



The Role of the Holy Spirit

*in the Life of Young Men & Women
in the Bible.*

Caribbean Union Conference
of Seventh Day Adventist

Holy Spirit Emphasis Week

January 11th - 18th 2025





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January 2025

Dear Brethren,

I greet you in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Our Holy Spirit Week of Prayer theme is ***“The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Lives of the Young Men and Women in the Bible.”*** As we enter this New Year, these sermons and testimonies will encourage us to look at our exemplars from the Bible and know that the Holy Spirit made a difference in their lives. It is also an inspiration to allow the Holy Spirit to use us to do great and mighty things for God.

We have included some personal testimonies from our young men and women whose lives have been transformed by the Holy Spirit. These additions will help us personalize the theme and demonstrate its relevance to us today.

I hope that this week's sermons will prompt us to search ourselves, seek after the Holy Spirit, and supply us with the courage to stand in His strength!

A special message to our young people: it matters not where you have been or what you have done, God is willing to turn your life around! Listen to the still small voice of the Holy Spirit talking to you, ***“Don’t waste your life away, I want to save you, don’t give your life away, I want to bless you, don’t throw your life away, I want to use you.”*** Life is more meaningful when God is in it because God has a plan for you!

May the Holy Spirit of God descend upon us and fill us to overflowing.

Yours in Christ,

Dr. Kern Tobias
President

/fpr



“

There is power in that prayer that is sent up from a heart convinced of its own weakness, yet earnestly longing for that strength that comes from God. The earnest, fervent prayer will be heard and answered.”

Ellen G. White
The Youth's Instructor,
October 1, 1855



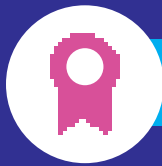


The 5 I's of a Faithful Prayer Life

By Pastor Jamie Gordon | [Sabbath January 11](#)

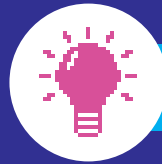


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SCRIPTURE

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. **Daniel 6: 10**



WORD OF THE DAY

Faithfulness- the fact or quality of being dedicated and steadfast in performing one's duty. (Dictionary.com)

A powerful scene that still awakens a deep appreciation for prayer, is the sight of my grandmother in the silent hours of the morning, with her head covered, kneeling before God. Her faithful practice of prayer inspired my mother who followed the same pattern. In turn, my mother's devotion set the standard for me to follow in my prayer life. We can never fully estimate the influence of a faithful, praying person.

Come with me today as we follow the knee prints of an extraordinary youth who was a faithful prayer warrior.

He pushed his windows open, and the thin streaks of light from the rising sun kissed his face good morning. He bowed his body and bent his knees in reverence at the majestic presence of God. He prayed, feasted on the scripture, spent time reflecting and receiving divine wisdom. This had become the habit of Daniel's daily life. Three times a day, without compromise, he paused, pressed and poured out his heart to God.

What's your custom? How do you start your day? Many young people begin their day by checking their messages or scrolling through social media. Others open the day by listening to their favorite song to set the right mood for the day. But Daniel spent his waking moments building his friendship with God.

Faithful in prayer

In Mahatma Gandhi's words "It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without heart." The word faithful means consistent; but more importantly, faithful implies a state of heart. The youth who is faithful in prayer, is genuinely open and sincerely ready to receive God's direction. A faithful person lives in a state of readiness and preparation.

Here are five marks of a faithful prayer life. The five I's



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THE 5 I'S

Here are 5 marks of a faithful **prayer life**.



International

Daniel 1: 1- "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 3-Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility. 6- Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

Daniel was taken from his home in Judea and brought to Babylon. Babylon was a modern, advanced and pleasure centered city. It was pagan, thrilling and seductive. It was a place where young people experimented and celebrated freedom. While other youth may have used the opportunity in a strange land to taste the secular experience, Daniel remained steadfast. His devotion to God was not limited to Judea, but it was International. Wherever he went, whether he was known or unknown, he proudly served as God's ambassador. Are you tempted to experiment when you are in a new place, with new people? Sometimes we all feel the urge to let down our hair, to enjoy the sights and sounds of the world. But, a faithful, praying person, has an international commitment to God that is lasting. Our commitment to God should not be limited to our home, or church or country. It must be International!



Impartial

Daniel 6:10 (NIV) says, " Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before."

Daniel's faithfulness in prayer showed no favor nor fear for anyone. Even when facing a den of ferocious lions, he did not adjust his devotional activities to save his flesh, but he was impartial. Whether he stood before the king or the common man, his resolve was the same, to be faithful. He didn't fear the king of Babylon but he honored the King of kings. He didn't try to please his co-workers but he strove to make God happy. Who do you try to please when you make decisions? Is it God or other important people? To be faithful, is to prioritize giving honour to God.



Intentional

"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself." (Daniel 1:8)

As soon as Daniel settled in Babylon he was intentional about his diet. He was also intentional about how many times a day he prayed. Three times a day, with every meal, he savored a slice of invaluable time with God. He had a proper plan, and clear goals. Daniel was intentional!

When do you pray? Anywhere, or anytime you remember? Is your prayer time properly planned? A cherished prayer life is one that is well thought out and guarded. Set a special time, choose a meaningful place, clear your agenda for that moment and connect with God. Be intentional! Don't skip a meal. Don't skip prayer.





Inclusive

The text in Daniel 1:8; " But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself." - indicates that at an early age Daniel understood the correlation between his diet and his behaviour. He knew if he ate clean, it would empower him to

live pure. The quality of our prayer life is inclusive of all our practices. The music we listen to, the shows we watch, the friends we roll with, the events we attend and the things we do, all influence our spirituality. Like Daniel, let us purpose in our hearts, to feed on things that are uplifting and wholesome. We can't separate our spiritual life from our personal life, it is inclusive.



Inspirational

Daniel 6:16 reads, "Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee."

20 "And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? 25 Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.

26 I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.

Daniel's prayer life and his faithfulness to God was a silent witness to the king. Before sealing Daniel away in the lion's den, he expressed his faith in Daniel's God to deliver him. He saw Daniel's prayers being answered, and he was moved.

When Daniel remained unharmed, the King, being greatly inspired by this miracle, made a law commanding his people to serve and pray to the God whom Daniel served. We never know who is taking note of our devotion to God. We may never be aware of the convictions that come about because of our practices and lifestyle. A faithful praying youth was able to change the spiritual and religious persuasion of an entire city! Your prayer life not only affects you but it can lead others to know God.

In our busy world, it's easy to rob our quality time spent praying to God to accommodate what we consider essential things. Robbing our prayer time only robs us of divine peace and power. It robs us of mountain top experiences with God.

Daniel's prayer life was International, not limited to a place or people. He was intentional and prayed purposefully. He understood that a faithful prayer life includes, and is affected by what we expose ourselves to. Daniel was impartial, he was not afraid to let his light shine. His faithfulness in prayer was able to inspire an entire kingdom. You too can impact the world, one prayer at a time.



What is the state of your prayer life right now? Is faithfulness a word that describes your devotion to God? What changes are God calling you to make today? Would you accept this rewarding challenge to be faithful in prayer? Kindly bow your heads with me as I pray.

Prayer

Faithful Father, who hears and answers our prayers, thank you for the gift of prayer. Help us to appreciate the sacred moments spent with you. May I be faithful in prayer and faithful in service. Amen.






Josiah: Uprightness that Brings Reformation

By Pastor Miguel Denny | [Sunday January 12](#)



10



A popular quote of Shakespeare is found in Act 2, Scene 5, of his play, "Twelfth Night". It goes like this, "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon 'em." While the original context is found in a prank played onto one of the lead characters, its current context usually leads to positive and even inspirational thoughts. In the simplest sense, this quote can be interpreted to mean, sometimes, one's social status can change in an instant. More popularly, the latter part of the quote is used to describe heroism in the face of unpredictable danger, especially when the hero is left disadvantaged by whatever means.

If we sit down and think about it, many of us have experienced greatness being thrust upon us. An unexpected leadership position at church, a promotion at the office, being called to represent our school at a national or regional competition; all of these are examples of greatness thrust. The Bible is also full of examples of thrust greatness. Gideon, a timid thresher of wheat, became a military giant in a matter of days. Moses, a shy and stammering shepherd, turned into the greatest prophet in Israel's history. Esther, a Jewish immigrant by no fault of her own, became queen of the then-known world (Persia). David, a humble shepherd boy, defeated a giant champion in the form of Goliath, and becomes Israel's first good king. Greatness isn't far removed from God's people.

But can you imagine an 8-year-old king? I mean, David was in his teens when he defeated Goliath; Joseph was about 30 when he became prime minister; Moses was 80 when he met God at the burning bush. But an adventurer leading an entire nation? That is greatness going overboard. But if God could use a "Builder" to help rebuild a nation, what can't he do through you or me? Let's take a brief look at Josiah's life and see what lessons can be learned.

Interestingly, Josiah's story begins before he was even born. 1 Kings 13 speaks of Jeroboam, king of Israel, who acted as a priest and offered sacrifices to God (or so he thought). A prophet left Judah and came to Israel, warning Jeroboam against his wrongful actions. The prophet calls Josiah by name, several years before his birth. 1 Kings 13:2 says, "And he cried against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee." Josiah does fulfill this prophecy in 2 Kings 23:16.

This leads me to conclude that God always has a plan for His children. You may not be prophesied like Josiah was, but we can safely conclude as God said of Jeremiah in Jeremiah 1:5, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee..." David affirms in Psalm 139:13, "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb." God knows us before we are even put together. If He knows us then, He must also know what our futures can be with Him. Jeremiah 29:11, a favourite text of many, says, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." God knows our beginning and our end, and He has a plan for us, no matter how big or small it may be.



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Josiah's full reign is described in 2 Kings 22 to 23. 2 Kings 22:2 is a beautiful way to describe his and anyone's life if done right; "And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left." Now we may take this lightly, but his actions described here had two interesting effects on those around him. Firstly, Josiah's choice to do what was right in God's sight kept others honest. What do I mean? Well, in 2 Kings 22:3-7, Josiah sends instructions to the high priest to count the silver brought to the Temple, in order that repairs could be done on the house of God. The Bible is specific to note who should receive the money (carpenters, builders, and masons), and what the money should be spent on (timber and hewn stone). But the Bible is even more specific in how the transactions were dealt with. Vs. 7 states, "Howbeit there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully." In other words, there was no need to check receipts, or review change brought back to the Temple, or even present a financial report at the end. This was because everyone acted prudently with the Lord's money. I can't help but conclude that Josiah's lifestyle helped encourage those he worked with, to be honest as well.

In a similar vein, righteous living should produce righteous living. We are often told as children, "show me your friends, and I'll tell you who you are." Even today, we ask our children to avoid negative influences. However, do we challenge ourselves to be positive influences on those around us? Does our presence inspire others to be better, do better, think better?

2 Corinthians 2:14,15 put it this way, and I want you to use the word "perfume" or "cologne" in place of "savour". "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. 15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish."

Now, Paul uses the image of a Roman general returning from a successful battle. He is met by government officials, and then a parade is held in his honour. The processional was lined with officials, trumpeters, carts containing spoils that were captured from war, bulls and oxen for sacrifice, lions and other fierce animals, the captive kings, generals and other captives, and finally the conqueror himself. But throughout the parade were individuals whose sole purpose was to carry censers containing burning incense. Their purpose was to make the parade, and by extension the conqueror, smell good. But of course, the smell would not stay in the parade. The entire city would be filled with the sweet aroma. Everyone would smell like the conqueror because the conqueror was present, celebrating his victory.

