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# BIBLE GREATS



*Volume II: A Series of Sermons on Great Bible Examples*

**Gene Taylor**

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# Preface

The theme for these sermons is: **“Great Bible Examples.”** This series focuses on four of the many great examples in the Bible—Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and David— and then closes with the greatest example, Jesus Christ.

The aim of this series is to help those who hear these lessons learn important principles to apply to their lives. If they will take to heart these messages from Scripture, they will learn to grow in the areas of faith, forgiveness, leadership and courage. Additionally, they can profit from the many inspiring qualities of Jesus, our perfect example.

These sermons may be presented as a series or independently for each lesson is complete in and of itself and does not build on previous lessons.

Gene Taylor

# Table of Contents

Preface .....	1
Table of Contents .....	2
The Power of Example .....	3
Abraham: A Great Example of Faith .....	5
Joseph: A Great Example of Forgiveness .....	10
Moses: A Great Example of Leadership .....	14
David: A Great Example of Courage .....	17
Jesus: Our Perfect Example .....	21

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# The Power of Example

## I. The Importance of Example

- A. We are creatures of imitation.
  - 1. The old adage, "Like father like son" is normally true.
  - 2. This explains why examples are important in life.
- B. The power of example is very great.
  - 1. It is one of the greatest powers known to man.
  - 2. It is a power that all possess, a force all must handle.
  - 3. The Bible recognizes the great power of example for both good and evil.
    - a. Good examples in Scripture.
      - 1) Godliness: Noah. (Gen. 6-7)
      - 2) Faith: Abraham. (Heb. 11:8-10)
      - 3) Patience: Job. (Job 1-2)
      - 4) Courage: Daniel. (Dan. 6)
      - 5) Endurance: Moses. (Heb. 11:23-27)
      - 6) Leadership: Joshua. (Jud. 24:31)
    - b. Bad examples in Scripture.
      - 1) The ten spies. (Num. 13-14) They influenced a whole nation by their lack of faith and courage.
      - 2) Korah. (Num. 16) Because of Korah's evil influence, God destroyed Korah, Dathan, Abiram, their families, 250 men, and 14,700 others.
      - 3) The Pharisees in the time of Jesus. (Matt. 6:2-8; 23:1-3)
- C. Someone has said, "Precepts tell us our duty, examples show us that it is possible."
  - 1. The Bible gives us many examples that illustrate the great principles of truth by which we are to live letting us know that we can live godly.
  - 2. One of the main reasons we possess the Old Testament is so that we can learn from the examples it contains. (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:6)
  - 3. Jesus is set before us in the New Testament as the perfect example for us to follow. (1 Pet. 2:21-25)
- D. The apostle Paul understood the importance of example.
  - 1. He was aware of his own example. (1 Thes. 2:10-12; 1 Cor. 11:1)
  - 2. He commanded others to set a proper example. (Titus 2:7-8; 1 Tim. 4:12)

## II. Christians Are to Be Examples

- A. Christians are to be the "light of the world." (Matt. 5:14-16) Could this teaching any plainer?
  - 1. Those who claim to be Christians are influencing people in one way or another.
  - 2. As Christians, we must realize the world is judging Christianity by us.

3. Thomas Jefferson, in writing to John Adams, "I always judge a man's religion by his life..., for it is from our lives and not our words, that our religion must be read."
- B. 1 Timothy 4:12 reveals those areas in which Christians are to be examples.
1. **Word.** Be careful what you say and how you say it.
  2. **Manner of life.** Never forget that people are observing your life.
  3. **Love.** For God, Christ and your fellow man.
  4. **Spirit.** What kind of attitudes do you have? Are you an optimist or pessimist?
  5. **Faith.** Is it weak or strong? Is it little or great?
  6. **Purity.** Can people see in you a desire to remain unspotted from the world or do they see a longing to engage in worldly things?

# Abraham: A Great Example of Faith

## I. Faith Defined

- A. Faith, *pistos*, is conviction of the truth of anything, trust or confidence springing from that conviction.
- B. "Primarily, 'firm persuasion,' a conviction based upon hearing (akin to *peitho*, 'to persuade'), is used in the NT always of 'faith in God or Christ, or things spiritual.'" (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*)
- C. "...used especially of the faith by which a man embraces Jesus, i.e., a *conviction, full of joyful trust, that Jesus is the Messiah—the divinely appointed author of eternal salvation in the kingdom of God, conjoined with obedience to Christ.*" (*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 511)
- D. The Biblical definition: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. 11:1)
  1. Since hope is desire with expectation (Rom. 8:24-25), there must be some basis or reason to expect a desire to be realized. This basis is faith.
  2. Faith is the "substance," *hupostasis*, i.e. the "thing put under, substructure, foundation." (*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 645)
  3. Since the things hoped for are not seen, yet the proof or evidence, *elenchos*, that they exist is faith.
  4. We are convinced of the reality of things unseen by the truth or confidence we have in God.
    - a. Consider, someone we love, respect, and trust promises us something—a gift, trip, etc. We have not seen the promised thing but we desire and expect it. Why? Because of the confidence we have in the integrity and honesty of the person who promised it.
    - b. What evidence is there that there is a Paris or London, that George Washington or Abraham Lincoln really lived?
      - 1) Have you seen these places or men?
      - 2) The fact that they are, or were, is accepted by faith.
      - 3) You trust those who informed you.
    - c. There is a heaven, etc., and as faithful Christians we expect to go there.
      - 1) The evidence? The basis for hope?
      - 2) God, who cannot lie, has told us. (Heb. 6:18)
      - 3) We believe Him.

