

How to Live a Significant Life

by Harrison Conley

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Happy Father's Day to all the guys. And if it's all right with you, I got a couple of things I want to share from the Scriptures. And because it's Father's Day, this sermon is going to be geared a little bit more toward the men. And ladies, I hope you're not offended at that. You had your day last month and today is Dad's day. But you can take what I say and you could apply it in your life as well, ladies. But I do feel a specific instruction from the Holy Spirit to speak to the hearts of the men in the room.

Recently, a friend of mine gave me some really cool baseball memorabilia. And he gave me this set of commemorative cards that were sort of commemorating some of the legends, some of the heroes of baseball. And there were a lot of kinds of players from a bygone era from the late 1800s into the early 1900s—guys like Honus Wagner and Tris Speaker, and Christy Mathewson.

And my oldest son, Asher, is obsessed with baseball. So the other day, we were looking through these cards, and he's asking me all kinds of questions. And he's going, "Hey, Dad, what did this guy do? Hey, Dad, why is this guy famous? Dad, how many home runs did this guy hit? Dad, what was Christie Matheson's lifetime era?" It was fun.

We're going back and forth and having some cool dad-son time. But then the questions started to shift, and they became more personal. And Asher started going, "Hey, hey, Dad, do you think I could make the Hall of Fame like these guys? Dad, do you think I could have that kind of batting average? Dad, do you think I could do some of the same stuff that these guys did?" And as we were talking, as he was asking me these questions, it dawned on me that bound up in the heart of every man, young or old, is this longing for significance. This longing to be known and to be remembered beyond our lot of time here on the planet.

But here's the thing with that, significant men do significant things. Now, I know that that's not rocket science. So let me just add a clarifying point. Significant men do significant things, but God's definition of success and significance is vastly different than the world's definition of significance.

Let me maybe say it like this. God grades significance on a completely different curve. I've just learned God uses a different set of determining skills. If God is grading significance, He's weighing it out on a scale called faithfulness. And here's the best biblical definition of faithfulness that I could find—a long obedience in the same direction. Now, the world says, "Hey, do something big, do something great, do something incredible.

Do something that pleases the crowd, and let them applaud you, and if you do that, then you will achieve significance, success, fame, and recognition." Whereas God says, "I want you to be obedient to the last thing I asked you to do. Whether it was small or it was big." God says, "I want you to be faithful in that whether or not the crowd is looking or applauding." God says, "Do that, and you'll have My recognition."

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And on the day when the books are open, and the pages of eternity are read aloud, that's when your life will be celebrated as truly having been significant. If, for the next couple of minutes, what I want to do is talk to you about true significance. I want to talk to you about living a life that matters. I want to talk to you about being faithful, even under unusual circumstances.

And how many know we're living in unusual times right now? Where right seems to be wrong and wrong seems to be right, and common sense has seemed to have taken an extended vacation. These are the times that we're living in. And it's in times like these that the men of God and that the Church of Jesus Christ should shine bright and stand out in the earth.

I'm convinced that God is looking for men that have chosen a different way, that have chosen a different path, that have chosen a different way of living, breathing, and acting. Men who have chosen to be committed to God's definition of significance and not the world's.

And this morning, I want to give you three phrases. You might want to write them down; three phrases that should define every one of us. And then I'm going to take you to the Scriptures, and we're going to expound on these phrases. But here they are. Number one, we need to stand up. Number two, we need to stick to. And number three, we need to settle in. Stand up, stick to, settle in. Can you say that with me? Stand up, stick to, and settle in.

2 Samuel 23. Here we have recorded for us the names and the exploits of David's mighty men. And there are 37 mighty men in total. But this morning, we're going to read just about the top three. And then, just for your own personal reference and study, if you'd like, you can go to 1 Chronicles 11, and you can read a little bit more in-depth about these same men. But here we go, 2 Samuel 23:8-12. It says,

⁸ These are the names of the mighty men whom David had: Josheb-Basshebeth the Tachmonite, chief among the captains. He was called Adino the Eznite, because he had killed eight hundred men at one time.

Verse nine,

⁹ And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there for battle, and the men of Israel had retreated.

