

Declaring Holy War on our Passivity

By Jay Wegter

Objectives:

- 1.) To learn why passivity keeps us from God's purpose to make us leaders.
- 2.) To understand that breaking out of passivity involves risk taking.
- 3.) To grasp the fact that spiritual leadership is assuming responsibility on behalf of others.
- 4.) To know that God has equipped believers to make a difference in the body.
- 5.) To learn why personal assessment is vital to spiritual leadership.
- 6.) How to overcome the obstacles to spiritual leadership.

The Problem: Spiritual Complacency ('Passivity')

"So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way and be satiated with their own devices. "For the waywardness of the naive will kill them, and the **complacency of fools** will destroy them" (Prov 1:31-32).

Apathy, passivity and complacency are the scourge of godly masculinity as our Proverbs passage reveals. Geoff Botkin of Vision Forum notes that we have inherited a passive, apostate form of Christianity. Botkin goes on to say that one hundred years ago men had not as yet been cowed by decades of social engineering. As a result, they were less fearful, more apt to think critically and independently, and more inclined to take initiative.ⁱ

Our culture has been poisoned by the unbiblical philosophy of socialism. The "nanny state" of entitlement has had the net effect of cultivating male passivity. The college lecterns of our public universities are imbuing our students with a collective 'victim mentality'. **The net effect is more passivity in males, as if we should wait for someone to do something for us.** Author Mark Levin notes that the relentless drumbeat of the political progressives have instilled in us a passive 'group think' approach characterized by conformity and political correctness—this is a blight upon America, especially upon the men:

Sadly, the lure of the "nanny state" is blinding many Americans to the perils of allowing government to favor some over others, redistributing wealth rather than ensuring equal opportunity to all. . . . Much of the oppressive political correctness, distorted sense of history, disregard for individual rights, and lust for power evident in Washington today has sprouted from seeds planted in America's colleges and universities. Unfortunately, too many of our country's politicians, journalists, attorneys, professors, high school teachers, clergy, and other gatekeepers of our society were educated in schools that either do not teach the American heritage, or teach it in a way that undermines it. The state of higher education in America today is a far cry from what the Founders intended. While education has always been revered in our nation, it was never intended to be hostile to the American heritage. Yet on many campuses today, political indoctrination has replaced open intellectual discourse, and ideas are evaluated not on their merits, but on their agreement with "progressive" ideology. Students are no longer taught how to think, but what to think.ⁱⁱ

Therefore, if we are to accurately detect just how immense this yawning chasm is between biblical Christianity and our fallen culture, we will have to be filled with the knowledge of God's will. "For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you

may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light” (Col 1:9-12).

There is no other way to have true biblical discernment. “But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil” (Heb 5:14). Nowhere is *this gap* more evident than in our culture’s effort to make us ‘neutered male clones’ who abdicate the biblical call to godly masculinity characterized by initiative and leadership.

Strong churches result from laymen **who are answering the biblical mandate to lead**. Author Richard Phillips observes, “The foundational message about teaching and the exercise of spiritual authority within the church as a whole is clear: these roles are reserved for Christian men. To the degree that men fail to assume these roles gladly and exercise them diligently, **we end up with feminized churches that can quickly become fruitless and unsound** because they are not being led as God intended.”ⁱⁱⁱ “Leadership is intrinsic to the biblical idea of male calling in the world.”^{iv}

How true, **strong churches are the result of men yielded to the rule of Christ** who daily place their gifts and abilities in the hands of the Savior for His use (Rom 6:12-13). The ‘masculine mandate’ issued by God to men constitutes a willingness to assume responsibility in order to qualify for assuming more responsibility (the **principle of the enlarged sphere of influence**—a concept easily lost in our celebrity culture). Our place in the coming Kingdom of God depends upon our recognition of, and our obedience to, this pervasive fact that we are stewards under our Lord (Lu 19:12-27). “As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as **good stewards of the manifold grace of God**” (1 Pet 4:10ff.).

