



# **WARRIOR** OR **WORRIER**

**EXEMPLIFYING COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP  
AMIDST CONFLICT AND CHANGE**

**DR. TANIKKA SHEPPARD**  
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# TODAY'S OBJECTIVES

1. Define the lens of leadership and liberation and use them to assess situations through the priorities of justice, responsibility, and Christlike love.
2. Draw leadership insights from the story of David and Goliath, recognizing how faith, perception, resistance, and response shape courageous leadership in real-life situations.
3. Distinguish between spiritual concern and destructive worry and recognize how fear impacts leadership decisions.
4. Identify personal leadership patterns, including emotional and shadow-side tendencies, when facing conflict or change.
5. Describe the embodiment of “courageous leadership” as ethically grounded action that brings clarity, compassion, and conviction into uncertain or high-stakes moments.

A woman with a large afro and glasses on the left, and a man with glasses on the right, both adjusting their glasses with surprised expressions. The background is a solid reddish-pink color.

# ICEBREAKER

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ICEBREAKER

# WHAT WOULD YOU DO?



SLS Leaders Real Reaction Poll

# Leaders Real Reaction Poll

Scan this QR Code and  
take the short survey.

<https://www.menti.com/alswjp78fdot>



# GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What did your answers reveal to YOU about your default reaction under pressure or in the face of conflict?
2. When facing conflict as a leader, do you perceive yourself as being more of a *warrior* or *worrier*?





# WARRIOR<sup>OR</sup>WORRIER

DEFINING THE DIFFERENCE

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## **WARRIOR:**

Anchored in faith, takes ethical risks, leads through uncertainty.

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## **WORRIER:**

Driven by fear, stuck in anxiety, paralyzed by possibilities.

# THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONCERN & WORRY

<b>CONCERN</b>	<b>WORRY</b>
Focuses on what you can control	Obsessive about what you can't control
Leads to planning and prayer	Leads to panic and paralysis
Stays grounded in reality	Is often driven by fear and "what ifs"
Helps you take wise action	Keeps you stuck in indecision
Can be a sign of love and compassion	Becomes a form of distrust in God

# LENS OF **LEADERSHIP** & **LIBERATION**

- **A leader's lens sees more than how a situation affects them personally.** While a layperson may focus on fairness, comfort, or emotion, a leader considers the broader impact on people, systems, mission, and long-term consequences.
- **The leader asks:** *“What does this moment require of me, as someone called to set direction, protect people, and model integrity?”*
- **A liberation-minded leader also asks:** *“Who is most impacted by this? What systems need to be challenged or changed? Where is justice lacking, and what role must I play in correcting that?”*
- They pursue **righteousness**, knowing that silence can reinforce harm.
- They lead, fighting for freedom, dignity, equity, and opportunity for those who've been marginalized and oppressed.
- This leadership perspective **considers whether one's actions** maintain existing conditions or actively contribute to progress in healing, justice, and greater freedom for all.



# Giants in the Land

1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 17

FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURE

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# 1 SAMUEL 17:1-31 (SYNOPSIS)

The Philistine and Israelite armies are positioned for battle, but no one is moving. For 40 days, Goliath challenges them, and Saul (along with his army) is too afraid to respond. They are fully equipped but not leading. Fear has taken over.

David shows up, not to fight as a soldier, but to deliver food. When he hears Goliath's challenge, he responds with confidence in God, not fear. He recognizes that this situation extends beyond confronting an individual. It involves upholding the integrity of God's name and purpose.

David speaks up and asks questions despite his older brother's attempts to silence him. He remains focused and assertive. He demonstrates leadership even before any confrontation begins.

# 1 SAMUEL 17:32-37 (NIV)

<sup>32</sup> David said to Saul, “Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.”

<sup>33</sup> Saul replied, “You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth.”

<sup>34</sup> But David said to Saul, “Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, <sup>35</sup> I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. <sup>36</sup> Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. <sup>37</sup> The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.”

Saul said to David, “Go, and the LORD be with you.”