Today, I'm happy to serve a bigger Conqueror than the USA or Europe could ever produce. We serve a Conqueror who defeated Satan in death, who put death to shame, and who died so that you and I can have eternal life. I am happy that our Conqueror lives today. How do I know that He lives? He lives within my heart. And I'm happy to carry His incense around so that others can smell like Jesus in their behaviour. I'm happy to wear His cologne so my schoolmates can smell like Jesus in their honesty. I'm happy to wear His perfume so that my work colleagues can be exposed to Jesus' grace and forgiveness. I want you to be happy enough to follow Jesus' command in Matthew 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

However, there is another positive effect of Josiah's relationship with God that we must consider. In 2 Kings 22:9-20, Josiah receives word of the book of the law's presence in the Temple. Apparently, the book was in the Temple, but persons didn't read it. After renting his clothes, Josiah inquires of God's will, since it seems like Judah is doomed to destruction because of its disobedience. The prophetess Huldah reveals that Judah would be punished, but because of Josiah's righteous living, he would not see Judah's punishment during his lifetime.

Now, if it were some of us, we would be content with this news, and not worry about the welfare of everyone else. If you do the crime, you do the time. But Josiah does something remarkable. 2 Kings 23:2-3 describe the king's adventurous actions, "And the king went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the Lord. 3 And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant."

In other words, Josiah does not leave his kingdom to its punishment. He appeals to his country to change, so that they can benefit from the blessings of a life he has lived. He is not selfish with his experience. He









shares it with others in the hope that they too would experience the benefits of walking with the Lord. This was more than being a positive influence; Josiah intentionally reached out to make a difference in the lives of those he served. And the results of Josiah's actions flow to the end of his life as recorded in 2 Kings 23:30.

While this week's sermons are written in the context of youth ministry, this point is for everyone; you are not too young or old to intentionally call others to turn to Jesus. We may not always have a sermon, but we can follow Peter's counsel in 1 Peter 3:15, "but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." We may not be altogether perfect, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." While it may seem difficult to call for change today, Jesus promised in John 16:33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." And if Jesus overcame, so can we.

In fact, just as in Josiah's story, there is a special experience that takes place when we move from influence to intentionality. Martin Buber, the Jewish philosopher, recalls: "My grandfather was lame. Once they asked him to tell a story about his teacher, and he related how his master used to hop and dance while he prayed. My grandfather rose as he spoke and was so swept away by his story that he himself began to hop and dance to show how the master had done. From that our he was cured of his lameness." When we tell the story of our Master, we too experience His power.

So, what can we learn from Josiah's story? Firstly, God has a plan for our lives, no matter how big or small. Secondly, God wants our righteous living to be reproduced in others through our influence. And thirdly, God wants us to intentionally invite persons to make a change in their lives towards Jesus. But how can I make these three lessons a reality in my life?

Well, here are a few suggestions:

 <p>1 Pray and read your Bible daily. Read in a simplified version; pause and reflect on what God says to you in His Word. Write down what you've gathered (or save it on a note app in your phone). Pray about what you've learned and ask God to continue to reveal His will for your life to you.</p> 	 <p>2 Be proud of what you believe in. Proudly declare your faith when asked. Be willing to say why you choose to do or not do certain things. Don't be proud or boastful but be unashamed. Be willing to help others in need. Promote peace and speak out for the needs of others. Ask God for the bravery to represent Him in the big and little decisions.</p> 	 <p>3 Pray for God to give you the right words to say to the right persons. Ask God to lead you to a friend, neighbour, relative, or even stranger, who needs to hear God's Word from you. Share words of encouragement on social media. Listen to God's voice when He points you to someone and act in faith. Be patient and keep a prayer list for persons you want to see changed. Ask God to change you day by day.</p> 
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Josiah's life is an example of adventurous royalty. Many of his ancestors (including his father Amon, and grandfather Manasseh) went against God's will. But Josiah chose to stand with Jesus, and made an impact on his entire nation. Whatever your background, current status, or future may be or hold, know that God has greatness in store for you. Trust His plan, be a sweet influence, and an agent for positive change.

Will you seek after and accept God's plan for your life? If so, raise your hands with me.

Will you live God's plan for your life positively so that others can be positively influenced? If yes, say Amen with me.

Will you seek to intentionally share God's plan for the lives of others by sharing your faith and inviting others to accept Jesus? If yes, stand with me as we accept God's call to be agents of reformation.



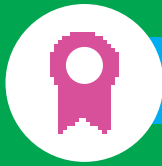


Samuel: Commitment to a Life of Service

By Pastor Chad Goolaman | Monday January 13



14



SCRIPTURE

¹ And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision.

² And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see;

³ And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep;

⁴ That the Lord called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I.

⁵ And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

⁶ And the Lord called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again.

⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him.

⁸ And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child.

⁹ Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰ And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.. **1 Samuel 3:1-10**

At a tender age of nine, my heart was excited, nervous, beating fast. I was about to preach my very first sermon. Looking at the children and the adults that filled the benches in Church, I began to second guess myself. "Am I really the one to deliver this message?" Just a few minutes before I was introduced, I heard this still calm voice. "God". He reminded me that I was just the instrument used by him. At that point I sacrificed myself to his will. For I knew that he is my maker. More than twenty years later I am still his instrument working for him.

The story of Samuel is one of the most profound examples of what it means to be fully committed to a life of service to God. Samuel, whose very life was a result of prayer and divine intervention, is a figure who demonstrates obedience, humility, and unwavering devotion. As we look into Samuel's journey, we would learn valuable lessons on how we too can commit ourselves fully to God's purpose..



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The Birth of Samuel – A Life Dedicated Before Birth

To understand Samuel's life of service, we must begin with the circumstances of his birth. His mother, Hannah, was barren and deeply distressed by her inability to have children. In her anguish, she turned to the Lord in prayer, pouring out her heart before Him at the tabernacle in Shiloh. In her prayer, Hannah made a solemn vow: "O Lord Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life." (1 Samuel 1:11)

Hannah's vow is significant because it set the course for Samuel's entire life. Before he was even conceived, Samuel's life was dedicated to God. Hannah's prayer was answered, and she gave birth to a son whom she named Samuel, meaning "heard by God." True to her word, after Samuel was weaned, Hannah brought him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh and presented him to Eli the priest, saying, "I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of Him. So now I give him to the Lord. For his whole life he will be given over to the Lord" (1 Samuel 1:27-28).

Here, we see the foundation of Samuel's commitment to a life of service to God. His very existence was a testimony to God's faithfulness, and from the moment he was dedicated, his life belonged to the Lord. This initial act of dedication is crucial for us to understand. Samuel's life of service did not begin with his own decision; it began with the faith and surrender of his mother. Hannah's willingness to give her son to God was an act of trust and obedience, and it set Samuel on a path of lifelong service.

For us, this speaks to the importance of dedicating our lives—or the lives of our children—to God. Like Hannah, we must recognize that everything we have, including our very lives, comes from God. Our commitment to a life of service begins with the understanding that we are not our own. We belong to God, and we are called to live in a way that reflects that truth.

The Call of Samuel – Listening and Responding to God's Voice

As a young boy, Samuel was brought to live in the tabernacle under the care of Eli the priest. It was here, in the house of the Lord, that Samuel learned the discipline of service and the importance of being in God's presence. But more than that, it was here that Samuel first heard the voice of God.

In 1 Samuel 3, we read the well-known account of how God called out to Samuel in the night. At this time, Samuel was still a boy, and the Bible tells us that "the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions" (1 Samuel 3:1). Nevertheless, God chose to speak to Samuel, even though he was young and inexperienced. When Samuel first heard the voice of God, he didn't recognize it. He thought Eli was calling him and ran to his mentor, saying, "Here I am; you called me" (1 Samuel 3:4). This happened three times before Eli realized that it was the Lord who was calling the boy.

Eli instructed Samuel to go back and lie down, and if he heard the voice again, he should say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:9). When God called a fourth time, Samuel responded as Eli had instructed, and the Lord revealed to Samuel the judgment that would come upon Eli's house because of the sins of his sons.

This moment is a turning point in Samuel's life. From this point on, Samuel was established as a prophet of the Lord. "The Lord was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the Lord" (1 Samuel 3:19-20).

Samuel's response to God's call is an important lesson for us. His willingness to say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening," reflects a heart that is open to God's direction. Samuel didn't argue or resist when God spoke to him, even though the message he received was difficult and involved judgment on the house of Eli, the man who had raised him.

In our own lives, we must ask ourselves: Are we listening for God's voice? Are we open to His direction, even when it may challenge us or take us out of our comfort zone? Like Samuel, we must cultivate a heart that is ready to hear from God and respond in obedience.



Samuel as a Prophet, Priest, and Judge

As Samuel grew, his role in Israel expanded. He became not only a prophet but also a priest and a judge, leading the people in both spiritual and civil matters. Samuel's leadership was marked by integrity, humility, and unwavering devotion to God.

In his role as a prophet, Samuel was God's mouthpiece, delivering His messages to the people of Israel. He faithfully proclaimed the word of the Lord, whether it was a message of hope or judgment. In his role as a priest, Samuel offered sacrifices and interceded for the people. As a judge, he provided leadership and guidance, helping to settle disputes and administer justice.

Throughout his life, Samuel remained committed to his calling, even in the face of challenges. One of the most significant challenges Samuel faced came when the people of Israel demanded a king. Up until that point, Israel had been a theocracy, with God as their ultimate ruler. But the people wanted to be like the other nations around them and insisted on having a human king to lead them. Samuel was deeply troubled by this request, as it represented a rejection of God's kingship.

In 1 Samuel 8:6-7, we read, "But when they said, 'Give us a king to lead us,' this displeased Samuel; so, he prayed to the Lord. And the Lord told him, 'Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king.'"

Even though Samuel knew that the people's request for a king was not in line with God's original plan, he remained faithful to his role as God's servant. He warned the people of the consequences of having a king, but ultimately, he anointed Saul as the first king of Israel, following God's direction. Samuel's faithfulness in this difficult situation demonstrates his deep commitment to serving God's will, even when it conflicted with his personal feelings.

Samuel's life of service was not about seeking his own glory or fulfilling his own desires. It was about being obedient to God's plan, even when that plan didn't align with his own preferences. Samuel's humility and willingness to put God's will above his own, is a powerful example for us today.



Lifelong Faithfulness and Leadership

Samuel, a pivotal figure in the Bible, exemplifies faithfulness and leadership throughout his life. As a prophet, priest, and last judge of Israel, Samuel played a crucial role in transitioning Israel from a loose confederation of tribes under judges to a centralized monarchy. From an early age, Samuel's life was marked by his unwavering faithfulness to God. His mother, Hannah, dedicated him to the Lord before his birth as a response to her fervent prayers for a child. Samuel grew up in the tabernacle under the priest Eli, and even as a young boy, he learned to listen to God's voice. His first prophetic message, which foretold the downfall of Eli's household due to their disobedience, established Samuel as a faithful servant who would deliver God's word, regardless of its difficulty.

Throughout his life, Samuel was steadfast in his devotion to God. He consistently prayed for the people of Israel, acted as a mediator, and sought God's guidance before making decisions. Even when the people demanded a king, rejecting God's direct rule, Samuel faithfully conveyed God's message of warning. His faithfulness was evident in his constant intercession for the nation and his obedience in fulfilling the roles God gave him.

