

# VIGIL



*“Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”*

*~ I Peter 5:8*

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Examples**

## **Esther-Example of Courage Bobby Liddell**

In the third year of Ahasuerus, who reigned from India to Ethiopia, the king made a great feast in Shushan, displaying his wealth and majesty. While Vashti, the queen, made a feast for the women, Ahasuerus sent for her “to show the princes and the people her beauty: for she was fair to look on” (1:11). When she refused, the king consulted his wise men who counseled him to make her an example lest other women be emboldened to rebel against their husbands. Her estate was given to another, and the king enacted a law to compel all wives in the kingdom to give honor to their husbands.

To replace her, fair young virgins from all over the kingdom were brought to Shushan, to be purified under the oversight of Hege, the chamberlain. In Shushan, lived Mordecai, a Benjamite whose forefathers had been taken captive with Jeconiah, king of Judah. Into Mordecai’s care, had come the beautiful Hadassah, or Esther, daughter of Abihail, his uncle, upon the death of her parents. She was taken to Hege, but as Mordecai had charged her, she did not apprise Hege she was a Jewess. “Esther obtained favor in the sight of all them that

looked upon her” (2:15), and Ahasuerus chose her above all others, loved her, and put the crown upon her head.

Later, when two chamberlains sought to harm the king, Mordecai informed Esther, and she told the king. The two men were hanged, and the account was written in the royal record. However, when Ahasuerus promoted Haman, and all the servants revered him, Mordecai would not, although charged daily to do so. Thus, Haman became wrath, and sought to destroy all the Jews in the kingdom in order to destroy Mordecai. He deceived the king into making a law allowing the slaughter of the Jews— young and old, women and little children.

Upon learning of the proclamation, Mordecai mourned and wept, as did also the Jews in all the provinces. The queen’s maids informed her of the king’s decree, and she sent Hatach to inquire further of Mordecai. Mordecai sent a copy of the decree, and called upon Esther to go in unto the king to make supplication for her people. Esther replied: “All the king’s servants, and the people of the king’s provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman,

shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden scepter, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days” (4:11).

Mordecai responded: “Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king’s house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father’s house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (4:13-14).

Continued on page 40

## **Examples**

### **Editorial Ronnie Hayes**

“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” (1 Peter 2:21). Webster’s Dictionary defines

example as: “one that serves as a pattern to be imitated or not to be imitated” (397). We see examples every day of our life. Some will be good and other bad. Paul reminded us, “For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself” (Romans 14:7). Our lives will influence others either toward heaven or away from heaven. The question remains, “am I leading others to Christ or destroying their faith”?

Christ gives us the example of what He wants! He wants Christians to be the light of the world, liberal in their giving, and Christians who love with all their heart, soul, and mind.

Christ gave us the example of light. Light has a way of directing our lives. The psalmist said, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalms 119:105). When our lives are this kind of example, we will be directing others in a fashion that is most beneficial for them. Christ reminded us that we are “...the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16). When the world looks at our example which direction to they see emphasized? It is sad that sometimes as Christians, we give mixed signals.

Christ showed us how to give. “I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). H. Leo Boles in his commentary on Acts, wrote

concerning this verse that Paul, “...quotes one of the unwritten sayings of our Lord: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ These words were well known and quite familiar to his listeners, yet they are not found in any of the four writers of the gospel. They enforce with solemn distinctiveness the duty of liberality to the poor; they possess a far deeper meaning, for they assert as an eternal truth the higher blessedness of giving as compared with receiving” (329). The principle of sowing and reaping is one that should and will be manifested in each Christian (cf. 2 Corinthians 9:6-8). What example do we show in giving? Liberal and cheerful are characteristics of how Christians are to give. Grudgingly and stingily are not the examples that Christians should portray.