# KEY LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS

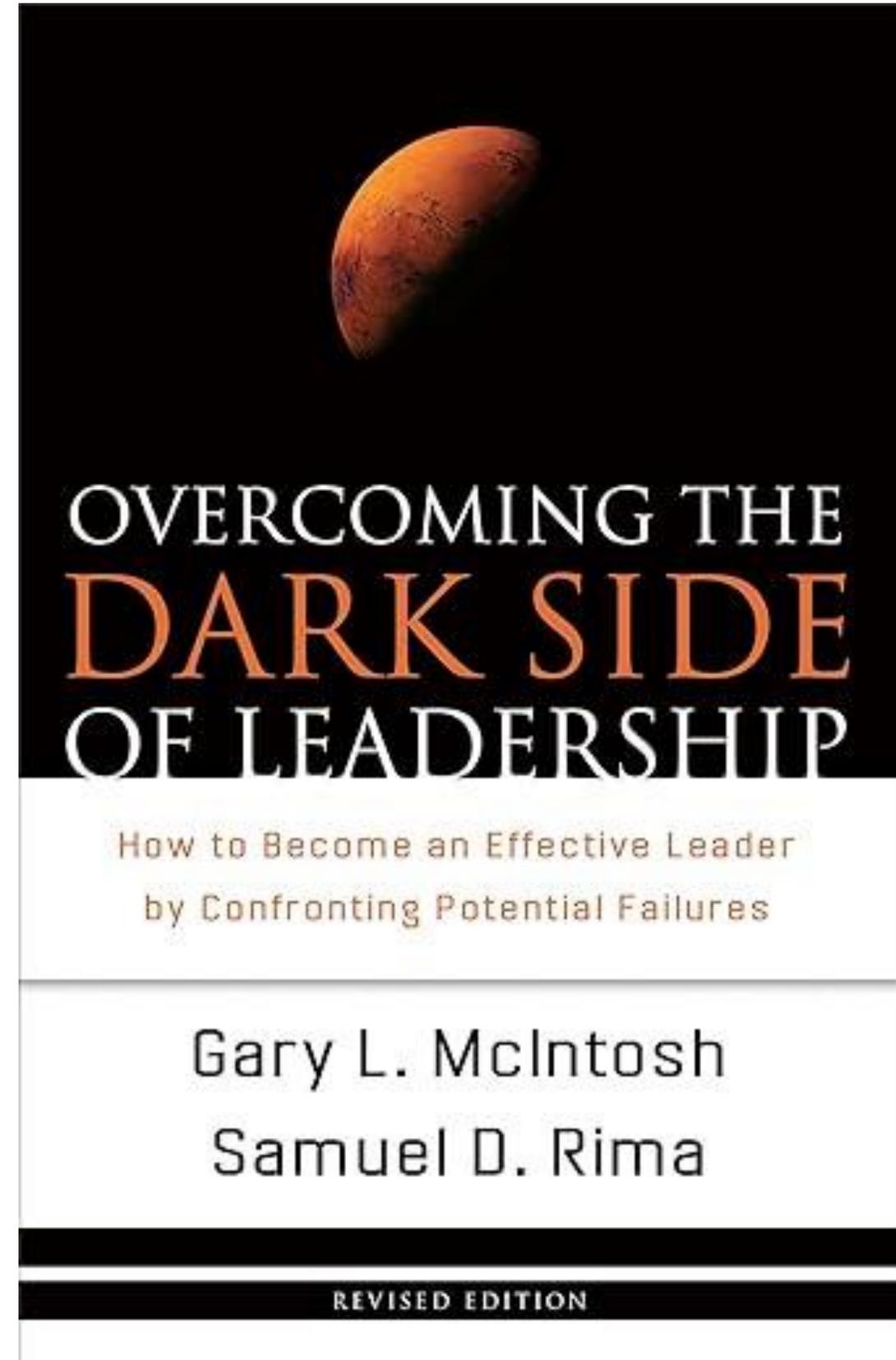


- **Saul and his soldiers embody the worrier** – fearful, passive, waiting for someone else to act. They have titles and positions, but they don't demonstrate any boldness or movement.
- **David's brothers**, especially Eliab, **are also worriers**, critical, and dismissive of courage. Rather than step up, they tear down the one who does. Their response is rooted in insecurity, jealousy, or discomfort with bold faith.
- **David, who is young and uninvited, exhibits the character a warrior** – trusting in God, asking critical questions, and stepping up while others stay silent. He's demonstrating leadership without needing a title or sword.

