

**Greatness: The Life of Israel's Greatest King and How Yours Can Be Better**  
**Great Leadership**  
**2 Samuel 21:15-22; 23:8-39**

**Introduction:** I'm a huge fan of Clint Eastwood movies. I don't care if he acts in it, directs it, or both; I'm a fan. I love the stories he tells and how he tells them through film. Particularly, for a guy like me, a former Division 1 college athlete in my 50s with 15 orthopedic-related surgeries in my past, I'm particularly encouraged by the fantasy Eastwood creates of old guys who can still physically fight like young men! In 2021, at the age of 91, Eastwood directed and starred in the film "Cry Macho," in which he drives to Mexico to rescue a child. Although the story is clearly fictional, the fact that Eastwood directed and starred in it isn't. How can you possibly not be inspired by that? It reminds me of my almost 80-year-old Dad and the ridiculous things he can still do in a weight room that, regardless of their age, 99% of adult men can't do!

However, in all of Eastwood's and my father's inspirational ageless characteristics, if you make enough trips around the sun, speed and agility eventually decrease, even if your strength and conditioning don't (just ask Mike Tyson about his fight with Jake Paul). In all of Eastwood's physical achievements, at 91, his ability to see a punch coming, duck it, and pop back up to knock a guy out before he gets hit with another punch is very likely not going to happen outside of a staged movie set!

Age has some unavoidable consequences. For instance, although it occurs at varying levels for different individuals, your ability to see and hear deteriorates as you age. It's unavoidable. For instance, as you age, your ability to hear becomes more limited, with a corresponding decrease in the range of tones you can discern. Let's do a quick test to illustrate what I'm talking about. It takes less than a minute to complete.

Everybody, close your eyes and raise a hand in the air. If you have hearing aids, you might want to cover your ears or turn them down. The AV team is going to play a video of a tone that will remain at the same volume but steadily increase in pitch. When you stop hearing it, open your eyes, drop your hands, and look at the screen, and you'll see the approximate age of your hearing ability. Eventually, unless you permanently have high-pitched ringing in your ears, the only hands in the air will be those of young people!

<https://youtu.be/PM4WSBZanQQ?feature=shared>

Now, what's this got to do with our study of 2 Samuel? Well, the book tells the story of David; therefore, it is no surprise that, as we approach the end of the book, David is growing older and his ability as a warrior in battle is starting to be affected. There was always a risk of getting killed in battle, but with David's age, that risk is going up significantly.

Furthermore, his fame has spread tremendously, meaning more and more people are going into battle against Israel in hopes of making a name for themselves by killing David. Therefore, the men around him realize it's time for David to change how he leads the

nation. It's awesome that he has put his incredible fighting and tactical military leadership skills to use in leading Israel's army into battle, but he's at an age and a situation as the King that continuing to do so is not the most effective use of his skills, nor the best situation for Israel. It would be a terrible thing for Israel if David were killed in battle. However, even though he needed to step back from leading Israel's army into battle, that didn't mean he had to hand over the reins to whoever wanted to lead it.

Over the years, David had gone from leading a group of ragtag rejects and misfits to being surrounded by some of the most talented, skilled, and committed leaders in all the land. They had all grown in their ability to lead, including David, and the Kingdom had greatly benefited from it. Therefore, David didn't delegate to people who simply expressed a passion to lead or to those who merely had strong opinions about things, but to people who were clearly loyal to him and the Kingdom, and who had PROVEN themselves to be EXTREMELY talented at leading what he was delegating to them! Great leaders don't just delegate; they find, grow, and equip leaders who will do things better than they can so that the organization benefits from an increasing level of committed and talented leadership. This is what David did, and it's what made him a truly great King.

**Proposition: 2 Samuel 21:15-22 and 2 Samuel 23:8-39 demonstrate two testimonies of David's wise leadership.**

**The first testimony may come as a surprise.**

**(1) David entrusted four talented and committed leaders to kill the giants that attacked Israel. (21:15-22)**

**Note:** Most people are familiar with the story in 1 Samuel 17, where a young David killed a giant named Goliath. However, to the surprise of many, David is not the only giant slayer in the Bible!