## II. The Necessity of Faith

- A. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (Heb. 11:6)

- B. Since by faith one obeys God in entering into an approved relationship with Him, and by faith lives the approved life (Gal. 5:6; 3:11), it follows that faith is necessary to please God. (Heb. 11:6; John 8:24)
- C. Faith must be in one's heart in becoming a Christian and it must be retained and even augmented throughout his life as a Christian. (Rom. 5:1; 2 Cor. 5:7)
  - 1. There is no sin more devastating than the sin of unbelief because it eliminates every phase of usefulness before the Lord. (John 3:18)
  - 2. Unbelief, which so easily besets a person (Heb. 12:1), keeps him from fellowship with the living God. (Heb. 3:12)
- D. Trust and confidence comes through a knowledge of God—His character, love, dependability, sovereignty, etc.—revealed in Scripture, thus, faith comes by hearing the word of God. (Rom. 10:17)

### III. The Evidence of Faith

- A. Many things are accepted and acted upon by faith.
  - 1. Before we were born the pyramids of Egypt were built.
    - a. We were not present and so have no immediate knowledge.
    - b. Yet, we believe that intelligent beings erected them because they show evidence of intelligent design and construction.
  - 2. Before we were born the universe was created by God for the same reasons.
    - a. It is this God who reveals Himself in the Bible.
    - b. As we come to know Him, His character, power, and wisdom, we have faith in Him that He is able to do all that He promises. (Eph. 3:20; Rom. 4:20-21)
- B. The evidence of one's faith in God, as already noted, is obedience to His will. (Jas 2:17-20, 24)
  - 1. Faith enables one to obey in the absence of understanding the why and how of the thing commanded.
  - 2. Faith is a trust that assures one that he will receive a promise, though the means of fulfillment is not obvious because he has confidence in the one who revealed it.
- C. The evidence of faith is seen in the actions of the faithful as seen in Hebrews 11.

### IV. The Saving Faith

- A. Degrees of faith.
  - 1. Great. (Matt. 8:10)
  - 2. Strong. (Rom. 4:20)
  - 3. Little. (Matt. 14:30)
  - 4. Weak. (Rom. 14:1)
  - 5. Dead. (James 2:17)

- B. For a faith to be a saving faith, it must be strong enough to cause one to obey God. (Heb. 5:9; 2 Thes. 1:7-9)
1. A mere conviction is not enough to save. (Jas. 2:19; John 12:42)
  2. Faith must include obedience in order for it to be a saving faith. Consider the example of Moses. (Num. 20:1-13)
  3. In every reference to “faith” as a means of salvation, the saving faith is an obedient faith. Consider John 3:16 with 3:36.
    - a. In v. 36 the word “believe” occurs twice in the KJV but not from the same original word.
    - b. The first “believe” is from the Greek word *pisteuo*, the latter from the Greek *peitho*.
    - c. *Pisteuo* means “to be persuaded, to place confidence in, to trust” (*Vine’s Expository Dictionary of NT Words*), while *peitho* is to “obey” (ibid). The latter implies the obedience that is produced by the former.
  4. “Faith is of the heart, invisible to men: obedience is of the conduct and may be observed. When a man obeys God, he gives the only possible evidence that in his heart he believes God.” (Ibid)
- C. Salvation is by faith but not by “faith only.”
1. Faith alone is dead, while an obedient faith is living. (Jas. 2:17, 20, 26)
  2. Faith alone is imperfect, while an obedient faith is perfect. (Jas. 2:22)
  3. Faith alone does not save or justify but an obedient faith saves or justifies. (Jas. 2:14, 24)
  4. Faith alone characterizes the demons (Jas. 2:19-20), while an obedient faith characterized Abraham. (Jas. 2:21-23; Heb. 11:8-10)
  5. Faith alone characterized many of the Jewish rulers (John 12:42-43), while an obedient faith characterized Noah. (Heb. 11:7)
  6. The only occasion in which the phrase “faith only” is used in Scripture is to show that it is not enough to justify anyone. (Jas. 2:24)

## V. The Results of a Strong, Obedient Faith

- A. The cleansing or purifying of the heart. (Acts 15:7-9)
- B. Justification before God. (Rom. 5:1; 3:28)
- C. Salvation. (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 13:11; 1 Pet. 1:4-5)
- D. Great boldness and confidence. (2 Cor. 1:24)
- E. Life. (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 2:20; 3:11)
- F. Fellowship. (Rom. 1:12; 2 Pet. 1:1; 1 John 1:7)
- G. Protection from the darts of the wicked one. (Eph. 6:16)
- H. Triumph over the world. (1 John 5:4)

## VI. Abraham’s Example of Faith

- A. He is the father of the faithful. (Gal. 3:16-29; Rom. 4:11)