Samuel's leadership was grounded in his deep relationship with God and his commitment to guiding Israel according to divine principles. As a judge, he led Israel through a time of moral and spiritual decline, calling them to repentance and urging them to turn away from idolatry. His leadership was not based on military power or political strategy, but on spiritual authority, marked by his role as a prophet and intercessor. One of Samuel's most significant leadership moments was his anointing of Israel's first two kings, Saul and David. Though he was reluctant to establish a monarchy, Samuel followed God's command, first anointing Saul and later, after Saul's disobedience, David. Even as Saul's reign faltered due to his disobedience, Samuel maintained his loyalty to God's will, demonstrating that true leadership requires submission to a higher authority.

Samuel's integrity and commitment to truth made him a model leader. He was unafraid to confront both kings and the people when they strayed from God's path. His farewell speech to Israel (1 Samuel 12) highlights his transparency, as he invites the people to testify against him if he had ever wronged them. This speech demonstrates his accountability as a leader and his concern for justice and righteousness.

Samuel's life leaves a powerful legacy of faithfulness and leadership. He bridged the period between the judges and the kings, ensuring that even in a time of political change, Israel remained rooted in its covenant with God. Samuel's unwavering commitment to truth, justice, and prayer is a profound example of how leadership, grounded in faithfulness to God, can guide a nation through both peace and crisis.

Through his life, Samuel teaches the importance of listening to God, leading with integrity, and maintaining faithfulness regardless of circumstances. His example continues to inspire those who seek to lead with humility, courage, and a deep sense of divine purpose.

Lessons for Our Own Lives

As we reflect on Samuel's life, there are several key lessons we can apply to our own commitment to a life of service:

1. Dedication

Like Hannah, we must be willing to dedicate ourselves, and even our children, to the Lord's service. This means recognizing that everything we have belongs to God.



2. Listening

Samuel had an open ear to God. Samuel recognized he was merely a servant, "Speak, Lord, thy servant hears. "We are called to hear God's word (Romans 10:17). We must hear with an obedient heart (James 1:22-25). Samuel recognized that he had to speak all of God's words. He didn't let any of God's word fall to the ground. We must live by every word of God (Matthew 4:4). We must speak the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). We must cultivate a posture of listening for God's voice, ready to respond when He calls. This may require patience, discernment, and a willingness to be still before God.



3. Obedience

Samuel obeyed God even when everyone else disobeyed. Just as to obey was better than to sacrifice, so today, God defines our love for Him in terms of keeping his commandments. Serving God often means stepping out in faith, even when the task is hard or the future is unclear. We must be obedient to God's commands, trusting that He will provide the strength we need.



4. Faithfulness

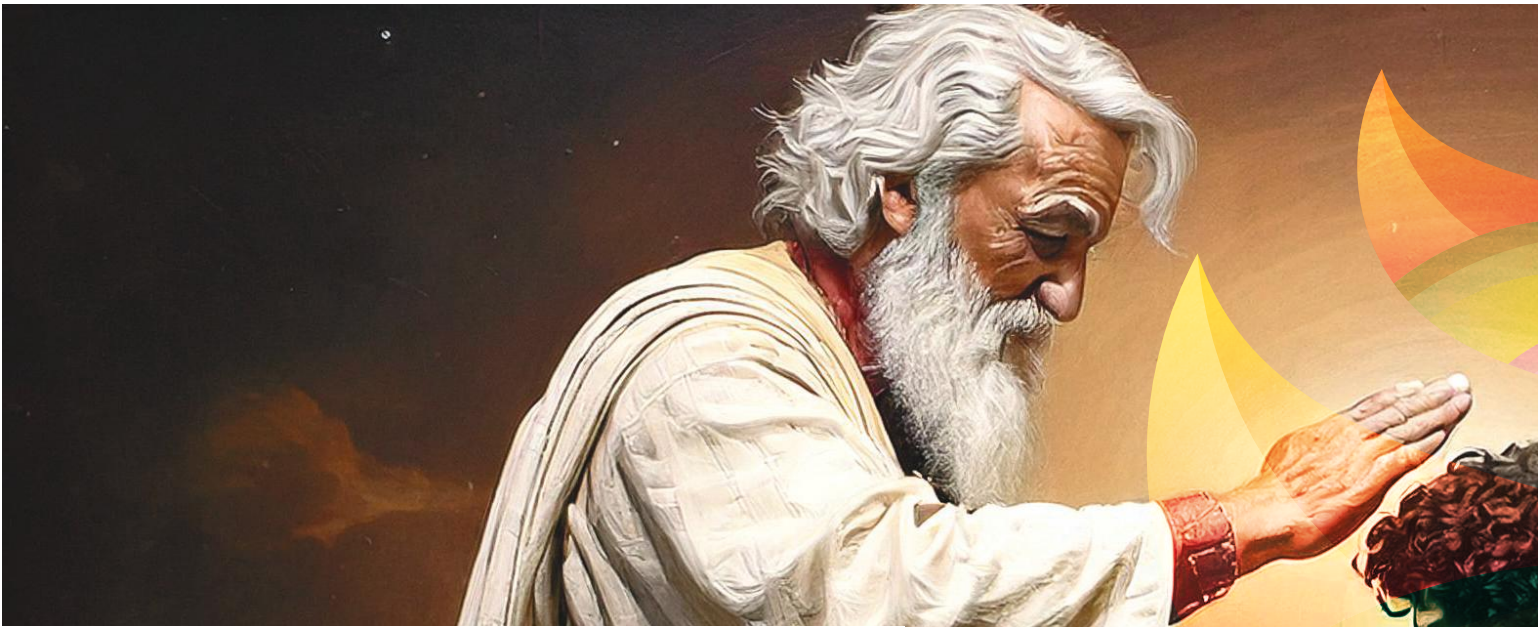
True commitment is seen in how we continue to serve, year after year. Like Samuel, we are called to be faithful stewards of the responsibilities God gives us, no matter the season of life.



Conclusion

Samuel did not want to be like the nations around. Samuel recognized the false standard of the world and was displeased by it. The world beckons us to accept it as the standard for right and wrong. Isaiah 5:20 "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" "We must not let the world set the standard for what is right, but God must set that standard. Jeremiah 6:16 says "Thus saith the LORD, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, we will not walk therein." Samuel recognized the true source of righteousness – he prayed. When Samuel was confronted with a difficult situation he took it to God. The early church confronted problems with prayer (Acts 12:5)..





Conclusion...continued

Samuel's life is a testament to what it means to be wholly committed to God. From his birth to his death, he lived a life of service, obedience, and faithfulness. As we consider our own lives, may we seek to emulate Samuel's example. Let us dedicate ourselves to God, listen for His voice, and serve Him with all our hearts, knowing that the greatest fulfillment we can find is in doing His will.

Let us always remember that it depends whose hands it's in.....

A basketball in my hands is worth about \$19

A basketball in LeBron James's hands is

worth about \$1.2 billion

It depends whose hands it's in

A baseball in my hands is worth about \$6

A baseball in Mark McGuire's hands is worth \$19 million

It depends whose hands it's in

A tennis racket is useless in my hands

A tennis racket in Pete Sampras' hands

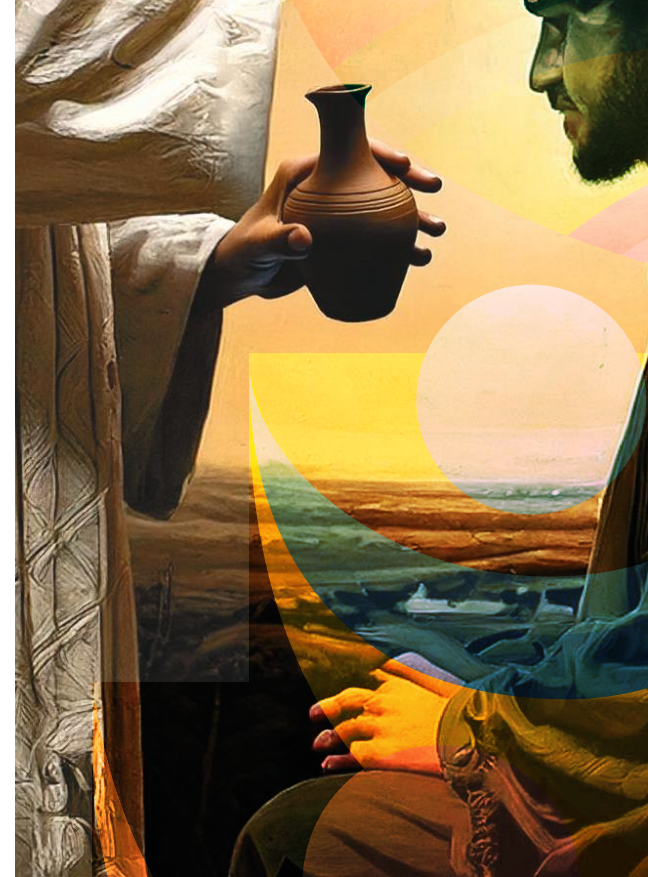
is a Wimbledon Championship

It depends whose hands it's in

A rod in my hands will keep away a wild animal

A rod in Moses' hands will part the mighty sea

It depends whose hands it's in





A slingshot in my hands is a kid's toy
A slingshot in David's hand is a mighty weapon.
It depends whose hands it's in
Two fish and 5 loaves of bread in my hands
is a couple of fish sandwiches.
Two fish and 5 loaves of bread in God's
hands will feed thousands It depends whose hands it's in
Nails in my hands might produce a birdhouse
Nails in Jesus Christ's hands will produce
salvation for the entire world.
It depends whose hands it's in
As you see now it depends whose hands it's in.
So put your concerns, your worries, your fears, your hopes, your
dreams, your families and your relationships in God's hands because
it depends on whose hands it's in.

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father, I come before You today with a humble heart, longing to serve You faithfully, just as Samuel did. Lord, Samuel listened to Your voice and followed Your calling from a young age. He walked in obedience, seeking only to fulfill Your will. I ask that You help me to have the same heart of devotion.

Like Samuel, let me be sensitive to Your voice. Open my ears to hear when You speak and give me the wisdom to discern Your guidance in my life. Help me to always say, "Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening," and to respond with a willing spirit to whatever You call me to do. Grant me the courage to stand for truth and righteousness, even when it's difficult. Let my life be a reflection of Your love, Your power, and Your grace. May I never seek my own will or glory, but always pursue what brings honor to Your name. Lord, just as Samuel was a faithful servant in every season of life, help me to remain steadfast and faithful in my journey with You. Mold me into a vessel of honor, set apart for Your purposes. May I always serve You with a heart full of love, humility, and obedience. In Jesus' name, I pray,

Amen.



TUESDAY 14 JAN. | TESTIMONIES - PART 1

Today we focus our attention on testimonies from two sisters - one from a contemporary and the other from a sister of ancient times. These testimonies speak of the Holy Spirit working in your life to take care of your needs, and how; having surrendered to his leading ; he can use you to be a blessing to others.

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

Mrs Tracy Dick-Noel a native of Tobago, is the Youth and Chaplaincy Ministries Director of the Tobago Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

The Influence & Powerful role of the Holy Spirit in shaping My life.

Tracy Dick-Noel



In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. **Romans 8:26-27 NKJV**

It is sometimes hard to know what to do in your life when you are a new believer or the only person in your family that has chosen to be and stay a Christian at a very young age. At the age of 15, I made the decision to give my life fully to God after attending the Seventh-day Adventist church on and off since the age of 7. My family had no real background in Adventism, but my cousins did and seemed to love being there, so we went with them. My decision to get baptized was prompted by a prayer where I told God that I needed him to take care of me for the rest of my life and to guide me always because I did not know what to do with my life as growing up in a little village in the countryside of Tobago, I had little idea of what the world was about, what job to do, or how to take care of myself. Since then, I have seen in my life the way the

Holy Spirit has spoken and led in so many miraculous ways that my praise for Him will never die. Let me highlight 3 ways that I saw His leading.