The testimony of the first giant slayer under David's reign also tells us about a significant shift in David's leadership.

**A. 15 There was war again between the Philistines and Israel, and David went down together with his servants, and they fought against the Philistines. And David grew weary. 16 And Ishbi-benob, one of the descendants of the giants, whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of bronze, and who was armed with a new sword, thought to kill David. 17 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah came to his aid and attacked the Philistine and killed him. Then David's men swore to him, "You shall no longer go out with us to battle, lest you quench the lamp of Israel."**

1. "David may have been aged by this point in his career; alternatively, he may have grown weary because he was the primary focus of the Philistine attack once they knew he was on the battlefield."<sup>1</sup>
2. "A Philistine giant, **Ishbi-Benob**, advanced on **David** with a spear (with a **spearhead** weighing **300 shekels** or about seven and one-half pounds) and **a new sword** (the Heb. in v. 16 is lit., "armed with a new thing," without specifying the weapon), threatening to **kill** him. ... His death would mean the end of his leadership, a tragedy synonymous with the snuffing out of Israel's illumination (**the lamp of Israel**) for in and through David were God's covenant blessings to be accomplished (1 Kings 11:36; 15:4; 2 Kings 8:19)."<sup>2</sup>
3. "It is not clear at what points in David's reign these encounters took place. Like the Gibeonite incident, they are recorded here by the inspired historian in order to demonstrate both justice and mercy in God's dealings with his people: first calling Israel to account over Saul's genocide of the Gibeonites, and now showing his grace to David and Israel in destroying the power of their Philistine enemies ... The first incident was evidently the last time that David led his men to battle in person and engaged in hand-to-hand combat with the enemy (21:15-16). Abishai rescued David from great danger by killing the Philistine giant Ishbi-Benob. The picture is of a David who, though still as brave as ever, does not have the staying power he once had. The passage need not be seen as out of chronological order ..."<sup>3</sup>

**B. 18 After this there was again war with the Philistines at Gob. Then Sibbecai the Hushathite struck down Saph, who was one of the descendants of the giants.**

1. "This is one of David's mighty men on the Chronicler's list (see 1 Chr 11:29; 20:4; 27:11)"<sup>4</sup>
2. "**Sibbecai**, a heroic Israelite, slew **Saph** (Sippai in 1 Chron. 20:4), another Philistine giant (**Rapha** is from "Rephaim," a race of giants; cf. 2 Sam. 21:16)."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., Whitehead, M. M., Grigoni, M. R., & Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (2 Sa 21:15). Lexham Press.

<sup>2</sup> Merrill, E. H. (1985). *2 Samuel*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 477). Victor Books.

<sup>3</sup> Keddie, G. J. (1990). *Triumph of the King: The Message of 2 Samuel* (pp. 197–198). Evangelical Press.

<sup>4</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., Whitehead, M. M., Grigoni, M. R., & Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (2 Sa 21:18). Lexham Press.

<sup>5</sup> Merrill, E. H. (1985). *2 Samuel*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 477). Victor Books.

**C. 19 And there was again war with the Philistines at Gob, and Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim, the Bethlehemite, struck down Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam.**

1. "According to 1 Sam 17, David killed Goliath of Gath (the Gittite). The Hebrew text here claims a man named Elhanan killed Goliath, but this is a scribal mistake that was introduced at some point in the book's transmission history. First Chronicles 20:5 clarifies by stating that Elhanan killed Lahmi, the brother of Goliath."<sup>6</sup>
2. "Because Elhanan was from Bethlehem, some scholars believe that he was David and that the present passage recapitulates David's former exploit. Against this is the lack of evidence to equate Elhanan with David and the fact that the accounts in both verses 18–22 and 1 Chronicles 20:4–8 follow that of David's conquest of Goliath by many years. The chronicler in fact stated that the giant killed by Elhanan was Goliath's brother Lahmi (1 Chron. 20:5). The resolution of the problem might well be that two Philistines were named Goliath, one killed by David and the other by Elhanan. Perhaps the Chronicles version is an attempt to clear up the confusion of two giants with the same name."<sup>7</sup>

**D. 20 And there was again war at Gath, where there was a man of great stature, who had six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in number, and he also was descended from the giants. 21 And when he taunted Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimei, David's brother, struck him down.**