- B. He left his country and his countrymen never to return. (Heb. 11:8-16)
  - 1. He left his home without doubting or questioning God.
  - 2. He did not know where he was going. (Heb. 11:8)
- C. He believed the promise of a son though such a birth was naturally impossible. (Gen. 17:9-21; Rom. 4:18-21)
  - 1. He did not waver in his belief or hope.
  - 2. He, in reality, hoped against hope—his faith in God was strong.
- D. He cast out a son, Ishmael, when Sarah and God commanded it. (Gen. 21:9-14)
  - 1. Though Ishmael was the son of a concubine, he was still his son and casting him out must have been very difficult for Abraham.
  - 2. He realized obeying God was more important than anything else on this earth.
- E. He taught his children and those in his house the ways of the Lord. (Gen. 18:17-19)
  - 1. This is an important characteristic of the faithful. (Deut. 6:4-7; Eph. 6:4)
  - 2. Because of this, God was able to bless him.
- F. He offered Isaac, the son of promise. (Gen. 22:1-19)
  - 1. This act is the greatest and most vivid example of Abraham’s great faith.
    - a. Of all the commands God had given him, this was certainly the most difficult to obey.
    - b. Yet, Abraham rose early in the morning and took his son to place him on an altar.
  - 2. Aspects of faith learned from this act.
    - a. The sacrifice of faith.
      - 1) Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son whom he loved. (Gen. 22:2)
      - 2) Abraham realized that even the most precious thing he had must be given up for God.
      - 3) We must present our bodies as living sacrifices unto God. (Rom. 12:1-2; Matt. 16:24; Gal. 2:20)
    - b. The obedience of faith.
      - 1) Faith is swift to carry out the command of God. (Gen. 22:3)
      - 2) Noah “moved with godly fear” to build the ark. (Heb. 11:7)
      - 3) We should be swift to obey the word of God, ready and willing to obey, and enthusiastic to accomplish His will and work.
    - c. The expectation of faith.
      - 1) Abraham believed that somehow God would see him and Isaac through this so he told the two young men who had accompanied him to wait because he and the lad would return to them. (Gen. 22:5)
      - 2) He believed that Isaac would be the son of promise for God had told him it would be through Isaac that his seed would be called. (Gen. 21:12; Heb. 11:17-19)

- d. The work of faith.
  - 1) This act was something that had to be done to prove Abraham's faith. (Gen. 22:6)
  - 2) It was his act to do. He had to gather wood for the fire, make the altar, bind Isaac, lay him on the altar, etc., thus establishing the relationship of faith and works. (Jas. 2:21, 24-26)
  - 3) We must prove our faith by our deeds of obedience. (Jas. 2:18)
- e. The persistence of faith.
  - 1) This sacrifice tried Abraham's faith severely, yet he conquered in the hour of trial. He persisted with the sacrifice even though he knew it would mean the death of Isaac.
  - 2) A faith not tried or one that fails in the hour of trial is, in reality, no faith at all.
- f. The victory of faith.
  - 1) God stayed the hand of Abraham as he prepared to plunge a knife into Isaac saying, "for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." (Gen. 22:12)
  - 2) Having been put to the test, he emerged victorious and was thus able to receive the blessings God had in store for him.
  - 3) If we put our faith and trust in God, we too will be victorious over the trials in our lives and we will be blessed. (1 John 5:4)

### **Conclusion**

- 1. As Abraham lived a life of faith and was tried, we too will be tried. (1 Pet. 1:7)
- 2. Our faith, having been proven, will enable us to stand in the hope and glory of the Lord. (Rom. 5:1-5)
- 3. If we live faithfully, we will be Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. (Gal. 3:27-29)

# Joseph: A Great Example of Forgiveness

## I. The Importance of Forgiveness

- A. No more important or desirable characteristic can be found in the human heart than that of forgiveness.
  - 1. Its importance is seen in the home, the community, the nation and the church.
  - 2. Having a forgiving heart is an essential quality every Christian should have. (Eph. 4:32)
- B. Someone has said, "There are three kindred spirits of the human heart—giving, thanksgiving and forgiving. Usually, where one is found, all are found."

## II. The Necessity of Forgiveness: Four Fundamental Reasons Why It Is Necessary to Forgive One Another

- A. God commands it. (Mark 11:25)
  - 1. If one is going to please the Lord he must have a forgiving heart. (Eph. 4:32)
  - 2. But forgiveness on mere obedience to command usually falls short of what it should be. Consider the example of the parent who makes a child say, "I'm sorry," when, in reality, he is not sorry at all.
- B. The example of Jesus. (1 Pet. 2:21; Phil. 2:3-5; Luke 23:34)
  - 1. As He is our example in all things, He is our example of forgiveness too.
  - 2. He does not require us to do something He could/would not do.
  - 3. Even though He had His life taken from Him, He was willing to forgive.
- C. One who has been forgiven must forgive. (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13) This principle is illustrated by the parable of the unmerciful servant. (Matt. 18:23-35)
- D. In order to receive future forgiveness. (Matt. 6:14-15)

## III. What It Means to Forgive

- A. To simply speak the words does not necessarily mean you have forgiven.
  - 1. Some say, "I won't forget," or "I hope I never see you again."
  - 2. Such is not only foolhardy but also hypocritical and deceitful.
- B. There are two kinds of forgiveness: divine and human.
  - 1. Divine forgiveness is the standard for us to follow as we extend human forgiveness.
  - 2. We must forgive by the "golden rule." (Matt. 7:12)
    - a. When forgiving, seek to do the other person good.
    - b. Deny the impulse to "get even."
    - c. We must forgive with a kind attitude, removing all animosity and hatred, and be void of grudges.
  - 3. When God forgives, He forgets (Heb. 8:12; Acts 3:19).
- C. There are no degrees of forgiveness. Either you forgive someone or you do not.