We tend to feel an internal resistance to our calling to lead: every man knows what it is like to battle the accusatory feelings of inadequacy. We are sinners who have inherited Adam’s ‘broken scepter’. The moment the curse entered the world due to sin, Adam was greatly weakened; suddenly his effort to rule over the works of God’s hands was resisted by a host of things including Adam’s own exhaustion. **As men we hate to have our inadequacy exposed**—and as a result, we often choose passivity rather than risk failure. We don’t want to demonstrate that we inherited a broken scepter from Adam! (EX. a flood of sitcoms about ineffective boyish husbands: *King of Queens*, *Everybody loves Raymond*, etc.).

But, **our failure avoidance agenda can work against us**. If we are more controlled by the love of safety and protection, than by a vision for usefulness, we will short-circuit what the Lord wishes to do through us. As men we need to attempt a certain amount of risk each year in order to keep our ‘emotional testosterone’ flowing. **The more rigidly committed to safety we are, the more we are sentencing ourselves to mediocrity**. Creative initiative and risk-taking are necessary if we are to realize God’s plan in three major areas of our lives: 1.) *Our growth in character as men who manifest godly masculinity*; 2.) *Our ability to court, win, and lead a wife*; 3.) *Our essential equipping in order to find our place in the body of Christ and our unique ministry*.

A century of social engineering has pushed men in the direction of being tentative, adaptable, passive, and harmless males. Astronaut Buzz Aldrin recently made a stunning observation: the preponderance of reality TV shows which make entertainment out of failure have only increased the male

members of our society's aversion to risk. Buzz hit the nail on the head: in our culture of entitlement the attitude all too often is, "*I showed up, where is my job?*" "*Where's my appreciation, my affirmation?*" "*Where is a woman who will show interest in me first?*" **Risk aversion has become a national blight upon our men.**

We have cultivated a society in which males with a thrusting, initiating character are regarded as too impertinent, overbearing, aggressive, over the top—today we find that we are bred for mediocrity. The male ideal put before us by the media of the nice, vulnerable, sensitive, overly gentrified, aggression-less male has tainted our understanding of true masculinity. We see a different kind of masculinity in Scripture. **Godly men described in the Bible frequently manifested an imposing personality.** They invaded the comfort zones of those around them in the interest of truth and righteousness. They pressed on in spite of opposition and adversity; they boldly addressed the erroneous sloppy thinking of those within their sphere. I can't imagine a more bold N.T. believer than the Apostle Paul, yet he prays for more boldness.

"With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, and *pray* on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in *proclaiming* it I may **speak boldly, as I ought to speak**" (Eph 6:18-20).

God's cultural calling rests upon us—there is a God-given mandate for leadership joined to our godly masculinity; therefore we need to grow up into the godly manhood mandated in Scripture. "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men; be strong. Let all that you do be done in love" (1 Cor 16:13-14). **That is the MAN-UP text of the N.T.**

The Premise: God is calling us to break out of our Passivity

Obedience will mean leaving the safety of self-protection and moving in the direction of godly risk-taking. Only when we **lean into our fears and begin to risk will we find the joy that accompanies godly masculinity.** Thus, it behooves us to analyze our culture in order to realize that our society is far too content with men who are easily manipulated. What our society fears is a man without guilt who thinks differently than the herd mentality—a man who cannot be controlled by guilt, fear, shame, or social pressure.

Throughout biblical history, God's man was always a man who swam **against the current of his culture.** Joshua was fearless because of his commitment to following the Lord without compromise or reservation: "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. Have I not commanded you? **Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go**" (Josh 1:8-9).

So, how can we tell if our masculine character is moving in the direction of initiation and risk-taking? First of all, we will be fed up with a cautious, tentative, overly careful spirit that waits around for something to happen. In a word, we will loathe living as a responder who is characterized by

depending upon others to ask them to do something in order for things to happen. Timothy was raised by godly women, but he needed the mentorship of the Apostle Paul in order to continue to be actualized and empowered in his spiritual giftedness. **Paul exhorts his understudy, Timothy to stir himself from passivity:** “Kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline” (2 Tim 1:6-7).

