deception, Michal blames David for his escape.

David's Trust in Samuel:

David flees to Samuel, seeking refuge and counsel. In the house of the Lord, David finds solace and guidance. Samuel, a man of God, is wise enough to discern the gravity of David's situation and quickly removes him to a place of safety. This transition to a place where the Spirit of God is moving provides David with spiritual refuge and sanctuary. Here, David can hear from the Lord and find strength for the journey ahead.

Saul's Encounter with the Spirit of God:

Saul, in his relentless pursuit of David, sends messengers to find him. However, upon reaching Samuel's abode, they are enveloped by the Spirit of God and begin to prophesy. Even Saul himself, upon learning about the situation, experiences the same, stripping off his clothes and prophesying in the presence of Samuel.

Conclusion:

The story of David's trials in the ministry and his choices regarding trust and reliance on the Lord serves as a profound lesson for us. We face our own Sauls—enemies and challenges in our service to God. The chapter highlights the importance of seeking refuge in God, who has the ultimate power over every spirit in the universe. Just as David sought sanctuary in the house of the Lord, we must turn to God in times of trouble, allowing His Spirit to guide us and lead us to a place of safety.

This chapter also draws a parallel to the ultimate victory of Jesus Christ, who conquered Satan through the Spirit of God. Jesus's sacrifice on the cross stripped Satan of his power and

dominion, giving us the ultimate victory over sin and death. In times of trouble, just like David, we must trust in God and rely on His Word and Spirit to guide us through the challenges of ministry.

Chapter Six

A Pivotal Moment in the Ministry

1 Samuel 20:1-42

Introduction

Life is filled with pivotal moments. These are moments that change the course of our lives when we least expect them. Pivotal moments come to make us change when we are most unsure or least likely to think about change. They are game changers, realigning and refocusing us. Pivotal moments help us reimagine what the Lord is doing in our lives.

Biblical characters also experienced pivotal moments. Adam, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Elijah, and many others all had their own pivotal moments. God works and reveals Himself in these crucial moments of their lives.

Today, we witness a pivotal moment in the life of David. This moment occurs during a season of spiritual warfare as God prepares him to rule a nation. It's essential for change to come into the servant of God's life to lead him from his familiar surroundings and prepare him for the kingdom. This is a pivotal moment in David's ministry.

David has discovered that King Saul is seeking to kill him, even though he has committed no wrongdoing. As David is on the run, God permits Saul to pursue him, and his ministry faces significant stress. Leaving Ramah, where he met the Prophet Samuel, David finds himself in this pivotal moment.

David's Consultation with Jonathan

David, unsure of the circumstances, searches for answers from his brother-in-law and best friend, Jonathan. He tries to find solace and guidance for his troubled soul. While David knows the truth of Saul's intentions after witnessing four assassination attempts, Jonathan struggles to believe that his father, Saul, would harm David. David's melancholic mood may seem irrational to

Jonathan, but David, possessing the wisdom of an angel, discerns the evil that Jonathan cannot see.

Application

In pivotal moments, people often seek consultation from those they believe can provide answers. They may place more trust in others' opinions than the wisdom God has already provided. In such moments, fear and uncertainty can cloud judgment. The courage to act and make the right choices may be lacking due to moodiness, but these pivotal moments call for courage.

David's Covenant with Jonathan

Jonathan, despite the growing tension and the evidence of Saul's malevolence, stands firm in his friendship with David. He makes a covenant with the house of David, pledging to protect and support him. This covenant forms a spiritual bond and affirms that the Lord will grant David success in the future. God works through Jonathan to provide prophetic insight, reinforcing David's destiny.

Application

Covenant relationships are invaluable in life and ministry. They offer support and encouragement in times of trouble. They keep promises and build trust. Covenant friends are there for each other, even when enemies seek to destroy them.

David's Communication with Jonathan

Jonathan sets a plan into motion to discover the truth of Saul's intentions. As David waits in the field for a sign, Jonathan shoots three arrows, one for direction, one for confirmation, and one for release. The arrows provide the information David needs to decide his next steps.

In the secret place of waiting, David receives the message he seeks, understanding that he can either return or run for his life based on the signal and Jonathan's words.

Application

Pivotal moments often involve waiting, seeking signs, and receiving divine guidance. These moments can be painful, but they shape our faith and understanding of God's will.

David's Confirmation from Jonathan

As the New Moon feast continues, Saul notices David's absence and inquires about it. Jonathan, having seen the arrows land, knows the truth but provides a cover story to protect David. Saul's anger is kindled, revealing his hatred for David, and he hurls a spear at Jonathan, attempting to kill his own son. Jonathan is left in a difficult position, discovering the depths of his father's animosity.

Application

Pivotal moments can be divisive and separate even families. They force individuals to take action against their desires. Jonathan is faced with a moral dilemma, going against his own father's wishes because it is the right thing to do.

Conclusion

David and Jonathan's covenant remains unbroken despite the pain and separation caused by Saul's hatred. As David departs, they bless each other, knowing that their bond extends to their descendants. This pivotal moment in David's ministry propels him forward on his path of greatness, destiny, and divine contentment.

Pivotal moments are a part of life, but they serve a purpose and reveal God's plan. Just as David faced this crucial moment in his ministry, we, too, encounter pivotal moments that define our faith and guide us on our journey of purpose and destiny.

Chapter Seven

What Fear Will Make You Do

1 Samuel 21:1-15

Introduction

Fear is a powerful emotion that can lead people to act out of character, make poor decisions, and run from their responsibilities. In this chapter, we will explore the story of David's encounter with fear in 1 Samuel 21:1-15 and how it compelled him to make choices he wouldn't have made otherwise. We will draw lessons from David's experience and discover how to overcome fear in our own lives.

I. David's Fear of Ahimelech

David, on the run from King Saul, sought refuge in the city of Nob and encountered Ahimelech, the priest. At this moment, both David and Ahimelech were driven by fear. Ahimelech's fear stemmed from the unexpected arrival of David, a renowned warrior. David, on the other hand, was afraid to reveal his true purpose and lied to the priest about his mission.

Observation:

- David, even in the house of the Lord, let fear lead him to deception.
- Fear caused David to be paranoid and assume the worst about the priest.
- Despite being in need, David came to the sanctuary for sustenance and guidance.

Application:

We often let fear guide our actions, just as David did. When we fear, we may misbehave, become paranoid, or change our behavior. Instead of trusting God, fear can make us doubt and make poor decisions. Remember, just as David sought refuge in the house of the Lord, you can turn to God in times of fear.

II. David's Fear of Achish

David's fear of Saul led him to an even riskier situation. He fled to the city of Gath, among the Philistines, where his identity as a renowned warrior became known. This discovery heightened David's fear as he knew he could no longer hide. In response, he feigned madness, pretending to be someone he was not, scratching at the gate and letting saliva fall on his beard to escape the predicament.

Observation:

- Fear led David to run to another enemy (Gath), compounding his troubles.
- In Gath, he was discovered, and his popularity as a warrior became known.
- In fear, David pretended to be insane to deceive the Philistines.

Application:

Fear can lead us into situations where other enemies spot us. It can make us change our behavior, pretend to be someone we're not, or act out of character to save ourselves. Like David, we sometimes resort to deception when we could be trusting in God for protection and deliverance.