#### IV. Some Examples of Forgiveness

##### A. David. (1 Sam. 24)

1. Knowing that Saul wanted to kill him, he fled for his life.
2. He later had the opportunity to kill Saul but he spared his life.
  - a. He had a forgiving heart.
  - b. It is no wonder he is called a man after God's own heart. (Acts 13:22)

##### B. Stephen. (Acts 7)

1. The first martyr for Christ, he was stoned by the Jews after he had preached a courageous sermon in which he condemned their unbelief.
2. As he was dying, he asked God to forgive those who were putting him to death. (vv. 59-60)

##### C. Jesus.

1. As in all other areas of life, Jesus is the classic example of forgiveness.
2. He died with a forgiving spirit. (Luke 23:34)

#### V. Joseph: An Example of Forgiveness

##### A. The birth and youth of Joseph. (Gen. 30:22-24; 37:1-4)

1. Joseph was born to Jacob and Rachel while Jacob was living in Padan-Aram.
2. At age 17 he was his father's favorite son because "he was the son of his old age."
  - a. Jacob gave him a multi-colored coat as a token of his affection for him.
  - b. His brothers hated him because he was the favorite and also because he had given their father an "evil report" of them while they had been tending the flock.
3. The dreams of Joseph. (Gen. 37:5-11)
  - a. He dreamed that he and his brothers were binding sheaves in a field and that their sheaves "bowed down" to his further enraging his brothers when he told them of it (Gen. 37:5-8)
  - b. He dreamed another dream in which the sun, moon and eleven stars "bowed down" to him. (Gen. 37:9) After he revealed it to his father and brothers, Jacob rebuked him but "kept the matter in his mind" and his brothers envied him. (Gen. 37:11)

##### B. Joseph sold into slavery. (Gen. 37:12-36)

1. His father sent him to check on his brothers who were feeding the flock in Dothan.
  - a. They plotted to kill him but Reuben interceded for him.
  - b. They took off his coat and cast him into a pit.
  - c. They sold him to some Ishmaelites (Midianites) for 20 pieces of silver. The Midianites, in turn, sold him into slavery in Egypt to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guard.
  - d. His brothers tore his coat and covered it with animal blood in order to make Jacob believe that Joseph had been killed by an animal.
  - e. Jacob mourned for him and would not be comforted.

C. Joseph in Potiphar's house. (Gen. 39)

1. Potiphar saw that God was with Joseph so he made him overseer of all his house and possessions.
2. Potiphar's wife desired him.
  - a. Joseph refused because he knew it would be wicked to do so and that it would cause him to "sin against God."
  - b. While no one else was there, she attempted to get him to change his mind.
    - 1) He fled but she held on to his garment.
    - 2) She used the garment as evidence that he had tried to take advantage of her.
  - c. Potiphar, believing his wife's lie, cast him into prison.

D. Joseph, interpreter of dreams. (Gen. 40:1 - 41:32)

1. God caused Joseph to prosper in prison and all the prisoners were put under him.
2. Pharaoh cast his butler and baker into prison because they had offended him.
  - a. While there, they dream and Joseph interprets their dreams.
  - b. The butler was restored to his former position and the baker was put to death.
3. Two years later, Pharaoh dreamed two dreams that none of the magicians and wise men of Egypt could interpret.
  - a. The butler finally remembered Joseph and Pharaoh sent for him.
  - b. Joseph interpreted the dreams which prophesied of the seven years of plenty and then seven years of famine that would take place in Egypt.

E. Joseph, a ruler in Egypt. (Gen. 41:33-57)

1. At age 30, Joseph was placed over Pharaoh's house and all Egypt in order to prepare for the coming famine by stockpiling food during the years of plenty.
2. When the famine came, all the countries of the world came to Egypt to buy grain.

F. The reunion with his family. (Gen. 42:1 - 47:12; 48:1-22)

1. Jacob sent his sons, except for Benjamin, to Egypt to buy grain.
2. Joseph recognized them but did not reveal his identity to them. Instead, he accused them of being spies.
  - a. He sent all of them, except Simeon, back home to bring Benjamin to verify their story.
  - b. He restored their money to them in their grain sacks.
3. The brothers returned to their father and told him all that had happened to them in Egypt but he refused to let them take Benjamin.
4. When the grain ran out, Jacob relented and allowed his sons to take Benjamin to Egypt to get more.
  - a. They took double money so they could pay for the grain from the first trip.
  - b. Joseph prepared a meal for them and then filled their sacks with grain and put his silver cup in Benjamin's sack.

- 1) He had his stewards follow them and bring them back to him. The one with the cup was to die.
- 2) Judah tried to take the place of Benjamin.
5. Joseph could not keep his identity from his brothers any longer.
  - a. He told them he had forgiven them.
  - b. He said he knew that it was God's plan to have placed him in Egypt.
6. Jacob and all his family came to Egypt to live.
  - a. He was tearfully, yet joyfully, reunited with Joseph.
  - b. Pharaoh allowed them to live in Goshen.