1. When I became a teacher, it was not because I loved teaching. I wanted to become a scientist so that I could make bombs and military-grade weaponry, to destroy an intended target. Strange, isn't it? Maybe I watched too many violent shows when I was a little girl. While in the pathfinder club, I discovered my giftedness for leading young people. I asked God to show me a way to earn a salary while being of service to him as a youth leader. About a few weeks after that prayer, I heard an advertisement at church,

informing of vacancies for teachers at Harmon School of S.D.A. It was as if God had answered my prayer, and the Holy Spirit prompted me to respond. Shortly after, I was interviewed and became a teacher at the school from the beginning of the school term. Those 17 years at Harmon School of SDA were some of the best years of my life. During those years, the Holy Spirit reshaped my life, as I developed each fruit of the spirit one by one (a very painful process mind you). I also became a better planner, a better manager and spiritually stronger. **I learnt to trust God and His leading, through the Holy Spirit. I also saw what he did for others and realized I could ask him for**



anything I desire, because he cared about my every need or want, since he knew me intimately.

My years at Harmon led to many friendships and opportunities to mentor young people, whom I may not have encountered otherwise. I have seen students who I have mentored, having left school, get married, establishing their own families. My abilities in youth leadership were multiplied as I served at that great institution.

2. The Holy Spirit's leading in my life was quite evident, during the time I attended the University of the Southern Caribbean. While studying at the off-site campus in Tobago, I continued my employment being the sole breadwinner in my family. At that time, my husband was a full-time student at the main campus in Trinidad. Of course this meant money was almost always in short supply. There were a few times that I had to access loans from the bank to pay my fees. One month specifically, after all the bills had been paid and tithe returned, I remember having only 20 dollars in my hand and all expenses for the rest of the month. We had no extra in the bank, no returns on credit union shares nor people to borrow from. This money was just sufficient for me to go to work for two days and then there would be nothing left.

My young believers, during that month, the Holy Spirit sent persons that I barely knew, to pick me up in the morning and take me to work. When I inquired, "How is it that you stopped for

me?" The usual reply was "Something told me to stop for you this morning." Of course we know that that 'something' is really 'someone' - the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit also inspired a friend whom I had not seen in a very long time, to ask, "How are you getting home after work this evening?" This friend willingly took me home on numerous occasions to Moriah after work and after classes which ended at 10:30 p.m. On the 15th day of the said month, my phone rang. It was my mom on the other end of the line inquiring whether I had bought groceries as yet. She sent 300 dollars for me the very next day to buy something to eat. My landlord, who was emptying her refrigerator because she was traveling for a three month vacation, thought it best for me to have the fresh vegetables, provision and fruits she had just harvested, so she offered them to me.

None of these persons realized that they were being used by the Holy Spirit to answer the prayers of a young girl, who claimed the promises of God, including His promise for protection and for answered prayer. Christ has promised that "before you call, I will answer." This promise, I often claim in those prayers. This promise is for you too.

3. Just to underscore how the Holy Spirit moves in mysterious ways, I will share this short anecdote. I had a friend, whom I had not spoken to for about nine months because of a very painful betrayal. I received a call from that friend on a particularly tiring day and

had no desire to answer because I was hiding from any further pain that my 'friend' could possibly inflict. I am sure that some of us can relate. It was after the conversation with that person that I received within one month the apartment, which I had been unsuccessful in obtaining, after searching for many months. What a humbling experience! The Holy Spirit had again shown up and answered a prayer that I was tired of praying, through the unlikely of persons, while he ministered to my stubborn heart. He can do the same for you too, but you must listen.

And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

Isaiah 30:21 KJV

Young people, if you want to know where to go, if you want to know how to get there, and if you want to save yourself a lot of heartache and stress on this earth, ask God to lead you and then allow the Holy Spirit to guide you on the straight and narrow path. It may sometimes be rocky, annoying and lonely to be a Christian and a standout one at that, but if you allow the Holy Spirit to lead, you will go a great distance. After all, the Bible promises that "He will lead you into all truth," and truth is what you need to live a fulfilling life until Jesus comes. Surrender to Him and be blessed. Maranatha, my young friends. The Lord is coming!!



Anywhere With Jesus I Can Safely Go

Pastor Wayne Jeffery



No mother, father, sisters or brothers, I am just an Israelite girl captured by Syria, as a Prisoner of war (POW). Now living with strangers, nothing seems familiar. No synagogue, no Tabernacle of two apartments, just my Lord deep within my heart though I am far away from home and may never have the opportunity to return again. I know my God is with Me. I now live with Naaman and his wife. He is commander of the King of Syria's army. My task is to make their house-work easier and go on errands for them.

Let me share four important points on my journey through life in Syria, with Naaman's family, and how I managed to remain a Christian and keep God's commands.

1. I took from Israel my homeland the principles of the God of heaven that my parents and I embraced. I worship God and hide His word in my heart that I might not sin against Him. I studied, prayed and kept no hatred in mind for my captors.
2. Even though I am away from home, and I do not know anyone in Syria and no one knows me, I am not following the wrong things I see others doing, whether they are older or younger than I am. I trust in Jesus and His Spirit gives me strength. (Proverbs, 3:5)
3. I am a witness of Jesus at every opportunity, because I believe in God's promise, that His spirit will give me power and courage (Joel 2:28, 29; Matt. 28:20 last part). Let us read these texts together. Jesus promised to be with us even until the end and to give us power to be His witnesses, Amen! Don't be afraid, just be willing to help others.
4. My greatest testimony about God's Spirit working in me was the day when I saw Mrs. Naaman crying. She seemed to be in deep agonizing sorrow. When I enquired of her concerning her troubles she told me the bad news about her husband. "My husband is stricken with a disease called Leprosy that is contagious and has no cure and he will soon die. If I go too close to him or touch him I would be infected and die too". I told my mistress about the prophet in Israel that could heal him. Jeremiah 32:17 reminds us that God is able. God is able, Amen!

Naaman's wife gave him the message and he went to the prophet who gave him instructions about his healing process and he received healing. His healing came as a result of his faith, trust and obedience to God.

Remember therefore, that Jesus wants you to be His ambassador. He can make you brave and strong by putting His spirit in you. Even when you are far from home, with or without family and friends or with strangers, He will take care of you. The God of the mountains is still the God of the valleys, when things go wrong He can make them right. God's promise is to give you His spirit, not only to witness for Him but to also fulfill all your dreams, desires and take you to heaven one day soon (Acts 2:17-21).

As I close today's message, remember, Jesus gives confidence, courage, protection, bravery, salvation, success and peace in your life, Amen! I know you believe it. To confirm your love and trust in God and His spirit to work in your life for the good of others I invite you to stand with me as we close. There may be someone here today who has never given their heart to Jesus and you are saying in your heart, "I want to be baptized soon, to meet Jesus at His second coming", I invite you to just raise your hand and put it down so that I can pray for you too.

Pastor Wayne Jeffery a native of Trinidad is the Youth Ministries Director of the South Caribbean Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.





Joseph: Purpose-Driven Lifestyle

By Pastor Brent St. Jean | [Wednesday January 15](#)

Living a purpose-driven lifestyle means aligning your actions, values and goals with a clear sense of purpose. It often involves:

Identifying Your Values: Understanding what truly matters to you in relation to spirituality, relationships, creativity, or community service..

Setting Goals: Establishing specific, meaningful goals that reflect your purpose and contribute to your sense of fulfillment.

Making Conscious Choices: Regularly making decisions that support your purpose, whether it's in your career, relationships, or daily activities.

Finding Joy and Satisfaction: Experiencing deeper satisfaction in life by engaging in activities that resonate with your core beliefs and passions.

Contributing to Others: Often, a purpose-driven life includes giving back to others or the community.

Tonight, we gather to explore the profound story of Joseph, a young man whose life illustrates the importance of living with purpose, even in the face of adversity. Joseph's journey, from favored son to prisoner, and ultimately to a powerful leader in Egypt, teaches us about faith, resilience, and the pursuit of our God-given purpose.

Understanding Our Purpose

Joseph's life begins with dreams—dreams that symbolize his future and the greatness that awaits him. In Genesis 37, we see Joseph sharing these dreams with his brothers. They respond with jealousy, but Joseph's dreams were not merely fantasies; they were glimpses of his divine purpose.

It is important to understand that when you decide to live a purpose-driven life, not everyone will support you. Most purpose-driven individuals are usually lonely or ostracized. Joseph's own brothers were angry with him, not because he was a bad brother, but simply because his life was filled with purpose. Whenever you find yourself neglected and attacked because of where God is taking you, know that you are in good company.

When you understand your purpose, the opinions of others who are against God's plan for your life carry less weight. Purpose-driven individuals know that Satan will do all he can to distract them from their purpose. When you understand your purpose, you learn to value your existence and know that you are not an accident. God strategically placed you on this planet to fulfill His ultimate goal for the expansion of His kingdom. One must recognize that each of us has a unique purpose ordained by God. It's essential to seek and understand what that purpose is, even if we don't yet see the full picture.



Pastor Brent St. Jean a native of Dominica is the Youth, Chaplaincy, and Public Campus Ministries director of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Mission of Seventh-day Adventists. He also serves as the Health Ministries Director and the Assistant to the President for Evangelism in the S.V.G Mission.





Embracing Adversity

Joseph's life was filled with challenges. Firstly, he faced betrayal by his brothers. Imagine being sold into slavery by your own flesh and blood. Perhaps, the most heartbreaking thing is that Joseph was betrayed when he was performing an act of service towards his own brothers and fulfilling the wishes of his own father. Joseph had every right to feel completely helpless and broken in this experience.

Secondly, Joseph faced slavery in Egypt. Imagine being away from home, without any emotional support system, without friends or family, without your freedom. That's what Joseph had to deal with

during slavery in Egypt. Talk about adversity! What Joseph encountered would have broken many people, especially knowing that he didn't do anything to deserve these perplexing events and circumstances.

Thirdly, Joseph faced imprisonment for false accusations. Imagine going to prison for your faithfulness to God and His commandments. This is exactly what happened to Joseph. His prison term came as a result of him standing for what was right. It seems like Joseph's entire story of tragedy comes as a result of doing the right thing. This is what makes his story so powerful.

Each of these events could have easily led him to despair, but instead, Joseph chose to maintain his integrity and trust in God. You see, Joseph understood as the apostle Paul said, that all things work together for the good, to them who love God and who are called according to His purpose (Rom 8:28). He embraced these negative circumstances and saw the hands of God even through the trying times.

The child of God who is determined to live a purpose-driven life will even see their challenges as stepping stones for God's glory. They will understand that trials come to make them more resilient and grow their faith in God. One song writer said that "through it all, he has learned to trust in Jesus." Maybe what you see as adversity, is only God's way of showing you that He has a special plan for your life.

Adversity is often a catalyst for growth. Instead of viewing challenges as obstacles, let's see them as opportunities to deepen our faith and strengthen our character. Joseph's time in prison allowed him to refine his gifts and prepare for his future role.



The Power of Forgiveness

When Joseph eventually reunited with his brothers, instead of seeking revenge, he forgave them. In Genesis 50:20, he declares, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good." Joseph understood that forgiveness was a key component of living a purposeful life.