Verse 10, speaking of Eleazar,

¹⁰ He arose and attacked the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand stuck to the sword. The Lord brought about a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to plunder. ¹¹ And after him was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. The Philistines had gathered together into a troop where there was a piece of ground full of lentils. So the people fled from the Philistines. ¹² But he (Shammah) stationed himself in the middle of the field, defended it, and killed the Philistines. So the Lord brought about a great victory.

These are bad men. Now you know why they're called the mighty men. And straight away, I want to point out for your observation the fact that God here in His Word has kept for us a very detailed record of the names and the exploits of David's fighting men.

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This is significant because it indicates to me that God also records our personal service to Him. Because if God kept track, and if God applauded King David's valiant soldiers by name, how much more will He keep track of the faithful acts of the servants of King Jesus of whom David's life points to?

Now with that in mind, I want to use these three men. I want to use their stories to teach us a few things about what it means to be faithful and to live a significant life. Let's jump into the first story. Josheb-Basshebeth, this mighty man, he single-handedly took on, and he defeated 800 enemy combatants in a single battle. Now that's crazy to me. And frankly, it boggles the mind. And if it wasn't recorded for us in Scripture, I would doubt how true it is. But yet, time and time again, throughout the Scriptures, in the face of insurmountable odds, we see God empowering men to do the impossible.

Whether that be Moses or Joshua, Elijah, Elisha, Samson, Gideon, the list goes on and on and on. And here's the point, when God empowers a man, nothing is impossible. Here's an equation for you. God plus nothing equals everything. When God empowers a man, nothing is impossible. And here, in the case of Josheb, we're not given a lot of details surrounding the particulars of the battle. We just know that through God's intervention, he came out victorious.

And I did some study, I did some digging, and there are some scholars, there are some historians that believe that as the enemy advanced on Josheb's position that he stood, he made his stand in a small gap in this mountainous trail. A gap that was so small that only a few enemy combatants could come in at a time, thus giving Josheb a bit of an advantage. And I don't know if that's true, but it makes sense to me.

But here's what I want you to catch about the story. In the face of insurmountable odds, Josheb stood up. You can maybe even say it like this; he stood in the gap. And that's fascinating to me because his name Josheb-Basshebeth, you know what it means? It literally means the one who sits. In the Hebrew, his name is a compound word. It literally means the one who sits or the people sitting. And I want to just say this to all the men in the room: in this life, there will be time for sitting, but there will also be times that require men to stand up.

There will be times where wisdom dictates sitting. Where we sit in the place of counsel, where we sit in the place of patience, where there is this deliberate and intentional stillness of the soul. And we're in that place to reflect and to recharge and to game plan for the future. However, there will be those ascendant moments, and the Holy Spirit will help you determine when these moments are. But there will be those ascendant moments where sitting back and sitting by just will not suffice. And as a man of God, or ladies, as a woman of God, you're going to have to make your stand.

I think about Josheb. He's there in this moment. The enemy is bearing down on him. He's got three choices. He can run, he can surrender, or he can stand and fight. And while the people sat, he chose to stand.

You've heard me say this a lot recently, and I'm going to say it again. I can't get away from it, but it takes courage to follow Jesus. It takes courage to stand in the gap in service to Christ, especially when the easy thing to do, especially when the convenient thing to do, is to just keep sitting. You want to be significant in this life? Well then, you need to choose to stand up. That's that first phrase. We need to stand up and remain faithful even when it's inconvenient. We need

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to remain faithful even when it's difficult. We need to stand up even when potentially it could cost us everything. We need to choose to stand even in the face of insurmountable odds.

We could spend the rest of this message right here talking about different things that we should stand for, but let me just give you one major thing. We've got two more stories to drop into so let me give you one major thing to stand for. And that's this, the faith. Our faith is worth standing for. Let me read you this verse. The apostle Jude would write this. Jude 1:3, and he's writing to all Jesus followers, both past and present. He says,

³ Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith.

