

# Grow Beyond Yourself

By Theodore Jaria,  
Caribbean Union Conference of SDA

**Theme:** To challenge members to see the vast potential available to us first in personal growth and secondly in pushing forward the work of the church.

**Text:** 1 Kings 12:1-33

**Songs:** 103 (O God, our help), 577 (In the heart of Jesus), 572 (Give of your best to the Master).

## Introduction

Israel was in transition. Solomon had died and the people embarked on the task of crowning a new King to sit in the place of the man who was considered the wisest who ever lived. His son Rehoboam the king elect along with the leaders of Israel were gathered in Shechem for the coronation ceremony. Jeroboam who was exiled in Egypt for fear of being killed by Solomon was invited by the leaders to witness the coronation and to speak in their behalf to the new King about the heavy taxes that Solomon had imposed upon them during his reign.

We pick up the narrative in verse 4 the Clear Word Bible, Jeroboam is speaking to the new King:

*“Your father was hard on us by asking us to pay such heavy taxes. Lower our taxes and we’ll be happy to serve you as our king”.*

*Vs 5 Rehoboam said, ‘come back the day after tomorrow and I’ll give my answer. So Jeroboam and the leaders left’.*

Rehoboam consulted with the elders who advised him to deal favorably with the people and *“they’ll willingly serve you forever”* Not satisfied with that response he consulted with the younger counselors, young men who had grown up with him during his father’s reign. They in turn gave him advice entirely opposite to what the elders gave, advice which essentially said rule them with a ‘rod of iron’, show them *“who’s in charge or they’ll never respect you”*. So when Jeroboam returned with the leaders of Israel this was Rehoboam’s response:

*Vs 14:’ You people complain about the heavy taxes my father laid on you, but I’ll make your taxes even heavier. You said you felt like my father was whipping you, but I’ll beat you so hard you’ll feel you’ve been stung by scorpions’.*

Rehoboam was power hungry and was more concerned about flexing his political muscle. Even when his people promised they would follow him forever if he lightened the burden on them,

he refused their offer and pursued his own agenda. As a result he sealed his fate as an ineffective leader. He lost the opportunity to grow, to be an even more powerful King than his father was. By his attitude he also failed to maintain unity among the tribes. The legacy he left was one of war, and he had the distinction of being the king who destroyed the nation God had chosen as His own.

### **Our vast Potential**

You may ask how does this theme “Grow beyond yourself” apply to me as an ASI member or potential member? The answer is simple. As a business person or professional within the church you are a recipient of many blessings three of which I would like to highlight:

1. **Financial resources** – you may not consider yourself to be rich but by virtue of your work or business, God has blessed you with a little more than the average person.
2. **Influence** – a circle of friends, acquaintances and maybe business associates which the average member or even the Pastor himself may not have access to.
3. A **passion** for the advancement of the work of the church and the preaching of the gospel.

Any legitimate endeavor therefore which will increase these three - resources, influence and passion, will also enhance your capacity to do more for the cause of Christ, hence the topic **grow beyond yourself**. Every child of God ought to increase his capacity to do more for the Kingdom of God. The pen of prophecy says Ed P. 19 *“higher than the highest human thought can reach is God’s ideal for His children”* and He provides the opportunity to do more.

Quoting from last year’s morning watch commentary, Always Joyful written by Juan O Perla pg. 327:

Speaking about Jesus and the prophecy of Isaiah on how he was to be buried Is. 53:9, Perla says: *“For the prophecy to be fulfilled, a man of much influence named Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate to ask for Jesus’ body and placed it in a grave prepared in a rock for a wealthy person. His influence and relationship with Pontius Pilate served to get his request.*

*Joseph of Arimathea was a very respected, distinguished man of character and a member of the Sanhedrin. How much of a blessing is money, social position, prestige and fame when they are placed in God’s hands for the progress of his cause.....*

*Has your prosperity served for the advance of the Gospel? Have you used your gifts and talents to influence those around you?*

*Ask the Lord today to help you make an impression with what you are and have – your workplace, your city, your country - for the good of the gospel”*

John C Maxwell in his book, *The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader’s Day*, gives some useful insights into how we can endeavor to grow beyond ourselves.

**Instead of Lecturing, Listen.** (James 1:19).

Rehoboam failed to listen – first to the people, then to the elders who gave him the right advice. He cared more about hearing his voice than that of his people.

