

“The GOSPEL FAITH MESSENGER” Ministry
*“Equipping For Leadership In The Nations
Through The Power Of The Holy Spirit.”*

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This booklet is dedicated to those who believed enough in me to give me the opportunities to develop in ministry and leadership. There have been several and I would like to especially mention just a few: Clarence Hunt (Jean’s Dad and my first Pastor – now with the Lord); Peter Morrow (now with the Lord), and Ian Bilby, who all taught me principles that I have been able to build upon.

It is also dedicated to those who genuinely and sincerely want to be equipped for leadership through the prophetic principles of the Word of God, and are prepared to apply them in their lives.

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Forewords

Spiritual Leadership is described in the Scriptures as a **gift** (Romans 12:8). It is not presented as “better” than other Spiritual Gifts but as a different gift. It is the kind of gift that demands diligence, attracts attention and ultimately makes a difference; in some cases I would say makes **the** difference!! So if a person has that gift, then for God’s and the Kingdom’s sake, they had better use it . . . well!

In this booklet Rodney talks plainly and powerfully about Spiritual Leadership. Anyone who has ears to hear what he is saying **will be** a better leader for the hearing. Great leadership is about connection; connection with God; with others who can prepare us for leadership; connection with vision, and connection with those we are called to walk and work with.

In this booklet these factors are identified and, in simple terms, those of us who are called to lead are given keys and steps to make these connections in all of life. May God bless all those who do!!
~ *Pastor Bruce McDonald* (“The Life Church,” Auckland, New Zealand).

There is a call going out today across the Church for leadership. Not just people who can speak confidently, or pray for people, but leadership that has integrity and courage. Integrity because there are too many leaders that are motivated by the love of money and status, and courage because there is a lack of Holy Spirit-trained-and-led-leaders who will shy away from the pressure that is placed on them to grow their church a certain way by doing certain programmes and fitting into certain expectations that are placed on them by others.

If we can grasp hold of the principles that Rodney has placed in this booklet and allow the Holy Spirit to impact our lives, who knows where it will lead us? Rodney has once again put into print what is the very heartbeat of God for leaders today - people who are impacted by God, able to hear God’s voice and are courageous enough to obey. Thank you, Rodney, for putting such foundational truths into print. Keep it up. ~ *Pastor Peter Ridling* (Greymouth Elim Church, New Zealand).

Introduction

In Christian ministry **effective** LEADERSHIP is vital. It is so vital that not only is the future of the prospective leader at stake, but often hundreds – and even thousands of others – are affected in either a positive or negative way. I have observed over many years men and women rising up into positions of leadership – yet after a few years they drop out (for varying reasons), never to be heard of again ministry-wise. The late Leonard Ravenhill was a man whose ministry impacted my life in the early stages of my leadership development. I can still remember him saying: “*The Christian highway is littered with ‘has-beens’*” – meaning that many start off with good intentions but do not last the distance. A further tragedy is that often those same “has-beens” fall into a worse state than they were in before they started out. Whether we like to admit it or not, there are many dangers associated with the call to leadership. If we are not adequately equipped and warned against these hazards, then we, too, can fall prey to their snares (many of which come in the form of attractive temptations). The Apostle Paul said to Archippus: **“Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfil it”** (Colossians 4:17). **You can be sure that when the Bible says, “Take heed,” it means what it says.**

To be effectively equipped for lasting leadership, we must have more than a Theological Training. I am not saying that Theological Training is not good, but on its own, it is not sufficient to enable us to overcome all the obstacles that are against the man and women of God in leadership. I remember on one of my ministry trips to England sitting and talking with three young men. All had had three years of Bible College training and all had, at that time, been in Pastoral ministry for about five years. As I have not had the benefits of that kind of training, I was sincerely interested to know how they were coping in ministry and what their Theological Training had benefited them now that they were in ministry. I sincerely wanted to know. So when I asked them, “What benefits

have you received in your Theological Training now that that you are in Christian ministry?" I was a little surprised by their answer. After discussing my question amongst themselves, they then replied to me that the one area they felt the benefit of their Theological Training was in the area of helping them develop a personal devotional life. But in every other way, they did not believe they had any great advantages. Their answer was a little disturbing, because so many enter Theological Training Colleges with high expectations that they are going to come out fully equipped for ministry. Those three young men had been in ministry long enough to know that there a number of other things that are necessary to being properly equipped for ministry. Christianity, and Christian ministry, is more than having theories and sermons. If we cannot prove that our theories work, then why do we hold on to them?

Leadership is one of the highest vocations in life this side of eternity. God's heart is that we not only develop into good leaders, but that we also can enjoy the journey as we go. Because leadership involves leading people, it is imperative that we develop good people skills, good communication skills, and a good listening ear (often at times when we would rather not)! We leaders will accomplish so much more when we lead people because they have delegated us their authority to lead them, rather than our trying to lead purely from a positional authority of leadership. We can always lead people further when they recognize and respect our leadership calling – more than if we demand them to submit to our elected position of leadership.

May this message help you to gain more insight into some of the principles of leadership that are presented here, so that you can be much more fruitful in your service to the King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ. God bless you.

~ *Rodney W. Francis.*

EQUIPPING FOR LEADERSHIP

By **Rodney W. Francis** (Hamilton, New Zealand)

The cry worldwide, in both the secular and the spiritual, is for genuine, honest leaders to rise up and **lead** their people in the direction they are meant to be going. But before leaders can lead others, **they must first themselves be led into a strong conviction of where they must go, and why they are going there.** For the Christian leader his/her “strong conviction” has to be birthed in his/her heart from the heart of God. Christian leadership is all about leading God’s people to the place where GOD wants them, and not man. This booklet is a challenge to us all to raise the standard of leadership in the Christian community, and beyond.