Conclusion

Fear is a formidable adversary that can drive us to act contrary to our true selves and faith in God. It can make us lie, change our behavior, and misbehave. Fear might compel us to perform for those who dislike us, leading us to forget past victories and God's protection. However, the Bible provides numerous verses that encourage us not to fear but to trust in the Lord's presence, strength, and love. Fear should not dictate our actions; faith in God should guide us through challenging times.

Chapter Eight

Leaders Protect the Community

1 Samuel 23:1-5

Introduction:

In 1 Samuel 23:1-5, we are presented with a biblical narrative that vividly illustrates the concept of leadership that protects and saves a community. The story centers around David, who is called upon by divine providence to safeguard the city of Keilah from the oppressive Philistine invaders. This narrative provides valuable insights into the qualities and actions of a leader who becomes a savior for the city. As we delve into this account, we can draw parallels to contemporary leadership and the responsibility of protecting and caring for our communities.

I. Information about the Enemy

The story begins with a report delivered to David, informing him of the dire situation in Keilah. The Philistines, known for their ruthlessness, were attacking the city and plundering its resources. Keilah's residents were suffering from this hostile invasion. David, a seasoned warrior and leader, recognized the gravity of the situation. This report serves as a metaphor for the adversities and challenges faced by communities today.

Observation:

- David's past experiences prepared him to address this crisis. While he was once tasked with defending Israel under King Saul, his circumstances had changed. Now, it was his own people who sought to harm him. Yet, he did not turn a blind eye to the plight of Keilah.
- The story reflects a recurring theme: the obligation of those who have the ability to assist those in need. When we become aware of adversities affecting our communities, it is our responsibility to act in their defense.

Application:

Just as David took action to help Keilah, we too should step in when we become aware of adversities within our communities. We must be vigilant and recognize when our neighbors, friends, or fellow citizens require assistance. Like David, we should develop a heart for justice and take action when necessary to protect the vulnerable and restore what has been lost.

II. Inquiry about the Enemy

David, upon hearing the distressing news, did not rush into battle based on his own judgment. Instead, he inquired of the Lord, seeking divine guidance. He questioned whether he should confront the Philistines to save Keilah.

Observation:

- David's inquiry highlights the importance of seeking divine guidance before taking action, especially when faced with difficult decisions. He did not rely solely on his past successes or human wisdom but acknowledged his need for God's direction.
- It is evident that David recognized the enemy's hostility not only as a threat to the people of Keilah but as an affront to God Himself. By inquiring of the Lord, David ensured that his actions were aligned with God's will.

God's response to David's inquiry affirmed his mission to save Keilah. He was granted divine permission and guidance to confront the enemy.

Observation:

This segment illustrates that God is concerned with the welfare of cities and their inhabitants. When we receive divine mandates, it is often our responsibility to save and protect our communities. Just as David received divine approval to engage the Philistines, contemporary leaders should seek God's guidance when confronted with challenges that impact their communities.

The adversities faced by Keilah can be likened to the challenges that communities face today. Cities and urban areas often grapple with issues like violence, crime, poverty, drug abuse, and

social injustices. Just as David recognized the need to protect Keilah, leaders should address these issues with a sense of purpose and divine guidance.

III. Insecurity about the Enemy

David's men, upon hearing of his intent to save Keilah, expressed their fear and uncertainty. They questioned their safety in Judah and raised concerns about confronting the powerful Philistine armies in Keilah. Their fear reflected the doubt and insecurity that often creeps into the hearts of those who are faced with daunting challenges.

Observation:

- The fear displayed by David's men is a reminder that even in the presence of strong leadership, insecurity and uncertainty can take hold in the hearts of those who follow. Fear can paralyze action and hinder progress.
- David, however, did not let the fear of his men deter him. He recognized the importance of revisiting God in prayer to regain his sense of purpose and assurance.

David's second inquiry to the Lord reaffirmed his divine mission. God assured him that the Philistines would be delivered into his hands.

Observation:

This segment emphasizes the importance of leadership by example. Despite the insecurity of his men, David's unwavering faith and commitment to his mission served as an inspiration. Leaders often face moments of doubt and insecurity in the face of adversity. However, their resolve, faith, and reliance on divine guidance can empower their followers to overcome their own fears.

Conclusion:

In the final part of the narrative, David led his men into battle. They confronted the Philistines, struck them with a mighty blow, and liberated the people of Keilah. David's leadership, guided by his unwavering faith and divine mandate, exemplified the role of a savior for the city.

This biblical story offers contemporary leaders a powerful lesson in safeguarding and protecting their communities. It underscores the need for leaders to inquire of the Lord for guidance, demonstrate unwavering faith in the face of adversity, and take action to protect and save their cities.

Just as David saved the inhabitants of Keilah from the Philistine threat, leaders today have the opportunity to make a positive impact on their communities, addressing issues such as crime, poverty, social injustices, and more. By seeking divine guidance, demonstrating unwavering faith, and leading by example, leaders can become the saviors their cities need, bringing about positive change and safeguarding the well-being of their residents.

Chapter Nine

Leaders Pray in Difficult Times

1 Samuel 23:6-14

Introduction:

In the midst of turmoil and danger, we find a compelling narrative in the Book of Samuel. A war rages in the background, and King Saul has just committed a heinous act – the massacre of the entire priestly village of Nob. This village represented the Aaronic tribe, and Saul, in a fit of paranoia, believed that they had chosen David over him. The village paid the price for this perceived allegiance.

But amid this tragedy, a single priest managed to escape Saul's bloodthirsty rampage. This priest was Abiathar, the son of the high priest Ahimelech. He carried with him not just the weight of his own life but also the legacy and lineage of the priestly tribe of Aaron. If he didn't reach David safely, the priestly line in Israel faced extinction, leaving no one to minister in the temple.

Abiathar's escape was not without sacrifice. He left behind everything he knew and loved, fleeing with a heavy heart and eyes filled with tears, armed with a powerful weapon – prayer. The Bible tells us that when Abiathar sought refuge with David in Keilah, he carried the ephod in his hands.

The Ephod: A Symbol of Divine Authority

The ephod was no ordinary piece of clothing; it was the high priest's royal vesture. God had instructed Moses to give the ephod to Aaron to wear during his service in the temple. It was a garment that symbolized the righteousness of Yahweh, setting the priest apart from all others. The ephod was a distinctive and sacred item, signifying the priest's role as a mediator between God and humanity.

This dyed garment was made of fine linen and embroidered with blue, purple, scarlet, and gold. It featured two shoulder straps adorned with onyx stones, each inscribed with the names of

Israel's twelve tribes. The ephod served as a representation of the people when the priest entered the Holy of Holies, a place where no ordinary man could venture. This vestment embodied the presence of God on the men of God, standing for the people of God.

Abiathar's Actions and Dedication:

As Abiathar learned about the massacre of his family and village and realized the imminent threat to David's life, he took immediate action. He ran to the temple and seized the ephod. He recognized that David, a military leader, needed divine guidance and wisdom. The ephod would enable him to consult with God effectively in this time of crisis.

Abiathar's choice of the ephod was remarkable. The temple held numerous sacred items for worship – candlestick holders, holy vessels for sacrifices, scrolls, shew-bread, knives for sacrifices, the lampstand, and more. Yet, Abiathar chose the ephod because he believed it was the most vital asset for the ongoing spiritual warfare.

Abiathar's decision was not self-centered. He understood that he needed to stand in the presence of God, not just for himself but also on behalf of all of Israel. Despite the injustice inflicted on his family and village, Abiathar remained faithful to his priestly duty. He continued to operate in the place God had called him, refusing to quit in the face of adversity.