Christ’s love was apparent. The example of the love of Christ is clearly seen in many aspects of His life. The love of Christ is seen in the cross. If you want to see the love of Christ, you have to look no further than the cross. It was His love that kept Him on the cross not nails or soldiers. In the garden of Gethsemane He prayed three times, “And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39). Christ was concerned with doing the Father’s will not in getting out of the trial He faced. The love of Christ is seen in His compassion. Christ had great compassion for the multitudes. “But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd” (Matthew 9:36). Christ

had compassion on two blind men. “So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him” (Matthew 20:34). Christ showed great compassion for the city of Jerusalem. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Matthew 23:37,38). Maybe His love shined the brightest at the death of Lazarus. “Jesus wept” (John 11:35). Notice the explanation of the Jews, “Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him” (John 11:36)! The love of Christ is seen in the Comforter. Christ did not want to leave this earth without giving His disciples something to help them. “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you” (John 14:16-18). Christ is truly an example of love.

Christ left us His example so that we would “follow his steps” (1 Peter 2:21). Are we following His steps? What kind of examples are we leaving? Can our children follow our footsteps to heaven? Our actions speak louder than our words. Let’s not just tell our children, friends, associates, and neighbors what to do. Let’s show them.

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## Lessons on Encouragement From the Life of Barnabas

### Brian Gentle

At some point in all of our lives we need some form of encouragement whether we want to admit it or not. If anyone says differently they are putting themselves above many great men of the Bible especially Jesus himself. When someone mentions the words encouragement and Bible together you cannot help but think of Barnabas. Even his name shows this aspect of him (Acts 4:36). Not a great deal is known of him from the scripture, however, the things we do find in God's Word are treasures that can fill many volumes of books concerning his devoted attention to encouragement. Let's look at a few.

**First, to give.** That's right. In Acts 4:37 the Bible says, "*Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.*" He gave everything to God. This is where true encouragement begins, right? We can't expect people to come to us or to heed our words if they do not see us living the way we are supposed to live. A father and mother needs strength because of the financial battle they are a part of...what can you tell them? Can you tell them to trust in God when you may not have put your total faith and trust in him as well. We all must heed the words of Jesus when he tells us to "seek ye first the kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33). Should we not give completely to God our hearts...our souls...our might? (Deuteronomy 6:5)

**Second, to forgive.** Remember, it was Barnabas that forgave Paul (formerly Saul) to the point that he did not look back at all of his "past sins" (cf. Acts 8:1-3) as others did (Acts 9:26). Barnabas took it upon himself to make a case for Paul to make sure that nothing hindered him from speaking the gospel. (Acts 9:27-29) Are we willing to look over someone's past sins when one has repented? If we want to **receive** forgiveness then we better learn to **give** forgiveness. Matthew 6:14 says,

*"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."* It is impossible to forget someone's wrongdoings (unless that person has a bad memory) because of human nature however, we certainly do not need to bring it up to that person or anyone else for that fact.

**Third, to be humble.** In Acts 11 we find Barnabas being sent to the church at Antioch to encourage them to continue in their good works. (Acts 11:19-23) So here you have a minister being sent to encourage a group of believers (could be mostly young converts). How would you feel? Most would have a big boost in their ego. What a feeling...the "preacher" has come to stand at our feet and give us words of wisdom. Is that what Barnabas does? Well we see he does encourage them to cleave to the Lord (11:23) but what else does he do? Listen to verse 25 & 26. *"Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."* Barnabas probably had those people "eating out of his hand" and he chooses to bring in another "spiritually young" Christian to partake of the "glory. That sounds like someone who does not care about having the "glory" but giving the glory...sharing the excitement...helping someone else. What an example of unselfishness & humility. How many preachers need to read that story again? We need to get away from wanting center stage to wanting Christ's kingdom broadened. Do you think you have all the answers...the best speaking ability...the flawless character? Barnabas may have had all those things and more but he chose to take backstage to further the kingdom of

God. He might have thought Paul had a better speaking ability. Paul was even called the "chief speaker" in Acts 14:12. This did not cause jealousy on Barnabas' part (cf. the switching of names in Acts 13:1 and 13:32). Paul may have seen this strong character trait because later he encourages us to "put on...humbleness of mind." (Colossians 3:12)