Leadership is both a privilege and a responsibility. It is a privilege to be chosen by God to lead His people on in the revelation He has for them. Yet it is also a great responsibility, because we have to learn how to lead people in such a way that they want to follow us in that revelation of God. And herein lies the challenge of leadership. Often we find ourselves trying to lead a “mixed multitude” of personalities, some of whom do not think that they need what you have to feed them, and do not need to be taken where God has called you to take them. This is why it is so important that we learn the principles of LOVE – loving God and loving people; because if we don’t we will soon find ourselves running short on patience. This then turns to our operating out of re-action rather than seeing beyond the “annoyances” that can come our way when we are

inspired and running with a vision, which we believe is best for all following our lead. People skills are essential in being a good leader – unfortunately, many church divisions are caused by leaders not handling their people with more wisdom. Wisdom is “skilfulness in applying knowledge.” Knowing what to do with what we know is very important; especially in this responsibility of handling people. Sometimes we leaders can make the mistake of trying to handle everything on our own, when it can be so beneficial if we have developed a genuine relationship with other leaders who are proving themselves “successful” at handling people in difficult situations. It is a fact that some things are “caught” more than they are “taught.” So let us gain the benefits of those who have successfully walked before us.

There are four aspects to becoming a leader for God - and maintaining it - that are currently proving to be a real challenge to me. Let me share them with you briefly:

ASPECT No. 1

TO IMPACT OTHERS, LEADERS MUST FIRST BE IMPACTED BY GOD!

What does it mean to be impacted? The dictionary gives us this description: “1. the act of one body, object, etc., striking another; collision. 2. the force with which one thing hits another or with which two objects collide. 3. the impression made by an idea, cultural movement, social group, etc. 4. to drive or press (an object) firmly into (another object, thing, etc.) or (of two objects) to be driven or pressed firmly together” (Collins). If we translate the words “object” and “thing” into a more personal relationship between God and us, we get the picture of our need for “a collision” with God (in a good kind of way). The greater the “collision,” the greater the impact!

Leaders must have more than good ideas; they must have God’s ideas firmly impressed, even driven deep into their heart, mind, conviction and direction. Another word we could use is “encounter.” Until we have an encounter with God that is strong enough to impact our life, then we will not be able to display any real mantle of spiritual authority among the people. It is one thing to be a delegated leader among men; it is entirely another to be God’s leader of men. In the Bible, when God impacted leaders’ lives, He always left an indelible mark on them!

Listen to Job's testimony:

- **Job:**

“I was at ease, but He has broken me asunder (“into parts or pieces” - Collins); ***He has also taken me by my neck and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for His mark*** (“aim, as being closely watched” - Strong's) (Job 16:12, KJV). (Some translations say the “he” in this verse is Satan; others say it is God. I am using it in the context that it is God.)

Job was a great example and leader. His greatness was birthed out of his relationship with God. So good was Job's testimony that God allowed Satan “loose” on him; yet Job came through his ordeal with twice as much as he had before his testing. He carried God's mark!

- **Jacob:**

In Genesis 32:24-32 we read of Jacob getting caught up in a wrestling match with an angel. It was such a grapple that it left Jacob with a permanent, physical limp – who today would believe that God would do such a thing! (How could you explain it to your fellow Christians if that happened to you?) Jacob had been impacted by one of God's angels to the point he carried His “mark” for the rest of his life. But the result of that impacting was that from that day on, Jacob not only carried a new name (Israel), but he also carried a new spiritual authority that everyone knew and respected (see Genesis 35:5).

The name “Jacob” means: “he will take by the heel,” or “following after, supplanter, schemer, trickster, swindler” (AMP), while the name “Israel” means: “he will rule as God” (Strong's) or “ruling with God” (Young's). Something happened to, and in, Jacob

in that encounter that night that he was never the same again – both spiritually and physically!

• **Moses:**

In Exodus 2:23-25 we read of the children of Israel crying out to God for deliverance from the bondage they found themselves in. They had become slaves in Egypt, even to the point of working in their slime pits day after day. The harder things got for them the more they cried out to God. God heard their cry! But it seems that **God was unable to respond to their cry (prayers) for help until He could find a trusted leader who was willing to do what God wanted.** Exodus 3 tells us of God finding that leader - Moses. That man had been out in the wilderness for 40 years, far away from his people in bondage in Egypt. Moses was by then 80 years old!

The day came when Moses found himself at the extreme backside of the desert (Exodus 3:1). There he met God in a whole new way. An angel appeared to him out of a burning bush and told Moses of the need for someone to go back to Egypt to release the Israelites from their bondage. Moses was that man! (Exodus 3:10).

God so impacted Moses' life at the burning bush that he would never be the same again. That experience with God enabled Moses to go back to Egypt and bring the people of God out of their captivity (Exodus Chapters 4 to 14). He brought them out of Egypt by mighty signs, wonders and miracles . . . back to the mountain of God (Horeb/Sinai), the same place where God first impacted Moses as an individual. When Moses brought the people to the place where God had powerfully impacted his life, God was now able to impact the entire nation . . . not by a burning bush, but by setting the whole mountain on fire! (See Exodus 19).

