



LEADERSHIP

FOR THE

VIOLENT

LAST

DAYS

LDS GUIDE FOR SURVIVING  
THE DARK YEARS TO COME

GEORGE POTTER

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## PART ONE

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# 8 Principles for Leadership during the Great Tribulation

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*Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye  
think not the Son of man cometh.*

*Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his  
household, to give them meat in due season?*

*Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he  
cometh shall find so doing.*

*Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler  
over all his goods.*

*—Matthew 24:44–47*

*Get on your knees and ask for blessings of the Lord;  
Then stand on your feet and do what you are asked to  
do.*

—Gordon B. Hinckley

## Principle 1

# Prayer Driven Leadership

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Seeking the hand of the Lord in our battles is ingrained in the fabric of American history. President Ronald Reagan stated, “One of the most inspiring portrayals of American history is that of George Washington on his knees in the snow at Valley Forge. That moving image personifies and testifies to our Founders’ dependence upon Divine Providence during the darkest hours of the Revolutionary struggle.”<sup>14</sup> The following excerpt was taken from Nathaniel Randolph Snowden’s (1770–1851) “Diary and Remembrances,” who was with the Quaker Isaac Potts when he recounted the day he found General George Washington praying alone in the woods at Valley Forge.

In that woods, pointing to a close in view, I heard a plaintive sound as, of a man at prayer. I tied my horse to a sapling & went quietly into the woods & to my astonishment I saw the great George Washington on his knees alone, with his sword on one side and his cocked hat on the other. He was at Prayer to the God of the Armies, beseeching to interpose with his Divine aid, as it was ye Crisis, & the cause of the country, of humanity & of the world. ‘Such a prayer I never heard from the lips of man. I left him alone praying.

Someday soon you might find yourself needing to lead your family to safety from a violent enemy, a killer plague, the grips of a famine, or the eye of a destructive storm. Will you and your family survive? Henry B. Eyring advises, “The first, the middle, and the last thing to do is to pray.”<sup>15</sup> As the leader of your family, community, or church, the

most essential thing to do to survive the violent and wicked years to come is to pray constantly.

Immaculée Ilibagiza has already lived through an indescribable horror that no daughter of our Heavenly Father should have endured. She survived only through constant praying and in so doing developed a deep, powerful, and enduring relationship with God.

Immaculée Ilibagiza had a blessed childhood growing up in Rwanda. She had a loving family and a religious upbringing. However, her idyllic world suddenly turned into a bloody horror in 1994. Rwanda descended into a gory genocide that killed nearly a million Rwandans in three months. Immaculée is a Tutsi, the tribe that was the target of the slaughter. Unfortunately, the Tutsi genocide echoes a revolting and recurring Satanic behavior that will undoubtedly raise its ugly head in the last days. Living memory still reeks of the Jewish slaughter at the hands of the Nazis, the killings fields of Cambodia, the Christian purge in Iraq, and the Muslim ethnic cleaning in China. The list goes on and on. It is the familiar human killing disease of the soul that finished off the unrepentant Nephites. “And behold, the Lamanites have hunted my people, the Nephites, down from city to city and from place to place, even until they are no more” (Mormon 8:7). Are you prepared to navigate your family and community through such a horror?

For 91 days, Immaculée Ilibagiza and seven other women survived in the cramped bathroom of Pastor Murinzi, a Hutu. The pastor hid the women in tiny small bathroom with only a closet covering the door. Time and time again, killing gangs entered the pastor’s home searching for any Tutsis who might still be alive. At times hundreds of people dressed like devils surrounded the house and chanting a song of genocide while doing a dance of death: “Kill them, kill them, kill them all; kill them big and kill them small! Kill the old and kill the young . . . a baby snake is still a snake, kill it, too, let none escape! Kill them, kill them, kill them all.” To compound the horror, the killing gangs were none other than her neighbors. The lesson Immaculée learned during this hellish experience just might save your family when the mob is pounding on your front door. Immaculée relates in her book, *Left to Tell*, how her desperate prayers led her to God.