**Lastly, to be supportive.** In Acts 15 starting at verse 37, we find that Barnabas wanted to take Mark with them on their journey but Paul was reluctant. Why? When Barnabas and Paul were at Pamphylia, Mark deserted them and the work. Paul has a point doesn't he? Who would want to allow someone to go with them who had already left them with all the work? Barnabas never gave up on Mark and was very supportive to him and his calling to spread the gospel. Have you ever given up on someone? How many times has someone come to you wanting you to pray with them about a reoccurring problem they have struggled with in the past? How do you treat someone that did you wrong in some way or another? We are all blessed to this day because of Mark and his writing of his gospel account. We find out later that Mark was with Paul during his first Roman imprisonment (Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24). Paul spoke of Mark positively to young Timothy, "*He is profitable to me for the ministry.*" (2 Timothy 4:11) (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14; 2 Thessalonians 2:17; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:9; Hebrews 3:13; 10:25)

Let us conclude with his thought. Paul needed Barnabas (Acts 11:22-26)...Barnabas needed Paul (Galatians 2:11-21)...we need each other. Be an encourager everyday.

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## David An Example Of Penitence Jerry L. Martin

Penitence is humble recognition of and remorse for one's sins followed by a demonstrated resolve to change. It is not just a person being sorry he got caught in sin. Paul contrasted the difference between the two in the following words: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Corinthians 7:10). There is much instruction and insight that can be gained by reading and studying the seven penitential Psalms (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143). In that process one will not find a better example of a heart that is broken with godly sorrow, a mind aware of the defilement of sin, and a will that is determined to change than the one expressed by David in Psalm 51.

David's penitence is seen in the reverence and respect he exhibits toward God (Psalms 51:1). "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies..." The sin David committed with Bathsheba and the resulting murder to cover it up demonstrated open disrespect for God and His holy commandments. True penitence will acknowledge and reverse such an attitude. The first step of penitence is to regain respect for God. David describes what it felt like for him to try to ignore his sin and God's instruction during the time lapse between 1 Samuel chapters eleven and twelve. "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer" (Psalms 32:3-4).

David's penitence is seen in his recognition of and regret for his sin (51:1b-5). "...blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." After being forgiven by the Lord, David did not forget the magnitude of his transgressions and the privilege of having them removed. "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (Psalms 32:5).

David's penitence is seen in his request for the removal of his sin and renewal of his spirit. "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit" (Psalms 51:6-12).

David's penitence is seen in his righteous resolve to remind others to draw close to God and avoid sin.

"Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar" (Psalms 51:12-19).

Yes, David is a great example of true and complete penitence. In order for a sinner to be forgiven he must remember that the "whole" of man is measured by the reverence (fear) he shows toward God (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Such reverence will cause the sinner to remember the terrible consequence and burden of being separated from our loving creator. Such reverence will cause godly sorrow and motivate repentance. Such reverence will renew the desire for and practice of godly living. Such reverence will freely flow from a penitent heart and will be a constant expression on grateful lips. May we each determine to follow David's example of true penitence so we can renew the joy of our salvation (1 John 1:7-10).

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### Example:

**I would not give much for your religion unless it can be seen. Lamps do not talk, but they do shine.  
Source Unknown**

## The Example of Faithfulness In Abraham

### Sam Willcut

The Bible says quite a bit about the great man named Abraham. It lists his name over 300 times, including numerous references to his covenant with God and his seed. The Bible even refers to “*the God of Abraham*” almost twenty times. We may well remember that God changed his name from “*Abram*” (exalted father) to “*Abraham*” (father of multitudes). One of the many compliments that the Bible attributes to him is that he is called, “*the friend of God*” (II Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23). The one quality of life that separates Abraham from so many others was his faith. He is the epitome of faithfulness—literally, full of faith. He is “the father of the faithful.” In fact, the Jews were ready to acquaint him as such (cf. John 8:33-58). Let us notice some examples of his faithfulness that may be helpful to our lives.