• **Gideon** (*Judges Chapters 6 to 8:28*):

Our first glimpse of the man Gideon is that of a frustrated, confused, frightened yet angry, impoverished man who was in captivity with all the Israelites to the Midianites. He was “**threshing wheat in a wine press**” (verse 11), trying to eke out sufficient bread to live on, when he was visited by an angel of God. He had heard the stories of the miracle-working God of Israel, but he obviously had not had any first-hand encounter with them, or God. Until now . . . ! The angel challenged him to rise to lead Israel out of her bondage. After Gideon proved God with his fleece (*Judges 6:36-40*), and then heard the amazing testimony in the camp of the Midianites how he (Gideon) would triumph over them (*Judges 7:9-22*), Gideon rose up to become a great leader. The impact the angel made on him was such that, not only did Gideon’s life change dramatically, but so did the nation, and even history itself! Listen to this mighty statement:

“Thus Midian was subdued before the Israelites and did not raise its head again. During Gideon’s lifetime, the land enjoyed peace forty years” (*Judges 8:28, NIV*).

What an incredible testimony to Gideon’s leadership. One life, impacted by God, can make all the difference! That life can lead people from defeat to victory!

• **Samson** (*Judges Chapters 13 to 16*):

Until his “fall from grace” Samson was a leader whose life was mightily impacted by the Spirit of God. It made him invincible to the enemy. No matter what they did, Samson always upstaged them. It is interesting to note that Samson was defeated from within himself before he was ever defeated and

overthrown by the enemy (the Philistines). Fortunately he later repented and died in great victory (Judges 16:28-31).

• **The Apostle Paul** (*Acts Chapters 9, 22 and 26; Galatians 6:17*):

A zealous, religious bigot until his “Damascus Road” meeting with Jesus, Paul’s life was so impacted by what happened that he was totally transformed to become a devoted follower of Jesus Christ. That “collision” with Jesus became the basis of his Christian life and ministry, and, next to Jesus Christ Himself, Paul must rate as one of the greatest leaders Christianity has ever produced! The prophetic keys to his ministry were given to him by Ananias in Acts 22:14-15:

“Then he (Ananias) said, ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.’”

Without that prophetic foundation in his life, Paul would never have been the great apostle and leader he was. It is the God-factor that makes all the difference! (See my booklet, “God’s Supernatural Call!”).

Paul gave all to Jesus Christ to please Him, and to fulfil his leadership call. He declared: *“But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world . . . from now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus”* (Galatians 6:14-17).

Paul was “marked in his body” for the will and call of God. It does cost something to be a leader for God.

Likewise today, we also need to be impacted by God Himself, if we are going to be genuine and effective Christian leaders! Why is this so? The reason is because in seeking to fulfil the will and call of God in a leadership position, people do not understand, nor do they often recognize that calling within us. The power of opinions and bias are very strong – even in Christians! Moses thought the people would have understood the call of God on his life, but they did not:

“Now when he (Moses) was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand. And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and tried to reconcile them, saying, ‘Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?’ But he who did his neighbour wrong pushed him away, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?’ Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian, where he had two sons” (see Acts 7:23-37).

We, too, can fall into the same trap that Moses did, believing that the people (including our friends) will understand the call of God on our life. I remember that special morning as an 18-year-old, rounding up the cows for milking at 5:30 a.m., when suddenly I was sovereignly baptized in the Holy Spirit and began to speak a spiritual language I had never learned. Right in the midst of those cows I was in the presence of the Lord! It was right there that God clearly spoke to me and told me He was raising me up to be a minister of the Gospel, and that He would open doors for me to

preach straight away. And that is exactly what happened. Yet many could not “see” that I was called, etc. It was difficult breaking through the many barriers that seemed to get in the way. That experience – along with a number of others at different times – has left a deep impression (a mark) upon me. I still build my ministry today upon those things that God spoke to me back at the beginning of my walk with Him: *“If you will get to know My voice, and will do what I ask you, there is nowhere in this world where you and I cannot go together – and we not be successful.”* Those words are the prophetic foundation of my life and ministry. Those words have been the “key” to the things we have accomplished in more than 45 years of Christian ministry.

Over the years I have noticed that people really do not understand the call of God upon our lives. So, unless we are greatly impacted by God Himself, then it is very likely that discouragement will defeat us somewhere along the way. The Christian pathway is littered with “has beens” – people who believed they were called of God, yet today are disillusioned, discouraged and defeated; and are not fulfilling that call which once they believed they had received from God Himself. **The call has to be strong – and of God – if we are going to overcome all the obstacles that will come across our pathway through the journey of life.**

ASPECT No. 2

WE MUST BE TRAINED AND EQUIPPED

No matter how great or supernatural our call is from God, we still need to be trained, disciplined or mentored by other Christian leaders. Who those leaders and people are will depend on where you fellowship as a Christian, **and how wise and discerning you are in recognizing those you need “to speak into your life.”** Most of us understand what it means to be trained (it may, or may not include going to a Bible College). In Genesis 14:14-16 we read of Abram having trained servants:

“When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan. During the night Abram divided his men to attack them and he routed them . . . He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people” (NIV).

Abram trained his own servants. They were “instructed” or “initiated” into the art of warfare. They not only had the theories, but they were also practiced. They had learned the balance of a knowledge that they knew worked - theory and practice working together. Because Abram trained them himself, he knew their capabilities – and their strengths and their

weaknesses. One of our GFM Team, Kerry Wright, often quotes: *“If the student hasn’t learned, the teacher hasn’t taught.”*

If the theories we have do not hold us, nor work for us in the battle, they are no good! **We need to be equipped with things that work!** Abram had to know he could rely on those men in the time of testing. Their ongoing victory and future depended on them fulfilling that for which he had trained them!

