

Leadership Lessons from the Bible

Volume 1

Eturuvie Erebor

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Smashwords Edition

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## **Dedication**

This book is dedicated to my God and His son Jesus Christ who remains the best example of a servant leader.

Eturuvie Erebor

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# Leadership Lesson 1

## Eli: The Leader Who Was Asleep

Eli was a priest and one of the judges of the nation of Israel, as a matter of fact he was the last but one judge that Israel had. After his death, Samuel became judge and was the last judge as the nation moved from being led by judges to being led by kings.

Eli was without any doubt a very weak leader, the Bible described him as an old man who was overweight and the three times he is mentioned, he is in a position of ease, either lying down, a position which connotes inactivity or sitting down, a position which connotes rest. Three scenes that depict this are as follows; Scene one, Hannah was in the temple praying, the Bible records, concerning Eli, "Now Eli the priest was *sitting* on the seat by the doorpost of the tabernacle of the Lord." Scene two, the night the Lord called the young Samuel, the Bible records, "And it came to pass at that time, while Eli was *lying down* in his place." Scene three, a man of Benjamin returned with evil tidings that the ark of God had been captured, the Bible records, "Now when he came, there was Eli, *sitting* on a seat by the wayside watching, for his heart trembled for the ark of God." So in all three scenes, we see this man, who was the spiritual leader of the nation, either in a state of rest or in a state of inactivity. It is interesting to note that Eli as spiritual leader of the nation could sit down and lie down when the nation he led was in chaos as was his household. We know this for a fact because the Bible records concerning the nation of Israel, "The word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no widespread revelation." Then concerning the household of Eli, the Bible has this to say, "Now the sons of Eli were corrupt; they did not know the Lord."

While Eli was not a bad man, he was not a firm man either and this is clearly seen in his failure to call his sons to order even after he heard of their evil doings while they occupied the office of the priest. Eli failed miserably in leading his family and so he failed miserably in leading the nation and ultimately lost the priesthood. According to the Bible, Eli's sons were not only corrupt; they did not know the Lord. The fact that they did not know the Lord suggests that while Eli in his office as priest and religious leader taught the nation about God he failed to carry out the same duty in his home with his children. The little boy Samuel, who became priest after Eli, was raised by Eli and Samuel grew before the Lord and knew the Lord. Samuel was raised by Eli, what he knew of the Lord, Eli taught him. But, while Eli raised Samuel to know the Lord, he did not do the same with his sons. He was a leader who tried to lead outside his home without first leading inside his home and failed woefully both ways.

Eli's weakness is clearly seen in the way and manner in which he handled his sons' actions. While he pointed out to them that he had heard of their misbehaviours, there was no sign of remorse on their part for the Bible says, "Nevertheless they did not heed the voice of their father." This is a sign they had no regard for his authority as leader of their family and nation. Also there is no record of Eli taking any drastic action to stop their actions, a sure sign of weakness on his part.

Twice, after that Eli was warned about God's displeasure with his son's actions but he did not speak to his sons again neither did he take any action to punish them for their deeds. Also he failed to show any remorse for his failure to lead his family. In the first instance, an unnamed priest warned Eli that he honoured his sons more than he honoured the Lord and made himself fat with the best of the sacrifices of God's people. At that point Eli should have risen to his responsibilities and addressed the wayward actions of his sons but he did not. Then God gave him a second warning through the little boy Samuel and all Eli could say was, "it is the Lord. Let Him do what seems good to Him." No remorse, no action taken to correct his sons or the wrong they had done, or intercede in prayers, he did absolutely nothing.

His response reveals the weak, laid back, at-ease disposition of a man who at the time was supposed to be the spiritual leader of the nation.

Little wonder that in his days the ark of God went into battle and was captured by the enemies. Little wonder that both his sons died in the field of battle. Little wonder that the glory of God departed from the nation, not to return for many years, and thousands of men lost their lives needlessly in the battle against the Philistines. All this happened because the nation was led by a leader who was “fast asleep” and oblivious of the happenings around him.