David's Need for Divine Guidance:

As David learned about Saul's evil intentions, he immediately sought counsel from Abiathar and the ephod. The ephod symbolized divine authority and guidance. David recognized the value of having a priest who could intercede on his behalf, and he eagerly relied on the ephod to communicate with God.

David's Prayer for Clarity:

He began his prayer with a deep concern for the safety of the city of Keilah. David had just made a treaty with its people, but he needed to know if the city would honor that treaty and stand with him in the face of Saul's impending attack. This revealed David's understanding of both warfare

and human nature. In times of crisis, knowing who will stand with you becomes a crucial aspect of leadership.

He then asked the Lord whether Saul would indeed come to Keilah, wanting clarity about the movements of his adversary. David sought divine insights and information, desiring to base his actions on God's knowledge rather than hearsay, gossip, or circumstance.

Praying for His Companions:

In a striking display of leadership and compassion, David extended his prayer to encompass not only his own safety but also the lives of the men who followed him. He sought God's guidance on whether the men of Keilah would deliver not just him but also his loyal companions into the hands of Saul. David's selflessness and concern for those under his leadership demonstrated the heart of a true leader.

The Lord's Response through Prayer:

In this passage, we witness the Lord's response to David's inquiries through prayer. God did not intervene directly but provided David with insight, knowledge, and clarity. Through this divine interaction, we learn that God may reveal crucial information to His children in times of crisis, but He also expects them to act upon it.

In the face of danger, David's actions exemplify the significance of prayer, divine guidance, and selfless leadership. This chapter illustrates that leaders who seek God's counsel in difficult times, pray not only for their own well-being but also for the safety and protection of those under their charge.

Chapter Ten

Leaders Develop Strategy for Problem Solving

1 Samuel 24:14-29

In this chapter, we delve into the continuing story of David's life as he faces relentless pursuit by Saul, the fallen King of Israel. As we've discussed in our previous chapters, David was betrayed by the inhabitants of Keilah and was advised by the Lord to leave the area, as Saul and his men were on the hunt for him. David and his 600 loyal followers found refuge in the wilderness, hiding in strongholds strategically scattered to ensure their safety.

David's situation serves as a poignant reminder of the challenges faced by Christians in today's world, as we confront our own adversaries – the world, the flesh, and the Devil. These forces are ceaseless in their diabolical efforts to undermine and obstruct our mission. Therefore, it's vital for believers to examine the text and understand how to apply God's word to develop a battle strategy for their lives.

David's Battle Strategy:

The chapter begins with David taking refuge in the strongholds of the wilderness, using caves and remote crevices to shield himself and his men from Saul's relentless pursuit. Rather than launching direct attacks on Saul, David chooses to wait for divine guidance and direction, adhering to God's plan. He stands still, taking refuge in the stronghold.

The text mentions, "Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand." This reveals the source of David's battle strategy – divine intervention. God thwarted Saul's plans, ensuring that the evil king could not lay his hands on David. God was the ultimate protector and provider for David in the wilderness.

Observation:

As we reflect on this passage, Saul symbolizes the world, the flesh, and the Devil, which continually seek to undermine Christians. Just like Saul, these adversaries aim to destroy our witness, our word, and our walk. The battle is real, and it's relentless. Day and night, the unholy trinity conspires to sabotage the work of the Kingdom. However, like David, when we take refuge in the stronghold – the Word of God – our God delivers us from the clutches of the enemy.

Our stronghold is the sacred scriptures, the place where we seek refuge from the assault on our souls. It is our secret place, a sanctuary where we can find shelter from the world's pestilence and noise, even while residing in the hostile environment of the wilderness. When we remain in the Word, God fights alongside us.

David and his men, while hiding in the wilderness, found themselves in Ziph, an unfamiliar and uncharted territory. They neither had an alliance nor enmity with the Ziphites. They were anomalous figures in the Ziph community. However, their decision to take shelter in the wilderness drew the attention of the local desert dwellers. They had to hide where they couldn't be discovered, and their choice to remain in the stronghold indicated that they were doing so to escape the enemy's clutches.

Observation:

This is akin to the way Christians must navigate life's wilderness. We, too, should be anomalies, appearing distinct, peculiar, and extraordinary. By staying in the stronghold, we become visible to the desert-dwelling people of the world. David's astute observation skills allowed him to stay one step ahead of Saul. He could discern Saul's motives and actions, enabling him to elude his pursuers.

Application:

From this text, we learn that when God grants us wisdom, we must use it for His glory. When He provides a plan, we should employ it to outmaneuver the enemy. Just like David's men found refuge in the stronghold, we should take shelter in the Word of God, our stronghold, to stay ahead of the enemy's attacks.

David's Brotherhood:

In a new development in the ongoing battle between Saul and David, Saul's son, Jonathan, joins David's side. Despite being related to Saul, Jonathan stands with David. Jonathan's support is a testament to true friendship. True friends stand by us even when their family opposes us. They stand with us when it's unpopular, and they support us when we need it the most. Jonathan reassures David by delivering a prophetic message from the Lord. He tells David not to fear and that he will be king over Israel, with Jonathan as his loyal companion.

Observation:

Jonathan's words were not just comforting; they were a confirmation of what God had already spoken to David through the prophet Samuel. His message provided solace for David, reinforcing God's promises.

Application:

Words from a friend are priceless. They mean more than words can express and are akin to an oasis in the desert of life. When a friend stands with us in times of trouble and shares words of encouragement, it's like water in the wilderness.

Jonathan goes a step further by making a covenant with David before the Lord. This covenant signifies the depth of their commitment, the Lord's involvement in their relationship, and their unconditional love and respect for one another.

Application:

Despite the conflict between their families, God's plan keeps genuine brothers in harmony. Christians can learn from this to maintain their unity, support one another, and build relationships marked by unconditional love and respect.

David's Betrayal:

The chapter proceeds to reveal an episode of betrayal by the Ziphites, who disclosed David's whereabouts to Saul. The Ziphites had no direct stake in the conflict but decided to act against David without reason. Their actions demonstrate how sometimes the world may turn against believers for no apparent cause, and people may actively seek to harm them.

Application:

Christians may also encounter situations where the world turns against them without cause. This serves as a reminder that some people simply enjoy acting maliciously. We must remember that, like David, we can't control when the Ziphites come our way. However, we can control our response and seek refuge in the Word of God, our stronghold.

The Ziphites' actions set in motion Saul's pursuit of David, who had relocated from Ziph to Maon, further south. David's move was strategic, as he realized the danger and chose to travel deeper into the wilderness to a place called Maon.

David transitioned from the stronghold to the rock, from a place of cover to a position of strength. Maon provided David with an elevated vantage point where he could observe his surroundings and the movements of his enemy.

Application:

Sometimes, in our battle, we need to apply what we've learned in the stronghold and move to the rock. Jesus, the Rock, ensures our security, and staying near Him allows us to gain an advantage and maintain a strong position in the battle.

Observation:

Living in and on the Rock (Jesus) positions us for victory. When we dwell in the Rock (Jesus), we can discern the enemy's actions and gain the upper hand. Staying near the Rock ensures our safety and security.

David's Blessing:

As Saul and his men closed in on David in Maon, the situation became perilous. It was a close call, a near miss, but God intervened once again. An unknown messenger informed Saul of a Philistine invasion in his territory, diverting his attention and compelling him to abandon his pursuit of David.