- **So, what about you?**
- **Can you be depended on in the same way, Christian?**
- **Are you being equipped?**
- **What does it mean to be “equipped”?**

The word “equipped” comes from the Greek word “katartizo,” meaning “to complete thoroughly, i.e. repair or adjust; prepare to make fully ready - put in full order, perfectly equip. It is used of fully furnishing someone or something for some given purpose; bringing to full potential.” The dictionary says, “to furnish with (necessary supplies, etc.); to provide with abilities, understanding, etc.; to dress out, attire; to fit out (like a ship)” (Collins).

This is the mission and commission of the five-fold ministries we read about in Ephesians 4:11-16. Their task is to make Christians ready for the purpose of God in their lives. What a challenge! But what a difference!

- **Are you being equipped?**
- **Who is equipping you?**
- **If you are not being equipped, what are you doing about it?**
- **Would you recognize any of the five-fold ministries if**

you met them, or saw them in action?

- Seriously, how would you know a five-fold ministry gifting? Most would more than likely ask their leaders – but would your leaders recognize a five-fold ministry, if he or she were in your midst?

It is imperative that we know the giftings and capabilities of those who are standing with us: those who we are trusting to help equip us in the purposes of God. **We must be sure they have caught the vision of God (for themselves), and then have come to own that vision. Otherwise they will not be able to impart that vision into us.** This does not negate the personal responsibility that we have, to do all that is within our power to prepare ourselves in such a way that the will and call of God can be fulfilled in and through us. Consider the truth of this Scripture:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:1-2; read whole chapter).

We live in a day where it is very easy to blame someone else as to why things do not work out the way we thought they should have. But when it comes to the will and call of God being fulfilled within our lives, then we can blame no one except ourselves for where we find ourselves at right now. Have we really taken heed to the above verses and applied them in our life, or are we waiting for a “magical moment” when suddenly everything is going to be forever changed with people clamouring for our ministry around the world? I’m sorry but that is not the way it works. The Scripture clearly says

that if **we** will present our bodies a living sacrifice (that means God comes first in everything), according to God's requirements, and **will** make those decisions to take us away from the dictates of the ways of the world, and **will** work on the renewing of our mind, **then we will be able to prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

- **Prove . . . the will of God!**
- **Prove what is that good . . . will of God!**
- **Prove what is that good and acceptable . . . will of God!**
- **Prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect . . . will of God!**
- **Yes, we can prove the perfect will of God for our life!**

If we look at Colossians 4:17 we see this challenge: "And say to Archippus, ***Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfil it.***" We need to put our name in there in the place of Archippus, as it is a Christian principle that is being spelt out here. God gives us a call, and the direction and purpose of that call – but **we** have to apply it in our lives in such a way that it is fulfilled. **There is a huge difference between the receiving of a call, and the fulfilling of that call!** God entrusts us to work out that which He has placed within us.

Before God can trust us with people to fulfil the vision and call He has given to us, we must first learn how to run and support another man's vision – to make someone else's vision a greater reality. It is all a part of our equipping. This is the time when much equipping takes place because we are in an active involvement with someone else who is in the process of "doing it."

We cannot fulfil our vision and mandate from God without others

being given the opportunity to become a part of the same anointing, same mantle, etc., so the ministry is not built around one man, but will carry on even greater through those who have been equipped or “brought to full potential.” **To place a vulnerable person in the wrong place in the heat of battle is a sure cause of defeat.** That is why we all need to discover our own strengths and weaknesses, and be equipped to win the battle rather than lose it! Remember, to be equipped means to be repaired, adjusted, prepared, and to be made fully ready to fulfil the will and call of God!

• DAVID - THE GREAT EQUIPPER

When it comes to equipping, David had God-given abilities to bring the best out in people. He knew how to turn failures into leaders – and experts! Let us learn from him as we look at how he trained and equipped those who came and submitted themselves to him and his leadership (even though, at the time, he was in hiding in the wilderness).

“David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father’s household heard about it, they went down to him there. All those who were in distress, or in debt and discontented gathered around him, and he became their leader. About four hundred men were with him” (1 Samuel 22:1-2, NIV).

David had been called, chosen and anointed by God to become the king of Israel. However, the present ruling king was Saul. Saul had been anointed to lead Israel (1 Samuel 10:1) and had set out on a course of seeking to improve the strength of the army of Israel. Whenever Saul **“saw any strong man, or any valiant** (“strength, might, valour” - Wilson’s) **man, he took him unto him”** (1 Samuel 14:52,

KJV). The NIV says, “. . . **whenever Saul saw a mighty or brave man, he took him into his service.**” The Amplified Bible says, “. . . **whenever Saul saw any mighty or [outstandingly] courageous man, he attached him to himself.**”

Saul went for the best! But Saul himself could not live up to the expectations of an anointed leader and man of God. In 1 Samuel 15 he falls into disobedience. When challenged by the Prophet Samuel, he makes out he has obeyed God, thus revealing self-deception. When exposed by the **“bleating of the sheep”** (verse 14), Saul confessed his disobedience was because he feared the people! By the time we get to 1 Samuel 17 we discover that **the fear that was in the leader’s heart had now permeated through the whole army of Israel!** Those mighty and brave fighting men had been reduced to frightened and broken men (including David’s three older brothers)! They had been wrongly influenced and affected by a negative leader; they also persecuted and scoffed at their younger brother. They did not understand what God was doing, and about to do, in and through David’s life. The best in Israel were turned into “shattered and disillusioned wrecks!” On the other hand, David, because of Saul’s disobedience, had now been anointed to be king over Israel – anointed by God for the task of leadership, yet not able to publicly function. Saul was still physically on the throne – no longer anointed, but still holding the position of the leadership of Israel. A lot of inner refining takes place in the hearts of “the called and anointed of God” at these times.