“Dear God, save us . . .” I whispered in my ear. *Why are you calling of God? Look at all of them out there . . . hundreds of them looking for you. They are legion, and you are one. You can’t possibly survive—you **won’t** survive. They’re inside the house, and they’re moving through the rooms. They’re close, almost here . . . they’re going to find you, rape you, cut you, kill you!*

My heart was pounding. What was this voice? I squeezed my eyes shut as tightly as I could to resist the negative thoughts. I grasped the red and white rosary my father had given me, and silently prayed with all my might: *God, in the Bible You said that You can do anything for anybody, Well, I am one of those anybodies, and I need You to do something for me now. Please, God, blind the killers when they reach the pastor’s bedroom—don’t let them find the bathroom door, and don’t let them see us! You saved Daniel in the lions’ den, God, You stopped the lions from ripping him apart . . . stop these killers from ripping us apart, God! Save us, like You saved Daniel!*

I prayed more intensely than I’d ever prayed before, but still the negative energy wracked my spirit. The voice of doubt was in my ear again as surely as if Satan

himself were sitting on my shoulder. I literally felt the fear pumping through my veins, and my blood was on fire. *You're going to die, Immaculée!* the voice taunted. *You compare yourself to Daniel? How conceited you are . . . Daniel was pure of heart and loved by God—he was a prophet, a saint! What are you? You are nothing . . . you deserve suffering and pain . . . you deserve to die!*

I clutched my rosary as though it were a lifeline to God. In my mind and heart I cried out to Him for help: *Yes, I am nothing, but you are forgiving. I am human and I am weak, but please, God give me Your forgiveness. Forgive me my trespasses . . . and please send these killers away before they find us.*

My temples pounded. The dark voice was in my head, filling it with fear, unthinkable images. *Dead bodies are everywhere. Mothers have seen their babies chopped in half, their fetuses ripped from wombs . . . and you think you should be spared? Mothers prayed for God to spare their babies and He ignored them—why should He save you when innocent babies are being murdered? You are selfish, and you have no shame. Listen, Immaculée . . . do you hear them? The killers are outside your door—they're here for you.*

My head was burning, but I did hear the killers in the hall, screaming, “Kill Them! Kill them all.”

*No! God is love, I told the voice. He loves me and wouldn't fill me with fear. He will not abandon me. He will not let me die cowering on the bathroom floor. He will not let me die in shame!*

One might ask, “Was Immaculée a leader?” All she did was to pray for God's help. Of course, the answer is yes. Her action saved the lives of the seven other women. In the same manner, the greatest of all leaders, Jesus Christ took the leadership action in the garden of Gethsemane to console with His father. His triumph had the potential for exalting every person who ever lived. “And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39).

If you want to be a leader in the last days, one who can save his or her family, friends, community, or nation, you must start leading on your knees. You will need God's help, and be assured your Father in Heaven will not fail you. To outwit the forces of Satan as the Second Coming approaches, one must walk in the paths of the Lord and receive daily inspiration to know the problems that are coming your way. When Alma inquired of the Lord as to where their enemy's army would attack, the Lord told him that they were headed to Manti (Alma 43:23–24). This inspired knowledge helped save the Nephite nation in the hour of their need.

One of America's greatest military leaders, General George S. Patton, understood the direct relationship between victory over evil forces and the power of prayer. Msgr. James H. O'Neill provides his personal account of his famous Third Army Prayer:

The incident of the now famous Patton Prayer commenced with a telephone call to the Third Army Chaplain on the morning of December 8, 1944, when the Third Army Headquarters were located in the Caserne Molifor in Nancy, France: “This is General Patton; do you have a good prayer for weather? We must do something about those rains if we are to win the war.” My reply was that I know where to look

for such a prayer, that I would locate, and report within the hour. As I hung up the telephone receiver, about eleven in the morning, I looked out on the steadily falling rain, “immoderate” I would call it — the same rain that had plagued Patton’s Army throughout the Moselle and Saar Campaigns from September until now, December 8. The few prayer books at hand contained no formal prayer on weather that might prove acceptable to the Army Commander. Keeping his immediate objective in mind, I typed an original and an improved copy on a 5” x 3” filing card:

“Almighty and most merciful Father, we humbly beseech Thee, of Thy great goodness, to restrain these immoderate rains with which we have had to contend. Grant us fair weather for Battle. Graciously hearken to us as soldiers who call upon Thee that, armed with Thy power, we may advance from victory to victory, and crush the oppression and wickedness of our enemies and establish Thy justice among men and nations.”