Observation:

This incident emphasizes the importance of being in God's will and trusting Him during the battle. David's safety came from being on the Rock, and God knew exactly when and how to protect His servant. Just like David, when we are saved on the Rock – Jesus – we find renewal and are refreshed by His cleansing blood.

Application:

Salvation on the Rock, followed by a refreshing at En-gedi, represents the Christian's journey. The Rock is Jesus, and His sacrifice on the cross cleanses us from our sins. Our Maon and En-gedi occurred on the hill of Golgotha, where Christ fought for us. It is where we find salvation and renewal, just as David found salvation on the Rock of escape and renewal in the strongholds of En-gedi.

In conclusion, this chapter illustrates the significance of seeking refuge in God's Word, the stronghold, in the face of relentless opposition. David's strategic moves and the support of a true friend like Jonathan exemplify the importance of developing a battle strategy guided by God's wisdom. Like David, Christians can navigate the wilderness of life, remain alert to the enemy's tactics, and trust in the security provided by the Rock – Jesus. David's blessings came from staying in God's will, as he journeyed from the stronghold to the Rock and on to renewed strength in En-gedi.

Chapter Eleven

Leaders that Prepare Lead Successfully

1 Samuel 26:1-25

Introduction:

In our journey through the life of David, we've encountered numerous trials and tribulations, each offering valuable lessons for the believer. David's witness, walk, and work have provided a blueprint for navigating the challenges of life. In this chapter, we delve into David's ongoing struggle with King Saul, a relentless enemy driven by jealousy and demonic influence. While Saul represents those who harbor baseless hatred and seek to harm us, we will focus on three key lessons from David's life that can empower believers on their own journey.

- Know the Enemy's Location:

As we rejoin the narrative, David discovers that Saul is on the move again, hunting him down relentlessly. Rather than passively waiting to be found by his enemy, David proactively sends out spies to determine Saul's whereabouts. He refuses to remain a sitting target and exemplifies the wisdom of knowing where your enemy is. The smart Christian is one who remains vigilant and aware of the enemy's location, often relying on divine guidance to stay one step ahead.

David's actions teach us that Christians should be proactive in spiritual warfare. We cannot afford to play games with the enemy, and we must keep our spiritual eyes open for opportunities to gain an upper hand. Just as David knew Saul's location, believers should also seek to understand their spiritual adversaries and strategies, so they can plan and prepare effectively.

- Know the Enemy's Logistics:

When David receives the report about Saul's location, he goes one step further and physically investigates the enemy camp. David enters the camp, despite the risks, and observes the layout of Saul's forces. He sees where Saul is sleeping and identifies Abner, the commander of Saul's army, along with the military strategy in place.

David's courage and keen observation highlight the importance of assessing the enemy's logistics and strategies. Just as David was willing to venture into the enemy's camp to understand their preparations, Christians should be proactive in discerning their adversaries' tactics. Being prepared and knowledgeable about the enemy's plans and positions is essential for effective spiritual warfare.

- The Enemy Has Already Lost:

David's encounter with Saul in the camp presents a unique opportunity. With Saul asleep and his life in David's hands, Abishai, David's trusted companion, urges him to take Saul's life. However, David refrains from doing so. Instead, he shares his conviction that the Lord will deal with Saul's fate, whether by divine intervention, natural death, or in battle.

David's restraint and mercy reveal a profound understanding that the enemy has already lost. He demonstrates meekness and the power to forgive, emphasizing that God's timing and justice will prevail. The enemy can be subdued not through vengeance but through showing mercy, love, and forgiveness. David's choice to spare Saul's life sends a powerful message, one that is far more potent than revenge.

Application:

David's actions in this chapter provide invaluable insights for leaders facing challenges and opposition. These lessons can be applied to the lives of believers:

- Be proactive in spiritual warfare. Seek to understand your enemies and their strategies. Know your adversary's location and take the initiative in your walk with Christ.
- Assess the enemy's logistics and strategies. Gain insight into their plans and positions, and be prepared to confront them with wisdom and knowledge.
- Understand that the enemy has already lost. Display meekness and forgiveness, allowing God to deal with your adversaries in His time. Showing mercy can be more powerful than seeking revenge.

In conclusion, David's life continues to provide a blueprint for successful leadership. By knowing the enemy's location, understanding their logistics, and recognizing that the enemy has already lost, leaders can navigate challenges with wisdom, courage, and a spirit of forgiveness.

David's story teaches us that God's guidance and empowerment can lead to victory, even in the face of relentless opposition.

Chapter Twelve

How to Learn from Previous Lessons

2 Samuel 1-14

Life is often likened to a battlefield where we encounter challenges, struggles, and conflicts. Lessons learned on the battlefield can provide invaluable insights for navigating the battles of life. In this chapter, we delve into 2 Samuel 1-14 to draw wisdom from the experiences of King David and his interactions with a man who brought disturbing news from the battlefield.

The passage opens after the death of King Saul, a prominent figure in the history of Israel. David, not present at the scene, had just returned from a battle with the Amalekites, where he successfully rescued his family and others from their captivity. This context sets the stage for the life lessons we can derive from the events that follow.

Bad News from the Battle:

- In the throes of a battle, we often encounter bad news that can be difficult to bear. This was the case for David when a man arrived with tidings of Saul's death and the losses suffered by Israel in battle.
- Bad news has a way of traveling far and wide, and we must remember that, in life's battles, bad news is a common occurrence. Wars, both physical and spiritual, leave victims and consequences in their wake.
- The arrival of a messenger with bad news reminds us that not all messengers in spiritual warfare are on our side. We must be cautious about the sources of information we rely on during life's battles.
- Just as in the battlefield described in this passage, deceit and trickery can infiltrate our lives. David was deceived by a man who came with false motives, seeking to use David for his own benefit. Spiritual warfare is similarly filled with deception from the enemies of our soul.

Bad Witness from the Battle:

- The man who brought the news portrayed himself as an eye-witness of Saul's death. He claimed to be an Amalekite, but his account did not align with the actual events of the battle.
- He was not an honorable witness, as he had not participated in the battle between Saul and the Philistines, and his true motives were dubious.
- We must be cautious about the witnesses we accept during life's battles. Not all witnesses can be trusted, and some may have ulterior motives.
- The man in this passage tried to portray himself as an ally while having hidden motives. Spiritual warfare often involves individuals who pretend to be on our side but ultimately aim to harm us.

Bad Feeling about the Battle:

- David and his men were deeply affected by the news of Saul's death and the losses in battle. Even though Saul had been David's adversary, he did not rejoice in his death.
- Spiritual warfare, like physical warfare, brings pain and sorrow. When we experience defeats in our battles with the world, the flesh, or the devil, we should grieve for those who have been defeated.
- David and his men turned to prayer and sought the Lord for guidance, comfort, consolation, and communion. In times of grief, prayer can provide solace and direction.
- Their grief and mourning led David to recall his duty to obey the Torah, God's commandments. This obedience was prompted by prayer and led David to execute judgment on the deceitful messenger.
- Obedience to God's commands is essential in spiritual warfare. We must slay the sins and deceptions God instructs us to eliminate.
- David's obedience to the Lord's commands showed true loyalty to God and modeled how we should respond in our own battles.

Life's battles, like those on the battlefield of 2 Samuel 1-14, provide valuable lessons. We must be discerning about the sources of information we trust and be aware of the deceit and trickery that can infiltrate our lives. When we face defeats in our spiritual battles, we should grieve and turn to prayer for comfort and guidance. Obedience to God's commands is crucial in navigating these battles. By learning from these lessons, we can better equip ourselves to face the challenges and conflicts that life presents.

