

Why Jesus Wants You to Be a Renegade for the Kingdom

Whether a David, a King Josiah or a Nehemiah, regardless of the period in history, God has always had His men who were willing to stand up in the face of fierce opposition and do what needed to be done.

They were courageous, tough and battle tested. They were men's men, but they were so much more. They were *remnants*, and they were *renegades*. The two go hand in hand. They were remnants in that they were in the minority. They were renegades in that they rose up in defiance.

Sick and tired of what had been going on in the culture around them, they banded together to fight for what was true and honorable. They were men called to disrupt the flow of compromise. It wasn't easy. It wasn't safe. Disrupting the flow of compromise never is.

Three unique qualities made these men remnant renegades:

- They were frustrated with what they saw happening all around them.
- They knew things could be better.
- They put action to their faith.

It takes all three of these qualities before change can occur. It took remnant renegades to usher in the changes in Israel. You remember the story. Saul was the reigning king of Israel. Before him Israel had been ruled by holy, God-fearing judges, yet the people weren't satisfied and wanted a king like other nations. God had anointed and appointed the prophet Samuel to lead them, but Israel rejected Samuel, which broke his heart. But God told him, "They have not rejected you, but they have

rejected me from being king over them.”

Think of it. God’s chosen people, God’s nation, no longer wanted God to lead them. Oh, they might have been religious, but their hearts were far from Him. Rejecting Samuel was rejecting God. Saul, on the other hand, had all the surefire signs of outward success. He was wealthy, charismatic and physically imposing, and Israel demanded he be their king. So, God gave them what they wanted. Sometimes God will do that—give us what we demand, give a nation what they insist on.

Unfortunately, Saul’s kingship turned out to be devastating for the people of Israel. He was reckless and ruthless, in addition to being defiant of the Lord’s directives.

Finally, God had enough and instructed Samuel to tell Saul, “You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. ... But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.”

God sent Samuel to anoint a shepherd boy whom no one suspected of being the next king. Unassuming in stature, David was the polar opposite of Saul. But his courage ran deep, and his heart was tender toward the things of God. When Samuel anointed him, the Holy Spirit came upon the boy and at that moment departed from Saul.

From then on God’s favor was on David. The anointing dripped off him and seemed to touch everything he did. Even Saul noticed the unusual peace that rested on David and recruited the lad to play music for him when he was depressed. David’s music soothed Saul’s soul. The king was so impressed with David that he made him his personal armor-bearer. Not long afterward, David slew the giant Goliath with a sling and a

stone.

David was on the rise. God showed him favor on the battlefield again and again; however, his time to lead as king had not yet come. Saul still held that position, and David was faithful to the reigning king. But Saul became insane with jealousy, and his love for David was replaced with a bitter passion to see him dead. Saul also began leading the country in a full-blown rebellion against God and His ways, making covenants with the enemy idol worshippers. The Torah was no longer being followed, and Saul's rule became tyrannical. God's chosen people, Israel, were living in a bondage of their own making—a destructive cycle of sin and oppression.

Convinced Saul was going to kill him, David was forced to flee and became a fugitive. Though he knew he was destined to become the king of Israel, David refused to retaliate and kill Saul. Instead he chose to trust, knowing that God would somehow, someday, place him on the throne, fulfilling His promise. But it had to be done God's way, in His timing. In the meantime David would be a remnant renegade for the Lord.

Then something amazing happened. A remnant of men in Israel rose up and banded together with David. They knew God had anointed him to be king. They also knew David possessed a purity of heart toward the things of God, and he longed to see God's ways restored to their homeland. They were renegades too and became fugitives with him.

The Bible says, "All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around (David), and he became their commander. About four hundred men were with him." Eventually that number would grow to six hundred. Most were ordinary guys. Many were considered outcasts, misfits, or leftovers. That's what the word remnant means. Referring to the people of God, the word means "those who are faithful to [God's] original truth despite apostasy and opposition."

These guys were not lawless rebels with no respect for authority. They were honorable men. The phrase in Hebrew for *discontented* used in the Scripture about David's men denotes they were angry, aggrieved in the mind or discontented—probably with Saul's oppressive government. The phrase in debt in Hebrew refers to having "an exacting, cruel their debtors with great severity." In Nehemiah 5:5, for example, such creditors were "taking away their lands and vineyards, and bringing into bondage their sons and daughters."

Many of these men rose up because they were tired of seeing their families and themselves in bondage. They were beat up, discouraged and displaced. So, they made a conscious decision not to take it anymore and banded together for change. God connected them in heart with David, and they became partners in purpose. They wanted freedom for themselves, for their loved ones and for their nation. They wanted their culture back and for Israel to serve God again.