## **Leadership Lesson 2**

### **Absalom: The Tragic End of a Rebel**

Absalom was one of the sons of David, king of Israel; he was a rebel who tried to unseat David and become king himself, however, he failed miserably and died tragically because he did not have a proper understanding of the requirements of leadership. His story is a clear example of what can happen when a rebel tries to lead by usurping the authority of the day through conflict and chaos.

After David's affair with Bathsheba, things started to get out of hand on the home front; first, his son Amnon raped his daughter Tamar and Absalom who happened to be Tamar's elder brother killed Amnon in a bid to avenge the evil done to his sister. Absalom went into exile after that and did not return for another three years. For two years following his return David refused to set eyes on him and when he finally did it was an emotional meeting and although it appeared as though all animosity between both men had been buried, Absalom obviously had other plans. He had decided at some point that David wasn't doing a good job at serving the people and he could do better and so he wanted to be king. He began to seek the support of the people he met daily with statements such as, "oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice." Gradually, he stole the hearts of the people who apparently thought he would make a great leader but they were wrong as Absalom lacked some important requirements of leadership listed below.

Leadership is about serving the people; a leader is a servant of the people. While Absalom's speech may have portrayed a man who wanted to serve the people, his actions revealed otherwise. Ultimately, he was not interested in serving the people; he rather sought to use the people to achieve his selfish ambition of becoming king.

A great leader is also a great follower; Absalom was clearly not a follower, he was a rebel. He did not know what it was to submit to constituted authority and he obviously was a man with no regard for authority. He took the laws into his hands and killed his brother Amnon and upon his return from exile, he plotted a coup to overthrow David, the leader God had chosen and anointed to lead his people, and also planned to kill him in order to become king.

Every great leader must be doer of the law; Absalom had openly wished that he were made a judge in Israel so he could do justice to all who came to him but he failed to realise that he could not be a good judge without first being a keeper of the law. Absalom was clearly not a doer of the law but a breaker of the same. God gave the law to His people when they journeyed from Egypt to Canaan, Absalom broke the law in more ways than one but especially in taking the life of his brother and in sleeping with his father's concubines.

A great leader must have a clear vision. Absalom had no clear vision because he looked to the people to tell him what to do. When Absalom arrived in Jerusalem after David fled, his actions revealed that he did not really have a vision because he didn't know what to do next. He required the people to tell him what to do. The Bible records that Absalom said to Ahitophel, "Give counsel among you what we shall do." These are not the words of a man with a vision. As leader he should have told the people what to do. It was at this point that Ahitophel gave Absalom counsel to sleep with his father's concubines before the people of Israel. Absalom heeded the counsel of Ahitophel and so Ahitophel counselled him a second time. This time, Absalom called for Hushai to hear what he also had to say; this clearly shows a leader without a vision.

Absalom was a rebel who lacked respect for authority and neither knew God nor feared Him. This kind is dangerous to follow as he will eventually lead his followers to destruction. Many men in Israel died needless deaths as they fought against the mighty men of David, in a bid to secure the throne for Absalom. They died because they followed a rebel who was driven, not by a need to serve the people but, by a selfish, ambitious desire to become king.

## **Leadership Lesson 3**

### **Good Leaders Don't Defraud the People**

Leadership is about service; service to the people and not service to self. When a leader serves self instead of the people, he has missed the mark. Anytime a leader defrauds the people he leads it is because he has ceased to serve them and begun to serve self. A person who truly understands that leadership is a call to serve the people and not himself will not defraud them.

Moses was one of the greatest leaders in the Bible; he understood what it meant to lead and did not defraud the children of Israel. When Korah and company rebelled against his authority, Moses said to God "Do not regard their offering! I have not taken a single donkey from them, nor have I done harm to any of them." Truly he was a man serving the people and not serving self.

Samuel was the last judge in the land of Israel; like Moses he also understood that leadership is a call to serve the people and not oneself. Samuel did not defraud the people, as a matter of fact, during Saul's coronation, Samuel said to the people of Israel, "Now, here is the king walking before you, but I am old and gray, and behold my sons are with you. And I have walked before you from my youth even to this day. Here I am; bear witness against me before the LORD and His anointed. Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed, or from whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with it? I will restore it to you." They said, "You have not defrauded us or oppressed us or taken anything from any man's hand." That is a powerful testimony of integrity.