1. "A condition called hexadigitation."<sup>8</sup> As fictional as this may seem to some, it's not. Here's a link to a story by CBS News of a man in Cuba who has six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot - <https://www.cbsnews.com/pictures/man-with-12-fingers-12-toes-vs-boy-with-34-digits/11/>
2. "Jonathan was David's nephew. His father Shimei (also known as Shimea or Shimeah, not to be confused with the Shimei of 2 Sam 16:5–14), was the third son of David's father, Jesse (see 1 Chr 2:13)."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., Whitehead, M. M., Grigoni, M. R., & Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (2 Sa 21:19). Lexham Press.

<sup>7</sup> Merrill, E. H. (1985). *2 Samuel*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 477). Victor Books.

<sup>8</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., Whitehead, M. M., Grigoni, M. R., & Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (2 Sa 21:20). Lexham Press.

<sup>9</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., Whitehead, M. M., Grigoni, M. R., & Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (2 Sa 21:21). Lexham Press.

E. The narrator concludes this section with an observation that, whether intended or not, highlights a crucial truth about great leadership.

F. **22 These four were descended from the giants in Gath, and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants. (2 Samuel 21:15-22)**

1. The narrator included David as one of the people who defeated the four giants he just listed. However, David didn't physically fight any of them! So, how is that the narrator could suggest they fell by the "hand of David" immediately after he just specifically told us that it was Abishai, Sibbecai, Elhanan, and Jonathan the son of Shimei who killed them? The answer is in how leadership works.
2. Dwight Eisenhower never set foot on a single battlefield while a battle was actually taking place in World War 2, nor did he ever fire a shot in any battle during his entire military career. To his chagrin, the army didn't grant his request to fight in World War 1 but instead assigned him to train tank operators at Fort Colt in Pennsylvania. Dwight Eisenhower never fired a single shot from a rifle in combat, flew a single plane into battle, or drove a tank into a fight, but he ultimately became the Supreme Commander of the Allied forces in Europe and, as such, is credited with defeating Germany and saving Europe! It's the nature of leadership. Eisenhower may or may not have been a great fighter; we don't know, but what we do know is that he was an elite strategic thinker who, more than anything, deeply understood the seats needed on the leadership bus to win, as well as who needed to be sitting in those seats. Whether it was leading the military, a university, or our country as a two-term president, he knew how to lead people to lead organizations to win. He not only knew what was needed from people to win, but he also had a keen ability to recognize who could do it and how to get it from them in a way that was done in sync with everybody else, so that the organization successfully achieved its mission.
3. John Maxwell, a renowned leadership consultant and author, is known for saying, "Everything rises and falls on leadership." In other words, it doesn't matter how much talent an organization has; if it doesn't have the leadership ability to maximize that talent, then it will fail.
4. So, my point is, the narrator is not including David because it would dishonor the King to do otherwise, but is necessarily naming him because David's leadership was as much a part of the hand of victory as the hand that actually killed the giant. Not only had David spent decades leading and developing these men as fighters and leaders, but it was David who first showed Israel that these giants could be defeated in the first place! David had not only modeled confident faith in God to fight a giant, but also demonstrated a tactical skill set to do it.

- G. Now, from here, we are going to skip ahead to 2 Samuel 23:8. In chapter 22 through verse seven in chapter 23, the narrator takes a break from telling us about the leaders around David to walk us through some of the important psalms of David that highlight the major themes of his life. We will come back to those next week, but for now, I want us to continue examining what the writer of 2 Samuel tells us concerning David's leadership.

Now, that first testimony of David's leadership told us about some victories that would undoubtedly get a lot of attention. Anytime the little guy beats the big guy, it's a big deal! However, wars are not won because of a marquee battle; if that were the case, the South would have won the American Civil War at Bull Run, Japan would have defeated the United States at Pearl Harbor, and Germany would have defeated Britain at Dunkirk. Likewise, in 2024, Vanderbilt defeated the University of Alabama in football for the first time in 23 years, but still finished the season with a 7-6 record. That marquee victory didn't get them into the playoffs because they lost too many games overall.