No, these were not lawless rebels. They were remnant renegades who would eventually become known as warriors, men of valor—David's mighty men. Remnant renegades who follow God become men of valor. Whether they are scaling the cliffs of Normandy to take back territory occupied by Hitler or taking back their families who have been occupied by the evil influences of this culture, men of valor fight the battles God has called them to.

Today, because of lawlessness and apathy, the hearts of people in our society have grown cold toward right and wrong and the things of God. Common sense has gone out the window, as has morality. Just like under Saul's reign, when God's ways are tossed aside, tyranny becomes the rule of law and wickedness becomes the norm. Good is called evil and evil good—something that God hates (Isa. 5:20).

As a man, you may get tired of the fight. Your senses may get

so overwhelmed and discouraged with the onslaught of evil and perverseness that you simply go numb. It's enough to make any man want to wave the white flag of surrender. You may want to check out and disengage from the fight.

But you can't.

You must not.

Too much is at stake.

Reserved for Him.

Around 150 years after David and his mighty men had directed their society back to God, things had deteriorated again in Israel. The prophet Elijah became distraught over the defilement of his nation. The people had started worshipping the false god Baal, which meant uninhibited sexual immorality, alternate lifestyles and child sacrifice. The wickedness had gotten out of hand, and Elijah fell into deep depression and despair. Convinced he was the only godly man left, Elijah cried out to the Lord, "The people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away" (1 Kings 19:10).

Many men feel this way, alone and isolated, as if the whole world is against them. Yet God's response to Elijah was, "I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal (1 Kings 19:18).

God used those faithful men to preserve and take back the nation of Israel from destruction time and time again, even when they were in captivity by the enemy. There were always remnant renegades. There was Nehemiah, who was so grieved in his spirit about the condition of his homeland that he dared to man up and take a risk in the face of a culture riddled with enemies and unbelief. He was ridiculed by his own people, lied about and hated by enemies. Yet God empowered Nehemiah

with incredible favor, and he pulled off the seemingly impossible, saving Israel from certain ruin. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to bow down to King Nebuchadnezzar's image, even to the point of being bound and thrown into a blazing furnace. God supernaturally preserved them, Nebuchadnezzar became a believer, and those three Jewish boys got promoted (Dan. 3).

Daniel had an excellent spirit, and that excellence, which came from the Holy Spirit, elevated him and those around him. As a result, Daniel influenced the whole nation and the king because he dared to take a stand for righteousness, even though he was tossed into the lion's den (Dan. 5-6).

The list of remnant renegades goes on and on. The Bible is full of them—men such as Joshua, Caleb, Abraham, Moses and Samson, just to name a few. All these men rose up and dared to risk it all by trusting God. God uses remnant renegades to change nations ... and locker rooms.

Two Locker Room Remnant Renegades

In 1986 Florida State head football coach Bobby Bowden was faced with a choice: Would he rise up, or would he stay down? In September, Florida State Seminoles offensive tackle Pablo Lopez was shot and killed after an argument. His death and the manner in which it occurred was a terrible blow to the FSU community and especially to the football program.

Bobby Bowden called a team meeting the day after Lopez's death and had a frank discussion with his players about where Lopez was and where they would be when they died. He said, "Men, I don't preach to you guys very often, but I'm going to preach to you today. ... I'm going to talk to you about something that doesn't have anything to do with football, and I want you to listen."

Coach Bowden shared the gospel with his players as well as his own faith journey. He then said, "All you guys are 18 to 22

and think you are going to live forever, and Pablo thought the same thing." He pointed to an empty chair and said, "Where is he today? Where are you going to be?"

Recalling the incident, Bowden felt he had to speak truth to his players:

"I feel I have a responsibility. These other professors can get you in their classroom, and they can talk about communism—that they are communists or atheists—and nobody bothers them. I feel like as a football coach I have a right to tell you what I think is right. ... I want you all to go to heaven; that's why I express this. It's your choice. I don't want to die without at least telling you what I know."

There were more people than just football players in the room that day. Assistant coach Mark Richt, who would later become the head coach at the University of Georgia, was also there. He recalled:

"I stood in the back of the room as Coach Bowden addressed the team about what had happened with Pablo. ... He was talking to the players, and I just happened to be in the room, but he was speaking to me. ... I became very convinced at that moment that then was the time for me to live for Christ."

Not too long after Lopez's death and the team meeting, Richt gave his life to the Lord in Bowden's office. Richt went on to have an impact for the kingdom himself. Coach Richt "is absolutely fearless in sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with others."

"Don't let yourself be silenced. Listen to that urging within you, telling you to speak up, to bear witness to the hope and faith within you."

Remnant renegades, it is time to be bold. It is time to speak up and speak out. Don't let the world silence you. You are full of the Holy Spirit, and it is time to take it back and

recover all! It is time to man up and fully embrace your God-given masculinity, offering that masculinity back to God for Him to use. {eoa}

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