Leadership involves sacrificially assuming responsibility on behalf of others. Spiritual and moral authority is not a function of raw ambition; it is what God bestows when we sacrificially assume responsibility on behalf of others (Christ says, ‘slave of all’ in Mark 10:44). This is the polar opposite of the world’s idea of fulfillment which says: *joy is having more and more of my preferences*. The biblical definition of joy is being a disciple of Christ: *joy is what happens when my life intersects your life at points of sacrifice for the sake of the Kingdom of God*. Our place in the coming Kingdom of God depends upon our recognition of, and our obedience to, this pervasive fact that **we are stewards under our Lord**—radically identified with our Lord and His mission (Lu 19:12-27; 1 Pet 4:10ff.).

Countless believing men have the potential to exercise leadership, most never take up the mantle. They are content to let others take the risk and do the work. But, by way of encouragement, consider that many Scriptural narratives describe spiritual leaders appointed by God who were not ‘born leaders’. **They grew into leaders as they walked obediently with the Lord.** Test your desire to grow into a leader—here are six indicators that you are a leader in the making:

1. You long to make a difference; you’re discontent and dissatisfied with the status quo.
2. You’re not waiting for more resources (or permission) to accomplish your vision.
3. Your dreams are so big they seem impossible; you face what *is*—but ask, “What could *be*?”
4. You realize that you don’t have to be in charge to have significant influence.
5. You refuse to blame others for your circumstances and take responsibility for finding solutions.
6. You foster unity by bringing people in the Body together and encouraging dialogue.^v

If masculine growth and change is going to take place, we must be willing to begin thinking in an entrepreneurial fashion. Because this is God’s world, certain things are rewarded in this life: *initiation, risk, hard work, planning, endurance, ingenuity, commitment, diligence, and creativity*. These are characteristics of an entrepreneurial spirit. The entrepreneur understands that the attributes and behaviors and attitudes described above CREATE opportunities. This is the exact opposite of the guy who works 40 years in the same cubicle, then gets a gold watch, retires, and dies. The entrepreneurial spirit thrives on seizing the opportunities which come from uniqueness, creativity, and hard work.

The Promise: you’ve been supernaturally equipped to make a difference

In order to develop an entrepreneurial spirit, we will have to accurately assess our gifts, abilities, experience, and limitations. The Apostle Paul summarizes the assessment process in one verse. Paul gives us this assessment injunction in a context of using one’s gifts corporately in the body of Christ. “For through the grace of God given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to **think so as to have sound judgment**, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith” (Rom 12:3).

Assessing our giftedness is vital if we are to serve the body of Christ to the fullest measure of our God-given potential. Paul cautions the overly ambitious that it is possible to have too high of an opinion of oneself. But, Paul also seems to be warning about the other extreme; of devaluing the gifts God has given you. The proper approach in assessing is, according to this verse is: first, realize **you are an object of divine grace and mercy and that God has gifted you to serve.**

Recognize that God has gifted you for the edification of the body. Think soundly about occupying your unique place of service in the body of Christ. The man who desires to be a spiritual influence on others is able to think in this manner: “God saved me that I might be a spiritual blessing to others.” **Bless God for giving you a “measure of faith”**—recognizing that the gifts He gives come with the measure of faith needed to exercise them as faithful stewards.^{vi}

Assessing our giftedness is a primary step in entrepreneurial risking. Here is the reason why. Once we begin to assess, we are seriously asking what it is that God has fitted us to do. That also means that out of **your self-assessment comes a willingness to step up and sacrificially assume responsibility on behalf of others**—taking initiative and eventual ownership of ministry opportunities for which God has uniquely fitted you. This leads to furthering your equipping and training to fulfill your ministry. All of that involves risk because it is moving you toward a position in the Christian life in which you can say to yourself without pride, ***“I believe God has fitted me for this; I believe I am the person to meet that need.”*** Risk is involved because there is always the possibility of lack of recognition—and/or of mediocrity.

The personal assessment Paul enjoins in Romans 12:3, involves a bold, honest, courageous look at how God has gifted us. We sometimes shun this exercise because we are so used to self-condemnation, we hesitate to venture one more look in the mirror—fearing that failure will be looking back at us. BUT, the promise in Romans 12 is that God never gives a spiritual gift without granting the measure of faith necessary to exercise it! That’s monumental in our ‘risk-averse’ culture (12:3-6).