Forgiving his brothers may have been the hardest decision that Joseph had to make. Joseph looked beyond just the act of his brothers' betrayal. He chose to see the hand of God and His purpose amidst the trials. He told his brothers, "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life." Understanding that God even uses the evil people to fulfill His purpose in our lives will even help us forgive others. Knowing that God has forgiven us, is also one of the reasons why we forgive others who hurt us. Psalm 103:10-12 says, "He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us."

What is evident in the story of Joseph after he forgives his brethren is that he cried. A weight was lifted from his shoulders, because forgiveness in many cases is of more benefit to the one who was hurt, rather than the one who erred. Many persons are unable to embrace their purpose God has for their lives because they are still holding on to an unforgiving heart. Their bitterness has clouded their own path and they are unable to live a purpose-driven life. Ellen White puts it nicely, "Joseph's brethren flattered themselves that they were taking a sure course to prevent the fulfillment of Joseph's strange dreams. But the Lord controlled events, and caused the cruel course of Joseph's brethren to bring about the fulfillment of the dreams which they were laboring to frustrate." (1SP 130.3) We forgive, because we know that God uses even our enemies for His glory and to fulfill His purpose for our existence.

Forgiveness frees us from the burdens of resentment and anger. It allows us to move forward, fulfilling our purpose without the chains of past hurts. We must remember that God can turn our trials into triumphs, just as he did for Joseph.

Serving Others

Throughout his journey, Joseph remained committed to serving others. Whether in Potiphar's house or in prison, he used his gifts to help those around him. Ultimately, he became a leader who saved Egypt and his family from famine.

The Bible makes it clear that Joseph was an amazing addition to the home of Potiphar. Everything that he put his hands to seemed to prosper because of the favor of God. Joseph did not use his misfortune as an excuse to give subpar service. Even as a slave, an excellent spirit of service and dedication was found in him. That's the reason that Potiphar made him manage the affairs of his house, because he recognized that Joseph served with distinction.

In prison, Joseph continued that passion for service. The prisoners saw him as someone they could trust and rely on and the keeper of the prison placed him in charge, because he recognized that he had a different spirit. The child of God who is living an exemplary life will serve others even when they are victims of circumstances. It's easy to serve when you are rewarded and living the ideal life, but can you serve when your back is against the wall? Can you serve when all hell is breaking loose in your life? Can you serve when you are wronged?

It is easy to serve when things are in your favor, but it takes a purpose-driven person to serve when the going gets tough. Martin Luther King Jr. puts it nicely when he said that "the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

Living a purposeful life means serving others. As we focus on the needs of those around us, we align ourselves with God's greater plan. Our purpose is often intertwined with the well-being of others. Joseph understood this and it drove him to serve in every sphere of his life. Whether in the prison or in the palace, serving others formed a major part of his life.



Trusting God's Timing

Joseph's rise to power didn't happen overnight. He endured years of waiting and uncertainty. Yet, through it all, he remained steadfast in his faith. In Genesis 41, when he interprets Pharaoh's dreams, it's clear that God's timing was perfect.

Let's go back to Joseph's rise from the home of Jacob to the house of Pharaoh. Joseph was born in a position of privilege. He was loved more than his other brothers, because he was the son of Rachel, the woman that Jacob loved most. He dreamt while he was at home, but it was not his time to get to the palace in Egypt. What is evident is that even if the final product took time, God used every step and challenge to lead him to the ultimate goal.

It is therefore very important that the child of God understands that every perplexity, every storm, every betrayal, every trial, with time and God's providence will work out for their good. So, for every child of God who feels like their victory is taking too long to be realized, please keep pressing on, for those who endure will receive God's blessing. The prophet Isaiah puts it this way, "Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isa 40:28-31).

The purpose-driven Christian understands that waiting on God is an indispensable part of the Christian experience. This reminds me about my life growing up on the rural side of Dominica in Boetica, a small village on the South Eastern coast. Roaming the bushes was a fundamental part of a boy's life at that time. I remember searching for soursops in the densely covered mountains. Sometimes in our quest to have soursops for an extended period of time, we would not only pick the ones that were ripe or half-ripe, but also those that we thought were mature. In many instances, what we thought was a mature soursop was far from it. These fruits would never ripe, but would turn black and spoil. This is what happens when you try to "force ripe" a fruit before its time.

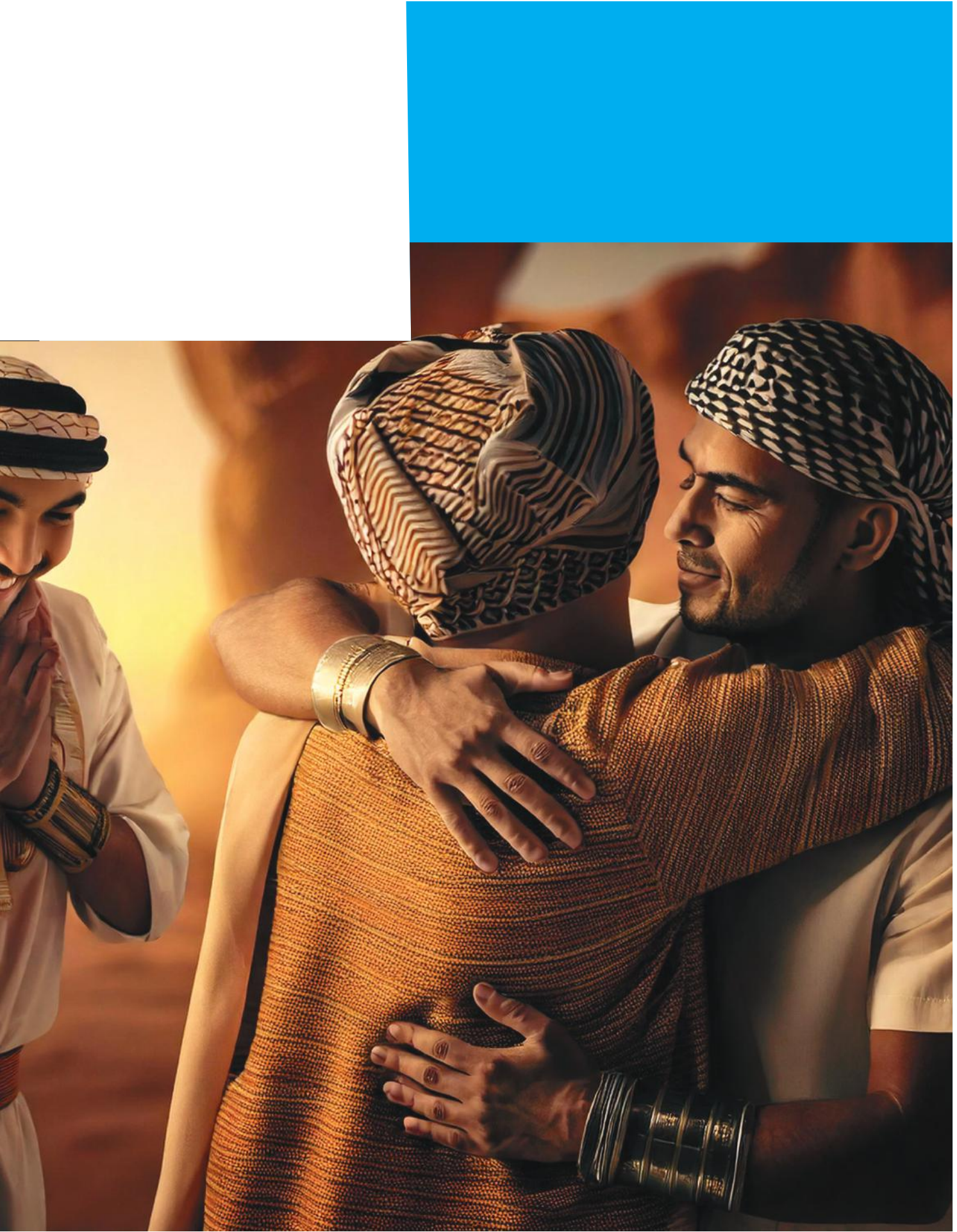
The same applies to the plans of God. Sometimes we are impatient and end up losing our blessing. Joseph endured the pit, Potiphar's house, and the prison, but in God's time, he made it to the palace. Trusting God's timing is crucial. When we feel lost or impatient, remember that God is always at work behind the scenes. Our purpose will unfold in His perfect timing if we remain faithful.

Conclusion

Joseph's story reminds us that living a purposeful life is not about avoiding struggles, but embracing them with faith and resilience. As we seek to understand our purpose, let's commit to trusting God through adversity, practicing forgiveness, serving others, and waiting on His timing.

Always remember that every life on this planet has a purpose. You aren't just a lump of clay walking around aimlessly. You are special, and God has a purpose for your existence. Through life's many vicissitudes, there is a God working all things for His glory. Ellen White puts it in the most elegant and powerful way, **"In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as dependent on the will and prowess of man. The shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God, the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, behind, above, and through all the play and counterplay of human interests and power and passions, the agencies of the all-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will" (Education, 173.2).** Let us pray for the strength to live purposefully, just as Joseph did, and to trust that God is guiding us on our unique journeys. Amen.





THURSDAY 16 JAN | TESTIMONIES - PART 2

"I stand as a testament to the boundless wonders of what can unfold when we fully surrender our lives to Him"
(Leriano Webster)

"[I am] Living my life to be a blessing to everyone" **(Lennox Jason)**

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

Pastor Liriano Webster is a native of Anguilla Is the Youth, Chaplaincy, and Public Campus Ministries Director of the North Caribbean Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He also serves as the Communication Director of his Conference.

From Prince to Pastor: A Journey of Faith and Transformation

Pastor
Liriano
Webster



I, Leriano Webster, was born on October 13, 1989, on the beautiful island of Anguilla to Samuel and Judith Webster. My childhood unfolded in the quaint fishing village of Island Harbour, where the rhythm of the sea blended with the love of my father's work as a fisherman. Little did I know that this nurturing environment would set the course for my own journey as a "fisher of men." Every Sunday, I attended Bethany Gospel Hall Church with my parents, a tradition that enveloped my early years until I turned eight. Gradually, church drifted from my family's life, but my mother's teachings on strong morals and values continued to resonate deeply within me.

I immersed myself in the vibrant atmosphere of Anguilla Summer Festival, and at just 11 years old, I proudly represented Stoney Ground Primary School (now known as Orealia Kelly Primary School) in the Prince and Princess Show. That blissful night in 2001, I earned the titles of every possible accolade and was crowned the Summer Festival Prince of Anguilla, a moment that filled my young heart with

joy. Not long after, I joined the All-Ah-We Young Theatre Players group, where I found fulfillment in the world of drama, dance, and poetry, participating in events that celebrated the richness of our culture.

However, in 2002, tumultuous waters swept through my family as my parents faced marital challenges. One dark day, my mother declared she could no longer endure the strife. With my brother by her side, she left our home, and we moved to a new house in Stoney Ground. Those moments were among the most emotionally trying of my life, shattering my childhood belief that my family would always be whole. Amid this upheaval, I encountered an incredible neighbour named Conlloyd Gumbs, a devoted Seventh-day Adventist and enthusiastic Pathfinder. He would often strike up conversations over the fence that separated our homes, and one Sunday, he invited me to play cricket and then to church. Hesitant at first, I eventually agreed, feeling compelled to appease his persistent invitations.