**So, let's flip over to 2 Samuel 23:8 and look at the second testimony of David's wise leadership. It's here where we see the genius of David's leadership to not only create the opportunity for other giant slayers to be successful, but more importantly, to create an army that consistently defeated the enemies of Israel without him.**

**(2) David wisely organized his army to be successfully led by talented, committed leaders at every level of the organization. (23:8-39)**

- A. Interestingly, Joab, the supreme leader under David, isn't mentioned in this list at all. It doesn't discount Joab's role as David's right-hand man over the military, but instead takes us further into the matrix of leadership under David and Joab that led the army of Israel through its greatest years since Joshua!
- B. Concerning this passage, E. H. Merrill noted, **"David's gallery of heroes consisted of 37 men (v. 39) who distinguished themselves by mighty exploits of service to God and Israel and who evidently made up his elite troops. These consisted of three chief men (vv. 8-17), two others of a second rank (vv. 18-23), and 32 in the longest list (vv. 24-39). ... Though the spellings of several of the names differ in the corresponding list in 1 Chronicles 11:11-47, the names can usually be equated. The chronicler does, however, add names beyond the 37 in 2 Samuel. Perhaps they were men of lower ranks than those listed in Samuel or perhaps they replaced others (already listed) who had fallen in battle."**<sup>10</sup>
- C. H.A. Hoffner wrote, **"Significantly, these men are said to belong to David, and not to Israel. Their loyalty was to him as an individual and a commander. Youngblood (597) cites Mazar's theory regarding the origins of these men:**

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<sup>10</sup> Merrill, E. H. (1985). [2 Samuel](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 479-481). Victor Books.

**In terms of David's military administration, the regular regiment of four hundred to six hundred men ... "was divided into three units: Two fighting units and one unit to guard the weapons. ... This division was most certainly based on ancient tradition. It presumably served as the basis for the emergence of David's three commanding officers or 'champions' " (Mazar, "The Military Elite," p. 314).<sup>11</sup>**

- D. 8 These are the names of the mighty men whom David had: Joshebbasshebeth a Tahchemonite; he was chief of the three. He wielded his spear against eight hundred whom he killed at one time.**
- E. 9 And next to him among the three mighty men was Eleazar the son of Dodo, son of Ahohi. He was with David when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there for battle, and the men of Israel withdrew. 10 He rose and struck down the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clung to the sword. And the LORD brought about a great victory that day, and the men returned after him only to strip the slain.**

**Note:** "In infantry combat, it was important to hold the ranks intact, so that each soldier could protect his neighbor's flank. When ranks broke, it usually meant everyone had to flee because any who remained would become so vulnerable that they would likely be killed. The latter was the case with Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam 11:15–17), who also was one of David's heroes (2 Sam 23:39). Fighting alone for a lengthy period, the muscles in Eleazar's hand gripping the sword became so tense that he could not relax them. Smith cites a parallel from Doughty: "The Kusman perished before me until the evening, when my fingers could not be loosed from the handle of the sword." Josephus' interpretation that Eleazar's hand was glued to the handle of the sword by the blood of the many men he killed is unlikely (Josephus, *Ant.* vii 309)."<sup>12</sup>

- F. 11 And next to him was Shammah, the son of Agee the Hararite. The Philistines gathered together at Lehi, where there was a plot of ground full of lentils, and the men fled from the Philistines. 12 But he took his stand in the midst of the plot and defended it and struck down the Philistines, and the LORD worked a great victory.**
- G. 13 And three of the thirty chief men went down and came about harvest time to David at the cave of Adullam, when a band of Philistines was encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. 14 David was then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then at Bethlehem 15 And David said longingly, "Oh, that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem that is by the gate!" 16 Then the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines and drew water out of the well of**

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<sup>11</sup> Hoffner, H. A., Jr. (2015). [\*1 & 2 Samuel\*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 870). Lexham Press.

<sup>12</sup> Hoffner, H. A., Jr. (2015). [\*1 & 2 Samuel\*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 871). Lexham Press.