First, Abraham believed God. Paul wrote, “*For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness*” (Romans 4:3). Faith necessitates itself upon believing: “*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*” (Hebrews 11:6). One cannot have faith without believing that God exists, but this is not sufficient, because even the devils believe (James 2:19). Thus, we see further that Abraham believed God when he believed his word. Paul later said, “*Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be*” (Romans 4:18). Therefore, when God called Abraham in Genesis 12, establishing his covenant linked with certain promises, Abraham believed God. Yet, notice what Paul said: “...against hope believed in hope.”

This simply means that his faith in the word of God was such that he believed God, even when what God said was literally and completely unbelievable from a human standpoint. He distinguished himself from his wife, Sarai, when God told him that the fulfillment of his promises would be in the birth of a child at a very old age. In fact, the next verses describe such:

*And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform (Romans 4:19-21).*

Therefore, if we are to follow the example of Abraham's faithfulness, we must develop a faith as Abraham had. Nevertheless, some think that they have faith in God, although they refuse to believe what God teaches when such contradicts human reasoning (cf. I Corinthians 1:18-29).

Second, Abraham demonstrated his faithfulness by obeying God. He obeyed God when he left his home (Genesis 12; Acts 7:2-4; Hebrews 11:8). He obeyed God when he offered his son, Isaac, upon the altar (Genesis 22:1-12; Hebrews 11:17; James 2:21-24). Can you imagine the memorable father/son talks they had—both before and after! Such is a clear demonstration of his love for God (cf. I John 5:3), because it is completely inconsistent for one to talk about how much he loves God if he does not obey God (cf. Luke 6:456; Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 5:8-9).

Third, Abraham demonstrated his faithfulness in his regular worship. On numerous occasions, we read of Abraham worshipping God by

building altars and sacrificing (Genesis 12:8; 13:3-4, 18). One has said that Abraham could be trailed by the smoke of his altars. He sets a proper example for us in our faithfulness in regular worship (cf. Hebrews 10:25).

Fourth, Abraham permeated his entire life with trusting faith. God gave him early in his life some precious promises—promises of his seed becoming a great nation, inheriting a land and becoming the avenue through whom all the families the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:2-3). Yet, the Hebrew writer discusses the fact that while he never lived to see any of these promises fulfilled, he made these the motivating forces of his whole life (Hebrews 11:13). In like manner, he provides a wonderful example of our own faithfulness to God in the promises that he has given to us—promises of a fulfilling life (John 10:10) and a better resurrection pointing towards our salvation (Titus 1:12; James 1:12; I John 2:25; Revelation 2:10). Through it all, Abraham put God first in his life. Do we put God first in relation to self (Matthew 16:24)? Do we put God first in relation to our modest appearance (I Timothy 2:10)? Do we put God first in relation to our possessions (Matthew 6:24)? Do we put God first in relation to whom we marry (I Corinthians 7:39)? Do we put God first in relation to personal pleasures (I John 2:15-17)?

In conclusion, Abraham died in faith (Hebrews 11:13-16; Genesis 25:7-8). Thus, it was through the seed of Abraham that Jesus would come (Galatians 3:16), and we become children of Abraham when we are in Christ (Galatians 3:26-29). What a wonderful example Abraham is of the quality of faithfulness!

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# Paul, An Example of Perseverance

James E. Rogers

The word, "perseverance" is used one time in the New Testament. In Ephesians 6:18, Paul wrote: "with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints." The word translated, "perseverance" is "proskarteresis," which comes from "proskartereo," which means, "to be earnest towards, i.e. (to a thing) to persevere, be constantly diligent, or (in a place) to attend assiduously all the exercises, or (to a person) to adhere closely to (as a servitor)" (Biblesoft). Vine defines, "proskartereo," as "to be stedfast . . . to continue stedfastly in a thing and give unremitting care to it" (1:87). This word is used to describe the work of rulers who "are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing" (Romans 13:6).

As we think about Paul as an example of perseverance, we are encouraged by several aspects of his life. In all of these we will see his perseverance.