The more David’s leadership strengths became known, the more “threatened and insecure” Saul became . . . to the point that Saul actively set out to destroy David. David was forced to flee to the wilderness, living in caves and on the mountains (1 Samuel Chapters

18 to 31). Yet, more and more, people began seeing a “hope of a better future” under David’s leadership. In spite of David being “on the run” and being hunted by the ruling king (Saul), men everywhere were making decisions about where, and to whom, their allegiance lay! **Because the anointing of God was on David, he was growing stronger and stronger** - and because the anointing of God had left Saul, he was becoming weaker and weaker in his leadership. Saul’s leadership was not producing good results! Many of Saul’s men began defecting from his leadership to David’s leadership! (This scenario continues to this day in the lives of many Christians and churches). 1 Samuel 22:1-2 tells us 400 “***distressed, in debt and discontented men***” sought David out in the wilderness to be their leader!! (That reveals how important they felt it was to be under the right leader!) Those 400 men were:

- “***in distress***”: meaning “anguish, distress, straitness” (Strong’s); “to distress by oppression” (Wilson’s); “1. to cause mental pain to; upset badly” (Collins).
- “***in debt***”: meaning “to lend on interest” (Strong’s); “to lend on usury, to loan” (Wilson’s) “1. something that is owed, such as money, goods, or services. 2. bad debt; a debt that has little or no prospect of being paid. 3. an obligation to pay or perform something; liability. 4. the state of owing something” (Collins).
- “***discontented***”: meaning “bitter of soul” (Wilson’s); “not satisfied with one’s condition, or lot in life” (Source Unknown).

Those 400 men made a major decision. They could have stayed on in the “security” of a job in the army of Israel (under Saul’s leadership), but become increasingly more frustrated, unhappy and unfulfilled, or . . . they could defect and join themselves to the persecuted David who was living in a cave! There was a cost to pay (rejection

by Saul) – but they made the decision to change! They were sick of being failures under King Saul! So . . . they came to David and asked him to take them in. They submitted to him . . . and he accepted them as they were: **“distressed, in debt and discontented.”** Submission meant **they gave David permission to “speak into their lives,” to make changes, to discipline them, to bring correction . . . whatever was necessary to get them from where they were to where they were meant to be – effectively equipped for the service of God.**

They knew David could help them to succeed in life as men of God. They did not know how to change from failure to success (of themselves); otherwise they would have already done it! But David did! (And they knew that). So they submitted themselves to David’s leadership, saying (in effect): *“Please help us! . . .change us! . . . we want to be successful! . . . ”* (Like them, we must also be willing to let those equipping us “speak into our lives.” Otherwise it simply becomes a matter of *“a man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still”!*)

- **David addressed their problems.**
- **He challenged and changed their attitudes.**
- **He trained them . . . and many others who also came to him.**
- **He trained and equipped them to be “experts in war!”**

1 Chronicles 12 tells us about David’s army (at that time over 600 strong at Ziklag – 1 Chronicles 12:1 & 1 Samuel 27:1-6):

- ***They were trained to use both hands . . . right and left***
(1 Chronicles 12:2).

This speaks of addressing areas of both strengths and weaknesses.

It is more than relying upon our natural talents and abilities. Weaknesses can be adjusted and even “strengthened” under the right leadership.

- **They separated themselves unto David** (1 Chronicles 12:8).

This speaks of commitment to the man, the cause, and the sorting out of their priorities, as to what was really important to them for their future. They saw David as maybe their “last opportunity” to do something worthwhile with their lives (which had been previously wrecked by Saul’s fear and poor leadership).

- **They were disciplined to be physically fit . . . “they were as swift as gazelles** (“small, graceful antelope” - Collins) **in the mountains”** (1 Chronicles 12:8, NIV).

They had to be able to endure hardship, to “last the distance,” so as to not be defeated by the laziness of the flesh. (We, today, also must have a “spiritual and physical fitness” about us that will enable us to last the distance. This has to be done individually, as you cannot do it for me, and I cannot do it for you.)

- **They were sure-footed** (1 Chronicles 12:8).

David trained them to know how to quickly traverse difficult terrain, without spraining or breaking their ankles (that would render them totally useless in warfare and life-threatening situations). This also speaks of being confident in the strategies that you have learned through the training methods of the leader. It also means that you can clearly see where you are treading, and can quickly head in the direction you have been equipped for.

- **David made them into captains over 100's and 1,000's!** (1 Chronicles 12:14-18).

They were so changed by David's equipping methods that they not only could do the afore-mentioned things, but they could also **be trusted with the responsibility of watching over other men's lives** (which is what leadership is all about)!

- **They could cross the Jordan River in flood** (1 Chronicles 12:15).

This was no easy task. If it was, why did someone not dive in and retrieve the axe head in Elisha's day? (2 Kings 6:1-7). David built them into brave and courageous men who were willing to tackle obstacles – and take risks - that others avoided.

- **Their hearts had to be “knitted”** (“joined in heart and affection”) **with David's** (1 Chronicles 12:17).

To be effectively trained and equipped on a personal basis meant that there had to be the forming of close, personal relationships. Each had to know they could trust and rely upon the other. There could be no room for “letting the leader and/or the side down” when the pressure was on, and when the going got tough. David had to know his men, their calibre, character, resilience, what each could and could not do in given circumstances. That is what training and equipping is all about.