That night marked a turning point in my life. With a heavy heart, burdened by the marital separation of my parents, I ventured into the church and found a warm embrace in the sermon delivered by Elder James Willock. His powerful words illuminated the truth that, no matter the struggles we face, God remains our unwavering solution. I was so profoundly touched that I eagerly anticipated the next Sunday night service, transforming this visit into a cherished routine. With Conlloyd as my guide, I discovered the Pathfinder Club—a captivating world filled with uniforms, honors, drumming, and unforgettable camping experiences. However, I grappled with the idea of conflicting schedules, as the meetings overlapped with my commitments to the All-Ah-We theatre group.

One day, I took a leap of faith and attended a Pathfinder session when there was no theatre rehearsal. The joy and



spiritual fulfillment I experienced that day were beyond words, and I knew I had found my community.

Enthusiastically, I signed up for the Ambassador Pathfinder Club. When I shared my excitement with my mother, she was initially supportive, yet dismayed to learn I would have to leave All-Ah-We.

Our weekends turned contentious as I argued passionately for my newfound calling. I sometimes deceived her into believing I attended theatre rehearsals while secretly attending Pathfinders. When the truth surfaced, her anger was palpable. I earnestly told her, "Mommy, I'm so sorry for deceiving you, but my heart lies with the Pathfinder Club. It is the best extracurricular activity that any young person can be a part of. It's a place where I learn invaluable skills while discovering my relationship with Jesus. Mommy, the program is fun-filled and spirit-filled." Eventually, witnessing my passion and conviction, she softened and allowed me to pursue my heart's desire.

In July 2004, Pastor Hesketh Mathew came to Anguilla to conduct a spirit-filled evangelistic series that spoke to my soul. I attended every meeting. When made the first call for baptism, the Holy Spirit convicted me and I stepped forward without hesitation, eager to embrace my faith. I had hoped for my mother's encouragement, yet when we returned home, she expressed her doubts, claiming I was too young to commit to such a significant step. My father echoed her sentiments, which further saddened the moment. My parents became instruments of the Devil, preparing meals that contradicted my new lifestyle

choices, leaving me feeling desolate. Yet just when I needed it most, my neighbour Conlloyd and his family extended their arms as a support system, inviting me over for meals and making me feel at home. Enna and Conrad Gumbs, Conlloyd's parents, became like second parents to me.

On the day of my baptism, my parents withheld their approval. Nevertheless, my resolve remained unshaken. When I looked around, I realized that if young people could engage in wrongful acts without their parents' permission, I, too, could make a choice for righteousness. Though my earthly parents were absent, I felt the comforting presence of the Holy Spirit guiding my heart. Maria Webster, the Deputy Director of the Pathfinder Club, encouraged me with warm words: "Leri, you're making one of the greatest decisions a young man can make. I stand with you." On July 10, 2004, I committed my life to Jesus through baptism, becoming a cherished member of Mount Fortune Seventh-day Adventist Church. Miraculously, soon after, my parents reconciled, and my father returned to us.

In September of that same year, an incredible opportunity arose for me to preach at Pathfinder Day. With the support of my counselor, Khaleesha Webster, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I delivered my first sermon on the importance of standing up for God, inspired by the story of the three Hebrew boys who faced the fiery furnace with unparalleled faith. To my amazement, my mother attended that day and witnessed my heartfelt presentation, leaving her profoundly blessed. From that moment, she became one of my strongest supporters in my newfound walk of faith. As I embraced spiritual growth, my desire to serve God deepened.

For years, I had dreamed of

becoming a lawyer, but in 2007, I felt the gentle prompting of the Holy Spirit nudging my heart towards pastoral ministry.

During one service, a pastor spoke movingly about running from God's calling, recounting how he had once wanted to be a lawyer but eventually discovered that God intended for him to be a minister of the gospel. After years of struggle, he surrendered to God, leading to a transformative joy he had never known. Inspired, I shared my newfound conviction with my parents, thrilled to follow this calling. My mother celebrated my decision, but my father expressed his disapproval, insisting I should pursue a legal career, emphasizing the financial security it would bring. This left me heartbroken. Yet, **I realized that some battles are best fought through prayer, leaning heavily on the Holy Spirit for guidance.**

In a twist of fate in 2008, my father faced a life-threatening ordeal at sea—lost for 22 and a half grueling hours after falling from his boat. By God's grace, he was miraculously saved, which dramatically shifted his perspective, including his views on my desire to become a pastor.

In 2008, I faced a difficult period, unable to attend the university I longed for. Depression set in as I found myself wandering into the company of friends who led me astray, engaging in activities that clashed with my beliefs. I remember one painful instance when my mother invited me to church, and I defiantly refused, allowing darkness to seep into my heart. In this challenging season, my father's efforts were nothing short of Holy Spirit's intervention to help me refocus on God's calling for my life. He learnt about the University of the Southern Caribbean and arranged for Pastors Danny Philip and Carl Hastings to speak with me about pursuing studies in theology.



Taking it upon himself, my father ensured I was enrolled in and even accompanied me to Trinidad to embark on this new adventure in January 2009—a decision I have never regretted. Throughout my years at university, the academic pursuits, spiritual experiences, and social connections profoundly shaped my character and faith.

In 2013, I proudly graduated with honors from the University of the Southern Caribbean and began my journey as a ministerial intern for the North Caribbean Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. On December 20, 2013, I was honoured to be invested as a Master Guide by the esteemed Youth Director, Dr. Vincent A. David. The very

next day, I married the love of my life, Jerreece Fleming, whose unwavering support would become a foundational pillar in my life. On August 21, 2021, I was ordained as a minister in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and in 2022, I was blessed to be elected as the Youth Director of the North Caribbean Conference.

It is breathtaking to witness how God has orchestrated my life—from a summer festival prince to a devoted Pathfinder, transforming a young dancer into a modern-day Daniel.

My dreams have shifted from a pursuit of the law of man to championing the truth of the gospel. I stand as a testament to the boundless wonders of what can unfold when we fully surrender our lives to Him. **Each chapter of my journey reflects the beauty and grace of God's plan, reminding us that no dream is too big and no heart too small when placed in His loving hands. The Holy Spirit has been my constant guide, illuminating my path and enabling me to serve with love, compassion, and unwavering faith.**

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

Elder Lennox Jason a native of Guyana is the Youth and Public Campus Ministries Director of the Guyana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Fulfilling my Purpose

Director
Lennox
Jason



Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. **Jeremiah 1:5**

Today, I am both humbled and honored to serve as the Youth and Public Campus Ministry Director of the Guyana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

However, me being in this position and given the opportunity

to serve "God first" and thousands of young people was God-appointed and God-orchestrated even before I was born, and interestingly enough, was shown to me more than 30 years ago.

In my early adolescence years, I was fatherless, hopeless,

poor and living in the ghetto community of Leopold Street in the heart of Georgetown, Guyana. I had just written the Common Entrance Exams (now National Grade Six Assessment) and would very often go behind the old Central High School building that my late grandmother was the



caretaker of to be by myself and to think about whether my present circumstances and situation would remain with me for the rest of my life.

But it was during one of my many visits to that spot that God showed me my purpose—His plan for my life, even though I couldn't see it at that time. I observed a group of young people well dressed in uniform practicing drilling and marching not far from the Ephesus Seventh-day Adventist church. I didn't know the name of the group nor the reason for them practicing but later learnt that they were pathfinders and was practicing for camporee at Loo-Creek.

I now had a good reason to return to that spot, over and over again because it was a joy to see this group of young people, like myself doing something positive as oppose to the negative things that I had grown accustom to seeing in my community: drugs and crime.

Some years later, I am now a middle adolescence and had just moved into another community. My late grandfather invited me and many other people from my neighborhood to a crusade that the Seventh-day Adventist church Moriah was hosting in North Ruimveldt. I attended the nightly meetings and heard God's voice

calling me at that young age. I took my STAND for God when the call was made and gave my life to Jesus in baptism.

I immediately joined the master guide club when it was promoted at an AY meeting on the Sabbath afternoon in the church building after the conclusion of the crusade. I had no idea what to expect but thought it would have challenged me so, I enrolled. Truth be told, God used the training that I have received in the master guide club to keep me in "Jesus" and serving in the Seventh-day Adventist church. I offered my service in the pathfinder club at my church and after completing my master guide program and investing as a master guide in the year 1999 I continued to volunteer my service to my church's pathfinder club, youth federations and Conference wide.

I was eventually called in the year 2014 to serve as the Assistant Youth Director of the Guyana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists with responsibility for the uniform clubs: adventurer, pathfinder and master guide. Then it became clearer to me that God had showed me this many, many years before. After experiencing this light bulb moment about my life's mission, I continued to execute God's bidding with "Pace and Power" focusing on my mission and not on the position.

God moved me from Assistant Youth Director to Associate Youth Ministries Director to Youth and Public Campus Ministry Director in eight years. I do much because I am given much!

I thank God for using those adverse situations in my life as an adolescence to reveal His mission and will for my life and for giving me a willing and obedient heart to say yes to His call and will for my life, even when that means serving as a volunteer.

I encourage everyone reading this testimony including the young people, to do something for Jesus, for something is always better than doing nothing. Pray and ask God to show you your purpose in life—because that is the reason you are alive this very second.

My life philosophy is driven by my God appointed mission, "Living my life to be a blessing to everyone"



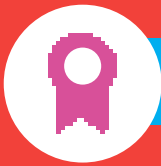


Esther: Courage to Stand

Pastor Sherwin A.E. White | Friday January 17



36



SCRIPTURE

¹³ Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.

¹⁴ For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? **Esther 4:13,14**

I invite you to take an exciting journey with me through the book of Esther as we explore the tenacity of a woman who had the courage to stand against all odds. The narrative is set over one hundred years after the Babylonian exile of the Israelites from their homeland. The Babylonian power had fallen to the Persian empire, and at this time, some Jews returned to Jerusalem, however, many decided to remain in Susa, the capital of the Persian Empire.

The Jews who remained in the Persian Empire were terrorized and they were nigh overtaken by the murderous threat of a misguided leader. The courage of Esther and the providence of God saved the lives of the Jews..

Let's explore four simple points

1. God's Providence

The events in your life are not an incident of chance. Ellen G. White posits, "Above the distractions of the earth He sits enthroned; all things are open to His divine survey; and from His great and calm eternity He orders that which His providence sees best" (Ministry of Healing, 417).

Esther's life was decorated by a series of misfortune and unsavory events, notwithstanding, God was controlling the master plan of her life. She was born into slavery; her ancestors were taken into exile from their homeland into Babylon. There is nothing good or notable about slavery. Slavery denied one; their freedom and dignity. The horrendous experiences of slavery tortures the mind of an individual. Under slavery, the living conditions are inhumane, suffocating and paralyzing. It is as if you are eternally trapped.

Additionally, her parents died leaving her an orphan. She lived in a foster home with her cousin Mordecai. Many stories are told and documentaries published of the harsh conditions under which foster children and orphans live. Contrary to these occurrences, she had a safe space to grow and develop, one that was free from abuse but full of love. One that nurtured her spiritually and created the avenue for her to have explicit trust and faith in God.

As time went by, the Jewish people gained a semblance of acceptance and recognition. They were now considered refugees or members of an immigrant community. This grouping of people are generally placed in a disadvantageous position and suffer from marginalization, disenfranchisement and discrimination.