Chapter Thirteen

Leaders Develop Strategic Partnerships

2 Samuel 2:1-11

Introduction:

For those of us who have been called to leadership in ministry, this text provides valuable insights into the challenges and trials that leaders may face. David, a man called to be king over Israel, is the central figure in this narrative, and his journey is a testament to the fact that ministry is far from perfect. It is not always smooth sailing, and just because it's a ministry doesn't mean there won't be trials and tribulations. Sometimes, ministry can be incredibly difficult and filled with challenges.

In this chapter, we will explore the story of David, who becomes the king of Judah but faces opposition from other tribes. We will see how his leadership and strategic partnerships play a crucial role in navigating the complex terrain of ministry.

Saul, the former king of Israel, has been killed in battle, freeing David from the constant threat on his life. He is now a free man, ready to return to his homeland and fulfill the divine calling God has placed upon him. David, who had been living near the Philistines, is eager to rejoin his people in Israel. However, unbeknownst to him, trouble is brewing within his own clan.

Sometimes, serving in ministry among your own family can be the most challenging assignment of all. Ministering to those who should naturally love and support you can be filled with heartache and pain. Nevertheless, God often calls us to serve our families first before anyone else.

I. David's Prayer:

The narrative begins with David seeking the Lord's guidance through prayer. After establishing himself in Ziklag, building a community, starting an army, and marrying two wives, David

wonders if it's time for a change in his ministry. He seeks the Lord's direction, asking, "Shall I go up to any of the cities of Judah?" The Lord's response directs him to go to Hebron, a city in the region of Judah.

This prayerful inquiry reveals that David is seeking divine guidance for his life, his family, and his community. It's a reminder that seeking God's direction through prayer is essential when considering changes in our ministry, our families, and our lives.

David models the importance of consulting the Lord before making significant decisions, showing that he relies on God's wisdom rather than leaning solely on his understanding. David recognizes that the Lord has a plan for his life and understands the importance of seeking God's guidance and direction for his ministry and the lives of those under his care.

Additionally, David's commitment to prayer continues even in times of peace, recognizing that trouble doesn't cease when one enemy falls. He maintains the discipline of seeking God's guidance and direction as he prepares to lead his people into a new chapter.

Application:

David's example teaches us the importance of prayer in leadership and ministry. Leaders must seek the Lord's guidance and wisdom before making decisions that affect their lives, their families, and their communities. Good leadership prioritizes prayer and leans on the Lord's wisdom.

David's obedience following prayer is another critical lesson. After seeking God's guidance, he takes action, leading his 600-man army and their families to Hebron. This demonstrates the responsibility and leadership mantle on David's life, as he mobilizes a significant community to follow God's will.

In summary, David's prayer and obedience serve as models for effective leadership in ministry, emphasizing the significance of prayer, seeking God's guidance, and taking others along the journey in alignment with God's will.

II. David's Promotion:

As David moves to Hebron, the men of Judah anoint him as their king, recognizing his leadership qualities and the divine promise that God had chosen him to rule. David acknowledges and appreciates the men of Jabesh Gilead for their act of kindness in burying Saul, his predecessor. He blesses them and vows to repay their kindness, embracing the responsibility and leadership that come with his newfound role.

This promotion in David's ministry marks a turning point in his life, as he transitions from being the commander of a 600-man army to becoming the king of Judah. The men of Judah recognize his leadership potential and embrace him as their ruler.

Observation:

David's promotion highlights the idea that when God promotes an individual, nothing can stand in His way. It also emphasizes the role of honoring and repaying acts of kindness, as David acknowledges the men of Jabesh Gilead for their actions. Effective leadership involves promoting unity and healing divisions, as David honors Saul's memory and the men who honored him through a proper burial.

Application:

David's response to his promotion illustrates the qualities of a good leader, including recognizing and appreciating acts of kindness, promoting unity, and leading with excellence. When God promotes us, we should remember to honor those who have gone before us and those who have shown us kindness.

David's leadership principles, including gratitude and unity, serve as valuable lessons for those in ministry. Effective leaders in ministry should prioritize honoring others and promoting unity within their community.

III. David's Problem:

Despite David's promotion, a problem emerges as Abner, the commander of Saul's army, makes a move against him. Abner brings Ishbosheth, Saul's son, to Mahanaim and anoints him as king over various tribes, including Gilead, Ashurites, Jezreel, Ephraim, Benjamin, and all of Israel, except for the house of Judah. This move by Abner causes division and opposition within Israel.

Ishbosheth, whose name means "man of shame," becomes an unwitting puppet king installed by Abner to oppose David. The divisive action of Abner disrupts the unity and cohesion of Israel and opposes God's chosen leader.

Observation:

This portion of the narrative highlights the trouble that can arise in ministry, even after experiencing promotion and success. Opposition, division, and challenges can emerge when leaders are following God's plan.

Abner's actions not only separate the tribes from each other but also create conflict by choosing tribes that would be easily influenced and led by the house of Saul. David inherits a fractured kingdom, and the opposition within his ministry is a significant challenge.

Application:

David's experience underscores the fact that trouble can follow the favor of God. Ministry leaders should be prepared for opposition and challenges, even when they are following God's will.

Furthermore, this chapter illustrates that God may use circumstances to align people with His divine plan. Circumstances can play a significant role in guiding individuals onto God's agenda, and leaders should trust that God's strategy is at work even when facing adversity.

In conclusion, the story of David and the challenges he faced after promotion serves as a reminder that leadership in ministry can be complex and riddled with trials. Effective leaders should be prepared to seek God's guidance, honor acts of kindness, and navigate opposition with

grace and wisdom. Trouble may come, but trusting in God's plan is paramount in developing strategic partnerships and leading in ministry.

Chapter Fourteen

Leaders Know How to Encourage Themselves in the Lord

1 Samuel 30:1-24

Introduction:

In life, there are inevitable trials and troubles that test the faith of every believer. Sometimes, these challenges can make you feel isolated and helpless. The story we explore today is that of David, who found himself in one of life's most trying situations. He faced a daunting trial, and no one was around to offer him solace and support. In the midst of his darkest hour, David had to learn the invaluable skill of self-encouragement to endure the trial that lay before him.

David's experience reminds me of the song by Donald Lawrence, "Speak Over Yourself," which urges us to encourage ourselves in the Lord when there's no one else to do it. Indeed, there are moments when no one else is there to boost our spirits in the battles we face. Many Christians have heard this song and experienced the need to encourage themselves during life's storms. In this text, we'll discover how David found the strength to face unfair, devastating circumstances by learning to encourage himself in the Lord.

In the previous chapter (1 Samuel 29), David was summoned by King Achish to fight against Israel, as he resided in Philistine territory. However, when the Philistine lords saw David and his men in battle formation, they voiced their distrust and persuaded the king to send David back to Ziklag. Upon returning to Ziklag, David and his men were met with a harrowing sight. Their wives, children, and families had been taken captive, their resources stolen, their homes destroyed, and their city left in ruins. In this crisis, their livelihoods were threatened, their egos shattered, and their families abused. The blame fell on David, and even his loyal followers wanted to stone him. David, once their beloved leader, had become "David the despised."

Questions Arise:

- What do you do when life takes a turn for the worse?