Nehemiah was a slave in a foreign land but when he learned that the walls of Jerusalem had been burnt down, he returned to rebuild them; because he was successful in leading the people to rebuild the walls he was made their governor. As governor there were certain privileges that Nehemiah was entitled to but he refused these privileges because he did not want to put an additional burden on the people. These are the words of Nehemiah, "Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor, neither I nor my brothers ate the governor's provisions; but the former governors who were before me, laid burdens on the people and took from them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver. Yes, even their servants bore rule over the people, but I did not do so because of the fear of God. Indeed, I also continued the work on this wall and we did not buy any land." Nehemiah was truly a servant leader, he could have taken the governor's provision, he could have bought land but those things were not his priority, serving the people and ultimately God was priority.

Apostle Paul, unarguably the greatest apostle, in speaking to the elders of the church at Ephesus said, "Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me." He took nothing from them; he worked with his hands to sustain himself and the people who preached the gospel with him.

Moses, Samuel, Nehemiah and Paul did not defraud the people they led. A leader is called to serve the people and a good leader knows this; therefore, he does not seek to serve himself rather he seeks to serve the people and enrich their lives.

When a leader defrauds the people he loses their respect and so is unable to correct their errors. After David stepped out of line in the issue of Bathsheba and served self by defrauding Uriah the Hittite of his wife and ultimately his life, he lost the respect of the people and so when his son Amnon raped his own daughter Tamar, he was silent. Although the Bible records that he was angry yet there is no record

that Amnon was disciplined by David for his evil deed. His passivity concerning the issue drove Absalom to murder Amnon. Had David responded accordingly by disciplining Amnon perhaps Absalom's anger would have been appeased and the murder of Amnon avoided. However, David could not discipline Amnon because of his own failure as a leader.

When leaders stop serving the people and begin to serve self, there are always grave consequences.

## **Leadership Lesson 4**

### **Jephthah: The Leader Who Suffered Rejection**

Jephthah was a leader who suffered rejection because of circumstances surrounding his birth. He was one of the judges of Israel and the Bible described him thus, “Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour, but he was the son of a harlot.” He had great potential to lead because he was a mighty man of valour but that potential was overlooked because of his background as the son of a harlot.

Jephthah was an illegitimate child born to his father by a harlot and although he was his father’s first son, when the sons born by his father’s wife grew up, they drove him away because as an illegitimate child he was not entitled to an inheritance. As a first son Jephthah should have been a leader in his father’s house by reason of his birth position but he lost that leadership position because he was born by a harlot. He ran away from his half-brothers and went to live in the land of Tob. It wasn’t long before worthless men gathered themselves to him and he became the leader of a small army that went out raiding with him.

Then the time came when the children of Israel were in distress because the people of Ammon made war with them and the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob so he would be their commander and lead them into battle against the people of Ammon. Although Jephthah wasted no time reminding them of their earlier rejection of him he eventually agreed to go back with them and fight against the people of Ammon, on the condition that they would make him their head. The elders agreed so Jephthah went with them and the Bible records, “and the people made him head and commander over them.”

Nothing had changed about Jephthah, he was still the son of a harlot, his birth circumstances had not improved, and the issue that disqualified him from being a leader even in his father’s house was still present in his life. Why then did the people make him their head and commander? The reason is simple; when the chips are down, people want a leader who knows the way. The children of Israel were faced with the people of Ammon and they had no clue how to handle the situation; the very reason they were distressed to begin with. They had no knowledge of war and war strategies and as such they were no match for the enemy; at that point they required a leader who had sufficient knowledge about war strategies and could go out against the enemy and win the battle. Remember that the primary reason the elders approached Jephthah was because they wanted him to lead them into battle. It was obvious they had to go to battle and even more obvious that since they knew nothing about war matters they would need a leader who knew. Jephthah was that leader; he was a mighty man of valour, he was skilled in the art of battle and knowledgeable in war matters. Jephthah’s knowledge qualified him to lead them and bring them out of their distress; because of this it became irrelevant that his mother was a harlot and that he was an illegitimate child of his father.