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1. God's Providence...continued

Life may place you in an unsavory position, however, the iconic word of Ellen G White states, "In the annals of human history the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as dependent on the will and prowess of man. The shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, behind, above, and through all the play and counterplay of human interests and power and passions, the agencies of the all-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will." (Education, 173)

In spite of Esther's challenges, God's Providence allowed her to be queen even though her heritage was Jewish. This exaltation was not by magic, an act of nepotism or simony. She was elevated because of her discipline and contentment. These are qualities that should be possessed in the life of every Christian. The prevailing culture drives individuals to grab at the expense of others, however, the child of God should allow the experience of Esther to be mirrored in their lives.

Like a master sculpture, God is carving a masterpiece in your life, in the same way He did with Esther's.

2. People in your life can make or break you.

A journey through the book of Esther reveals the importance of surrounding ourselves with humble, wise and godly people. Let's compare and contrast the lives of the Persian King Xerxes and Esther to illustrate this point. While inebriated, the king made an impulsive request of queen Vasthi to which she did not adhere. This left the drunk king in a state of embarrassment. Her actions caused him to seek counsel from his wise men. Esther 1:13 NIV highlights, He immediately consulted with his wise advisers, who knew all the Persian laws and customs, for he always asked their advice. Following their counsel, Vasthi was deposed as queen. Additionally, the king's right-hand man, Haman led him to make a series of extremely poor decisions and he enacted laws that were detrimental to the Jewish people.

On the other hand, the main protagonist in Esther's life was her cousin Mordecai. He was an outstanding citizen with an unblemished character. A man of immense wisdom and positive insights. When auditioning to be queen, he told her not to reveal her nationality and family background. This proved to be the launching pad for her ascension to the throne as queen. She didn't argue with his counsel or second guess, she trusted him explicitly.

It is also important to note that wise counsel can also come in the form of stern rebukes. During her period of inaction and timidity towards the deliverance of the Jews, Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place (Esther 4:13,14). She listened to the counsels, stood with courage and God's people were saved.

Choosing people in our lives is a matter that should be subjected to much prayer and communion with God. Lives are ruined, dreams shattered and destinies derailed because of misalignment with people who lack wisdom.

3. God Works Behind the Scenes

ILLUSTRATION

A young couple; the husband being an atheist; was excited about their vacation with their six month old baby. Due to circumstances beyond their control, they were in a rush to be on their way. They put the baby's car seat on the roof of the car while they were loading up for their trip. Somehow in the confusion and rush, they drove away with the car seat still sitting on the roof of the car. The car seat stayed where it was until they reached a major highway. At that point the wind blew the car seat off the roof, it landed on the road right-side-up, and skidded off the highway onto the verge. The baby was fine and unhurt. A driver who witnessed the incident exclaimed; it is a miracle! That incident paved the way for the husband becoming a believer. God was working behind the scenes.

Fascinatingly, God's name is never mentioned in Esther. Notwithstanding, God's fingerprints are littered on every page. God was present when Esther's ancestors were taken into captivity. When she lost her parents in an untimely fashion, God was present. As an orphan and foster child, God was her constant companion. It was not a coincidence that "the young woman had a beautiful figure and was very attractive" (Esther 2:7 GWT). Her physique was responsible for her entry into the beauty pageant. Not disclosing her Jewish identity was not a mistake. God was choreographing every moment for the deliverance of His people.



Every detail of your life is under divine surveillance. Ellen G. White states, "In all that He does he has the well-being of his (own) in view" (Steps to Christ).

ILLUSTRATION

To further illustrate how God works behind the scenes, Fanny Crosby recounted in her autobiography, "One day, I wanted the modestly substantial amount of five dollars for a particular purpose, and needed it very badly. I did not know, just then, exactly how to get it and was led in mind to pray for it. Somehow, I knew the good Lord would give it to me if I asked Him for it – though exactly how, I did not know.

Not long after I had prayed for the money, a gentleman came into the house, passed the time of day, shook hands with me, and went out immediately. When I closed my hand, after the friendly salutation, I found in it a bill which he left there. A visitor later told me it was a five dollar bill.

"I have no way to account for this, except to believe that God, in answer to my prayer, put it into the heart of this good man to bring me the money." My first thought was, "What a wonderful way the Lord helps me!" Fanny Crosby later penned the words, All the way my Savior leads me! What have I to ask beside? Can I doubt His faithful mercy, who through life has been my guide. Heavenly peace, divinest comfort, here by faith in Him to dwell! For I know, whate'er befalls me, Jesus doeth all things well.

4. Courage to Stand

In chapter four, an exciting dialogue takes place between Queen Esther and her cousin Mordecai. Esther is in the palace, on the other hand, Mordecai having rent his clothes, is in sackcloth and ashes at the gate of the palace. He implores Esther to approach the King and beg for mercy and plead for the Jewish people.

Fearing for her life, she dismissed his plea for help. It was against the custom for someone to present themselves to the king without an invitation. Quite often, our position of comfort can cause us to ignore and be indifferent to the plights of others. Also, self preservation causes many to overlook the hardships of others. The immortalized words of the wise man Solomon are instructive, "Do not withhold good from those who deserve it when it's in your power to help them." (Proverbs 3:27)

In defense Mordecai shared with his cousin the most popular verses from the book of Esther, Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? (Esther 4:13,14)

Upon hearing those words, with a resurgence of courage, she was ready to stand against the king. She said, "Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish." (Esther 4:16)

No one who stands for God will ever perish. God's favor was with her and her life was saved along with the life of all of the Jews.

God is sovereign and His fingerprints are all over your life. And wherever God has placed you is exactly where He wants you for this moment. He wants you to be courageous and stand.





David: A Leader Shaped by the Holy Spirit

By Pastor Marvyn Smith | Sabbath January 18



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Caribbean Union Conference of Seventh Day Adventists

In the words of John Maxwell, "everything rises and falls on leadership." The success or failure of a nation or institution is often hinged on the quality of leadership it receives. The leader not only influences the direction but also the momentum and energy that exists within the team. This reality can be substantiated biblically by just a cursory look at the impact various leaders had on the Nation of Israel throughout the ages. Whether they were journeying in the wilderness, conquering new terrain or establishing an empire, the leader of Israel contributed greatly to the success or failure they experienced as a nation.

David, the man after God's heart is considered to be one of Israel's greatest leaders. For centuries after his reign, he stood out as the standard and example for successive kings. Today his life and rulership are studied and discussed by leadership enthusiasts and experts alike. His leadership journey and story are inscribed in scripture as one of the most captivating dramatic masterpieces in the Bible. While there is much to be gleaned from his life and reign, we will be focusing on the role and influence of the Holy Spirit in shaping the life and leadership of King David.

David is introduced to us as an obedient shepherd boy who faithfully tends to his father's sheep (1 Samuel 16:11). His background as a shepherd, skill as a musician and humble family upbringing, appears to form the perfect pretext for his success as a leader. From the surface one may even conclude that David's biodata earned him the top spot as King of Israel and led him to good success throughout his tenure. We must note however that while his background and career aided in his preparation these were not the reasons for his selection. Though the Holy Spirit used his upbringing and background to help in shaping his character, one must never mistakenly accredit his success to mere background, upbringing or previous shepherd career. If the mere interaction with sheep was the reason for his selection and leadership prowess, then many other persons could have been eligible for the top spot as King. Anyone else could have been chosen, after all, it was a community of shepherds and there were many other sheep lovers in his time. This context and setting were not exclusive to Jessy and his family. Shaped by the Holy Spirit, David possessed uncommon qualities that transcended his background and career exposure.

What was it that distinguished David from the other shepherds in his day? What qualities did he possess that captivated the God of the universe? Why was David selected, why was he a rare and distinguished choice? Why would God count on him? These questions should not only be asked of David, but we must also introspectively consider whether God can count on us to stand out as a chosen people. Do you possess qualities that are attractive to God? Will God be able to pick you out from the crowd to fulfill his exploits? What are the qualities you need to model and inculcate to meet the kind of success that David met, and more importantly, to stand out as one of God's chosen men or women in the last days? Careful reflection on such questions can help us as church leaders and disciples to protect ourselves from the dry and empty leadership theories that exist in our world today. Many of these theories focus on mechanical processes but are void of the presence of the most consequential power available to humanity, the Holy Spirit. Over the next few paragraphs, I wish to share with you three perspectives that go beyond socioeconomic background and mechanical processes in leadership formation. These perspectives will unveil the source of the exemplary qualities in King David's life that led to his exclusive selection as well as his excellence in leadership.

Pastor Marvyn Smith a native of Guyana is the Youth, Chaplaincy, and Public Campus Ministries director of the Caribbean Union of Seventh-day Adventists. He is also an adjunct lecturer for the Youth Ministry Course at the University of the Southern Caribbean.



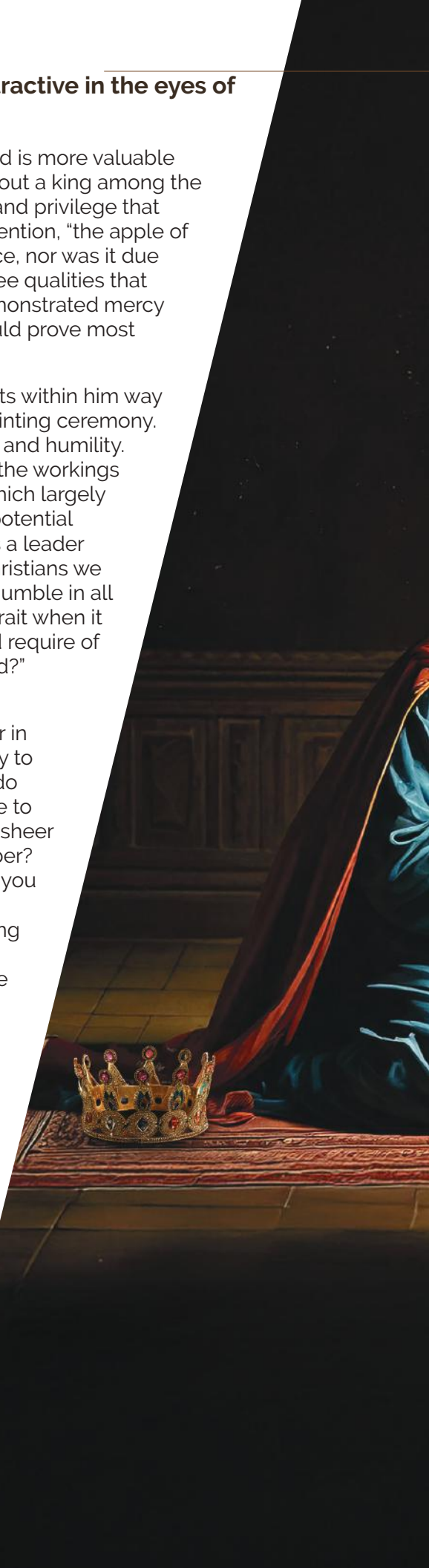
1. David's heart of justice, mercy, and humility made him attractive in the eyes of God..

Let me start by stating the obvious; being attractive in the eyes of God is more valuable than being attractive in the eye of any human being. When God sought out a king among the sons of Jessy, he was in pursuit of a heart that was worthy of the honor and privilege that will be bestowed upon it. As such David became the object of God's attention, "the apple of his eye, the man worthy of the royal office. This did not happen by chance, nor was it due to his dwelling with sheep. David's heart was under the influence of three qualities that God could not resist; justice, mercy and humility. David acted justly, demonstrated mercy and walked in humility. These were the very character qualities that would prove most invaluable to him as he matured and evolved into an exemplary King.