**Bethlehem that was by the gate and carried and brought it to David. But he would not drink of it. He poured it out to the LORD 17 and said, "Far be it from me, O LORD, that I should do this. Shall I drink the blood of the men who went at the risk of their lives?" Therefore he would not drink it. These things the three mighty men did.**

**Note:** "David teaches his men that such devotion at the expense of their very lives belongs to no human leader, but to Yahweh alone. As Firth (535) remarks: David will not drink the water, in spite of his men's commitment. Instead, he transforms it into worship by pouring out the water before Yahweh. No identical rite occurs in the Bible, though libations and drink offerings do exist (see Gen. 35:14; Lev. 23:13; Num. 6:15; cf. Phil. 2:17). This is a spontaneous act of giving what is of value to Yahweh, an informal expression of worship. Its meaning is seen where David declares to Yahweh that he cannot drink this water because only Yahweh is worthy of such sacrificial action. His men have not died, so their "blood" is a metaphor for sacrificial devotion, but the risk taken is too great. David insists such devotion belongs to Yahweh. Nevertheless, the citation's closing note reminds us that this was typical of these men, whose valour and skill was recognized, although David's worship transformed it this time. What these men did at great personal risk was not done in order to please and honor Yahweh, but David. Yet by pouring the water out on the ground as a libation to Yahweh, David transformed drinking water into a medium of sacrifice and worship, and with the water he also transformed the meaning of the men's action, deflecting it from himself to Yahweh. It is such "teaching moments" used by David with his men that reveal the message of this layer (the **B/B'** layer) of the chiasmus\* in 2 Sam 21–24—namely, that Yahweh protected David through loyal, courageous, and devoted warriors, whom he himself had taught to put Yahweh ahead of all else in their lives."<sup>13</sup>

- H. 18 Now Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief of the thirty. And he wielded his spear against three hundred men and killed them and won a name beside the three. 19 He was the most renowned of the thirty and became their commander, but he did not attain to the three.**
- I. 20 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was a valiant man of Kabzeel, a doer of great deeds. He struck down two ariels of Moab. He also went down and struck down a lion in a pit on a day when snow had fallen. 21 And he struck down an Egyptian, a handsome man. The Egyptian had a spear in his hand, but Benaiah went down to him with a staff and snatched the spear out of the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear 22 These things did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and won a name beside the three mighty men. 23 He was renowned among the thirty, but he did not attain to the three. And David set him over his bodyguard.**

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<sup>13</sup> Hoffner, H. A., Jr. (2015). [\*1 & 2 Samuel\*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 879). Lexham Press.



- J. 24 Asahel the brother of Joab was one of the thirty; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, 25 Shammah of Harod, Elikah of Harod, 26 Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh of Tekoa, 27 Abiezer of Anathoth, Mebunnai the Hushathite, 28 Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai of Netophah, 29 Heleb the son of Baanah of Netophah, Ittai the son of Ribai of Gibeah of the people of Benjamin, 30 Benaiah of Pirathon, Hiddai of the brooks of Gaash, 31 Abi-albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth of Bahurim, 32 Eliahba the Shaalbonite, the sons of Jashen, Jonathan, 33 Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Hararite, 34 Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai of Maacah, Eliam the son of Ahithophel of Gilo, 35 Hezroof Carmel, Paarai the Arbite, 36 Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite 37 Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai of Beeroth, the armor-bearer of Joab the son of Zeruiah, 38 Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite 39 Uriah the Hittite: thirty-seven in all.