A leader’s ability to lead is really what matters to the people; when the chips are down, the people will overlook the leader’s background if he possesses the qualities required to lead them forward.

## **Leadership Lesson 5**

### **Leadership Requirements: A Lesson from Joshua**

Certain requirements are a necessity for anyone who wants to lead people successfully, and some of these can be found in the charge given to Joshua by God as he assumes the responsibility of leading the people of Israel into the land of Canaan after the death of Moses. While Moses led Israel out of Egypt, he wasn't able to lead them into the land of Canaan; Joshua was given this responsibility and a charge to go with it.

The Bible records that God said to Joshua; “only be strong and very courageous that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth but you shall meditate in it day and night that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous and then you will have good success.”

The first requirement is strength; a leader must be strong especially mentally. The word strong means able to withstand force or pressure. A leader must be strong to lead because he is out in front and usually the target of opposition. He must be able to withstand whatever opposition may arise in the journey towards the fulfilment of the vision. If he is unable to withstand opposition and caves in under pressure, so will his followers.

The second requirement is courage; a leader must also be courageous. The word courageous means to be brave and undeterred by danger or pain. Interestingly, God did not just ask Joshua to be courageous, He asked him to be very courageous; without courage it is easy to quit when the battles of life get tough and a man or woman leading people cannot afford to quit, he must keep going despite the fierceness of the opposition. It takes courage to achieve this.

The third requirement is be a great follower; Joshua was asked to follow the instructions of Moses and not turn away from it. Every leader who will be great must be a great follower; Joshua was a great follower of Moses, he hearkened to the voice of Moses even after Moses died and so naturally the entire camp of the children of Israel hearkened to him.

The fourth requirement is speak from the book of the law. A law is simply a set of rules that guides a people and I have heard it said that where there is no law there is no sin, but also where there is no law anything goes and disorderliness will prevail. When the children of Israel left Egypt and journeyed towards Canaan, to ensure orderliness, God gave them a set of rules or the law also known as the Ten Commandments. When Joshua took over, God charged him saying the book of the law must not depart from his mouth, in other words he was to speak in line with the book of the law which was the constitution of the children of Israel. A leader must be careful what he says and ensure it is always in line with the constitution that guides the people he leads.

The fifth requirement is meditate on the law; no leader can speak the law he does not meditate on. To meditate simply means to think deeply about a thing. When a leader meditates on the law it fills his heart and two things happen; one, out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks and so when he opens his mouth the law flows out. Two, because it has filled his heart it shapes his values and ultimately his priorities and this is reflected in his ability to take right actions that benefit the people.

The sixth requirement is observe to do the law; a leader must without fail do as the law dictates for he is not above the law. A leader who does not do the law will give birth to followers who do not do the law because monkey see monkey do; followers do not do as their leaders say they do as their leaders do. Therefore, in an organisation or nation where the leader is corrupt the people will become corrupt because the people become like the leader. As such, a leader who wants to raise followers who are law abiding must first ensure that he is law abiding; it is not enough for him to teach the people the law he must do the law.

When a leader meets all of these requirements listed above then his success as a leader is guaranteed. If a leader is not successful, I daresay one or more of these requirements are missing.

## **Leadership Lesson 6**

### **Nehemiah: The Captive Who Became a Leader**

Nehemiah was a captive who rose to the position of a governor because he had a heart to serve God and His people. He was a slave in the land of captivity when news reached him that the walls of Jerusalem had been broken down and the gates burnt with fire. His desire to rebuild the walls caused him to return to Jerusalem. His story contains several Leadership Lessons.

Lesson number one; a leader must take the initiative. Initiative means the power to act or take charge before others do. A leader that fails to take the initiative is not a leader. Long before Nehemiah heard that the walls had been broken down and the gates burned with fire, others had heard; as matter of fact there were people in Jerusalem when the walls were broken down but they did nothing about it. Nehemiah heard and immediately took the initiative to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls. This is one quality that separates a leader from followers.