### **Conclusion: The Lessons from the Life of Joseph**

- A. He is an example of righteousness.
  1. No weaknesses or flaws are revealed about him in the Bible (That does not mean he did not have any).
  2. He knew that sin is against God. (Gen. 39:9)
- B. He is an example of faith. (Heb. 11:22)
- C. He, in the case of Potiphar's wife, is an illustration of how to deal with temptation.
- D. He is a demonstration of the providence of God. (Gen. 45:5, 7, 8)
- E. He is a type of Jesus.
  1. More than any other Old Testament character, he presents the Savior to us.
  2. "Joseph stands out among the patriarchs in some respects with preeminence. His nobility of character, his purity of life and heart, his magnanimity as a ruler and brother make him, more than any other Old Testament character, an illustration of that type of man which Christ was to give to the world in perfection. Joseph is not in the list of persons distinctly referred to in Scripture as types of Christ (the only perfectly safe criterion) but none more fully illustrates the life and work of the Savior. He wrought salvation for those who betrayed and rejected him, he went down into humiliation as the way to his exaltation, he forgave those who, at least in spirit, put him to death, and to him as to the Saviour, all must come for relief, or perish." (*ISBE*, p. 1740)
  3. There are more than 100 parallels between him and Jesus.
- F. He is an example of the forgiving spirit that is to characterize every child of God. (Matt. 6:14-15; Eph. 4:32)

# Moses: A Great Example of Leadership

## I. The Greatness of Moses

- A. His faith and leadership qualities are most probably unsurpassed in history.
- B. He was one of the greatest men who ever lived. (Jer. 15:1)
- C. His true greatness is seen in his willingness to serve God and others. (Heb. 3:1-5; Mark 10:42-44)

## II. The Three Basic Periods of the Life of Moses (Acts 7:20-36)

- A. Forty years in Egypt. (Ex. 2:1-15a)
  - 1. It seems likely from his birth that God's hand was responsible for Moses' safekeeping.
  - 2. He received the finest education in a culture which then led the world in educational advances and learning. (Acts 7:22)
  - 3. During his early years, he:
    - a. Had the availability of the Royal Court.
    - b. Was able to learn first-hand the characteristics of leadership and the distribution of justice.
  - 4. At the end of this period, Moses made a futile attempt to help his people. (Acts 7:23-29)
- B. Forty years in Midian. (Ex. 2:15b - 4:17)
  - 1. He married and acquired a wise father-in-law, Jethro.
  - 2. He learned the land through which he was to guide the children of Israel.
  - 3. He was divinely called from the burning bush to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.
    - a. He raised objections.
    - b. God convinced him that He would be with him.
- C. Forty years of service.
  - 1. He led Israel out of Egyptian bondage. (Ex. 4:18 - 18:27)
  - 2. Through him the Law was delivered to Israel. (Ex. 19:1 - 40:38)
    - a. They became a nation.
    - b. They were recognized as the people of God.
  - 3. He brought Israel to the promised land. (Num. 1:1 - Deut. 34:12)
    - a. Because of their unbelief at Kadesh-Barnea, the generation who left Egypt had to die off in the wilderness.
    - b. He guided Israel in the wilderness while a new generation matured to receive God's promise.
    - c. He was unable to lead them into the land because of his own transgressions.

### III. The Choice of Moses by God to Be Leader Was Based on His Faith

- A. This is the chief quality that God looks for in a person.
- B. Hebrews 11:24-29, while describing Moses' faith, also describes his qualities for leadership as well. It notes eight things about him which indicate why he was qualified to lead the people of God.
  - 1. He was independent yet humble. (24)
  - 2. He was of good moral character. (25)
  - 3. He was not greedy. (26a)
  - 4. He was far-sighted. (26b)
  - 5. He was fearless. (27a)
  - 6. He had stamina. (27b)
  - 7. He was religiously minded. (28)
  - 8. He was adventurous. (29)
- C. His excuses demonstrate that the greatness of his leadership was not due to any innate greatness in him but in his faith in God (Standing alone he was not such a great man.).
  - 1. Personal insignificance or unworthiness. (Ex. 3:11)
    - a. His humility here is almost, if not entirely, cowardice.
    - b. Never believe that you are not great enough to do what God has given you to do.
  - 2. The unbelief of the people. (Ex. 4:1)
    - a. He remembered the enchantments of the magicians of Egypt and knew the people would not follow him for he had no special powers.
    - b. God provided His power to him, the rod, so that he could demonstrate the power of God, their true Leader, before them.
    - c. God expects us to take in hand the gospel, His power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16), and stretch it out to the sinner and see its ability to transform the heart.
  - 3. Personal inability or infirmity. (Ex. 4:10)
    - a. He felt that in Egypt rapid and eloquent speech would be necessary.
    - b. God answered this objection by providing Aaron to speak for him.
    - c. Our work is not to determine physical status but to do the will of God.
  - 4. Personal unwillingness. (Ex. 4:13)
    - a. He wanted God to send anyone but him. But God's rebuke was sharp.
    - b. We must be as willing as Isaiah to do God's bidding. (Isa. 6:8)
- D. His ability as a leader included both positive and negative aspects.
  - 1. Positive.
    - a. He chose to associate with the people of God. (Heb. 11:25)
    - b. He kept the Passover. (Heb. 11:28)
  - 2. Negative.
    - a. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. (Heb. 11:24)
    - b. He forsook Egypt. (Heb. 11:27)