The process of equipping for leadership could not effectively begin until David had that commitment from those who came to him, that they were there to “help him” to fulfil the purpose of God for his (David's) life! When they were committed to his

vision and purpose, he was committed to getting them where they needed to be: that process is called **“a knitting of heart one to the other.”** David warned them that if they came with a wrong motivation or purpose to undermine his calling in God, then God Himself would deal with them. Once that commitment was given, **“the Spirit came upon Amasai”** (the chief of the captains/leaders) to bring a prophetic assurance, and the confirmation of the peace of God through such a knitting of their hearts to him. It was then that David **“received them and made them captains”** (See 1 Chronicles 12:16-18). David valued the prophetic ministry and held it in high respect.

Do not under-estimate what is being said here. Developing a close relationship with the person you are allowing to mentor and equip you is very important. To allow someone to mentor you, you must first recognize that they do have the ability to do that. That ability is seen through the fruit and active works of their fulfilling their calling in God. (It is no use being mentored by someone who has no fruit to show for their teachings and example!) This is where short-term overseas mission ventures are so good. Whenever I take others with me, it is a time of fellowship, relationship-building, sharing, and “throwing them in the deep end” so they can experience what it is like in ministry, spending lots of time talking about the will of God, etc. I have seen numbers go on to fulfil a fruitful ministry after being on such trips. Why? It is because it is more about relationship, than being in a classroom setting. It is personal, and it is real. It is where the character is revealed, and it is where the potential is also more clearly seen.

In 1 Chronicles 12:33, 35-36 (KJV) we are told three times they (David’s men) were **“expert in war.”**

- **“expert”**: meaning “to arrange, put in order (in a very wide variety of applications)” (Strong’s); “to set in order” (Wilson’s); “set in order, array (“made ready by training and experience of being put to the test”) - one who has learned knowledge and skill” (Source Unknown); “a person who has extensive skill or knowledge in a particular field” (Collins).

David worked on those discontents . . . turned their lives around and made them into experts! David trained and equipped his men in such a way that they knew and understood what they had to do . . . and what had to be done. This is what is recorded of the sons of Issachar, who were on David’s team:

“of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command” (1 Chronicles 12:32).

How did the sons of Issachar obtain that kind of knowledge and understanding? Through their personal commitment to God, and to David; through their own commitment, and through using the benefits of their prophetic heritage! (See my book, “Developing Prophetic Ministry”). Their giftings and callings were proven to David to be trustworthy – and, as a result, he trusted their decision-making ability over hundreds of his men. They were the fruit of his equipping principles! Being “good” was not good enough for David; he had the ability to turn them into experts, which was being “very good” at what they did. And they were!

Those men could **“keep rank”** (1 Chronicles 12:33):

- **“rank”**: meaning “to arrange, as a battle, a vineyard (to hoe); hence to muster” (Strong’s); “to set the battle in array”

(Wilson's). "Muster" means "1. to call together (numbers of men) for duty, inspection, etc." (Collins).

- **"rank"**: (1 Chronicles 12:38): meaning "to prepare and set in order a military array" (Strong's).

Stop and think for a moment what the Biblical meaning of the word "rank" is. David's men had to be able to do much more than "march in step," or "follow the leader." **They had to learn, and then carry responsibilities by having to strategize how to attack the enemy, and then lead others into that battle.** They had to know how to outwit the enemy and win with the least possible "casualties"; otherwise they answered to their mentor and leader.

- **They were not of "double-heart"** (1 Chronicles 12:33).

Divided loyalties are a real curse in Christianity. Far too many are held back from rising to greater effectiveness in God because they cannot make the hard decisions that will get them to be where they need to be going. Too many have what I call a "welfare society mentality": expecting others to "hand it to them on a plate" with little or no effort on their own part. Until we become single-minded on the will and call of God, we will never achieve very much – we will not make a huge impact for God! David made sure his men were of a single heart and mind. **"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways"** (James 1:8, KJV). Double-mindedness is a result of "sloppy" or "casual" believing – not being prepared to demonstrate by our actions the things we say we believe!

FOUR YEARS?

It seems that it was approximately four years between 1 Samuel

22:1-2 and 1 Chronicles 12. In those four years David made expert fighting men out of a bunch of “failures.” Those “failures” needed a leader like David to address their problems and weaknesses . . . to get them out of debt . . . to get their systems cleansed of the bad experiences of the past . . . to change them into men who were committed to making David king over Israel. They needed David to help them become valiant leaders! And David needed them to help make him king! They became of “*one heart*” (1 Chronicles 12:38) to make David king. And they did it! They did it in four years!

- **What can we accomplish in the next four years?**

Regardless of how we see ourselves right now, if we apply ourselves, seek out a leader (or leaders) who can “speak into our lives” to bring about positive change, etc., then there is no reason why any of us cannot be equipped to become good Christian leaders . . . experts . . . in this next period of time.

The need worldwide, right now, is for **the raising up of LEADERS . . . men and women who are IMPACTED BY GOD, TRAINED and EQUIPPED BY GOD’S LEADERS** to be of one heart to make Jesus Lord and King as together we gather in the end-time harvest.