**Note:** “There is no sequence to this list of names. A noticeable omission is Joab, although his brother Asahel (v. 24) and his weapons-carrier are included (v. 37). Why is Joab not included? Millgram<sup>2</sup> (489) has this suggestion: Perhaps David felt that his rank was sufficient, and that he was a de facto honorary member of the orders. Gen. Yadin suggests that “The Thirty” served as a supreme military council, responsible for the operational running of the army and its reserve system, and that Joab served as chairman of this council. If so, this might explain Joab’s omission from the list: his rank precluded membership in orders over which he presided as Commander in Chief. Bergen has made a very interesting study of the geographical or tribal origins of the named men. He demonstrates that all but twelve are from Judah, showing that the core of David’s military leadership was drawn from his own tribe. Of those from other tribes, three were from Benjamin and two each from Ephraim and Manasseh. Three others, Igal son of Nathan from Zobah (v. 36), Zelek the Ammonite (v. 37), and Uriah the Hittite (v. 39), were apparently foreigners. All interpreters caution us that a list like this would be fluid in its content by necessity, with members coming and going (by death). This undoubtedly accounts for the fact that, although it is called “The Thirty,” the names total various figures, depending upon the mss and the parallels in Chronicles. Firth (532) is right in stressing that “the Thirty” was essentially a rank, not a limited number of men. Admission to that group was restricted but not necessarily limited to thirty individuals at one time. Many view this list as a kind of roll of honor, so that the contributions of these brave men to David’s kingdom should not be forgotten. In a sense that is true. But in terms of the purpose of 1-2 Samuel, and even more narrowly the purpose of chaps. 21-24 with its chiastic structure, the two sections 2 Sam 21:15-22 and 2 Sam 23:8-39 represent Yahweh’s provision of loyal and brave men, who had received training from David, to protect him and his kingdom from exterior and interior enemies. The final name in the list, Uriah the Hittite, reminds us that Yahweh helped to protect David and his kingdom by the loyal and courageous service of at least one man whom David himself murdered. If the beginnings of this group date back to the years of David’s flight from Saul, as many would

affirm, then some of these men were themselves fleeing from debt collectors and therefore belonged not to the elite and successful, but the lowest levels of society. They therefore provide a striking fulfillment of Hannah's song near the beginning of 1 Samuel, where she celebrates Yahweh's raising up the lowly and bringing down the highly placed."<sup>14</sup>

- K. God provided talented and committed men for David to lead, and, except for what he did to Uriah, David seems to have organized and led them with exceptional excellence and to extraordinary success!

**Now, the practical leadership lessons in these two testimonies of David's leadership are huge, so let me take some time to highlight three of them.**

**The first hugely practical leadership lesson we can learn from these two testimonies of David's leadership is that,**

- (1) The greatest testimony of a leader is not what they accomplish with their own hands, but in what they lead others to achieve.**

- A. David wasn't Israel's greatest King because he killed Goliath, but because he led a group of leaders to consistently defeat Israel's enemies, including other giants! Dwight Eisenhower wasn't one of America's greatest leaders because he killed a bunch of nazi's, he never even fired a shot, but because he led a group of leaders who led an allied army comprised of multiple nations to defeat Germany.
- B. Therefore, if we properly apply this universal truth about leadership to Venture Church, then we need to know the vision God gave us for ministry in His mission, that is, to localize the movement of Christ in the counties on the westside of the Charlotte-Metro region and in places around the world that have no access to the Gospel, then we have to know we are going to need a bunch of highly talented committed leaders to do it; leaders who are great at equipping other people to change lives with the Gospel of Jesus Christ! What's happening in Lincolnton is a testimony to that very thing. God mobilized leaders here at our Dallas campus to leave and start a localized movement of the Gospel in Lincolnton. Now, the leaders in Dallas and Lincolnton need to not only grow leaders who can advance the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the lives of those who live in the Dallas and Lincolnton regions, but who can also go to other towns and regions on the west side of the Charlotte-Metro region to launch new campuses of Venture, as well as send leaders to places outside the United States where there is no access to the Gospel at all. It's now not only about what we as Venture can do in Dallas and Lincolnton, but what we can ALSO do in raising and equipping leaders who can lead localized movements of the Gospel in other towns and communities in counties across Gaston, Lincoln, Cleveland, and Catawba county, as well as places like Darfur!

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<sup>14</sup> Hoffner, H. A., Jr. (2015). [1 & 2 Samuel](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 883–884). Lexham Press.

- C. However, to successfully achieve this vision, we will need an army of leaders. I am absolutely certain that I can't do it by myself! I can only do it with a group of highly talented and highly committed leaders who, together, massively increase the number of highly talented and highly committed leaders working in sync with one another towards the vision God gave this church to participate in Christ's mission!

