

Rock Solid

What To Do When You're Outmatched

“They’re big! Very big!”

Those were the words that recycled nervously from teammate to teammate as we went through our pregame drills. No rocket scientist needed here. We were outmatched.

Somehow our coach had been able to set up a game of the Biola University JV team against the UCLA Bruin freshman team. (What was he thinking?!) From the nine national championship banners (which ultimately became eleven) that decorated the rafters of Pauley Pavilion, to the sheer size of the players, it was a night of intimidation.

As these storylines often go, we played over-our-heads for the first half and trotted off the court at halftime only a couple points behind and with a measure of dignity (at least for the time being). And then the floodgates opened in the second half. Need I go on?

Here’s the point. Of the many things that occupy the ledger of a leader, somewhere at the top of the list is **OPPOSITION**. Count on it. Take it to the bank. **Leaders are regularly in situations where they are outmatched.**

That being the reality, I offer one of the most fundamental lessons of leadership: Leaders measure the opposition not against themselves, but against God. That is, **leaders benchmark the foe not against the limitations of their resources, but against the strength of their God.**

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This principle of life and leadership headlines the Old Testament story when Moses sends out twelve men to do some reconnaissance of the terrain God had promised to the people of Israel. After forty days of assessing their opponent, ten of the twelve come back with a scouting report that they are remarkably outsized: “they’re giants... we’re grasshoppers”. For their money, it was time to cut and run.

But two of the twelve see things differently—much differently. Joshua and Caleb, after looking at the size of their opponents, quickly turn their focus to look at the size of their God. **In doing so, their lives for perpetuity shout out the bold reality that leaders never calibrate their opposition against themselves, but only against their God.**

So as you conduct your own self-evaluation, where do you find yourself? With the majority or the minority report? Here are a few questions to assist you in your audit:

- **Where are you most vulnerable to the trap of comparison?**
- **Do you find yourself hiding behind the point of view that “it’s me against the world?”**

- Have you restricted your vision to that which is SEEN (opposition), instead of that which is UNSEEN (our all-powerful God)?
- Do you find yourself trying to manufacture leadership effectiveness simply based on your strength or experience?
- Do you find it difficult to admit that you are outmatched?

As a charter member of the I'm-a-slow-learner club, through the years, I continue to be reminded that one of the key issues here is SPEED. That is, how fast do I recognize that once again I am in a situation where in faith I need to stop looking at my capacities and instead to lock on to the unlimited resources of my never-outmatched God?

Long story short. Life is full of opponents. Many of them big. But none bigger than our Mighty God.

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