Now, that expression "contend earnestly," it literally means to stand, it means to compete, it means to fight fervently for something. In this case, Jude's admonishing us to stand and fight for the faith. Why is that? Well, because the faith is the most important thing that we have. The faith, it's our relationship with God. The faith is the supernatural message of the gospel, that while we were dead in our sins and our trespasses, we've now been made alive together in Christ Jesus. That's the faith that we hold dearly to. The faith is the truth that in Christ Jesus, we have salvation, forgiveness, redemption, and we have right standing with the Father.

Hear me, the gospel, the faith, is the most important, the most precious gift that we have been given. And if the enemy of our souls can steal away from our hearts the sacrifice and the resurrection of Jesus, if he can steal our faith, we've got nothing. We've got no hope in this life, we've got no hope in the life to come. And Paul says we are to be the most pitied of all men.

Listen, the faith, the truth of the gospel, it's worth standing for, it's worth fighting for. And I know in our day and age, Christianity and our faith are under attack. Maybe it even feels a little bit like Josheb's story where all the odds are stacked against us. It seems like we're being attacked from all sides. We got pop culture coming this way. We got music and entertainment coming this way. We've got the government coming this way, education system coming this way, mainstream media coming that way. And when you look around, it seems like the world has become increasingly hostile toward our faith. And the easy thing to do is just sit back and sit by and not ruffle any feathers and live a life of no consequence that just sort of blends in with the world around us.

And look, I get not wanting to make waves, but hear me, men, we've been called to more. We've been called by our King to stand and to be counted. We've been called to be an example of holiness and godliness in the midst of a crooked and a perverse generation. Listen, men, our kids are watching us. Our coworkers, they're watching us. They're watching the way we live our lives. And I'm telling you, truth matters. Integrity; it matters. Biblical morality; it matters. Men, courage—it matters. This shouldn't come as a shock to you, but if you have Jesus, or maybe better said, if Jesus has you, then you will face your share of trouble.

Please understand, if you have Jesus, things will not always go your way. If you have Jesus, you will be scrutinized. If you have Jesus, you will have enemies. Make no mistake, following Jesus will cost you something. That's why Jesus said, "Hey, if you're going to follow Me, count the cost."

The apostle Paul would write to his protegee Timothy, and he would say this in the New Testament, "All who desire to live Godly lives in Christ Jesus, they will suffer persecution." So please understand what you've signed up for. If you thought accepting the gospel and following

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Jesus meant you could sit by and sleepwalk through life, you got lied to. Because if you wholeheartedly follow Jesus, I'm telling you this world, it will hate you. This world, it will not applaud you. This world, it will be contrary to you.

But on the other hand, if you're lukewarm toward Christ and His Word, if you sit back and sit by and just surrender on the sidelines, if you're only into this following Jesus thing for the blessings that are attached, and you begin to take your cues from culture, and you begin to take on the pattern of society, you will be accepted by the world with open arms. They will applaud you. They will make your name famous. You'll find influence and followers. But I'm telling you, if you do that, you'll be spit out by King Jesus.

And someone goes, "Oh, that's kind of harsh." I didn't say it. Jesus said it in Revelation 3, so you could take it up with Him. The point is this, men, we've been called to stand up and to stand out, and it takes courage to follow Jesus. It takes courage to stand and contend for the faith. And I know you know this, but without exaggeration, as believers, we're in a battle, and there does exist evil and demonic forces, and they are at play here.

And again, I'm going to say this, I know you know it, but our battle is not against flesh and blood. Ephesians 6 tells us that. So let me just remind you, people aren't the enemy. Politicians, they're not the enemy. School board members, they're not the enemy. Your boss, your landlord, your crazy neighbor, they're not the enemy. And I know it may seem that all of those things are against your Christian lifestyle.

And the truth is they might be but remember, people aren't the enemy. Deception is the enemy. There are demonic forces out to steal, kill, and destroy our faith. There are demonic forces working overtime to take out the Church of Jesus Christ. And I'm telling you, if you want your life to count on the pages of eternity, you better be ready to stand and contend for the faith.

And someone goes, "Well, yeah, okay, right. But how do I stand, especially in a world that is so contrary to me?" If you want to stand, here's the answer. You need power, but you need a power that you don't possess in and of yourself. You need the power of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:8, this is Jesus speaking, and I paraphrase, but He says this, "But you shall receive power." He's talking to His disciples, you shall receive power. That's the Greek word "dunamis." This is where we get our English word "dynamite."

