

Lessons from Abijah and Asa



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Welcome back. You made it to session three. Let's go forward here. I'm excited. Last session we learned leadership lessons from Jeroboam and Abijah and Rehoboam, by the way. We're going to continue with some lessons, or a lesson, from Abijah and continue now through the kings of Judah. It is very important—these lessons—because the Lord included these biblical examples in an historical text in the Bible not just to entertain us, not just to write something, but to give us so that we can learn from their examples. We can learn from their victories as well as their mistakes and apply them until today. Lord knows I've made many mistakes, but now as I read the living, breathing Word of God, I'm strengthened and able to excel beyond my years, beyond my experience based on experience from the Word of God.

9. When surrounded by enemies, leaders must rely on the Lord.

Another lesson that we learned from Abijah is that when surrounded by enemies, we must rely on the Lord. Remember, when we left him, he was facing a war with two to one odds against a superpower army, against his own nation after having only 20 percent, less than 20 percent, of the nation on his side and the rest on the other side. They had all of the weapons, all of the military wherewithal, and here he is surrounded. But the leader who praises God during adverse circumstances empowers their own leadership. Let me tell you. There was a commercial on television in America a while ago. They used to say it was a deodorant commercial. "Never let them see you sweat." Well I don't know. The way I saw it, if that's possible. However, never let them see you turn your back on God no matter how difficult it is, no matter how challenging it is.

When you as a leader can continue to praise God, can continue to say, "You are sovereign. You are in control, and I know I'm in Your hand. I have confidence in You, God," there's somewhere you can



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2 Chronicles 13 NKJV
 14 And when Judah looked around, to their surprise the battle line was at both front and rear; and they cried out to the Lord, and the priests sounded the trumpets.
 15 Then the men of Judah gave a shout; and as the men of Judah shouted, it happened that God struck Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah.

1 John 5:18

We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but **he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.** (NKJV)



be. True leaders submit their abilities and skill to God and rely on Him. That's why Abijah, when he was surrounded, could rely on God. When it looks like there is no way out, no way forward, trust in Him. In verse 15 of 2 Chronicles 13, it says, "Then the men of Judah gave a shout; and as the men of Judah shouted, . . . God struck Jeroboam and all Israel." Jeroboam came to fight and destroy them. He wanted this place. He wanted to take over Judah, but the men of God shouted. I wonder in class, can I shout? Yes! Will you shout and say, "God is good no matter what's happening." First of all, you send a signal to the enemy that, hey, I may be down, but I'm not out. My odds may not be good, but they're great because God is on my side. Listen, thank God that our faith and our walk with God is not democratic. All you need is one vote, and that's the vote of God.

Five hundred thousand of the eight hundred thousand men who were with Jeroboam were killed in battle. Instead of complaining or getting burnt out, shout and rely. Get an attitude of gratitude. Don't complain and feel like, *I'm just burnt out. How can God put me in this? This is too much for me.* Listen, the true people of God, we may get tired. We may get discouraged, but we don't burn out. We're going to wear out. We're going to say, "God, use me." First John 5:18 (the b section of that verse) is one of my favorite verses in the world. It says, "He who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him." When we serve God in our leadership, and we keep ourselves following the things of God, the wicked one cannot destroy us. He can push and try to do things to us and kind of disturb us. But when we keep our focus, he cannot touch us. We have the victory.

We've got to move on to the next section, because this one here, this blesses me. Because even today, there are things that I'm facing. I feel surrounded, but I know the sovereignty of God has my back. So I want to remind you, when you feel surrounded by enemies, rely on God.

10. Good leaders make decisions to break the cycle that was before them.

We're going to go now to another king, Asa. Asa is a good king. He is a good king, and he reminds us that good leaders make decisions to break the cycle that is before them. Remember earlier in a previous session we talked about how leaders can set a pattern for generations to come. But, a good leader can break those patterns if there are bad patterns before them. Asa had a father whose



2 Chronicles 14:10-12
 1 And Abijah rested with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David. Asa his son succeeded him as king, and **in his days the country was at peace for ten years.**
 2 Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God.