- How do you handle it when a positive situation rapidly deteriorates?
- How do you cope when those who once loved you now turn against you?
- What do you do when your loved ones become your enemies?
- How do you navigate when you feel utterly lost?

This text raises these challenging questions, and David provides answers by demonstrating how to lead in a crisis.

I. David Encourages Himself

When David and his men returned to Ziklag, they were met with intense grief, and the people even contemplated stoning David. Their grief and anger consumed them. However, David didn't allow despair to overwhelm him. Instead, he strengthened himself in the Lord, setting an example of encouraging oneself in the face of adversity.

David recognized the need to seek the Lord's guidance during this supernatural battle. In his darkest hour, David knew where to turn – to the high priest wearing the ephod, an essential piece of clothing signifying access to God. He understood that human efforts alone wouldn't suffice in this spiritual battle. Thus, David sought divine instruction to rescue his family.

Observation:

David teaches us that leadership within the community of faith can be challenging and dynamic. Followers may vacillate between love and criticism. In the face of such difficulties, a leader must stay focused, maintain determination, and never take it personally when the congregation's mood swings. A leader must rise to the occasion and show the way when facing life's most challenging situations.

Application:

This passage demonstrates that in the midst of a crisis, seeking the counsel of the Lord is paramount. David encourages us to position ourselves to hear from the Lord and be prepared to follow His instructions. Jesus, the High Priest of our souls, is ready to guide us through our difficulties if we are willing to listen.

II. David Empowers Himself

After encouraging himself, David inquired of the Lord regarding their course of action. He sought divine guidance on pursuing the enemy and rescuing their families. David's questions revealed his determination to save his loved ones, emphasizing that inaction was not an option. David's spiritual and warrior-like disposition taught us that in the midst of a crisis, one must be willing to fight for their family, even if the enemy holds them captive.

Observation:

David's actions remind us that leaders must make quick decisions in critical situations, trusting the Lord for guidance. Being passive or indecisive is not an option when your loved ones' lives are at stake. David's unwavering resolve to seek the Lord's direction and save his family provides a powerful example of leadership in times of crisis.

Application:

In the face of personal crises, remember David's example of seeking divine counsel, decisiveness, and determination. When you're in a difficult situation, don't wait for others to act. Instead, empower yourself by pursuing the Lord's guidance and take appropriate actions to address the challenges.

III. David Employs Himself

David's pursuit of the enemy to save his family led him to an Egyptian man abandoned by the Amalekites. This man, mistreated by his previous master, became an unexpected ally in the fight. Rather than despise or harm him, David and his men helped him recover. David recognized the Egyptian's knowledge of the enemy's whereabouts, traditions, and strategies. This informer, though previously associated with the enemy, became a valuable ally.

Observation:

In the journey of life, God sometimes sends unexpected allies our way to aid in our deliverance or mission. David's actions illustrate that we shouldn't underestimate the help that God provides. Allies may come from unexpected places and backgrounds, but they can contribute significantly to our success.

Application:

Learn from David's response to the Egyptian man. Don't despise or harm those who might initially appear as adversaries or people from the wrong side. Instead, recognize their potential to aid you in your mission. Always be open to God's surprising allies.

Conclusion:

In the conclusion of this passage, we witness David's unwavering commitment to save his family and possessions. He successfully rescues his loved ones, recovers all that had been taken, and reconciles with those who were initially too weary to follow him into battle. David's story teaches us about leadership in the face of adversity and how to encourage ourselves in the Lord. It reminds us not to forget those who stood behind or to despise the unexpected allies who can aid in our mission.

Ultimately, David's story foreshadows the arrival of a better King, Jesus Christ. This new King would rule unlike any other, conquering all adversaries, serving both the strong and the weak, and sacrificing Himself for the salvation of humanity. Jesus, the sovereign King of the Universe, would overcome sin and death, providing eternal life to those who believe.

In life, as in the Bible, leaders often find themselves in challenging situations. Yet, by following David's example of encouragement, empowerment, and employing unexpected allies, we can navigate these trials and lead with faith and resolve.

Chapter Fifteen

Handling Your New Leadership Promotion

2 Samuel 5:1-5

This chapter explores the passage from 2 Samuel 5:1-5, which tells the story of David's anointment as the king of Israel and the lessons it holds for us. This significant event in biblical history demonstrates the divine call, covenant, and commitment that should characterize a leader's response to a new leadership promotion. David's journey to the throne of Israel provides us with valuable insights and principles to navigate leadership transitions.

I. David's Divine Call

In this passage, we witness a divine call that demonstrates how God calls and anoints individuals for leadership. David's anointment as king was not a result of his ambition or power-seeking, but a response to a divine call. The Israelites, recognizing David's leadership qualities, approached him, and this call to leadership was confirmed by divine guidance and unity among the tribes.

The Divine Call Is Initiated by God:

David's call was not of his own making but a response to God's divine plan. This illustrates that leaders, especially in the realm of spiritual leadership, should wait for God's call and timing rather than pursuing leadership positions for personal gain.

Confirmation and Unity:

The fact that all the tribes of Israel came together to call David demonstrates the importance of confirmation and unity within a community. When a leader is chosen by consensus and divine guidance, it fosters unity and trust among the people.

Divine Timing:

David's call came at the right time. Often, leadership promotions require patience and divine timing. Leaders should wait on God's timing rather than rushing into positions of authority.

II. David's Divine Covenant

David's response to the divine call is to make a covenant with the elders of Israel, which emphasizes his commitment and accountability as a leader. This covenant reflects reconciliation and restoration of relationships and is a powerful illustration of how leaders should handle new leadership promotions.

- **Reconciliation and Restoration:** The elders of Israel, who had previously failed to support David, now turn to him for leadership. This act represents reconciliation and restoration. Leaders should be willing to reconcile with those who may have opposed them in the past.
- **Leadership Covenant:** David's covenant is not just an agreement; it is a commitment to lead and care for God's people. Leaders must commit to their role wholeheartedly, entering into a covenant with those they serve, acknowledging their responsibility.
- **Covenant Leadership:** Covenant leadership is characterized by love, commitment, and a sense of duty. Leaders who make a covenant with their followers show dedication and faithfulness to their role.

III. David's Divine Commitment

David's commitment to serving God's people is evident in the duration of his reign. He reigned for 33 years in Jerusalem and an additional 7 years and 6 months in Hebron. This demonstrates the importance of long-term commitment in leadership.

- **Ministry Longevity:** David's commitment to leadership for over three decades highlights the importance of ministry longevity. Leaders must be prepared for the long haul, as they may serve their communities for an extended period.
- **Experience and Maturity:** The 7 years in Hebron allowed David to gain experience and maturity in leadership before assuming the role in Jerusalem. It is a reminder that leaders

should be prepared through smaller responsibilities before taking on more significant leadership roles.

- Commitment to God's People: David's commitment was not just to the position but to the people he served. Leaders must have a deep commitment to the well-being of those they lead.

The story of David's anointment as king of Israel offers profound lessons on how leaders should handle new leadership promotions. It emphasizes that divine calls should guide leadership decisions and that leaders should make covenants to demonstrate their commitment and accountability. Additionally, long-term commitment and preparation are crucial for effective leadership. As we strive to lead in various capacities, we can draw inspiration and guidance from David's journey to the throne of Israel, with a focus on God's divine call, covenant relationships, and unwavering commitment to God's people.