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. And Jesus says, "You need this power in order to be My witnesses, in order to stand for Me in the Earth." So catch this, what Jesus is saying to His disciples is, "Hey guys, you can't do what I've called you to do, you can't be who I've called you to be, you can't stand up in a world that is contrary to you unless you've been endued with the power of the Holy Spirit."

And when you study the life of these disciples, you look at them. You look at the way they lived and the way that they taught. Every single one of them stood for the case of Christ. Every single one of them suffered persecution for the sake of Christ. All but one of them gave their lives as martyrs for the faith. Having said that, each one of them stood to the very end. They stood firm, and they held dearly to the faith. They considered it a joy and a privilege to be one counted as standing for Christ.

So let me ask you, do you have this power? Men, specifically, how's your connection to the Holy Spirit? If you're going to stand up, if you're going to contend for the faith, if you're going to stand

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out in the midst of darkness and show the world a different way, then you better make sure that you're anointed by the Holy Spirit.

And I know this is something I've talked a lot about recently, but the anointing, the anointing, the anointing, the anointing. It's not just for pastors, it's not just for preachers, it's for all believers. The anointing of the Holy Spirit is what sets you apart in the earth. It's the anointing of the Holy Spirit that gives you power. It's the anointing of the Holy Spirit that keeps you on your feet standing when everyone around you has kneeled to the world. It's the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

We must have the anointing, but the anointing is only found, and it's only fortified in one place, and that's the place of prayer. So, men, how's your prayer life? When was the last time you shut off the world and you got alone with God? If you're going to have the power to stand, you have to have the anointing. So every day before you get into work, every day before you walk on campus, every day before you have that first meeting, every day before you take your first phone call, every day before you answer that email, get with God and ask Him to anoint you afresh. Ask Him to empower you to stand and live a life worthy of the name of Jesus.

If we're going to be significant in this life, we have to stand up. But that's not all. We also need to stick to. We drop down into verse 9 of 2 Samuel 23, and we read about Eleazar. A couple things I want to draw to your attention here. Number one, he's fighting a familiar enemy. The Bible says they're fighting the Philistines.

If you study the Old Testament, in particular, it seems that in every other chapter Israel and the Philistines are fighting. They're at war. So Eleazar, he's fighting a familiar enemy. But then, secondly, I want you to notice this, he's fighting in a familiar place. If you were to flip to 1 Chronicles 11 and read this same story, there's a little bit more detail that's given. And in that detail, we're actually told that the place that they're fighting is a place called the Valley of Elah. This is the same place that David had fought against the Philistine named Goliath.

So we've got a familiar enemy and a familiar battleground. And the Bible says that while the men of Israel retreated Eleazar, he arose and he attacked the Philistines. I like this guy. When everybody else went on defense, he went on offense.

And again, to echo the previous point, it takes courage to stay in a fight when everybody else disappears into the background. But the Bible makes this point that as Eleazar fought, his hand grew weary. So we've got a familiar enemy on a familiar battleground, and as Eleazar fights, he grows weary. How true and how relatable is that?

And I wonder if anybody else besides me can attest to how exhausting it can be to have to fight the same battles over and over and over and over again. Sometimes those battles, they look like familiar sins. Those things that we allow to continue in our life, we make room for them, we continue to indulge them. Those things that continue to show up in our lives and consistently trip us up.

The writer of Hebrews, he talks about familiar sins. He says like it this, "They're the sins that so easily ensnare us." Some of you know exactly what I'm talking about. And you look at your life, and you're like, man, I'm just so tired of fighting this same battle. I'm tired of this carousel ride where I do good for a little while, but then I mess up, and I make the mistake. And I knew I shouldn't have, and I knew I should have done better, but I messed up. Then I ask for forgiveness, and I do good for a little while. And then I trip up, and I make the same mistake.

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And you look at your life, and you're like, I'm exhausted. I feel like I'm in this sick sin cycle carousel. It's this familiar battle on a familiar battleground, and you're tired of the fight.