E. His willingness to lead was costly. It cost him:

1. Social position.
2. Pleasure.
3. Wealth.
4. Disappointment of those who loved him.

**Conclusion: Some Practical Lessons Learned from Moses' Example of Leadership**

1. God may take many years to prepare us for a task.
2. Excuses anger God. (Ex. 4:13, 14)
3. God is with us when we go about His work.
4. There is great value to patience and perseverance.
5. Unselfishness is one of the chief traits of greatness. (Deut. 9:18-20, 25-29)
6. There is extraordinary power in the intercessory prayer of a good man. (Ex. 32:9-14)
7. The penalty for disobedience and loss of temper is severe. (Num. 20:12; 27:14)
8. Meekness is an integral part of leadership. (Num. 12:3)

# David: A Great Example of Courage

## I. The Necessity of Courage

- A. Courage is essential for a soldier in battle and for the soldier of Christ in the fight of faith. (1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7-8)
  - 1. Courage is the strength of the soul.
    - a. Spiritual strength includes steadfastness, bravery, faith and honesty.
    - b. Such does not come by accident but is deliberately developed.
  - 2. God has no use for cowards. (Heb. 10:38-39)
- B. Courage is needed because God:
  - 1. Commands it. (Josh. 1:9; Phil. 1:27-28; Heb. 10:35-39)
  - 2. Pledges His support. (Josh. 1:9; Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5-6; Phil. 4:13)
  - 3. Gives assurance of success. (Josh. 1:8; Isa. 4:10-11; Rev. 2:10; 3:21)
- C. Christians' lives must be built on a foundation of courage.
  - 1. Two components of courage.
    - a. A good conscience—knowing you have obeyed God. (Heb. 10:22-24)
      - 1) God knows every thought and motive, therefore, the Christian must be sincere.
      - 2) One cannot have real courage unless he knows he is doing right. (Prov. 28:1)
    - b. Trust in God.
      - 1) You must believe that He will be with you. (Rom. 8:31-39)
      - 2) God must be put first and foremost in your life. (Prov. 29:25)
  - 2. Both of the above components come with study of God's word. One must study to:
    - a. Build faith and to understand how to obey the Lord.
    - b. Learn more of God and to develop a greater appreciation for and trust in Him.

## II. Sources of Courage

- A. God.
  - 1. The Father (1 Sam. 30:6); Son (John 16:33); and Holy Spirit in His revelation (Rom. 15:4-5).
  - 2. If God is for us, who can be against us. (Rom. 8:31ff.)
- B. Prayer.
  - 1. Help in time of need. (Heb. 4:16)
  - 2. Boldness in preaching the gospel. (Eph. 6:19-20)
- C. Association with brethren.
  - 1. Hebrews 10:24-25. Christians are to "encourage" one another.
    - a. "Encourage:" To inspire with courage, hope and spirit.
    - b. Faithful attendance to services of study and worship revives the soul.

2. Hebrews 3:13. Christians are to exhort, encourage, one another daily. Such encouragement is:
  - a. To be given continually.
  - b. Preventative - "lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."
3. 1 Thessalonians 5:11. Christians are to encourage one another, build one another up.
  - a. Too often, the opposite is true—some tear down others or watch others be ridiculed and never say a word in defense.
  - b. Christians are a source of encouragement in time of need. (Acts 28:15)

### III. Areas in Which One Needs Courage: Some Biblical Examples of Courage

- A. When in the minority: Noah. (Gen. 6:8; 7:1)
  1. It is easy to renounce a position when you are in the minority.
  2. God's people have always seemed to be in the minority.
    - a. Elijah. (1 Kings 18)
    - b. The apostle Paul. (2 Tim. 4:16)
    - c. Today it is the same. (Luke 13:23-24; Matt. 7:13-14)
  3. God expects His children to stand for right even when they are in the minority. (2 Cor. 6:17-18)
- B. In the face of civil government: Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego. (Dan. 3:16-18)
  1. They would not even pretend to worship the idol.
  2. They overcame with God's help. (Dan. 3:43-45, 50)
  3. Christians today must face up to civil government.
    - a. In our country we may have to be doing it more and more.
    - b. How can you know if you could stand the test? See if your courage gives out in lesser situations such as with family, at work, etc.
- C. Facing temptation: Joseph. (Gen. 39:6-12)
  1. He could have sinned with Potiphar's wife and no one would have known—except God.
  2. Though his livelihood in a strange country was at stake, he overcame with God's help. (Gen. 41:39-44)
  3. Christians are to resist the devil (Jas. 4:7) but it takes courage. Such courage comes from a knowledge of God's care. (1 Cor. 10:13)
- D. Rebuking sinners and teaching truth: Nathan. (2 Sam. 12)
  1. It is much easier to overlook and forget the sins of others but that is not what is best for either party.
  2. Nathan could have suffered greatly, even losing his life, but he taught plainly, convictingly and fearlessly.
  3. Other examples of courage in teaching and rebuking others:
    - a. Ezekiel. (Ezek. 3:1-11)
      - 1) He knew the people would not want to hear the message of God.
      - 2) God told him, "Tell them...whether they hear or whether they refuse."

- b. John the Baptist. (Mark 6:18)
- c. The apostle Paul to Peter. (Gal. 2:11)
- E. Worshiping God: Daniel. (Dan. 6)
  - 1. As one of the three princes under the king, he was impeccably honest. (3-5)
  - 2. He openly served God knowing he was risking his position and his life. (10)
    - a. He would not compromise his service to God for any reason.
    - b. He overcame through God. (16, 22)
- F. Admitting wrong: David. (2 Sam. 12:13)
  - 1. Sometimes this takes more courage than anything else for the cowardly way is to try to justify one's wrongs.
  - 2. Nothing short of the kind of courage David possessed will suffice for the Christian.

