

5 Ways to Respond When Tragedy Strikes Your Family

I just got off the phone with a good friend of mine. I had called because of a tragedy that occurred in his family.

His grandson had fallen and cracked his skull on the concrete. There was some bleeding and potential of internal damage.

How do you respond when tragedy strikes your family?

As men, we have a responsibility to lead, especially in times of crisis. It's times of crisis that can reveal our positional authority or expose our weakness. When your family is facing this kind of challenge it is not a time for weakness. It is a time to man up!

David, the great shepherd and warrior, faced a tragedy. How he responded can be a lesson for us when we face a crisis.

As David and his mighty men were returning to Ziklag, a small town of Judah that became the city of David, they saw the city burning. You can imagine the adrenaline that exploded within each man as his thoughts turned immediately to the imaginations of tragedy. Were their families safe? Have they been killed? They couldn't get there fast enough.

As they approached the city they found evidence that the Amalekites had raided their possessions. They couldn't find any remains, so they knew that their enemy had taken their families captive.

The Amalekites were known to be ruthless, treacherous, and belligerent men, who preyed upon weakness. There was no reasoning with Amalekites—they were a people who were insanely evil—incapable of compassion and cohabitation.

David and his men were swept up with emotion—weeping to the

point of exhaustion. David became distressed because his men, the mighty men, whom he had trained up and built a life with, now were beginning to murmur of stoning him. Their bitter spirit had gotten the best of them.

Yet, the Bible says that, "David found strength in the Lord his God." (1 Samuel 30:6)

Here are 5 ways to respond when tragedy strikes:

1. Guard your heart from bitterness. It is very easy to allow bitterness to get the best of you when you're facing a crisis. Your heart is the seat of emotions. It is normal to respond emotionally. That's ok—but, don't allow your emotions to withdraw from your purpose as a man. You must direct your emotions and turn them toward what is best for your family. David did this by withdrawing from the murmuring of his embittered men and finding his strength in the Lord.

2. Draw your strength from the Lord, then turn and strengthen those who follow you. As a leader, David couldn't afford to keep his strength to himself. He had to strengthen those who were following him. When you're in a crisis, you must use your position as a leader to strengthen those around you.

3. Don't make haste. There is a big difference between acting quickly with decisions and making haste. David quickly sought the counsel of God by calling the priest Abiathar to inquire of God. In those days, seeking specific direction from God was a fairly elaborate process. Today, we have the Holy Spirit to counsel us (John 14:26). David asked a specific question, "Should I pursue the marauders and will I succeed in the rescue?" The answer was clear and precise, "Pursue them and you will succeed." Notice, even though he responded quickly, he didn't make a hasty decision. When facing a crisis, it is important to keep your head about you. Make sound decisions.

4. Develop the heart of a warrior. David and his mighty men mustered the strength to pursue. Although they fought all day,

and some were to the point of exhaustion, David succeeded over their enemy and recovered everything.

5. Know that crisis will always expose undesirable attitudes in others. This is an important lesson to learn. When David and his men returned with all of the property that they gained in battle, some of the followers exposed evil intentions and began to make trouble. They wanted to keep all of the assets for themselves and exclude those who stayed behind. David spoke up and issued an ordinance for Israel that day which read: "The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle."

My friend's grandson is fine. He recovered from the tragedy. My friend said, "Neil, when the enemy attacks your family, he attacks you personally with doubt, questions, and bitterness. It is important to be prepared with the Word of God before a crisis happens." My friend responded to every doubt that came to his mind with a scriptural promise.

Bonus

The victory over crisis always goes to the prepared.

Neil Kennedy, author of several books, including *FivestarMan: The Five Passions of Authentic Manhood*, *Centurion Principle*, *Mother's Guide to Raising a FivestarMan*; *God's Currency*; and *Speaking the Father's Blessing*; authored articles for scholarly journals; and multiple magazines, publishes *The Daily Champion for men*; and is founder of *FivestarMan*, an international movement of men.

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