10 GOOD LEADERS MAKE DECISIONS TO BREAK THE CYCLE THAT WAS BEFORE THEM.

Utilize times of peace to set a pattern of putting things right.



11 NO PROBLEM IS TOO LARGE FOR GOD.

No matter how large the problem is, if God is on your side, it's a small problem to Him.

heart was not loyal to God. However, he made a choice to ensure that his life would matter; and he made the right choice. We do have a choice. No matter where you are—in your family, business, church, organization, wherever you are leading, in your school—you do have a choice. You are not stuck. God has given you an opportunity of choice to decide to break the molds that are set before you. You were put in leadership exactly for that—to break the mold, to set a new pattern. Asa's grandfather, Rehoboam was not necessarily a good king—he did some bad things even though he won the battle. They divided the kingdom. His father, Abijah, fought a great battle but did not please God, ultimately made bad choices. But we see here that Asa, first of all, had peace. And so he utilized that time of rest to build a vision. He didn't have war. His father had fought the war against Jeroboam. He had a time of peace, and he used this rest from the Lord to build and restore his kingdom. Second Chronicles 14:6 tells us that, it says the Lord gave him rest, and he used it wisely to build. Verse 7 says he built cities, "[made] walls around them, and towers, gates, and bars."

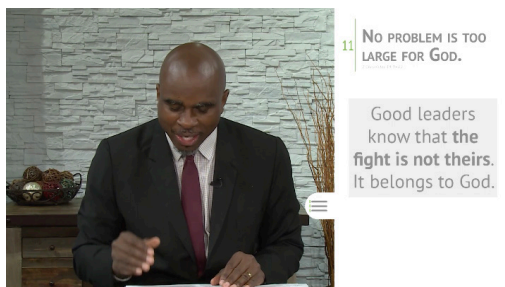
Listen, he made decisions to break the cycle by using the rest, the space that God had given him, to build up infrastructure in his nation. I want to encourage you, there are times in your leadership where it's not just stress and things are not going crazy, but it's not always going to be like that. Utilize this time to set a pattern where things are in order, where you put things right. Don't allow, don't just be a crisis manager, but proactively allow the space that God has given you to put things in order. Don't wait until there are problems in your family to pray with your family. Don't wait until your children are in trouble at school to give them great advice. Don't wait until the board at the church is having issues. When there is peace and space, use that time to grow. Good leaders make those decisions.

11. No problem is too large for God.

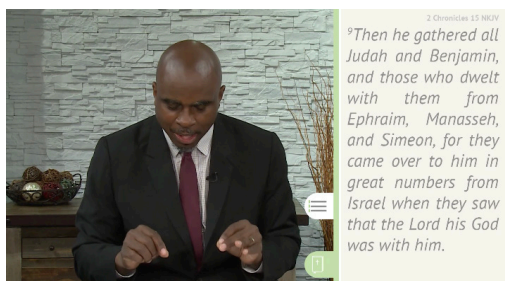
And then, now there's not always that, and we learn from Asa also another lesson that there is no problem too large for God. He had space. He built cities. He did other things. But now we learn that there is no problem too large or too difficult for God. Second Chronicles 14:9–12 and going into 15:1–12 tell of the problem that he is facing; and it's a large problem. Some people have problems. Other people have God-sized problems. I don't know about you, but I don't have problems like small things, like people looking at me funny or they talked about me or they didn't like me. That's kind of a, you know, low-level leadership problem. But sometimes



we have God-sized problems—problems that are impossible for us to deal with. All problems are small though when God is on our side. We learned that just a few moments ago. No matter how large the problem is, no matter how big the enemy is, if God is on your side, it's a small problem to Him. But the problem for Asa is that the Ethiopian army, an army with a million men and three hundred chariots (you might as well say three hundred tanks)—a million men, a million trained killers and three hundred tanks are coming after Asa and his nation. And Asa boldly declares in verse [11] of this text, "LORD, it is nothing for God to help with many or with a few who have no power." And then he continues in verse 11, since it is not my fight, it is Yours. "You are God; do not let man prevail against You." When faced with odds of a million trained soldiers, three hundred tanks, he says, "God, it's nothing for you to deal with this. This is not my fight. This is Yours."