Chapter Sixteen

How to Lead Others Through Crisis Management

2 Samuel 5:17-25

In the annals of ancient history, there exists a narrative of warfare, strategy, and leadership, written for our ears to hear and hearts to ponder. This narrative unfolds in the story of David, a man chosen by God to lead and protect His people, who came under relentless attack from their enemies. David's experience is not just a historical account but a timeless lesson that holds valuable insights for anyone navigating the tumultuous waters of crisis management.

This battle in David's life serves as a common ordeal that every Christian is likely to encounter on their journey to their eternal destination. While our struggles may not mirror the clash of armies on the battlefield, they share the universal theme of contending against forces determined to thwart our progress.

David has ascended to the throne, becoming the ruling king of Israel, uniting the country under his leadership, and fostering an atmosphere of unity and togetherness. Yet, it's precisely this unity and strength that provoke the Philistines to prepare for war. The enemy of God's people does not tolerate their harmonious alliance under one leader, a man renowned for his valor and history of triumph against them.

The Philistines, old adversaries of Israel, rise once again, a relentless and implacable foe. They consistently muster their forces to wage war against God's people. We glean a crucial lesson from this biblical passage: every time the Lord blesses you, you may become a target for the enemy's malevolence.

The Philistines harbor a deep-seated animosity towards David, resenting God's choice to anoint him as king. They converge upon Jerusalem with the intent to capture and obliterate David, once and for all. This biblical narrative mirrors the relentless approach of the evil one, Satan, in his

ceaseless pursuit to assail the saints of God. He discriminates against no one, never waivers, and vigorously seeks to assail your character and community.

In facing this relentless enemy, we can draw wisdom from David in three key areas:

- David's Summons to War
- David's Strategy for War
- David's Success in War

Let's delve into these aspects to learn how to emerge victoriously from the battles we encounter.

I. David's Summons to War

In the scripture, we discover that David's troubles arise after the Lord elevates his status. Troubles manifest from beneath, for the text describes how the Philistines "went up" to search for him upon hearing of his promotion. This scenario highlights a recurring theme: adversity often surfaces after God promotes us.

David's troubles originate from below, but he quickly realizes that the enemy is on the move. He does not ignore the enemy's intentions or hope they will dissipate. Instead, David, a seasoned warrior with prior experience battling the Philistines, recognizes the gravity of the situation. He promptly takes refuge in a stronghold, a fortified place designed to withstand an enemy's assault.

This response demonstrates that David does not downplay or underestimate the enemy's threat. He understands the need for serious preparation. In these times of spiritual warfare, the Church must adopt a similar proactive stance. The need is pressing for a unified body of believers prepared for the enemy's advances.

David's example urges us to refrain from complacency and blindness to the devil's relentless schemes. We must remain intellectually astute and alert to the evil one's pursuit of our destruction. It is time to stop feigning ignorance, to recognize the adversary's movements, and to find refuge in the stronghold where we can fortify ourselves and receive divine guidance.

Just as David responded swiftly and resolutely to secure his family, spouse, children, and soul, we must hasten to the stronghold of our faith. There, we can fortify our spiritual defenses and prepare to confront the relentless enemy.

The text continues to reveal that when David responded in this manner, the enemy also set their own plans in motion, deploying themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. Their actions exemplify the readiness and determination of the enemy to confront us when we are at our most vulnerable, even after suffering previous defeats.

In this life, every believer must be ready to engage in spiritual warfare from the stronghold of their faith. We will face enemies who are well-prepared, and they will not yield or surrender their intentions willingly. We must acknowledge that our enemy will do everything within their power to obstruct our path to victory. Hence, we must follow David's lead by preparing ourselves and, most importantly, understanding who stands with us in the stronghold.

Story: The Tale of the Great Wall of China

The story of the Great Wall of China offers a pertinent lesson. This massive structure, spanning 2,600 miles and the only man-made object visible from the moon, was built over centuries to protect against invasions. However, when the enemy sought to invade, they did not contend with the wall's formidable length. Instead, they secured cooperation from the gatekeeper who opened the gates, enabling the enemy to breach their defenses easily.

This anecdote underscores the importance of choosing your inner circle wisely. The stronghold and protective barriers we build are rendered ineffective if we allow the wrong people to enter. As the gatekeeper, you must be vigilant in selecting those you trust, for they can either safeguard or sabotage the fortress.

II. David's Strategy for War

After David's swift response to the enemy's approach, we transition to his strategic planning for the impending battle. He follows a sequence of actions that demonstrate his wisdom and leadership, culminating in the victory over his adversaries.

Inquire of the Lord: Pray Before You Act

David initiates his strategic approach by seeking divine guidance. He inquires of the Lord with prayer. As a warrior, he recognizes the necessity of discerning which battles to engage in, whether he can win, and if it is within God's plan for him. This underscores the principle that we must selectively choose our battles, seeking divine direction.

David's approach here highlights a critical aspect of leadership: even as a king, he submits to a higher authority. He acknowledges God's sovereignty and aligns his leadership with divine guidance. In times of crisis, this principle is paramount. Leaders should maintain their own authority while respecting and adhering to higher spiritual authority.

Obedience and Courage: Act with Authority

Once David receives divine direction through prayer, he proceeds with a decisive strategy. He leads his men with authority and courage. His actions reflect a commitment to follow God's guidance with confidence. This provides an essential lesson: obey God's instructions with faith and authority, stepping into the battle with determination.

The Victory in Baal Perazim: Acknowledge God's Role

When David's strategy bears fruit, and the victory is achieved, he recognizes that it was the Lord who granted them triumph. He promptly names the place "Baal Perazim," which translates to "The Lord of Breaking Through." This emphasizes the importance of attributing victory to God, acknowledging His role in our successes, and ascribing glory to Him.

The biblical account of David's strategy teaches us that victory can be achieved when we seek divine guidance, act with authority and courage, and recognize God's role in our successes.

Story: Personal Victory Over a Childhood Bully

A personal story illustrates the importance of following divine guidance and relying on God's authority. As a child, the narrator faced a schoolyard bully who tormented them and others. The

bully's threats and intimidation created fear. One day, the my mother intervened, telling me to stand up to the bully or face even graver consequences. Emboldened by my mother's words, I confronted the bully, securing my own victory. The lesson here is that by focusing on the one who commissions us and obeying His guidance, we can overcome even our most formidable adversaries.

III. David's Success in War

The narrative returns to the relentless enemy, the Philistines, who regroup and deploy in the Valley of Rephaim. The enemy remains determined to defeat David, even after suffering significant losses. Yet, David's unwavering faith and God's divine strategies prove victorious.

The Element of Surprise: Divine Strategy

As the Philistines reassemble for battle, David does not rely on the same strategy as before. Instead, he inquires of the Lord again, seeking a fresh approach. The Lord provides a unique plan: David should not engage the enemy directly but circle around them from behind. This new strategy emphasizes the importance of flexibility in crisis management and the willingness to adapt and seek innovative solutions.

Surprise Attack from Mulberry Trees: God's Intervention

In implementing God's new strategy, David positions his troops at the mulberry trees, awaiting the enemy. They are instructed to advance when they hear the sound of marching from above, signaling the Lord's intervention to strike the Philistines. This narrative highlights the element of surprise, an invaluable tactic in crisis management. By embracing the element of surprise, God defeats the enemy from an unexpected direction, showcasing His divine power.

David's success in this engagement, driven by an innovative and surprising approach, highlights the notion that God can secure victory through diverse strategies. He can defeat the enemy from any direction He chooses, and the enemy cannot withstand God's might. The lesson here is to maintain our focus on the one who commissions us and watch Him fight on our behalf.