Lesson number two; a leader must accept responsibility. Many in leadership positions fail to realise that a leader is called to take responsibility. Nehemiah accepted responsibility of building the broken down walls of Jerusalem. He also accepted spiritual responsibility of going before God in prayers and asking for forgiveness for his nation.

Lesson number three; a leader must have a clear vision. Vision tells the leader where he should go and a man who has no vision is a man who does not know where he is going. Nehemiah had a vision, to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem which had been broken down.

Lesson number four; a leader must be able to communicate the vision to the people. The Bible talks about writing the vision and making it clear so that the one that reads it may run with it. No one can run with a vision that is not clear and so it is important that a leader is able to communicate the vision clearly to the people. However, before a leader communicates the vision, he must ensure it is clear to him. Nehemiah communicated the vision to the people but it is interesting to note that when he first arrived in Jerusalem he did not immediately do this; rather he spent time viewing the damaged walls. I believe he was trying to evaluate the situation first hand so as to have clarity of the vision before communicating it to the people. This is very important and a leader must never communicate to the people a vision that is not yet clear to him.

Lesson number five; a leader must get the people to buy in to the vision. It is not enough for the leader to communicate the vision; he must get the people to buy in to it. Nehemiah did not stop at communicating the vision he got the people to buy in. He carefully explained to the people the present situation then charged them to arise and build and went on to tell them why they must build. In getting people to buy in to a vision, a leader must carefully point out to the people what they stand to gain, or why they should buy in to the vision.

Lesson number six; a leader must be ready to face the opposition. As soon as the people arose to build the walls, opposition also arose. Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem laughed the people to scorn and Nehemiah spoke up and answered them. Opposition will always arise against the fulfilment of a vision and when it does the leader must be ready to face it; this is his responsibility.

Lesson number seven; a leader must refuse distraction. The purpose of opposition is to distract a person or a people from the pursuit of a vision. Opposition usually targets the leader because he bears the

vision that drives the work and the easiest way to stop the vision is to stop the leader through distraction. Once, Sanballat and company called for a meeting with Nehemiah but he responded thus, “I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down; why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?” Nehemiah refused to allow the opposition distract him and stop the work. A good leader must stay focused until the vision is fulfilled.

## **Leadership Lesson 7**

### **Rehoboam: The Leader Who Rejected Wise Counsel.**

Rehoboam was the son of King Solomon and the grandson of David; he was anointed king after the death of his father Solomon and while he had the resources required to become a great king, he was a man who did not recognise wise counsel when he heard it and so he lost half the kingdom to another.

On the day of Rehoboam's coronation, the people of Israel assembled together, led by Jeroboam, who would eventually rule over the other half of the kingdom. They made a plea to Rehoboam to lighten the burden his father put on them in return for their loyalty. Rehoboam asked them to return after three days to give him time to ponder on the matter. He consulted with the old men who had been part of his father's inner circle and they gave him sound counsel which contained the true picture of what a leader should be. They said to him, "If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day and wilt serve them, and answer them and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever."

Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the old men because he thought it was foolish and because he had no clue how to lead and assumed that because he was king he could do whatever he liked with the people. He failed to realise that as a leader he was a servant of the people and his actions showed that he did not truly possess the heart of a leader. He approached the young men who grew up with him and they gave him counsel that eventually led to his downfall. They said to him, "thus shalt thou say unto them, my little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke; my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions."

Rehoboam took the advice of his friends and the result was that the people decided they had had enough and would not put up with his tyranny; they rebelled against his leadership. At first, he did not think they were serious, so he sent out Adoram who was in charge of collecting the tribute money and the Bible records that all Israel stoned him with stones and he died. At this point Rehoboam realised the matter was a lot more serious than he had thought and he fled.

Rehoboam was a leader who did not know the truth about leadership; that a leader is a servant of the people. He listened to the counsel of those who also knew nothing about leadership. He was not wise enough to know who to take counsel from. The men who were part of Solomon's inner circle were in a better position to counsel him than his friends because they had a better understanding of the people and their needs, having worked closely with Solomon during his reign. These men had observed Solomon and knew from experience what would work and what wouldn't work with the people. They also knew what it took to be the leader the people would willingly follow. However, Rehoboam did not listen to them but chose to listen to his friends who were really not in a position to advise him; as they had never occupied leadership positions themselves, or worked closely with anyone who had.