As a leader, you've got to be able to let go and say, "God, You fight on Your behalf, because I represent You. This business, I started it because You gave it to me. This family, I'm not leaving this family. I'm not abandoning my family. I'm not giving up on my family, because You gave this family to me. This church, You gave to me. This neighborhood, this group that You put me over, this place where You've given me a sphere of leadership, You gave this to me. I'm not giving up." And look in verse 12. It says, "The LORD struck the Philistines before Asa and Judah, and the Ethiopians fled." They ran away. It says God struck them. I learned something. God allows us to get in situations that humble us to recognize it's not our intelligence, it's not our degrees, it's not our influence, it's not our connections, that He puts us in situations where we can only trust in God. Good leaders know that the fight is not theirs, but it belongs to God. Don't stress and worry about how it looks. Worry about how big God is. Matthew 19:26 blesses me every time. It says, "With men it is impossible, but with God all things are possible." When you get to that place, we say with men it's impossible. With God, all things are possible. Asa understood this.



12. When you have courageous leadership, God attracts others to you.

And then there's something else that Asa understood—God's law of attraction through courageous leadership. When you have courageous leadership, God attracts others to you. We see this in 2 Chronicles 15:9. It says, "Then he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those who dwell with them from Ephraim,



Manasseh, and Simeon, for they came over to him in great numbers from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him.” I’m getting excited. I’m getting excited, because remember now, we’ve been following these developments—these sociopolitical developments in the leadership of these kings. Jeroboam had split the nation. There were people in Israel on this side, Judah on this side; and now they had been mortal foes. They had fought a war against one another. But there are people who are on the other side who are against them who have followed Jeroboam. When they saw that God was with Asa, it says here in the text in 2 Chronicles 15:9 that Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon came over to him when they saw that the Lord was with him. They saw something was missing. And when God is with you, the force of the power of God is irresistible to even our enemies. The Bible reminds us that when a man’s ways please the Lord, He will make even his enemies to be at peace with him. Righteous leadership attracts followers from unlikely places.

You know, when I was pastoring my church, I was appointed to a church that had three adults and three children. That’s a true story. The reason why I got the church was no one else wanted it. True story, three adults and three children. My wife and I working together working with this church. And all of a sudden, when we said we don’t know what to do—I’m in South Africa, by the way. I read, write, and speak Swahili fluently, but Swahili is in East Africa. And God sends me to South Africa where no one speaks Swahili. There are eleven official languages. And the only one I speak is English; and as you can see, I’m working hard at that. So here I am with a church that no one else wants, and all of a sudden, the church begins to grow. To make a long story short, thanks to my courageous wife and working with her, the church grew from six people no one wanted to 2,600 individuals. People were attracted from everywhere. I wasn’t from the area. I’m the worst person, that person that comes from America, and I’m here at this church, 2,600 individuals in an area, the largest church in our area. People began to accuse us. They said, hey, you’re stealing people from here and there and here and there. I said, it’s not about stealing people. No, the bottom line is when we stand for God and grow grass, sheep will come and eat it. What am I saying to you? Don’t worry about the naysayers. I had death threats, all kinds of things. And people said what could not happen. But the more I was surrounded, the more I fasted and prayed and trusted God; and God showed himself. And so we recognized this from Asa.



13. Leaders must put principles above personality or politics.

There's one last thing I wanted to share from Asa before this session is over. Because people are willing to follow you, but you must recognize that we must put principles greater than personality or politics. One last thing—well maybe not; there will be another lesson from Asa—but one last thing from this session. Asa was so passionate about being a great leader that he inspired others to make a covenant to follow him in serving God, to surround himself with people who served the God of the Bible. Just as I chose to do, just, I followed this same example. And guess what happens? These people said if you worship another God, you are cast out. You will not serve. And guess what? Asa finds out at some point that his own mother was secretly worshiping another god. And Asa had the courage to recognize that his leadership was greater than personality or politics. And he removed, he fired his mother from being queen mother and moved her down because she was worshiping another god. He made a courageous decision because it was so important. Even his own mother was not exempt from doing the right thing. I'm here to say to you, it's not easy. It's challenging. You have to make some tough decisions. When you trust God, He will validate your leadership. God bless you.