Name a Bible hero whose failures are not described in Scripture. With the exception of Daniel and a few others, they are certainly in the minority. It says in Proverbs 24:16, “For **a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again**, but the wicked stumble in *time of calamity*.” I have a new definition of what it takes to run well, victoriously: “Success is the Spirit-filled management of failure.”

I find Luther’s advice really helpful at this juncture: “To advance, to progress is to begin again.” Also note the “I wills” of the Psalms. Spiritual renewing involves having the mind renewed and transformed by God’s truth, but it always involves renewing our determination to obey the Lord.

Assessment is the cost we pay for authenticity, and authenticity is the price we pay for excellence. Being a responder is always easier than thinking soundly and becoming a risk-taker. But, in the long run, assessing one’s gifts will pay a far greater dividend than taking the path of least resistance. **There is no greater joy than doing what God has created you to do.** But it generally does not fall into our lap. We have to begin taking **some bold steps** (we start by declaring holy war on our passivity and fear). Otherwise we will live truncated lives (‘caged’—the same bars that lock out failure also imprison us)—living in harness, always wondering, “I wish someone would tell me who I am and what I am supposed to be and what I am supposed to do.”

Declaring holy war on our passivity is the modest cost of being proactive. Let's summarize again how this can take place: *assess your giftedness; locate the greatest areas of need in the body of Christ; assess how God has gifted you to meet some of these needs; deepen your equipping to answer these needs; pray diligently that God would use you; watch Him grow your vision for ministry; communicate your vision for ministry (cast a vision); allow Him to use you.*

As Paul enjoins in Romans 12:3, assessment involves a bold, honest, courageous look at how God has gifted us. “For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; **but to think so as to have sound judgment**, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith” (Rom 12:3). We sometimes shun this exercise of personal assessment because we are so used to self-condemnation, we hesitate to venture one more look in the mirror—fearing that failure will be looking back at us.

Paul tells us in another passage that the key to going forward is to not be controlled by our past “Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: **forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead**, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:13-14).

A major aspect of our battle for boldness for Christ is this: “What if my failures define me?” If we are controlled by past failures, when we attempt to take a step forward, the reminder of the past holds us back like a stretched rubber band yanking back our leading foot. If Paul had defined himself by his days as a murderous persecutor of the church, he never would have been what he was: the greatest missionary who ever lived (1 Cor 15:10).

I appreciate what a Christian friend of mine once said, “It is easier to direct a moving object than one cemented to the ground.” And another friend quipped, “**There is no mistake I can make by my honest risking that God cannot work together for good**” (Rom 8:28). (Analysis paralysis is a pitfall.)

Here are some suggested steps to take for personal assessment. Personal assessment is an evaluation of our abilities, experience, limitations, and desires. Honesty in these matters normally involves the input of those who know us well and who are familiar with our ministry efforts. **A mentor (discipler) is invaluable at this juncture because they can help us plot the steps necessary to recognize where we are useful and realize our unique ministry potential.**

Now, because we tend to devalue or underestimate what we do well naturally, a mentor can help point out your strengths. Also knowing one's limitations is vital as well. Consider asking your mentor, “How have you seen God use me in the past?” “What areas of strength do you think I should develop further?”

Also important to assessment is a daring look at one's ministry desires. It is a very helpful exercise to take out paper and *write out your ministry dream ticket*. In other words, if you could serve God in any way imaginable, what would it be? Would it be camp work, biblical counseling, discipleship training, missions, administration, men's ministry, evangelism?

Attempting great things for God, and watching the Lord work is the testimony of countless men who have left their mark on church history. But, serving God is about the Lord's glory and His love for His people—it is not about our legacy; therefore, when you ‘write your ministry dream ticket’, **you must first think in terms of the needs of others you want to meet.**

The Purpose: that others may know the Lord and be transformed

As you begin to envision your ministry calling, pray about particular needs and deficiencies in the body of Christ that you have noticed and would like to help remedy. Ministry is about burden-bearing. That's the opposite of ego-driven activities. **God's gifting in your life is often designed to equip you to address the most pressing needs that you see in the body of Christ.** This is a wonderful principle: you will see the needs of the body of Christ **through the lens of your giftedness.** That means that the needs that touch you the most are the needs God has equipped you to meet! We have to start thinking this way. **This is tied closely to the need for masculine initiative.** We don't have to wait around for someone to ask us to do something at church. Christ's plan for His body is **a fully ministering laity**—there is no other way to have a strong healthy church (Eph 4:7-16).