- **Your future is in your hands – and it starts with a decision on what you are prepared to do in order to fulfil your God-given destiny!**

ASPECT No. 3

WE NEED TO BE EQUIPPED WITH SPIRITUAL INSIGHT AND THE PROPHETIC GIFTS

To be effectively equipped to face and conquer the challenges of a world caught up into secular humanism and false religions in ever-increasing numbers, leaders must have more than Bible knowledge, theological degrees and the like, if they are to make inroads for Jesus Christ, the risen Lord. It is imperative that **leaders:**

- **Know what it means to be baptized in the Holy Spirit** (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:1-4 & 1 Corinthians 2:1-16).
- **Are trained to be more discerning than others;**
- **Are experiencing the reality of exercising several of the nine Spiritual Gifts of 1 Corinthians 12; and**
- **Are motivated by the love of Jesus to see the divine possibilities and potential of those we mix with, and minister to.**

I say “more discerning than others” because the general level of discernment that operates within Christian circles today is quite

low. So many “get away with all sorts of things” because we blindly accept what is given out. Much of that which is called “of God” is not “of God” at all – it is an emotional, soulish and fleshly presentation. And we need to be able to discern the difference between that which “entertains the soul” and that which “feeds the spirit.” **Our spirit can never be fed through the entertainment of the soul!** The message of Jesus is not about a “stage show” on Sunday mornings! **It is about setting the captives free, equipping and making them whole to the glory of God.**

The need to be exercising Spiritual Gifts is very important. After being in Christian ministry for over 45 years, I can honestly say that the Prophetic Ministry of exercising Spiritual Gifts and obeying the voice of the Lord opens more doors of opportunity to minister Jesus than any other way I know. Far too many Christians have a theory on Spiritual Gifts, but do not know how to release them. Then others think it is for only a “privileged few” to exercise Spiritual Gifts, like Pastors and Church Leaders. (That idea has grown out of a basic distrust of leaders to allow their people the freedom to function in the Holy Spirit; so that becomes a good way of controlling them. How sad.)

Likewise the responsibility of leaders is to equip the people so they can rise to carry more responsibility *“in fulfilling the work of the ministry”*:

“And He (Jesus) gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be

children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ – from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” (Ephesians 4:11-16).

The Word of God carries the “blueprint” on how the Gospel is meant to be preached/proclaimed. **The Early Church Leaders relied very heavily upon the anointing of the Holy Spirit and the Spiritual Gifts to enable them to win the people to Christ.** They carried a power – the “dunamis” power – to impact their hearers with more than words (see my booklet, “The ‘Dunamis’ Power Of God!”). They healed the sick, cast out evil spirits, rebuked those who were bound by religious beliefs, and commanded all people to repent and believe on Jesus Christ. They knew they were called of God, empowered by God, and had an authority in the name of Jesus Christ to challenge the anti-Christ powers that take people into a Christless eternity. We should be challenged to do the same today.

- Are you being equipped according to the Scriptures, or are you relying on gaining Bible knowledge alone?
- Have you been baptized in the Holy Spirit and power?
- What evidence do you have to show you belong to Jesus Christ?
- How can you progress from where you are at right now, to where the Lord is calling you?
- What strategies do you have in place to bring you to a place of effective leadership?

- **Are you being influenced by prophetic and spiritually-gifted men and women of God, who know how to impart more of the life of God into you?**

Unless we are really serious about these things, we will find that life will quickly pass us by and, before we know it, we will be too old to fulfil our dream.

- **NOW is the time to be equipped!**
- **Tomorrow may be too late!**

ASPECT No. 4

WE MUST GUARD AGAINST FALLING (through Pride) AS A RESULT OF OUR BEING SUCCESSFULLY TRAINED AND EQUIPPED!!

The fact we get ourselves equipped does not necessarily make us immune to various temptations along the way. Church history is full of the accounts of men and women who, having started out well in Christian leadership and even succeeded in ministry, have then done things that have caused them to “fall from grace.” It is always a great tragedy when a good man or woman, successful in the Christian Ministry (and especially a leader) “crashes out” of things because pride enters in and clouds, then blinds their judgment. Uzziah was such a tragedy. Let us look briefly at that man’s life:

- **King Uzziah or Azariah** (2 Kings 14:21; 2 Chronicles 26):

“Uzziah” means “my strength is Jehovah” or “Jah is strong”; “Azariah” means “helped of Jah” or “Jah is keeper.” (Having the right meaning name does not stop one from falling!)

Uzziah became king of Judah at only 16 years of age. He came into

great responsibility at an early age. He served God, doing what was right in His sight. Uzziah had a mentor by the name of Zechariah, ***“who had understanding in the visions of God; and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper”*** (2 Chronicles 26:5). Zechariah was a prophetic man and had a huge influence upon Uzziah in his younger days. **His counsel and wisdom would have been one of the “secrets” behind Uzziah’s leadership successes, enabling him to accomplish amazing things.**

He (Uzziah) was a builder . . . of places, cities, things and men. He was a destroyer of the enemies’ walls (2 Chronicles 26:6), breaking down the walls of Gath, Jabneh and Ashdod. He established himself, with God’s (and Zechariah’s) help, as a conqueror of nations, namely the Philistines and the Arabians. He obviously subdued the Ammonites in such a way as to get them to give “gifts” unto him (2 Chronicles 26:7-8). His reputation as a “winning warrior” spread far and wide . . . even to Egypt.

Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem, towers in the desert, and dug out many wells. He owned large herds of cattle, and loved husbandry. His building of towers and digging of many wells was a well-executed strategy in giving him the advantage over the enemies of his day. The towers gave him the advantage of being able to see further into the distance and so be earlier warned of an approaching enemy army. The towers also were built close to the wells in order to govern who used them. Water is an absolute must in every person’s life. None of us live too long without water, especially in those hot, dry climates of the Middle East. And Uzziah controlled the water supplies! He also had a fighting army of 307,500 men serving under the command of 2,600 leaders (that’s an average of 118.27 men per leader!). Uzziah had everything going for him - even God helping him - because of his heart to seek after God.

He was a very creative Leader:

“ . . . he made in Jerusalem engines (“inventions, thoughtful works”), invented by cunning (“skilful”) men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks (“a corner, a battlement in a wall” - Wilson’s), to shoot arrows and great stones withal . . . ” (2 Chronicles 26:15, KJV).