The lesson here is this; every leader needs people around him that he can trust to give him counsel; but in seeking counsel, a leader must carefully evaluate the competence of the counsellor. It will amount to foolishness to seek counsel from a lawyer when you have health related concerns. This is exactly what Rehoboam did when he turned to his friends for counsel.

## **Leadership Lesson 8**

### **Samson: The Leader Who Failed to Lead Himself**

Samson was one of the judges of Israel; he was born to deliver his people, Israel, from the hands of the Philistines; however, Samson failed to complete his task and died leaving his people under the oppression of the Philistines.

He was a man who started well but had a tragic end mainly because he tried to lead others without first leading himself. Samson crashed because of what some call personal leadership mismanagement. He failed to discipline himself, he failed to listen to others and he failed to learn from his past failures. He was a man with several character flaws but he paid no attention to them and eventually they were his undoing.

The first flaw was that he lacked self-discipline as far as women and sex was concerned. He picked a bride from the camp of the enemy which in itself was a wrong move and all because he couldn't discipline his desires. He saw the woman and wanted her although she was wrong for him. When the marriage ended he saw a prostitute and couldn't hold back, he slept with her. Finally, he saw Delilah (who would eventually destroy him and was completely wrong for him) and fell in love with her. He did not have the discipline to say no to women and sex and both combined to pull him down.

The second flaw was that he listened to no one. When he was going to get married his parents advised against his choice but Samson did not listen to them, as a matter he insisted on having his way after his parents had spoken. It has been said that there are two types of people who are failures in life, those who do not listen to anybody and those who listen to everybody. Samson belonged to the first category. A leader that will succeed must have people he listens to.

The third flaw was that Samson failed to learn from his mistakes. During his wedding feast he told the guests a riddle that no one had the answer to. The Philistines took his bride aside and asked her to entice Samson to tell her the riddle and then reveal it to them. At first, Samson would not tell her but when she pressed on him he told her and she told her people. Samson ought to have learnt a lesson at that point but his actions in the house of Delilah several chapters later revealed that he was not a man who learnt from his mistakes. After his marriage ended, Samson soon fell in love with a woman named Delilah and the lords of the Philistines came to her and offered her eleven hundred pieces of silver to entice him and discover the secret of his great strength. If Samson had learnt his lesson when he fell prey to the first plot to entice him he would have saved himself the heartache that came as a result of falling prey to the second plot to entice him. Delilah set out to seduce Samson and finally he fell into her hands just as he had fallen into the hands of the woman of Timnah, except this time the stakes were higher; he lost everything including his life.

If a leader will be effective in leading others, he must of necessity first be able to lead himself because therein lies the real challenge of leadership.

## **Leadership Lesson 9**

### **Saul: The Leader Who Was Insecure**

Saul was the first king of Israel, and he is a good example of an insecure leader. To be insecure means to be uncertain or anxious about one's-self and not confident. We see these traits in Saul from the onset. On the day he met with Samuel and was told he would be king he made excuses about his inability to lead because he was from the smallest tribe in Israel and his family happened to be the smallest in that tribe. Then when the day came that he would be presented to the people of Israel as their king he went into hiding so that when the people looked around for him, he was nowhere to be found and then it was revealed that he was hiding himself among the equipment. These two scenarios show a sign of a lack of confidence in Saul.

An insecure leader does not do what is right but what is popular; he leaves the good that he knows he should do and does what will make the people sing his praise even when it is wrong, because he is concerned with how people perceive him and always wants to look good before people. Saul was such a leader; he once admitted to Samuel, "I feared the people and obeyed their voice." Saul was always concerned about how the people saw him and whether he had acceptance with them or not. This in itself is not a bad thing, but if it goes against what a leader knows to be the right thing to do, then it is wrong. When Samuel told Saul that the Lord had torn the kingdom of Israel from him and given it to a neighbour better than he, Saul's response reveals his insecurity and need to look good before the people. He said, "I have sinned; yet honour me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel..." Being honoured before the people was for him more important than the fact that he had failed God who appointed him as a leader of His people and that he had failed in his duties as a leader to the people.