He [Patton] took his place at his desk, signed the card, returned it to me and then Said: “Chaplain, sit down for a moment; I want to talk to you about this business of prayer.” He rubbed his face in his hands, was silent for a moment, then rose and walked over to the high window, and stood there with his back toward me as he looked out on the falling rain. As usual, he was dressed stunningly, and his six-foot-two powerfully built physique made an unforgettable silhouette against the great window. The General Patton I saw there was the Army Commander to whom the welfare of the men under him was a matter of Personal responsibility. Even in the heat of combat he could take time out to direct new methods to prevent trench feet, to see to it that dry socks went forward daily with the rations to troops on the line, to kneel in the mud administering morphine and caring for a wounded soldier until the ambulance came. What was coming now?

The General left the window, and again seated himself at his desk, leaned back in his swivel chair, toying with a long lead pencil between his index fingers.

“Chaplain, I am a strong believer in Prayer. There are three ways that men get what they want; by planning, by working, and by Praying. Any great military operation takes careful planning, or thinking. Then you must have well-trained troops to carry it out: that’s working. But between the plan and the operation there is always an unknown. That unknown spells defeat or victory, success or failure. It is the reaction of the actors to the ordeal when it actually comes. Some people call that getting the breaks; I call it God. God has His part, or margin in everything, That’s where prayer comes in. Up to now, in the Third Army, God has been very good to us. We have never retreated; we have suffered no defeats, no famine, no epidemics. This is because a lot of people back home are praying for us. We were lucky in Africa, in Sicily, and in Italy. Simply because people prayed. But we have to pray for ourselves, too. <sup>16</sup>

It is human nature to expect the Lord to bring us victory over our enemies. To seek injury to the forces that align to destroy us. However, our enemies, while under the influence of Satan, are Heavenly Father’s children. Rather than hope for harm for our enemies, we should pray that the Lord will soften their hearts. Elder M. Russell Ballard has taught:

The Savior taught us to not limit who we pray for. He said, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”

On the cross of Calvary, where Jesus died for our sins, He practiced what He taught when He prayed, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

Sincerely praying for those who may be considered our enemies demonstrates our belief that God can change our hearts and the hearts of others. Such prayers should strengthen our resolve to make whatever changes are necessary in our own lives, families, and communities.<sup>17</sup>

Prayer opens the door to direct revelation. When Lehi prayed for his people, he was told Jerusalem would be destroyed (1 Nephi 1:5, 13). Later in a dream he was told to take his family and flee into the wilderness (1 Nephi 2:1–2). In the Book of Joel, we are promised:

And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

And I will show wonders in heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.

And it shall come to pass, that *whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered*: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call. (Joel 2:27–32, emphasis added)

Elder Ballard has counseled in our day, “The world’s current chaotic situation may seem daunting as we consider the multitude of issues and challenges. But it is my fervent testimony that if we will pray and ask Heavenly Father for needed blessings and guidance, we will come to know how we can bless our families, neighbors, communities, and even the countries in which we live.”<sup>18</sup> If prayer is so vital today, it will be even more so during the calamities leaders will face during the Great Tribulation.

*Pray always, that you may come off conqueror; yea, that you may conquer Satan, and that you may escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work. (D&C 10:5)*

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14. Ronald Reagan, “Proclamation 5551—Thanksgiving Day, 1986,” Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/254029>, accessed 23 July 2021.

15. Henry B. Eyring, "In the Strength of the Lord," April 2004 general conference.
16. James H. O'Neill, "The True Story of The Patton Prayer," from the Review of the News, 6 October 1971.
17. M. Russell Ballard, "Watch Ye Therefore, and Pray Always," October 2020 general conference.
18. Ibid.

*And in that day shall be heard of wars and rumors of wars, and the whole earth shall be in commotion, and men's hearts shall fail them, and they shall say the Christ delayeth his coming until the end of the earth. And the love of men shall wax cold, and iniquity shall abound.*

(D&C 45:26–27)

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