Story: The Chained Bald Eagle

A poignant illustration involves a majestic bald eagle, a symbol of freedom, but found chained to a rock in a zoo-like setting. Despite its natural prowess and potential to soar, the eagle remained bound to the ground, trapped by the length of the chain. This image serves as a metaphor for individuals who let worldly and fleshly influences restrict their ability to achieve spiritual victory. When we embrace God's strategies and breakthroughs, we shed the chains that bind us, allowing us to attain freedom and victory.

In closing, the story of David's triumphs and strategies provides invaluable lessons for leading others through crisis management. We discover that preparation, prayer, seeking divine guidance, obeying God's commands with authority, and acknowledging His role in our successes are essential components of effective leadership. Flexibility and the element of surprise are also powerful tools in the battle against relentless adversaries.

As we reflect on David's narrative, let us remember that God can achieve victory in diverse ways, and we must remain aligned with Him, recognizing His divine strategies. Just as David experienced breakthroughs and triumphs, we too can overcome adversity, soar to new heights, and find victory in our spiritual journey, as long as we trust in God's guidance and rely on His authority. Victory is within our grasp, for the battle is the Lord's.

Chapter Seventeen

Leaders know how to surround themselves with good Personnel

2 Samuel 23:8-17

In this chapter, we'll explore the inspiring story of David's Mighty Men, focusing on their unique qualities and their unwavering commitment to serving King David. These men epitomize the kind of brotherhood and loyalty that we should strive for in our own lives. Their profiles, passion, and purpose offer valuable lessons for all of us as we seek to be faithful and devoted followers of Christ.

The Warriors' Profile

David's Mighty Men were extraordinary individuals, recognized for their courage, fearlessness, and unwavering loyalty to their king. They stood as true soldiers in service to their beloved monarch, ready to sacrifice their lives for his cause. The Bible presents us with the stories of three of these mighty warriors who set a remarkable standard:

- Josheb-Basshebeth, known as Adino the Eznite, displayed his exceptional bravery by single-handedly defeating eight hundred men in one battle. His courage was unmatched, similar to the feats of Samson.
- Eleazar, the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, was one of the three mighty men who defied the Philistines and fought tirelessly even when the Israelite forces had retreated. His dedication led to a great victory that day.
- Shammah, the son of Agee the Hararite, stood alone to defend a field of lentils against a Philistine troop. He fought valiantly and secured another great victory.

These men shared several common characteristics, including fearlessness, sacrifice, and an unwavering commitment to their king. They were unafraid to stand alone, even when the odds were against them, and they placed their trust in the Lord for their victories.

Application: The church today needs followers of Christ who exemplify the same loyalty, courage, and commitment to Jesus as David's mighty men showed to their king. We should aim to be fearless and faithful soldiers in God's army, ready to lay down our lives for His cause.

The Warriors' Passion

The story of David's Mighty Men reveals their deep passion for their king. When they overheard David's longing for water from the well of Bethlehem, despite the well being located deep within enemy territory, they took it upon themselves to fulfill his request. Their passion for serving the king was so intense that they willingly risked their lives to retrieve the water.

They had to break through the Philistine camp not once but twice, covering a distance of 12 miles each time. Despite the grave danger and the potential for death, their passion to satisfy their king's desire fueled their determination.

This water from Bethlehem was not ordinary; it symbolized God's presence and favor in David's life. Drinking it signified that God was with him, and it was a reminder of the victories God had granted him.

Application: As believers, we should be passionate about serving our King, Jesus Christ. Just as David's Mighty Men risked their lives to fulfill his request, we should be willing to go to great lengths to meet the desires and needs of our Lord. Our passion for Christ should drive us to serve Him wholeheartedly, even in the face of danger.

The Warriors' Purpose

The purpose behind the actions of David's Mighty Men is a powerful lesson for us. When they brought the water from Bethlehem to David, he refused to drink it, recognizing it as "blood-

water" - water that represented the sacrifice of these men's lives. David, in turn, poured the water out as an offering to the Lord, acknowledging that the honor and glory belonged to God.

David understood that the dedication and sacrifice of his men were not to be taken for granted. He showed deep appreciation for their service and refused to steal their glory. Instead, he gave all the credit to God.

Application: This story teaches us to recognize the mighty warriors around us and to honor and appreciate their sacrifices. It also underscores the importance of giving glory and honor to God for all our achievements and blessings. We should never take credit that rightfully belongs to the Lord, and we should always acknowledge His presence in our lives.

David's Mighty Men provide a remarkable example of loyalty, courage, and sacrifice. Their profile, passion, and purpose serve as valuable lessons for us as we seek to be loyal and dedicated followers of Christ. Let us strive to be fearless and faithful soldiers in God's army, passionately serving our King, and always giving glory and honor to the Lord for His blessings and victories. Just as David's men were committed to him, let us be committed to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Chapter Eighteen

Leaders use godly Leadership

Godly leadership matters because it plays a crucial role in guiding and influencing people in ways that align with spiritual values, morality, and principles. Leaders who are committed to their faith and serve as examples of Godly living can inspire and impact individuals and communities to live according to their faith and moral values. They can provide spiritual guidance, support, and a sense of purpose, helping people navigate the challenges of life while deepening their relationship with God. Reverend Dr. Angulus Dion Wilson is an example of such a Godly leader who has made a difference through various educational and ministerial roles.

Reverend Dr. Angulus Dion Wilson has a notable background in ministry and higher education. His leadership has made a difference in several institutions and organizations, including Wheaton College, Fresno Pacific University, Warner Pacific University, Samford University, New Beginnings Church, and the Angelos Biblical Institute. Here's how his leadership has had an impact:

- **University Pastor and Church Planter:** Dr. Wilson has been instrumental in establishing congregations across North America. His work as a university pastor and church planter has contributed to the growth of Christian communities and the spread of the gospel.
- **Educational Background:** He holds multiple degrees, including a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from Fresno Pacific University, a Master's Degree in Spiritual Formation and Evangelism from Wheaton College, and a Master of Arts for Christian Leadership from Birmingham Theological Seminary, a Doctorate of Philosophy in Divinity from Ecclesia University of Divinity and a Doctorate of Ministry from Azusa Pacific University. His pursuit of knowledge and higher education has equipped him to effectively lead and teach others.
- **Ministry Work:** Dr. Wilson has a strong commitment to making disciples and equipping students for ministry work. He founded New Beginnings Baptist Church, continuing his mission to nurture leaders and foster Christian service.
- **International Ministry:** He has developed International Bible Schools, conferences, and seminars, collaborating with esteemed institutions like Wheaton College, Samford

University, Warner Pacific University, and Fresno Pacific University. His international ministry work involves traveling with students, preaching, and teaching at various networks, mission agencies, and biblical conferences, spreading the word of God to diverse audiences.

- **Commitment to Sharing the Gospel:** Dr. Wilson's leadership is characterized by his dedication to exploring new frontiers to reach those in need with the message of the gospel. He is a trusted shepherd and servant of the Kingdom, sharing the good news with a hurting world.

In summary, Reverend Dr. Angulus Dion Wilson has demonstrated his commitment to Godly leadership through his work in establishing and nurturing Christian communities, his educational background, and his dedication to making disciples and spreading the gospel both nationally and internationally. His leadership has made a positive impact on the lives of many individuals and communities.