

Strengthen Yourself in the Lord (VFC, February 11, 2024)

Text: 1 Samuel 30:6-8 New King James Version

⁶ Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was ^{la}grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.

⁷ Then David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, "Please bring the ephod here to me." And Abiathar brought the ephod to David. ⁸ So David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I pursue this troop? Shall I overtake them?"

And He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake *them* and without fail recover *all*."

What traits did David demonstrate when faced with difficult challenges?

1. **Awareness** – He accurately assessed the situation and developed a plan to address it.
 - a. He understood that his men were physically and emotionally spent (v. 6).
 - b. Even David was impacted by the situation (v. 4 "David and all the people who were with him raised their voices and wept until they had no more strength.")
 - c. The enemy uses circumstances to wear us down, making it difficult to think properly and do the right thing.
 - i. In a desperate situation, King Jehoshaphat declared, "For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon you" (2 Chronicles 20:12).
 - ii. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus at His point of greatest stress, declared, "Not my will, but thine be done" (Luke 22:42).
2. **Acknowledgment** – He knew what God would do, what he could do and what his men could not do.
 - a. God would empower them to recover all.
 - b. David strengthened himself when there was no one else to support him.
 - c. The men were too exhausted to make right choices.
3. **Action** – He sought God's solution rather than trying to formulate his own plan and ask God to bless it.
 - a. He called Abiathar, priest to bring the ephod. (vv. 7-8).
 - b. The ephod was an apron used to consult the Lord (Exodus 28:6; 39:9).
4. **Acceptance** – He did not punish those who had turned on him.
 - a. He shared the spoils with all, even those who stayed behind (v. 23-25).
 - b. The Parable of the Vineyard Workers demonstrates how God always treats His servants fairly (Matthew 20:1-16).

Postscript: Rick Warren illustrates four ways that God answers prayer: (1) When the situation is not right, He says NO (2) when the timing is not right, He says SLOW (3) when we are not ready, He says GROW, but (4) when the timing is right and we are ready, He says GO!