**The second hugely practical leadership lesson we can learn from these two testimonies of David's leadership is that,**

**(2) Truly successful leadership, that effectively empowers others to maximize their talents, only happens at the level of confident humility within the leader.**

- A. The level of confident humility within a leader is the level by which they can sincerely focus their attention and energy on helping other leaders be successful rather than themselves.
- B. Successful leadership certainly requires more qualities than confident humility, but the level of confident humility within a person directly correlates with how effectively their talents in areas like communication, strategic planning, resource allocation, gift alignment, and execution management will be utilized. A person can be incredibly talented in all of these areas, but be a consistent failure as a leader if they lack confident humility because their talents will be focused on the wrong thing. A person who lacks confident humility lacks the internal security and drive necessary to truly unleash their efforts on helping others be successful, and thus the organization. Furthermore, until your focus shifts to the success of others, the organization is limited to what you can achieve alone.
- C. Now, why are we taking the time to discuss this in Church? It turns out that the only way to truly possess confident humility, as God designed us to, is through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. David's knowledge of God gave him the confident humility to be one of the greatest leaders Israel ever had, but the knowledge we have in the Gospel of Jesus Christ is clearer and more powerful than anything David possessed. You and I have access to information that can instill a level of confident humility within us that not even David could have experienced. As such, you and I can be greater leaders than David in our marriages, with our children, in our communities, in our local church, in our workplace, on our sports team, in our schools, or wherever God places us. I'm not saying that if you're a faithful Christian you will end up being the CEO of a company, but rather, at whatever level God has gifted you to lead, and in whatever context, the Gospel of Jesus Christ can stir a greater confident humility with you than David ever had access to and as such equip you to use the gifts and talents God has given you more effectively for His glory than David!

**The third hugely practical leadership lesson we can learn from these two testimonies of David's leadership is that,**

- (3) Confident humility is ultimately experienced when a person is so secure in the abundance of love and honor they have received that they have no need to strive for more. Because they have it in abundance, they can live with complete freedom to help others experience it as well.**
- A.** Now here's the problem, and it's why the Gospel is the only way to truly experience confident humility. The love and glory we get from this world are conditional. As long as we are doing something that earns it, we can receive it, but only to the measure that we earn it. However, the moment we stop doing something to earn it, we no longer receive it, and it can even be taken away from us if we do things that society deems unworthy of love and honor.
  - B.** Therefore, a life lived in pursuit of love and glory from this world is an exhausting and stressful one, because it's a life that's always aware that one mistake can lead to the loss of all the love and glory one has spent their entire life earning. Furthermore, because the world is inherently unfair, a life lived trying to gain love and glory from the world, no matter how deserving that life may be of receiving it, may never receive it at the level it deserves, or possibly receive none of it at all. So, even a person who has been given enough love and honor from their accomplishments in the world to start living to give it away instead of receiving it, will still live with a noticeable amount of insecurity because they know it can all go away in a moment's notice. This is why I think we see so many celebrities struggling with massive levels of anxiety and depression!
  - C.** But the Gospel makes it clear that in and through Christ we get an eternal measure of love and glory that will never go away; and because it's an infinite measure, there is no limit to how much of it we can ever give away—we can never give away more than we have received! Let's examine Romans 8:15-39 and see what it teaches us about how Christ has abundantly blessed us with God's eternal love AND glory!
  - D.** **15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the**

**children of God.** 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. 26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. 28 And we know that for those who love God **all things work together for good,** for those who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also **glorified.** 31 What then shall we say to these things? **If God is for us, who can be against us?** 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died--more than that, who was raised--who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, **nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.** (Romans 8:15-39)

**Challenge:** Are you allowing the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to **experience** the eternal love and glory you have been given in Christ, or are you living your life trying to acquire it from others?

Listen, confident humility isn't just a key for being an effective leader, but for living a life free of anxiety, fear, and depression ... of feeling like your labors in this life are in vain! When I'm filled with the confident humility that comes from being filled with the love and glory of God, I've got nothing to worry about. When I'm filled with the love and glory that He gives, then I have more than enough to give away. When I'm filled with the love and glory that comes from Him, then I'll stop trying to get it from my spouse, my kids, my neighbors, my career, the people I work with, and the people on social media. When I'm filled with the love and glory that comes from Him, I not only get the joy of the experience of confident humility, but I get the joy of giving His love and glory to others for no other

reason than their benefit and God's glory! That is true power!! That is a life of true victory! That is true success, and it's what Jesus is going to respond to with, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant!"