Maybe for somebody else, it's not a familiar sin, but it's a familiar foe. Maybe for you, what you're facing, your battle, is a reoccurring sickness. And you've been fighting. And you've been praying. And you've been going to the doctor. And you've been exercising. And you've been eating right. You've been doing everything that you know to do. And right when you feel like you've turned the corner, right when things are starting to look up, that sickness rears its ugly head again, and you're exhausted.

Maybe that familiar foe isn't a sickness. Maybe it's not a sin. Maybe it has to do with a hostile relationship. Maybe it's a family member or a coworker that just seems to have it out for you, and being around them, it's just constant drama. And you do your best to be kind. And you do your best to be long-suffering. Which by the way, you can't be long-suffering without suffering long. But you've been around them, and you're like, man, it's the same thing, and I'm exhausted.

So the question becomes, what do you do when you're weary from fighting the same battle over and over again? Well, I'm glad you asked. If you want to stay in the fight, even amidst weariness, you've got to learn to stick to it; you've got to stick to it. Stick to what? Stick to accountability and stick to the Word of God. Look at verse number nine. There's something really important I want you to see here. Second Samuel 23:9. It says this,

⁹ And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there for battle.

So catch the picture. All of Israel has retreated but Eleazar, David, and the other mighty men. They are standing there fighting together. Hear me, men, you will not defeat the enemy if you continue trying to fight alone, especially when it comes to familiar sins. And I know it can feel embarrassing, and I know it requires trust and vulnerability, but whatever you do, don't keep trying to fight alone.

I quoted the book of Hebrews just a minute ago, where it talks about those sins that so easily ensnare us. Do you know how that verse actually starts? Let me read it to you. Hebrews 12:1,

¹ Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us.

That first phrase, "surrounded by a cloud of witnesses," is literally talking about people being around us, witnessing our life, watching our life, being involved in our life. Hear me: the Christian life was never meant to be lived alone. You were not created to fight alone. God has created us for community. And one of the enemy's greatest tactics is to separate and to isolate believers because if he can isolate you, you become very vulnerable to his attack. This is why we have to stick to accountability.

That's why we have to be surrounded by godly people that we've given access to our life. People that are willing to encourage us. People that are going to be committed to pointing us to Jesus. People who are going to pick us up when we are down and speak hard truths into our lives. It's not until we get surrounded with community that we start walking in victory.

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And maybe it's not a familiar sin. Maybe it's that familiar sickness and or relational thing that you're dealing with. Listen, you still need to have accountability. Let people into your world. Be honest with them. Sometimes it's a heavy weight to carry on your own, but many hands make the load light. Ask them to pray with you, ask them to encourage you, ask them to lift your arms when you're feeling weary.

That's what the family of God is for. We need to stick to accountability. But that's not enough by itself. You also have to stick to the Word. Notice what it says about Eleazar. It says his hand stuck to the sword. In Ephesians six, we're told to take up the whole armor of God. That's how we wage war against the enemy. And the last thing that we're instructed to do there in Ephesians 6:17 is this; we're to take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Listen to me; whatever you do, do not let go of the sword. Do not let go of the Word of God. Stick to the Word, find a promise in His Word, and cling to it. Hold onto it for dear life. Don't let anyone, don't let anything, don't let any situation or circumstance take the Word of God from you. Stick to the Word.

When my wife and I were dating, she had this dog. The dog's name was Walter, and he had all kinds of personality. And pretty early on, I realized Walter did not like me. He saw me as a competitor. I'd walk in the room, and he'd realize there was a connection between me and Bethany, and he felt like I was stealing his girl.

So, literally, this dog would look at me and then turn his back to me. And I'd be like Walter, Walter? And he would walk further away, just with his back to me. I'm like, what is going on with this dog? And so I would try and make nice with the dog and try and play with the dog, and I would try and play catch with him or fetch with him. And I'd get the toy, and I'd throw it, and he'd go get it, but he wouldn't come back. He'd make me walk over to him. And I'd walk over to him, and I'd try and get that toy out of his mouth.

And he would just look at me, and he would grit his teeth, and he would not let go of that toy. And I tried all of my tricks. I twisted that toy. I lifted him up in the air. I would tackle him and wrestle with him, trying to get this toy, but he was relentless. He wouldn't let go of the toy. Finally, I was like, all right, I'm done. You win. You can have the toy. The dog was crazy.