## As a Persecutor

We are introduced to Paul in a context of persecution (Acts 7:58). "Saul was consenting unto his death" (8:1). "Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison" (8:3). As time passed, "Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem" (9:1,2). Ananias recognized Paul as one about whom he had heard "how much evil he did to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name" (9:13,14). Those who heard Paul preach remembered him as, "he that in

Jerusalem made havoc of them that called on this name" (9:21). Paul described himself as one who "persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women" (22:4). His intent in going to Damascus was "to bring them also that were there unto Jerusalem in bonds to be punished" (22:5). Paul, further, described his persecution of saints as being one who "shut up many of the saints in prisons . . . and when they were put to death I gave my vote against them. And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities" (26:10,11). Paul said he had "persecuted the church of God, and made havoc against it" (Galatians 1:13). Paul described himself in these activities as "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious" (1 Timothy 1:13). Certainly, he was an example of perseverance as a persecutor.

## As A Persecuted Christian

After his conversion to the Christ, Paul began at Damascus to proclaim "Jesus, that he is the Son of God . . . proving that this is the Christ" (Acts 9:20,22). It might have been easy to persecute the church, but how would Paul fare as one of the persecuted Christians? Would this silence him in his proclamation of the Christ? Would he denounce Christianity and go back to Judaism? His life shows his perseverance in the Gospel of the Christ.

He, and other Christians, stood "in jeopardy every hour" (1 Corinthians 15:30). He had to face "beasts at Ephesus" (15:32). He described his time in Asia as one in which "we were weighed down exceedingly, beyond our power, insomuch that we despaired even of life" (2 Corinthians 1:8). He found himself "in prisons . . . in stripes

above measure, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers . . . of robbers . . . from my countrymen . . . from the Gentiles . . . in the city . . . in the wilderness . . . in the sea . . . among false brethren; in labor and travail, in watching often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches" (11:23-28).

Paul, because of his perseverance as a persecuted Christian, became one whose "bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole praetorian guard, and to all the rest; and that most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear" (Philippians 1:13,14). We are indebted to Paul as an example of one in whom the seed of the Gospel was not sown on "rocky places" (Matthew 13:20,21).

## Conclusion

Space fails me to mention Paul as an example of perseverance, as a preparer of others, a partner, a partaker, a prisoner, a Pharisee and a prayer. Perhaps these thoughts will jog others in the mind of the reader. Please do the extended study necessary to appreciate and follow the example of Paul in perseverance (1 Corinthians 11:1).

**Sources Cited:** Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright (c) 1994, Biblesoft and International Bible Translators, Inc. Vine, W. E., An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, Co., 1966).

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## My Servant Moses Tom Larkin

Leadership in the Lord's church has been called the crisis of our time. Without a doubt this is a current problem, but it is not a new problem. The need for qualified leaders who will take the initiative to lead in a godly way always has been a pressing one. Tomorrow's eldership will not be filled unless today faithful men are developing the necessary character to fill that need.

When we look to God's word for examples of leadership it is not surprising that our attention turns to Moses. This shepherd who led God's people from bondage in Egypt to the promised land of Canaan exemplifies the leadership needed in the church today. A study of the life of Moses can help those who wish to develop the godly character that is required to lead God's people. Perhaps the most important leadership lesson in the life of Moses is seen in God's statement of Numbers 12:7, "My servant Moses." Moses was a great leader because Moses was a servant of God.

Moses' first attempt at leading God's people was a failure because he was not prepared (Exodus 2:11-14 and Acts 7:23-25). He was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" but had not yet been schooled in the wilderness of Midian (Acts 7:22, 29). As a stranger and shepherd in Midian Moses learned valuable lessons that prepared him for the task of leading God's people.

As a stranger in Midian Moses learned the right relationship to the world. He had chosen to suffer with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin connected with the treasures of Egypt (Hebrews 11:25-26). Leaders in the Lord's church must never forget that we are "the called out" – that we must be separate from the world. We must never forget that heaven is our home

(Philippians 3:20) and that we are strangers and pilgrims on this earth (1 Peter 2:11-12).