“I am mad and I am not going to take it anymore.” That was a saying a few years ago; but it can apply to many areas of our masculinity where proactive steps are desperately needed. Are you ready to say, **“I am tired of treating my God-given masculinity as if it were negotiable?”** Have you ever wondered why so many churches seem content and self-satisfied with congregations full of passive, unempowered men? This spiritual condition is a great travesty because it is a distortion of God's plan for the Body of Christ. **Let's look at God's answer—which begins by diagnosing the problem and then by looking at the way Christian men may be empowered.**

Countless church leaders have relinquished the privilege and responsibility of being stewards of the giftedness of the body of Christ. As a result of inheriting an apostate passive ecclesiology, men aren't using their gifts (Colin Marshall). Therefore they are not motivated to find their unique place of service in the body of Christ and thus, they lack the drive to be further equipped. **In Christ's plan, men are to be disciplined and unleashed to their ministries.** In weak churches this is not happening—weak churches are not pleasing to Christ. As a consequence they are basically harmless to the kingdom of darkness.

When we are afflicted with pain and fear, we must consider it to be ‘the bell’ calling us to the school of Christ. We are most teachable by the Lord when our way is not working and we are distressed by affliction. It makes us very alert learners in the school of Christ. What does Christ teach us in His school? **He teaches us that our adequacy is in Him** (2 Cor 3:4-6). He teaches us that when we are weak we are strong because it forces us to depend more on Him (2 Cor 12:10). He is teaching us that the redeemed man has been reconstructed around Christ so that we are complete in Him (Col 2:9-10). **In the ‘school of Christ’ we learn that our weakness is a staging area for God's power.** That is a lesson we are slow to learn because we are so fixated on personal adequacy; but in the school of Christ we are learning to live upon Another—upon Christ (Gal 2:20).

At first living by faith (in Christ) is a somewhat uncomfortable thing. We hate not being in control. We want to be in charge of risk management. But as God patiently works with us, He shows us that it is a blessed thing to be *leveraged upon God*. When I am living by faith I am conscious of the fact that I am way out on a limb with God. If He doesn't come through I will look rather silly. This is good! We must leave room for God to work so that when He does come through He will get the credit instead of you. **Our true source of risk management is the gospel itself instead of our carnal plans of self-protection from failure.**

We must deal with our inner resistance to assume leadership. *As those who are growing in godliness and spiritual influence, you must learn to pray through your battles and challenges.* The book of Psalms provides a model for us to **process** our *pain, fear, guilt, and obstacles* through prayer. **Don't make the mistake of fighting your battles in isolation.** Start making your struggles into appointments with God for intimacy with Him. Christ wants to meet us at our points of spiritual poverty. (Note His invitation to the church at Laodicea—Rev 3:14-22).

Sometimes we call this “the toe in the Jordan” principle—here is how it works: we often don't see God's power and enablement until we step out, and then discover He is meeting our effort with His divine enablement (the paradox of striving according to His power—Col 1:28-29).

Taking risks means closing off some of your existing options. You cannot move to the next stepping stone until you move off of the stone presently supporting your weight. Genuine commitment means that there will be numerous times where we close off a way of retreat. **In our age of passive masculinity, men tend to keep their options open.** But, commitment in marriage and ministry involves consolidating your energies and abilities instead of spreading them out and diluting them by keeping all options open. This is essential if you are to find your ‘groove’ or ‘sweet spot’ in ministry. Men ought to be encouraged to deepen their expertise through equipping and training in their area of their giftedness.

Sometimes we call this “**the toe in the Jordan” principle**”—here is how it works: we often don't see God's power and enablement until we step out, and then discover He is meeting our effort with His divine enablement (the paradox of striving according to His power—Col 1:28-29). The Lord is behind your willingness to step out in ministry efforts.