But, hear me, in the same way, when it comes to the Word of God, when it comes to His promises, we need to be relentless and not let go for anything. And I'm telling you, the enemy, he's got tactics. He's got tricks. He'll try and wrestle that Word. He'll try and wrestle that promise from you, but you have to stick to the Word of God.

Listen, the Word of God, it's supernatural. It has power over sin. It has power over sickness. It has power over any attack of the enemy. And anchored in God's Word are supernatural promises that cover every need, every need from provision, to strength, to healing, to forgiveness, to wisdom, and relationships. If we're going to live a significant life, if we're going to walk in victory, we have to stick to the word of God even when we're feeling weary.

A few years ago, a woman came up to me after service, and she wanted prayer. Specifically, she wanted prayer for healing. She began to tell me her story, that she had cancer, cancer in the blood, leukemia. And it was a reoccurring thing. She had done well and responded well to treatment, and it had gone away for a little while, and then it had come back again. This, I think, was her third bout with it. And the doctor had told her she's in the late stages with this cancer.

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And as we're talking, I could just tell there was something different about this woman. And normally, when I would pray for healing, I would open the Word and share a promise with that person.

Usually, out of Isaiah—by His stripes, we're healed. Or Psalm 107:20, that God sent His word and He healed us. Just sort of connect faith before we would pray. But she said, "Oh, pastor, you don't need to open your Bible. You don't need to give me a promise." What do you mean? She's like, "I've already got a promise." And she began to quote an Old Testament passage from Ezekiel. It was a promise I wasn't even familiar with, but she said it.

She said it was such faith. She said, I saw you struggling in your own blood. That's what the verse says. This is God speaking, I saw you struggling in your own blood, and I said to you in your blood, live. That was the easiest prayer I ever prayed. Normally, people are trying to connect to my faith. No, no, no, I was connecting to her faith.

And months later, I saw her in church and I said, "Hey, how are you feeling? What's the diagnosis? How are things?" She said, "Oh, pastor, I'm good. When we prayed that day, I knew God had healed me. I went back to the doctor's office a few weeks later. They ran all the tests. They did all the things. There wasn't a single trace of cancer in my body." Here's the point, she held onto a promise. Even when she was weary, she held onto a promise. And it's His promises that connect us to His power.

Notice how with Eleazar, the story ends with a statement. It says this: that the Lord brought about a great victory that day. The Lord brought about a great victory. Eleazar experienced the intervention and the power of God. You know what his name means? Eleazar literally means: God helps. And when you find yourself weary, fighting that familiar battle, that familiar foe, stick to accountability, stick to the Word. And if you do, you will see, and you will experience firsthand that our God truly is the One that helps.

My time is gone, but we still got one more story to get into. So here's what we'll do. I wish I could elaborate on this, but there's one thought, in particular, I feel like I'm supposed to share with you.

We drop down into our last section of verses, and we read about a man named Shammah. Shammah, the son of Agee. And the Bible says that the Philistines they've gathered again in order to steal; in order to commandeer a crop of lentils. And this field of beans doesn't seem all that important. It doesn't seem quite worth the risk to fight for a field of beans. But to Shammah, this lentil field, it was sacred. It was sacred because it was the place the king had stationed him. It was the place that the king had asked him to defend.

In the backstory of this lentil field that you don't see on the surface is that this field, every single year come harvest time, the Philistines would show up, and they would come and plunder. So get the picture here. Every year, the Israelites would plow this field, plant this field, tend this field, and then when the harvest time would come, the Philistines would come, and they would steal the crop. They would steal the harvest. And this had been the pattern. This was the cycle until King David asked Shammah to take charge of that field.

Men, let me ask you something. What area has King Jesus stationed you in? And again, there are a lot of different directions I could go with this. There's a lot we could extrapolate from the Word, but this is what I want to say. The number one area that God has called us as men to is

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the area of our family. And the reason I bring up family is because, in the text, we see Shammah's dad listed. He's mentioned by name as well.

