

REAL MEN
LEAD

Jeffrey (Duke) Crawford

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Preface

When God created man, He gave Adam the role of leadership—leadership over the animals and leadership over Eve and their home. Later when God established the church, He gave men the role of leadership as elders and pastors.

Whatever your position in life, somewhere, somehow, you will find yourself a leader—whether it is in your home, your place of employment, your church, or your community. It is often easy to let someone else take the responsibility (the headaches) of leadership. You can hand it over officially or you can relinquish it through passivity. But real men don't roll over to let someone else do the leading. **Real Men Lead!**

When God established a throne for the nation of Israel, He gave the leadership to men, first to Saul and then to David. The books of 1 and 2 Samuel reveal the life of David, the greatest king of Israel. Now there was a leader. And God has graciously recorded David's strengths and weaknesses that we might learn from them.

In this study you will investigate David, who led everything from a rag-tag group of "losers," to Israel at its height as a nation. You will discover how God equipped David for leadership, how his relationship with God affected his leadership, and what he did as an effective, godly leader.

As you study these lessons on your own or with a group of men, you will be challenged to become a more effective, godly leader yourself. You will find that you can be **a real man who leads.**

L E S S O N O N E

Leaders Are Equipped

This study will help you identify God's work in your life to equip you for leadership.

A successful coach is future minded. He sees every practice as preparation for a game and every game as preparation for *the* game (i.e., the championship). At certain practices, he blasts “crowd noise” at a head-splitting decibel to simulate game situations. In that same practice, he “encourages” his players to run to the point of exhaustion and then to shoot jump shots and free throws. He knows those winded lungs and tired legs are the same ones that will be called upon during “crunch time.” He’s preparing his players for the future.

Similar to the coach, God prepares us for leadership through each circumstance of life. While some of these circumstances are unpleasant (no ballplayer relishes wind sprints), they are purposeful.

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God was clearly “up to something” in David’s early life. The lessons learned and skills acquired through shepherding sheep prepared David to shepherd people—God’s people!

Shepherding 101

While “shepherd” may not look too impressive to us on a résumé, God did impressive things in young David’s life to prepare David for leadership through the work and experiences of a shepherd. For David, this experience was “Shepherding 101” at RLU (Real Life University).

1. How does 1 Samuel 13:14 describe the heart of David as a youth?

2. How did God use the lonely, unassuming, quiet life of a shepherd to develop David’s inner man?

3. Read Psalm 23. What did David learn about the character and care of the Lord as a shepherd?

The Work of a Shepherd	God’s Character and Care
Makes to lie down in green pastures and leads to still waters	Is able to meet and satisfy every need of those who belong to Him

Leaders Are Equipped

A shepherd's life in David's day was undoubtedly lonely. David would have spent days, even weeks, alone in the hills and valleys surrounding his hometown of Bethlehem. Grazing pastures were hard to come by; and in some seasons, nearly impossible. A good shepherd diligently led his flock over miles of rugged terrain for food and water. (Finding "green pastures" and "still waters" is not as easy as it sounds.) David resisted the temptation to become dull and instead grew in wisdom and skill.

One of the many things David mastered during this time in his life was his musical skill.

4. Read 1 Samuel 16:14–23. How did God use David's musical ability?

In his book *When God Chooses* (RBP5156), Keith Kaynor insightfully points out, "David did not figure on getting into court via his harp, but he ended up riding it into the capital."

A "Setback"?

Having been anointed by Samuel to be the next king (1 Samuel 16:1–13) and having been taken to the palace to play for King Saul (16:14–23), David could see God's hand at work. He knew that God was angry at Saul due to Saul's disobedience (1 Samuel 13–15) and that Saul knew the kingdom would be taken from him and given to another (15:28). David could have assumed that his position as court musician was a stepping-stone to the throne. However, as chapter 17 begins, he was back in the Judean mountains with the sheep.

5. Explain why David might have seen this move as a setback.

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6. Read 1 Samuel 17:34–37. From these verses, what skill did God perfect in David that could be perfected only as a shepherd?

7. Recall from your own life an apparent setback that God used to equip you for a future opportunity.

A Giant Test

First Samuel 17 is the classic account of David’s battle with the Philistine champion Goliath. With both armies at a face-off in the valley of Elah, Goliath challenged the Israelites to send their best to meet in a one-on-one conflict, the winner take all (17:8, 9). Saul and his men were frightened, and God’s name was maligned as daily the giant warrior hurled his challenges and curses at the Israelites (17:10, 11, 16, 23). Saul and the rest of the Israelites shook with fright. Instead of meeting the challenge with courage, they cowered, literally running for cover (17:24). The time demanded a leader. Someone to rise to the challenge. That someone had been groomed by God for the moment.

8. Read chapter 17. Did David believe he could defeat Goliath. Why?

Leaders Are Equipped

9. Contrast David's leadership with the leadership of (or lack of leadership by) Saul.

Saul	David
Looked for someone else (vv. 25-27)	
Feared man (v. 33)	
Trusted in armor (v. 38)	

Note: David's confidence to succeed in battle was founded on both his knowledge of God and his skills, finely tuned in the sheep pasture.

10. Why is it important to give our best even in things that seem small or insignificant?

Think About It

11. How has God used His Word and the experiences of your life to equip you to lead at home?

at work?

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at church?

With surgeon-like precision, God equipped David to lead. Whether tangling with a bear, confronting a champion warrior, or playing the harp for a depressed king, David grew into a leader.

His early life teaches you . . .

- to have patience when your responsibilities and opportunities seem small or insignificant.
- to work hard and give your best in all circumstances.
- to trust that God is “up to something” in your life, equipping you to lead.

12. What attributes of God have you learned or been encouraged in through this study?

Memory Verse

“David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee” (1 Samuel 17:37).