We must understand that the Spirit of God was developing these traits within him way before the prophet Samuel showed up at the home of Jessy for the anointing ceremony. God wanted a leader whose service would be defined by justice, mercy and humility. In like manner, God seeks to develop these very qualities in us through the workings of the Holy Spirit. We should not take for granted that these qualities, which largely influenced David's success, must be nurtured and developed in every potential leader in the church of God. Even further, every disciple of Christ, who is a leader by default, is required to demonstrate justice, mercy and humility. As Christians we should constantly pray and ask God to help us to be just, merciful and humble in all our daily interactions. Micah 6:8 highlights the importance of this triple trait when it says "He hath shown thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Can you identify experiences and situations in your life that require a demonstration of justice, mercy and humility? Are you required to be fair in helping to bring resolve to conflicts, do you listen objectively and openly to both sides of situations when doing so? When administering discipline do you act with firmness and fairness? If you are asked to select a delegate to represent your church or institution, will you partake in the process with sheer objectivity or will you subjectively choose a close friend or family member? What about your demonstration of mercy? Are you in a situation where you can demonstrate more leniency to a defector or offer forgiveness to an offender? Are you sensitive to those who are in need or might be suffering in your community office or classroom? What about your display of humility, are you constantly seeking attention? Do you always have to be visible and up-front at church services? Are you only supportive of the mission of the church when you hold church office or key leadership roles? Do you only associate with the influential and well-to-do?

While there is not an exhaustive list of questions to determine if a person possesses these qualities, it is important to always introspectively pray and ask God to nurture and develop a sense of justice, a disposition of mercy and an attitude of humility within you. You will discover that the demise of Saul largely hinged on the injustices meted out by him and a false sense of pride (which led to disobedience) that eventually derailed his leadership. On the contrary David rose to prominence because his leadership was marked by justice, mercy and humility. Whether you provide leadership at school, at work, in the home or at play; or whether it is as you lead your personal life, the presence or absence of these character qualities will determine the success or failure of your leadership. Therefore, pray that justice, mercy and humility will define your life and leadership. Ask God to develop these qualities within you.





2. David's Leadership was never void of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

After David's anointing scripture records that "the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward" (1 Samuel 16:13). Never in scripture was it said of David that the Spirit of God departed from him, as it has been seen of Saul and many other would-be leaders of Israel.

While everything rises and falls on leadership, leadership itself rises and falls based on the presence or absence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the leader. We see in scripture that upon the departure of the Holy Spirit Saul was unable to sustain two very important qualities that David managed to maintain throughout his rule; wisdom and integrity. In 1 Samuel 18: 5 the Bible tells us that David behaved himself wisely wherever he went. Further, in 2 Kings 9:4, we see that Solomon is asked to walk with integrity like his father David. The wisdom and integrity that was demonstrated by David cannot be bought in a book, developed at a leadership seminar, or gained in a university classroom. This level of wisdom and integrity can only be engendered through the inner workings of the Holy Spirit.

Wisdom and integrity are common threads in the lives of those Bible leaders who ascended the full ladder of success. However, in each case, the presence and working of the Holy Spirit was the controlling factor. Only the Holy Spirit can bring you the wisdom and strength of integrity needed to stand out as an exemplary child of God.

Do you desire wisdom to make the decisions that are before you right now? Do you need wisdom to make major decisions on career, financial investments, friendships, a life partner, or diet? Whatever the decisions before you, use this opportunity to pray and rely on the Holy Spirit for wisdom.

Along with wisdom, integrity will be the driving factor that gives you the ability to act right whether in public or in private. David while under attack by Saul had the opportunity to secretly assassinate his enemy-King but refused to do so. He refused to "touch the Lord's anointed." Due to a high sense of integrity, David knew that he did not have to assassinate the reigning King to secure his position as future King. The spirit of God gave him the power to walk with integrity though he was being pressured to take matters into his own hands. Saul on the other hand, who was void of the Holy Spirit, acted without integrity. He was willing to assassinate the future King to secure his position as the incumbent King. When the Holy Spirit is pushed aside or ignored this integrity defect will often emerge in the leadership arena. Void of the Holy Spirit, many persons act without integrity to secure high positions and gain the influence of others. Many walk the low road of character assassination, personal attacks, and diplomatic defamation of others to gain some personal mileage. This kind of Saul-like behavior is a clear indicator that the Spirit of God has been sidelined. On the contrary, David's integrity was sustained by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit even when under immense pressure.

Wisdom and integrity are critical qualities in our lives as leaders and as disciples of Christ. For this reason, we should constantly pray for the presence and potency of the Holy Spirit in our lives daily. Wisdom and integrity cannot be sustained without Him. Like David, we should constantly seek to ensure that it is not said of us that the Spirit departed. When the Spirit departs wisdom and integrity will also depart..



3. David's deep love for God was ignited and fueled by the Holy Spirit.

David is distinguished among the Kings of Israel for his immense love and respect for God. His love for God produced an unparalleled obedience which stands as a hallmark of his leadership. This factor gives great validity to John 14:15 where Jesus highlights the fact that obedience is a byproduct of love: "if you love me keep my commandments." David was not a perfect leader, but he is the ideal model of love and obedience to God in leadership. 1 Kings 15:5 tells us that David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

There are two critical aspects of love driven leadership that come to view when we analyze this text. Firstly, David was never influenced by, nor attracted to idolatry. He made no room for the worship of other Gods throughout his reign. David's love for God kept him clear from the evil influence of the pagan religions surrounding Israel. He never compromised or challenged Jehovah's position as the Supreme ruler of Israel. David's love, zeal, and reverence for God was unhinged. From his initiatory combat with Goliath of Gath to his final fight with Ishbibenob, David defended the honor of God with all his heart, soul, and mind. David was always ready to lay down his life for his God. His actions stand in contrast to many who lay aside the eternal God in an effort to preserve their frail human lives.

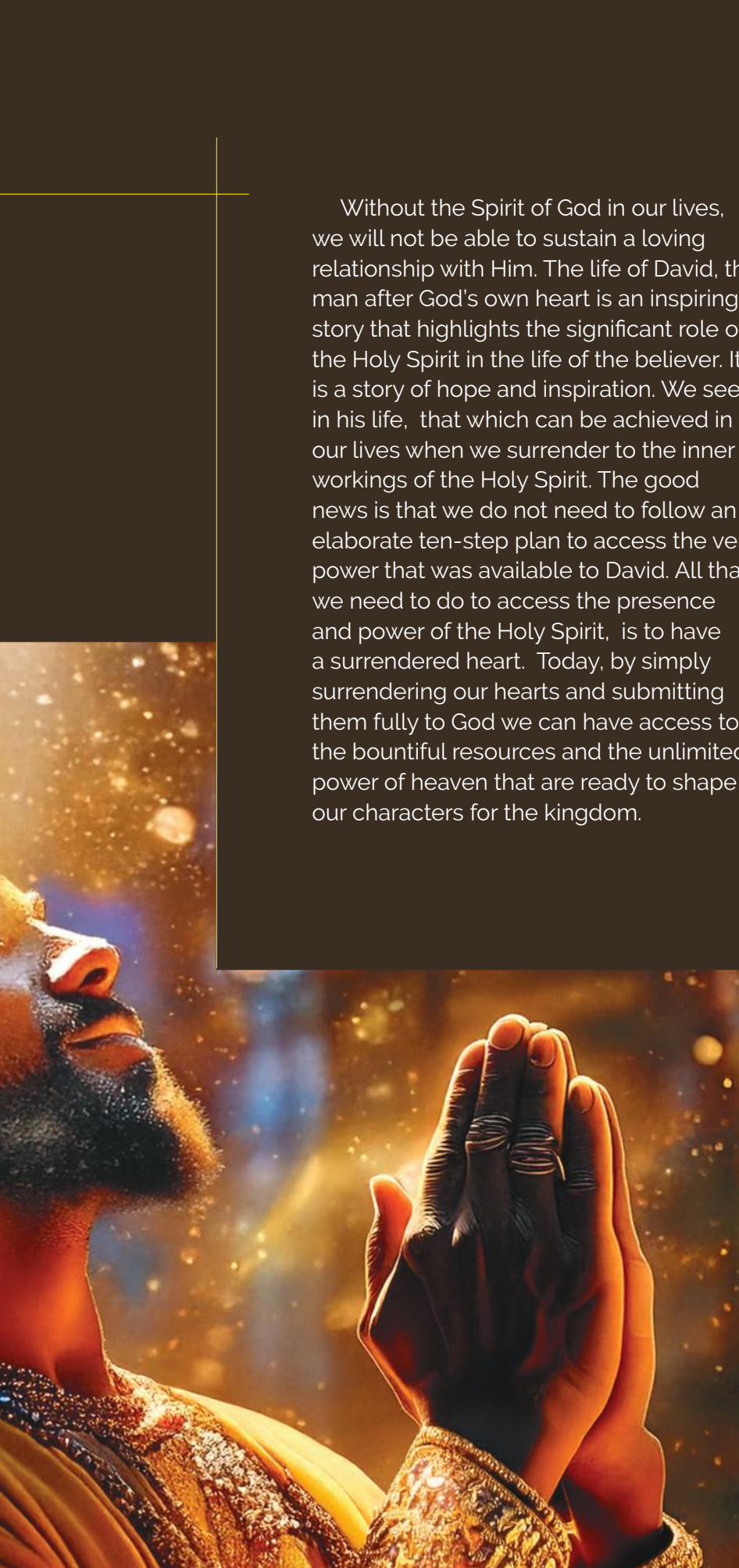
Secondly, David demonstrated the ability to turn to complete repentance after making grave missteps. It is no secret that David committed the double crime of adultery and murder after being led away by his own lust. The Bible writers did not omit this chapter of David's life to portray him as a perfect man. On the contrary, this record is kept as a cautionary testimony that speaks to the vulnerability of any person who steps out of the protective coverage of God's commands. It also stands out as a message of hope to the erring and fallen. David's complete turnaround and repentance as captured in Psalm 51 is the best example of a contrite and penitent heart. This degree of sincerity and remorse can never be achieved without the inner workings of the Holy Spirit.

Is your love for God so great that it empowers you to walk the straight and narrow path? Whenever you make a miss-step, is your heart broken with deep remorse? Does your love for God empower you to turn away from sinful ways and sinful practices? Do not voice your answer, instead use this opportunity to ask the Holy Spirit to fill your heart so you can develop a greater love for God.

CONCLUSION

The apostle Paul points out in Philippians 2:13 that "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." It was the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit that shaped the life and leadership of David.





Without the Spirit of God in our lives, we will not be able to sustain a loving relationship with Him. The life of David, the man after God's own heart is an inspiring story that highlights the significant role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. It is a story of hope and inspiration. We see in his life, that which can be achieved in our lives when we surrender to the inner workings of the Holy Spirit. The good news is that we do not need to follow an elaborate ten-step plan to access the very power that was available to David. All that we need to do to access the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, is to have a surrendered heart. Today, by simply surrendering our hearts and submitting them fully to God we can have access to the bountiful resources and the unlimited power of heaven that are ready to shape our characters for the kingdom.

PRAYER ACTION/ APPEAL

- That the Spirit will give you a heart of justice, mercy and humility.
- That the presence of the Holy Spirit will be sustained in your life.
- That your love for God will be fueled by the Holy Spirit.



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The Holy Spirit works with those who will be worked, molds those who will be molded, fashions those who will be fashioned. Give yourselves the culture of spiritual thoughts and holy communings.

Ellen G. White
Help in Daily Living 50.2







Holy Spirit Emphasis Week | January 11th - 18th 2025