An insecure leader makes excuses to cover his wrong deeds; he fails to take responsibility for the things he allows to happen and shifts blames very easily. Saul was such a leader, when Samuel confronted him because he had failed to destroy the Amalekites completely; this is Saul's response to Samuel, "I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal." He was very quick to shift the blame to the people forgetting that as leader he was responsible for the actions of the people. He also failed to accept that his insecurities drove him to permit the people to act contrary to the instructions given to him.

Insecure leaders are very anxious people; once Saul and his army were at Gilgal waiting for Samuel to come and sacrifice the burnt offering to God. As they waited, the people out of fear began to withdraw from him and so Saul took the burnt offering and sacrificed it himself. As soon as he was done, Samuel showed up. When Saul was confronted by Samuel, rather than admit his error and ask for forgiveness he again began to make excuses. From the excuses he made, we see his lack of confidence and anxiety. He said to Samuel, "When I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered together at Michmash, then I said the Philistines will now come down on me at Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the Lord. Therefore I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering." Anxiety drove Saul to take the place of the priest and offer a burnt sacrifice to the Lord an action which he knew was wrong.

An insecure leader is a destructive person; Saul's insecurity reached its peak the day the women sang their song saying, "Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands." He was angry and displeased at the saying; he became uncertain of the future and thought, "now what more can he have

but the kingdom?" So the next day, as David played the instrument for him, he hurled a spear at the young innocent lad in an attempt to kill him because he feared he would lose the throne to him.

Saul's insecurities caused him to lose his place as leader of God's people Israel. It also caused him to be an ineffective leader because the later part of his years as king he left national issues that he should have been addressing and chased David all over Israel seeking to kill him. Eventually, he met his death and alongside him died his children who would have reigned in his stead. His story is a good example of what can happen when a people are led by an insecure leader.

## **Leadership Lesson 10**

### **The People Become Like the Leader: A lesson from David and Saul**

Saul and David were the first and second kings of Israel respectively and they both had personalities that rubbed off on the people that they led. The stories of these two men, who possessed very different personalities, help to portray the truth that, the people ultimately become like their leader, and this is whether they know it or not. A look at the lives of these two men reveals they had opposite personalities. Saul was a man full of uncertainty and fear and David was a confident and fearless man. This truth was exposed on the day that David fought against Goliath. Saul was the leader of the armies of Israel and should have given his men the courage required to go against the giant but because he was fearful, the entire camp trembled in fear until David showed up and killed the giant. The interesting thing is the way David went about killing the giant; the Bible records that he ran to meet Goliath. While Saul and the entire army ran away from Goliath, David ran to meet him. This incidence clearly shows that one man was fearful and the other fearless; their dispositions ultimately affected the people they led.

One instance that shows how Saul's fear was passed on to his men is at Gilgal, where he prepared to fight against the Philistines. The Bible records that, all the people followed him trembling. It is not surprising that they followed him trembling, he was a fearful leader and must have been trembling himself; perhaps not outwardly but interestingly even if inwardly it can be sensed and passed on to those who follow.

Another instance is when Goliath boasted before the armies of Israel; the Bible records that when Saul and all Israel heard the words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid."

Finally, prior to his last battle, in which he was killed, Saul consulted with a medium to bring Samuel up because he wanted to enquire how the battle would go. Samuel told him without mincing words that he and his sons would be killed in the battle and the Bible records that immediately, Saul fell full length on the ground and was dreadfully afraid because of the words of Samuel. It is little wonder he died in the battle and it is little wonder after he died his men could not carry on fighting rather they took to their heels and fled. He was without doubt a fearful leader and gave birth to men who were equally fearful.

David on the other hand was a mighty man of valour and knew no fear; while he kept his father's sheep, a lion came and took one of the sheep to kill it; but David ran after the lion, delivered the sheep from its mouth and killed it. The bear came and the same thing happened, therefore, when he saw Goliath intimidating God's sheep (the armies of Israel) he was not afraid; he simply went out against the giant the same way he had gone out against the lion and bear and slayed him.