For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with *me* in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher. For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day. Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to *you* (2 Tim 1:7-14).

Like a dump truck with huge shock absorbers, handling is always better when there is a load being carried. So also, men must learn to assume responsibility on behalf of others—their lives will handle better if they fill some of their discretionary time with responsibilities instead of video games and idleness. Young males today can imagine being assertive vicariously through the action heroes in video games and movies; but the net effect of entertainment instead of the divine joy that comes from initiative, there is greater passivity.

Growth in godly manhood means that we will have to take action before everything looks perfect. Proverbs tells us that the sluggard always has an excuse for his inaction. “There is a lion in the street” (Prov 22:13).

In our quest to grow in godly masculinity and especially in initiative, we will have to mortify our desire to be constantly affirmed and reassured by others. Most of us have grown up in homes where input from mothers overshadowed input from dads. As a result we tend to be narcissistic approval addicts—feeling like we are special and deserving of hearing that we are special. This is going to be put to death by suffering. **There is nothing like affliction to kill narcissism. Seek your approval from God.** If you are going to grow in this area you will need to ask yourself if it is your highest ambition to be pleasing to Christ. “Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him” (2 Cor 5:9).

One of the obstacles which resists our growth in masculinity is the addictive need for approval (EX. note the social networks where everything is validated including your meals). Brothers, we will have to pray through this. The people around us all too often stereotype us and pigeonhole us—choosing to be blind to our real potential in Christ. Therefore they will not be able to adequately approve you; praise you; honor you; encourage you; or affirm your ministry vision. You must prepare yourself for ‘yawns’ when you share your ministry vision. Do not let that discourage you.

A living faith in Christ is how you ‘steward’ your gift; it will take you out of your comfort zone, past your inhibitions and natural reticence—it will enable you to pursue others for the purpose of doing spiritual good to them. It will keep you laboring for God’s glory even when appreciation goes silent.

I think of one of the Judges listed in Hebrews chapter eleven, the chapter known as the ‘faith hall of fame’. This Judge was Jephthah (Heb 11:32). He certainly was an interesting character. He was the son of an adulterous relationship conducted by his father. As an illegitimate son, Jephthah was driven out and forced to live separate from his ‘legitimate’ half-brothers. But Jephthah was a valiant warrior, a man of great integrity, a leader, and a knowledgeable Jewish historian. So when a time arose that Israel was sorely afflicted by the Ammonite invaders, the elders in the region looked at the possibility of enlisting Jephthah’s military help.

What is fascinating about this biblical narrative is that only when his brothers were in dire trouble did they consider using the skills of their half-brother, Jephthah. And, even then they wanted him to risk his life in battle for them without any guarantee that he would thereafter exercise his leadership skills in Israel. Our take away point is this: **people may stereotype you; put you in a box; pigeonhole you; even stigmatize you as with Jephthah. In spite of this, we must pray diligently to keep alive and grow the ministry vision God has given us** (for the account of Jephthah, see Judges 10-12).

A final piece of counsel—don’t stop studying, writing, and journaling—prepare messages and projects within your ministry vision—even before you think they are needed. God will open doors for your usefulness—and we must be ready. **Leadership is ‘vision-casting’ which is a function of expressing yourself—communicating the truths of Scripture that the Lord has written on your heart.** He will meet your efforts to be spiritual influencer with His strength and enabling power—we **strive according to His power** (Col 1:28-29). You have been equipped and appointed to be a blessing to others—you are the worldview-changers—salt and light—the Lord is with you and for you (Heb 13:20-21).

Endnotes:

ⁱ Geoff Botkin, San Antonio Independent Christian Film Festival, 2011

ⁱⁱ Mark Levin, lectures from his book, *Liberty and Tyranny*

ⁱⁱⁱ Richard Phillips, *The Masculine Mandate*, p. 133

^{iv} Ibid, p. 44

^v <http://michaelhyatt.com/12-ways-to-know-if-you-are-a-leader.html>, May 5, 2012

^{vi} *John MacArthur Study Bible*, p. 1716