Shammah, the son of Agee. Do you know what Agee means? It literally means thug. It means fugitive. And I think it's quite possible that Shammah grew up without a proper fatherly example of what it meant to be a man, of what it meant to be honest, what it meant to be integrous, what it meant to be brave.

And now Shammah has been asked by his king to defend a field that, generation after generation, has been devastated by the enemy. And I love what the Bible says in verse 12, what it says about Shammah. It says this: he stationed himself. He settled in. He stationed himself in the middle of the field. And he defended it. It's as if Shammah said, no, no, no. Not this time. No, no, no. You're not getting the field this time. I'm breaking the cycle.

And I go back to what I said a minute ago. Men, the number one area that God has given us charge of is our family. And biblically speaking, under Christ, our role as the men is to be the head of the household. And please be aware. The enemy is after our household. The enemy is after our families. And the number one way he comes after our families is by attacking us.

As the Scripture says, strike the shepherd, and the sheep will scatter. That's not just a picture of ministry. That's a picture of our homes. And maybe when it comes to our family, just like Shammah, we've not had the best example to model ourselves after. Maybe just like how the Philistines came in year after year to this lentil field, you've noticed in your own life and in your family a generational pattern, a generational curse.

Maybe your grandfather got divorced, and there was this straining of relationship with his kids. Maybe you look at your dad; he had an affair and sort of left you, kids, on the sideline and went and had another family over here. And now you are married, and you've got kids, and you find yourself struggling and being tempted with some of the same things, and you're terrified that you're going to repeat the pattern.

Listen, just like Shammah, you need to settle in. You need to station yourself in the midst of your family, and you need to say to the enemy, no, not this time. You can't have my family. I'm going to break this cycle. I'm going to break this generational curse. You're done with me and my family. As men, we need to settle in, and we need to declare, "As for me and my house, we're going to serve the Lord."

And again, you may not have had the greatest example of what it means to be a father, what it means to defend your family. And if that's the case and that's the household you grew up in, you didn't have that great example. I'm really sorry. But can I say this to you? As your pastor, can I encourage your heart and say you're not your dad. You're not your grandfather. And the things that define them don't have to define you. You can start a new pattern. And you can show your family what it is to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

You may not have had a great earthly father, but you've got a wonderful, kind, compassionate, and strong heavenly Father. And He is with you. He is with you. As a matter of fact, we're talking about Shammah. You know what his name means? The name Shammah literally means the Lord is here. He's here in your midst. And I love how this story ends. It ends with the line in verse 12,

¹² So the Lord brought about a great victory.

How to Live a Significant Life

Men, you can take heart because you're not alone. You can settle in and station yourself in the midst of your family, defend your family because you're not alone. The Lord is there. And to echo a previous point, the truth is you couldn't do it alone if you wanted to. We need the help of Christian accountability. We need the help and the power of the Holy Spirit if we're going to live significant lives, if we're going to walk in victory. We need to stand up, we need to stick to, and we need to settle in.

Let me just end by reading you one more verse. It's from the New Testament. The apostle Paul writing. And I just feel like it sums up what we've talked about today. I'm going to read this, and then we're going to pray. 1 Corinthians 15:58. Paul says this,

⁵⁸ Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Stand up. Stick to. Settle in. Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Come on, let's pray together,

Father, we love You so much, and we're so grateful for the opportunity to serve You, to serve King Jesus. God, I thank You that Your Word it's supernatural and that as we've read Your Word and talked about Your Word today, You've brought supernatural encouragement to our hearts. God, I pray You've even brought a supernatural challenge to some of our hearts. Our prayer is that we would be the people You've called us to be, that we would stand. Even when it seems the world is bowing down around, we would stand and serve You faithfully.

Father, help us even in the midst of weariness with familiar battles all around us. Help us to stick to accountability and to stick to Your Word, Your promises that are forever settled in heaven. Father, when it comes to the different areas that You've stationed us in, help us to stand, to be settled. Station ourselves there so that we could bring glory to the name of Jesus. Help us to raise our kids well. Help us to lead our employees well. Help us, O God, to be a light in the midst of a crooked and a perverse generation. We need Your help. We need Your help. Would You anoint us afresh, O God? Anoint us with the power of Your Holy Spirit. Hallelujah.

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