David was bold and fearless, so his men were also bold and fearless. When you read the accounts of these men it is amazing the boldness they had; once David was fighting against the Philistines and the garrison of the Philistines at that time was in Bethlehem and David thirsted and longed for a drink from the well of Bethlehem; as soon as he voiced it, three of his men broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well and brought it to him. Can you imagine going into the enemy's camp? It takes a very high level of boldness and courage to do that, it is not a feat for the lily livered but this is not surprising; after all they were becoming like David, their leader. Then there was Abishai one of the mighty men who lifted up his spear against three hundred men and killed them; one man killed three hundred men. Indeed, it is a feat that can only be accomplished by the fearless. Then

Benaiah (also one of the mighty men) killed two lion-like men of Moab, he also killed a lion. Surprised? No reason to be; David who led them had killed a lion as a young lad so his men must have realised there was really nothing to killing a lion. These are by no means the only accomplishments of David's mighty men but they do help to buttress the fact that these men were as fearless as their leader, David.

Saul was fearful and so those who followed him became fearful; David was fearless and those he led became fearless. Like it or not, the people ultimately become like their leader.

## **Leadership Lesson 11**

### **Nabal: The Leader Who Was a Fool**

The Bible described Nabal as harsh and evil in his doings and Abigail his wife, said to David about her husband, “for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name and folly is with him.” In other words, she called him a fool. According to the free dictionary, a fool is one who acts unwisely on a given occasion.

Nabal’s foolishness is made manifest when he rudely turned down David’s request for help. David was in the wilderness hiding from Saul, who sought to kill him. There he met and showed kindness to Nabal’s shepherds and sheep in protecting them from harm. After sometime, he required food for himself and his men and Nabal had plenty of food, so David sent messengers to Nabal requesting a favour in return for the act of kindness previously shown. However, because Nabal was a fool, he responded to David’s humble plea, thus; “Who is David and who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants nowadays who break away each one from his master. Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers and give it to men when I do not know where they are from?” This was not a very wise act and as soon as David heard he was angered and said to his men, “Every man gird on his sword.” He took four hundred men with him to destroy Nabal and his household. Fortunately, a servant approached Abigail and told her all that had transpired between Nabal and David’s men. Being a wise woman, she hurriedly prepared some food and went out to meet David and his men to stop the plan to destroy her family.

Nabal was the God ordained leader of the family, but he failed in this duty. His foolish and thoughtless response exposed his followers, i.e. his household to danger and probable extinction. David was a mighty man of valour and he had with him men he had trained to fight. Nabal was not a man of valour and he had no might against David and his men. In offending David, he was calling for a war he was neither prepared nor equipped to fight. He exposed his wife to danger when she went out to meet David and his men who were hungry, angry and armed and had the intention of destroying all that belonged to Nabal.

Nabal’s leadership failures are quite apparent in this story. Firstly, he was a man who listened to no one and this is a recipe for failure. It has been said that there are two types of people who never succeed, those who listen to everybody and those who listen to nobody. Nabal belonged in the second category. His servant in speaking to Abigail, said of Nabal, “Now therefore, know and consider what you will do, for harm is determined against our master and against all his household. For he is such a scoundrel that one cannot speak to him.” This reveals that Nabal was unapproachable and a good leader must always be approachable. In his book, “The 21 Qualities of a Leader”, leadership guru, John Maxwell lists listening as a leadership quality. Nabal clearly did not possess this leadership quality.

Secondly, he did not have the heart of a servant leader; he was more of a boss than a leader. A leader is a servant and puts the needs of his followers before his because leadership is about service to the people. At this point I will compare him with Jesus, who in my opinion is the perfect example of a servant leader. On the night Jesus was arrested, he said to those who came to fetch Him, "I told you that I am He; so if you seek Me, let these go their way." In so doing He spared the lives of the disciples who were with Him and put their need for safety before His.

Good leaders serve the people they lead. Nabal however, served no one but himself and cared for no one but himself. Everyone but he saw the problem that would follow his rude, inappropriate behaviour

to David's men. The reason he didn't see it was because he was not in tune with the needs of others so he failed to see how his decisions would affect them.