#### IV. David's Great Example of Courage: His Victory Over Goliath (1 Samuel 17:1-51)

- A. The Philistines had gathered their armies against the Israelites.
  - 1. Their champion, Goliath, a ferocious warrior, defied the entire army of Israel.
  - 2. The Israelites were delivered by David who, in a great act of courage, willingly engaged Goliath in battle.
- B. This account has come under suspicion by many who do not believe the Bible.
  - 1. Newspaper article, "Goliath's secret out! He was a weakling" (Reprint from *Dayton Daily News*)
  - 2. Goliath was a worthy adversary. (1 Sam. 17)
    - a. He is referred to as "champion" three times. (4, 23, 51).
    - b. He was 9 feet, 6 inches tall and wore armor that weighed at least 150 pounds. (5, 6)
    - c. His spear head weighed 18 pounds. (7)
    - d. He proposed a "winner-take-all" fight. (16)
    - e. His appeal made Israel "greatly afraid." (11, 24)
    - f. He had a high price on his head. (25)
    - g. Saul, a great warrior in his own right, urged David not to fight him. (33)
    - h. He was as the lion and bear David had fought. (34-37)
    - i. His eyesight was not poor. It was good enough for him to see that David was a "youth." (42)
    - j. He was a giant, ferocious warrior who defied an entire army.

#### ***Goliath's secret out! He was a weakling***

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Goliath was a sickly giant weakened by glandular problems and probably didn't notice David hurling the fatal pebble at his head, researchers theorize.

Dr. Pauline Rabin, a psychiatrist, and her husband, Dr. David Rabin, an endocrinologist, both of Vanderbilt University, claim there is evidence in the *Bible* that Goliath might have suffered from a combination of ailments which made him physically vulnerable to the small rocks David loaded into his slingshot.

"There is considerable evidence in the *Bible* especially in Samuel, that Goliath didn't take much notice of David. He was disdainful of the small, slight David and took no notice when he picked up the stones," Mrs. Rabin said Wednesday.

"**HE DIDN'T DUCK** or raise his shield and consequently, David apparently had little trouble striking him with the stone," she said.

The two say Goliath suffered from gigantism and possibly a rare disorder called endocrine neoplasia, which causes tumors to grow in the endocrine gland.

"It would explain why Goliath was so large, why he couldn't really see David and why he was felled by a small rock from a slingshot," Mrs. Rabin said.

She said one reason Goliath probably took little notice of David was because the disease had put pressure on his optic nerve, resulting in diminished vision.

"He could see but it was sort of like a horse wearing blinders. He had to turn his whole head. He also probably had a bone defect in the skull and probably had a lot of cysts," the psychologist said. (Reprint from *Dayton Daily News*)

- C. The source of David's courage: "The battle is the Lord's."
1. David's courage was not because of:
    - a. His personal size or strength.
    - b. His military armament. Saul tried to put his armor on David but he refused to wear it because he had not "proved" it.
    - c. Numbers or the support of others.
  2. David's courage was founded upon his great faith in God.
    - a. He knew that God was with him.
    - b. He knew "the battle is the Lord's." (1 Sam. 17:47)
    - c. He knew "the Lord does not save with sword and spear." God has given victory in some most unusual ways.
      - 1) The victory over Jericho. (Josh. 6; Heb. 11:30)
      - 2) Gideon's victory over the Midianites. (Jud. 7)
- D. "The battle is the Lord's" today.
1. There is a need for people of deep faith and courage who will go out against the "giants" of today.
  2. The "giants" of today include:
    - a. Worldliness.
    - b. Compromise.
    - c. Indifference.
    - d. Lack of growth.
  3. All of these "giants," and more, can be conquered if we will have the same faith and courage of David.

# Jesus: Our Perfect Example

## I. The Necessity of Following the Example of Jesus

- A. In Scripture, the admonitions to follow after and imitate Jesus are many. (1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Pet. 2:21; John 13:1-15; 1 John 3:16)
  - 1. The reason is obvious: He was perfect.
  - 2. There was never a:
    - a. Situation for which He did not have the right answer.
    - b. Problem for which He did not have the right solution.
    - c. Circumstance for which He could not recommend the best advice.
- B. He is the standard or model by which we are to mold our lives. (John 13:15)
- C. His life, as well as His will for us, forms the basis of all that we are to think and do in this life.

## II. The Basis of His Example: The Humanity of Jesus

- A. Jesus “made Himself of no reputation” (ASV & NASV: “emptied himself”). (Phil. 2:7)
  - 1. He gave up the environment of glory.
  - 2. “Christ did not empty Himself of Godhood. He did not cease to be what He essentially and eternally was.” (W.E. Vine, *Expository Dict. of NT Words*, p. 365)
  - 3. He left the riches of heaven (2 Cor. 8:9)
    - a. The footnote in the NASV on Philippians 2:7 states, “i.e., laid aside His privileges.”
    - b. He had no regard for self. His regard was only for others.
- B. He took upon Himself the “form of a bondservant” and the “likeness of men” in “appearance as a man.” (Phil. 2:7-8)
  - 1. **Morphe**. “Denotes the special or characteristic form or feature of a person or thing; it is used with particular significance in the N.T., only of Christ, in Phil. 2:6-7, in the phrases ‘being in the form of God,’ and ‘taking the form of a servant.’” (Vine, 463)
  - 2. “The word became flesh.” (John 1:14; 2 John 7; 1 John 4:2)
    - a. He was born of the flesh. (Rom. 1:3)
    - b. He had a body prepared for Him. (Heb. 10:5)
    - c. He had a body of flesh and blood. (Heb. 2:14; Luke 24:39)
    - d. “God was manifested in the flesh.” (1 Tim. 3:16)
  - 3. How did humanity and deity come together? By the virgin birth. (Luke 1:26-35; Matt. 1:18; Gal. 4:4)
- C. Jesus had characteristics of humanity.
  - 1. He was subject to certain laws of human development.
    - a. He grew. (Luke 2:40, 52)