“ . . . he produced engines of war manufactured in Jerusalem, invented by brilliant men to shoot arrows and huge stones from the towers and battlements. So he became very famous, for the Lord helped him wonderfully until he was very powerful” (TLB).

Uzziah’s creativity kept him ahead of all the other leaders of the surrounding nations. This gave him a huge advantage in his being able to defend his kingdom, as well as to be able to dictate the strategies in warfare. He controlled the water and the weaponry, and used the towers to watch and guard his territory. A smart leader! **BUT! There came a change. Pride entered into his heart.** Uzziah started to trust in his own success, his own strength . . . and, the more it went on, the more invincible he felt. Pride, then arrogance, took over. Then he violated against God’s plan, became unteachable and unmanageable, even to the point of offering incense in the temple unto God. That was the ministry of the priests, not of Uzziah. Judgment fell and Uzziah became a leper to the day of his death. That meant he became ostracized and had to carry the stigma of being a leper from that day on. Not a very nice situation to be in.

- **52 years of ministry was spoiled - ruined!!** (verse 3).

What a tragedy! **“How are the mighty fallen . . . !”** (2 Samuel 1:25). And he was such a good commander of men!

Then he became a “has-been,” a hindrance to the purposes of God. Uzziah’s negative influence became a blockage to the ongoing revelation from the heart of God. Instead of his expertise being used to train and equip others for leadership responsibility, the very opposite happened (like King Saul in David’s day). Uzziah became the problem - and the training, equipping and releasing of others stopped. He would never again be restored. He remained a leper to the day of his death.

Isaiah 6:1 records this: ***“In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up . . .”***

In a year where death was experienced, God broke through! (Out of death comes a new release, a new vision, a new understanding of the ways of God, a new arising of a leader, or leaders.) On Uzziah’s death and removal from this earth then (and only then), did a fresh revelation come to the Prophet Isaiah of the call of God for service:

“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me” (Isaiah 6:8).

When Abram’s father (Terah) died, God spoke to Abram about his life’s mission calling (Genesis 11:32 to Genesis 12:1-4). On that word from God, Abram and Sarai went out in faith into a new place, a new experience, a new lifestyle, and a new ministry. His father’s death released him to go. Like as when Saul died and David ascended to the throne, so when Uzziah died, it opened up a new day of opportunity for people to respond to God’s call for leadership and service.

Just as success (as a result of being **Equipped for Leadership**) causes people to rise and become experts, so does failure in the

lives of leaders cause people to decline through discouragement and become “has-beens,” . . . failures, even despising those who they had trusted to lead them. It is always a great tragedy when a Christian leader goes the way Uzziah did in his latter years.

Let each of us be very sure that we know a present-tense anointing of God in our lives . . . and not be trusting in something we had “back there.”

This is a day for leaders to be trained and equipped with the skills necessary for us to reap a tremendous harvest for Jesus . . . and retain it, because we have the confidence and competence to lead others, and make right decisions along the way.

- **“Who will go?”**
- **Will you go?**

God bless you.

Ask yourself . . .

- **How desperate am I for a fruitful life of leadership and ministry?**
- **How desperate am I to be used by God?**
- **How desperate am I for the anointing of God the Holy Spirit to flow in and through my life?**
- **Am I equipped to go?**

“And He (Jesus) said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He who believes (what you say) and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe (what you say) will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who

believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

“So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they (the disciples of Jesus – after they were filled with the Holy Spirit) went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen”
(Mark 16:15-20).

Finally:

Often it only takes one person to make a very positive difference. The following was penned by an unknown author, but it is worth our while meditating upon the truth of what has happened as a result of only one person taking the lead, taking the initiative:

“In 1858, a Boston (USA) Sunday School teacher named Kimball began visiting one of his students at the shoe store where he worked as a clerk. Eventually he led him to Christ. That student’s name was D.L. Moody. Twenty-one years later, Moody, now an evangelist, visited London, and a great spiritual awakening took place. F.B. Meyer, a local pastor, went to hear Moody, and his life was transformed. Later Meyer went to America to preach, and in one of his meetings a student named J. Wilbur Chapman got saved. Chapman became active in the YMCA, where he met and discipled a former baseball player called Billy Sunday. Sunday became a great revivalist, and in one of his crusades in Charlotte (USA), a group of businessmen came to Christ. A year later they decided that their city needed another crusade, so they invited Mordecai Hamm to

be their speaker. After three weeks Hamm left town, discouraged because he had only had one convert – a twelve-year-old boy called Billy Graham!

One Sunday School teacher started it all! One brother, Andrew, led another brother called Peter to Christ; and Peter brought multitudes to Jesus. One woman, whose name he still does not know, led David Yonggi Cho, pastor of the world's largest church (over 800,000 members), to Christ.

- **One person – just one – can make all the difference!**
- **You can be that one!**

- **What is your response?**
- **Are you being equipped for leadership?**

- **“Only one life, it will soon be past; only what is done for Jesus Christ will last” (Author Unknown).**

Rodney is the Founder/Director of The Gospel Faith Messenger Ministry which ministers to thousands through literature, Bible Correspondence Courses, books, manuals, preaching/teaching, conducting Seminars, Schools Of The Holy Spirit, International Training Schools and the Equipping of Timothy's. He has authored more than 25 books and carries a heart to see this generation of believers equipped with leadership skills to do the job of fulfilling the purposes of God. He ministers out from Hamilton, New Zealand, carrying credentials both with The GFM Ministry, and United Kingdom Elim (ECI).

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