If you struggle with doing too much talking and not enough listening, you may be missing opportunities to grow. Next time you’re in a meeting make a conscious effort to allow others to speak first. As a leader if you can, designate one meeting where you will do nothing but listen to the hearts of your people.

**Instead of Projecting Image, Project Integrity.** (Phil. 2:3-8).

Needless to say, Rehoboam cared very little about integrity. He was more concerned with asserting his newfound authority over the people so they wouldn’t perceive him as a weak leader (Which in reality he was). And he was willing to do whatever it took to make sure the people knew he was in charge.

Anyone who has to tell people he’s the leader isn’t really the leader. Do you have to explain to some people that you are in charge? If you do, you may need to back up and spend some time building a trustworthy relationship with them first.

**Instead of Demanding Control, Demonstrate Compassion.** (Matt. 20:27,28).

There’s no doubt that Rehoboam was a control freak. From the moment he was crowned king, he ruled the people with an unmerciful hand.

If you are experiencing healthy growth there is no need to parade your control over people. Take a look at how you handle people’s mistakes. Do you hang the mistake over their heads and treat them like failures? Or do you take the time to show them how to improve and give them a second chance to succeed?

**Instead of Glaring at Others, Gaze Through Their Eyes.** (Prov. 27:17).

If Rehoboam had looked through the eyes of his people, he would have seen their hardships and their genuine desire to serve him. He would have observed an opportunity to win the loyalty of an entire nation.

Are people excited about the work your organization is doing? Have you taken time to ask them? What do they think about your leadership? Always take time to put yourself in their shoes. Their insight can be a valuable tool for determining what direction you should lead them.

Every leader faces the prospect of making changes to improve the connection with his people and experience growth. The way that leaders deal with change says a lot about their effectiveness. Ineffective leaders, like Rehoboam, often fear change at all costs and never break free of the status quo. The result: momentum eventually comes to a halt, and leadership becomes stagnant. On the other hand, effective leaders are teachable – their eyes and ears are always open to learn more, and they embrace change as a catalyst for growth and improvement. When it comes to developing productive relationships, flexibility is essential.

Within our church today there is a group which I would like to call the silent, influential minority. Men and women who by virtue of their busy lifestyle cannot fill a church office and cannot engage in regular forms of ministry as the average Christian, Individuals who nonetheless, love the Lord, and are happy to make a contribution to the church when called upon to do so. What ASI seeks to do is to sensitize these individuals to the good that they can do for the church and the promulgation of the gospel. With your resources you can give greater support to the programs of the church or you can identify projects which you can finance and thus make an impact on society. And with your influence you can touch lives who would never step into a church building but who would listen to you because of your relationship with them. Using the theme “Sharing Christ into the Market Place” ASI emphasizes that good business as well as good service is as much a reflection of one’s Christianity as is preaching from the pulpit, perhaps even more so. The pen of prophecy says:

*When men of business, farmers, mechanics, merchants, lawyers, etc., become members of the church, they become servants of Christ; and although their talents may be entirely different, their responsibility to advance the cause of God by personal effort, and with their means, is no less than that which rests upon the minister. The woe which will fall upon the minister if he preach not the gospel, will just as surely fall upon the businessman, if he, with his different talents, will not be a co-worker with Christ in accomplishing the same results. 4T, p. 469*

Field leaders within our church who recognize the vast potential of these men and women have found in them a valuable resource in pushing the work of the church forward.

## **Conclusion**

I would like to close with a quote from Juan O. Perla.

*“We can all be influential despite our social or educational position or the power of money. I knew a humble church member named Francisca who was the cook for the president of the Republic of El Salvador in the 1970’s. Even though she was not rich like Nicodemus, she was rich in faith. On several occasions, she brought the President and his wife to church meetings. This faithful cook did what other people with material advantages never would have been able to do.*

*The Bible says that God wants His children to be the head and not the tail. God wants to make an impression where we are. If we have what Nicodemus had by God’s grace or if we do not, then we can be like Joseph who influenced Potiphar even though he was a slave”.*

**Resources.**

The Clear Word, Jack J. Blanco

Always Joyful, Juan O. Perla

Education, Ellen G. White

Testimonies Vol. 4, Ellen G. White

The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader’s Day, John C. Maxwell.