Likewise, Moses' time as a shepherd prepared him to lead the people of God. The life of a shepherd provides opportunity for thought and meditation. This allowed Moses to appreciate the value of God's fellowship. The kind of leadership needed in the church requires an appreciation of God and a deep desire to do his will. If we fail to see this in the qualifications of elders in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 we make a terrible mistake. These qualifications go deeper than age and number of children – they encompass the character of a man's heart and the essence of his being. These are not simply a checklist to be used in selecting elders – they describe the man who recognizes his need for fellowship with God and whose life follows his word.

A leader of God's people must have the proper view of God. When he spoke to Moses out of the burning bush, God told him to remove his shoes, "for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Ex. 3:5). A leader must recognize God's majesty and holiness and, in turn, his own littleness and sinfulness. One can never lead effectively unless he first understands his utter hopelessness without God.

When we understand our relationship to God we can understand better our role in God's plan. A leader of God's people should not expect honor and recognition. Leadership is not about getting recognition – it is about helping others in their Christian walk and giving God the glory. Though he was in front of the people as their leader, Moses realized that he was but an instrument in the hand of God. Moses was not the deliverer –

God was. In Exodus 3:8, God said, "I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians." Likewise, today's leaders must understand that accomplishments in the church are not due to our ability or intellect, but as Paul wrote, "our sufficiency is of God" (2 Corinthians 3:5).

Further, to be an effective leader of God's people, Moses had to understand that the people belonged to God. Again, at the burning bush God said, "I have surely seen the affliction of *my people* which are in Egypt" (Exodus 3:7). Church leaders must understand that the church does not belong to them. It is the church "of God" (1 Corinthians 1:2). It is the church "of Christ" (Romans 16:16). He purchased it with his blood (Acts 20:28). We must never forget that we are where we are as a result of his grace.

Moses' sin at Meribah grew out of his failure to act in harmony with this understanding. Notice his question before he struck the rock – "Must we fetch you water out of this rock?" (Numbers 20:12). Leaving the impression that he was responsible for the flow of water, Moses did not sanctify God before the people. As a result Moses was forbidden from bringing Israel into Canaan. At all times a leader must focus the people's attention on God and not himself.

While this incident reminds us that Moses was not sinless, we know that he was a faithful servant (Hebrews 3:5). All leaders in the church are imperfect people, but like Moses, we must be faithful. If these lessons are put into practice, we can be the kind of leaders that God desires and it will help to solve the crisis of our time.

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**Esther—Example of Courage by Bobby Liddell ----- continued from page 34**

Esther showed great courage in her reply: “Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish” (4:16).

On the third day, Esther entered the king’s court, obtained his favor, and was summoned forward. She requested the king and Haman come to a banquet. The invitation thrilled Haman, yet he could not rejoice for Mordecai still would not bow to him. On the advice of Zeresh, his wife, Haman had a gallows built, fifty cubits high, on which to hang Mordecai.

That very night, the sleepless king called for the chronicles, was reminded of Mordecai’s good deed, and inquired what was done to reward him. The king asked Haman, “What

shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour? Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself?” (6:6). Therefore, Haman responded, only to learn the king sought to honor Mordecai, and Haman would be the one to see the honor was bestowed. Haman’s wise men and his wife assured him this was a sign he would fall before Mordecai.

At Esther’s banquet, Ahasuerus asked what Esther requested—even to the half of his kingdom. She petitioned him for her life, and for the life of her people, and informed the king that Haman sought to destroy them. Enraged, the king went into the palace garden, and Haman fell upon the queen’s bed, pleading. Returning, the king saw Haman, and said, “Will he force the queen also before me in the house?” and had Haman hanged

upon his own gallows. In Haman’s place, the king put Mordecai.

Again, Esther approached the king, and besought his help for her people, and he commanded the Jews could “stand for their life,” and take the spoil of their enemies. “Thus the Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and slaughter, and destruction, and did what they would unto those that hated them” (9:5). As well, they slew the ten sons of Haman, hanging them upon the gallows. Mordecai’s influence and honor grew, and he and Esther established a feast (Purim) on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar to remember their victory. Esther’s exemplary courage brought deliverance to the Jews, destruction to their enemies, and is remembered to this day.

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