- b. He was subject to His parents. (Luke 2:51)
- 2. He possessed human attributes.
  - a. Hunger. (Matt. 4:2)
  - b. Weariness. (John 4:5-6)
  - c. Sleep. (Luke 8:23)
  - d. Agony. (Luke 22:44)
  - e. Compassion. (Matt. 9:36)
  - f. Sorrow and trouble. (Matt. 26:37-38)
  - g. Weeping. (John 11:35; Luke 19:41)
- 4. Though He was human, He was sinless. (John 8:46; 1 Pet. 2:22; 2 Cor. 5:21)
  - a. He was tempted. (Heb. 4:15)
  - b. What kept Him sinless?
    - 1) Not His deity. If so, what kind of example would He be to us. (cf. 1 Pet. 2:21-22)
    - 2) He resisted the devil. (Matt. 4:1-10; Jas. 4:7)
    - 3) He was made perfect through His suffering. (Heb. 2:9-10; 5:8-9)

### III. Some Areas in Which Jesus Is Our Example

- A. Being subject unto parents. (Luke 2:51; Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20)
- B. Being “about His Father’s business” at an early age. (Luke 2:49; Eccl. 12:1)
- C. Living for others. (Mark 10:45; Phil. 2:4)
- D. Accomplishing the will of God in one’s life. (John 6:38; Matt. 26:39)
- E. Attitude.
  - 1. Attitude is a person’s disposition, his frame of mind.
  - 2. The attitude of Jesus was perfect. His point of view was always of the very highest sort.
  - 3. His attitude is declared and enjoined upon us. (Phil. 2:5)
    - a. Toward fallen man. (John 10:17-18; Gal. 1:14)
    - b. Meekness. (John 13:12-17)
      - 1) There was never a time when He was not completely under the control of the Father. (John 4:34) Such control is what meekness is all about.
      - 2) In every situation He did as the Father would have Him to do even in the face of extreme difficulty. (Luke 22:41-42; John 6:38) Such meekness is necessary for obedience.
    - c. A willingness to forgive.
      - 1) His willingness to forgive is remarkable. It is demonstrated after He had suffered immense physical pain and immeasurable spiritual suffering. (Luke 23:34)
      - 2) His was a sincere compassion. It is seen in His heaviness of heart over the Jews. (Matt. 23:37)

d. Love.

- 1) No one had greater love than He did. (John 15:13)
- 2) He practiced and taught the principle of Acts 20:35.
- 3) He not only taught His followers to love all men, even their enemies (Matt. 5:43-44), He also set the proper example by bidding all men to come to Him. (Matt. 11:28-30)

F. Well-doing.

1. Even as a child, Jesus went about doing good. (Luke 2:49)
2. He was constantly teaching. (Matt. 4:23)
  - a. He told each person, each audience, what they needed to hear.
    - 1) Nicodemus. (John 3:1ff.)
    - 2) The Samaritan woman. (John 4:5ff.)
    - 3) When teaching the Pharisees, in every instance He emphasized the truth that was applicable on that particular occasion.
  - b. In constantly teaching truth, He did the very best thing anyone can do for another person.
3. He was a man of immense energy, totally committed to the task He was to accomplish.
  - a. He did not just admit the need, not just plan to do good, nor just resolve to do so, but He went about *doing* good.
  - b. He taught:
    - 1) *Doing* in the Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. 7:21-23)
    - 2) That there will be a day of reckoning and that it will be greatly concerned with our constancy and consistency in well-doing. (Matt. 25:14ff.)

G. Emulating an example.

1. He was the perfect photograph of God. (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:15; John 1:18; 14:8-9)
2. He perfectly:
  - a. Manifested the essential nature and the true characteristics of the Father by declaring in His life and attitude the righteousness of the Father.
  - b. Radiated the light of God. (John 12:44-46; 1:9)
    - 1) He is the perfect revelation of God.
    - 2) We are to follow His example of reflection by being a reflection of Him. (Matt. 5:14-16)
  - c. Radiated the love of God. (John 15:9-14)
    - 1) All that we can know of love, all that we can ever know of it in its pure form, is seen in Christ's illustration of it.
    - 2) As He was the perfect illustration of the love of God, we should be examples of His love to others. (1 John 4:11-12)



- d. Radiated the eternal life which is of God. (John 12:50; 11:25)
  - 1) We must live to show others our confidence in the affirmations of that eternal life. (2 Tim. 1:12)
  - 2) Since He is our assurance of the resurrection, we should be an example of it to a doubting and skeptical world. (Rom. 6:23)

### **Conclusion**

1. In every learning situation, there is an example given to illustrate fact. Jesus Christ is our example.
2. Since we have such a great leader, let us follow His every step, emulate His every mood and mimic His every action.



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