*“Your greatest strength overused or unexamined becomes your greatest liability.”*

Many leaders develop coping mechanisms, sometimes rooted in trauma, insecurity, or performance pressure that initially “work.” They gain influence, affirmation, or results.

But in times of conflict, these same traits tend to intensify, become rigid, and begin to sabotage our leadership.



# ONE COMPULSIVE LEADER



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**What seems to work:** Organized, detail-oriented, high control = efficient systems, stable ministries.

**But in conflict:** Becomes micromanaging, rigid, obsessed with perfection, resists change.

**MANAGE IT BY:**

- Practicing delegation and trust.
- Making room for mistakes and grace.
- Leaning into God's sovereignty over personal control.

# COMPULSIVE LEADER:

*“Are you obsessing over how something is done instead of why it matters?”*

# TWO NARCISSISTIC LEADER



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**What seems to work:** Charismatic, visionary, ambitious = gains followers and momentum.

**But in conflict:** Becomes defensive, domineering, dismissive of others' ideas, takes critique personally.

**MANAGE IT BY:**

- Seeking honest accountability and diverse voices.
- Practicing humility: “This is not about me.”
- Grounding identity in Christ, not admiration.

# NARCISSISTIC LEADER:

*“Do you need to be right or be effective?”*

# THREE PARANOID LEADER



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**What seems to work:** Cautious, protective, alert = avoids pitfalls and surprises.

**But in conflict:** Becomes suspicious, controlling, unable to trust or delegate. Sees feedback as threat.

**MANAGE IT BY:**

- Naming fears and testing them against truth.
- Creating safe spaces for feedback and disagreement.
- Praying for discernment—not just protection.

# PARANOID LEADER:

*“Are you guarding the mission or guarding yourself?”*

# FOUR CODEPENDENT LEADER

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**What seems to work:** Caring, servant-hearted, available = creates loyal teams and compassionate environments.

**But in conflict:** Avoids confrontation, over-functions for others, sacrifices health or integrity to “keep the peace.”

**MANAGE IT BY:**

- Practicing healthy boundaries.
- Letting people feel discomfort or disappointment.
- Remembering: peace-making is not people-pleasing.

# CODEPENDENT LEADER:

*“Are you loving people  
or managing their  
approval?”*

# FIVE PASSIVE- AGGRESSIVE LEADER

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**What seems to work:** Calm exterior, diplomatic, adaptable = seen as steady or conflict-averse.

**But in conflict:** Shuts down, withholds feedback, gossips, or undermines others behind the scenes.

**MANAGE IT BY:**

- Addressing conflict directly and prayerfully.
- Speaking the truth in love, even when it's hard.
- Asking God to align your courage with your convictions.

**PASSIVE-  
AGGRESSIVE  
LEADER:**

*“Are you being  
peacemaking or peace-  
faking?”*

SMALL  
GROUP  
REFLECTION  
QUESTIONS

Which dark side tendency resonates most with you?  
How has this trait “worked” for you in the past?  
How does it show up in conflict or under pressure?  
What spiritual practices or accountability could help you manage it more faithfully?

“Sometimes people  
won’t follow you  
because they’ve  
watched you.”

-Dr. Keith A. Troy





# EMBODYING COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP

1. Empower your **devotional life.**
2. Increase your **emotional intelligence to overcome your “dark side.”**
3. Draw upon **past courage and wisdom.**
4. Decide your hill to **fight on.**

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

- **Philippians 4:6-7**(NIV)



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# WHAT IS THE WORST...?

GRAB AN INDEX CARD



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