



**The Salvation Army**

Jack McDowell School for Leadership Development  
Evangeline Booth College, Atlanta, GA  
www.sldleadership.com

“Shaping Leaders to Transform Their Worlds”

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## Leadership Lessons from the Word

*The Big Idea:*

**“God is in Control: Be Grateful”**

*Psalm 136:1-5*

*Dr. Jonathan Lotson*

Life can be difficult and often forces us to deal with various things that we are honestly not prepared to deal with. There are multiple things that we deal with that put a strain on our physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. If we are not careful, we can soon get to a place of grief. Grief can develop in many ways, and from various things. Furthermore, grief can make one feel lost. Grief can make an individual utterly oblivious to their surroundings and themselves. Grief is a powerful and intense emotion that can become stronger to the point in which it becomes unbearable. However, when one is experiencing grief and feels lost, they must seek the direction from God who can lift them up from their grief and thinks of being lost. God is our ever-present help in the time of trouble, and our ultimate guide out of grief.

*My Notes*

*A Question to Consider:*

*How do you handle grief?*



## “Where do I start”?

Many people deal with grief and some to the point where they feel lost from within, but yet have a desire to move forward but do not know where to start. The answer is with gratitude. If something is telling you that better is possible if you are surrounded by people who are trying to encourage you, or if you are merely reading this leadership lesson from the word right now, then you have something to be grateful for. When faced with grief it is essential that you start with gratefulness in reverse. Being grateful often begins with a feeling and is then expressed with an action. However, when experiencing grief and the sense of gratitude may be far from you, try by starting with expressing gratitude with an action. The action can be as small as saying “thank you” or by writing a letter to God expressing that you desire to be thankful for. Our leadership lesson from the word is taken from Psalm 136:1-5 which says:

*“O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever.*

*O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth forever.*

*O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth forever.*

*To him who alone doeth great wonders: for his mercy endureth forever.*

*To him, that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy endureth forever.”*

These five verses highlight Gods’ faithfulness to us by giving us the gift of Gods’ mercy. This scripture can assist us by simply reading it because it reminds us of Gods’ mercy and it reminds us of who and what God is. God is good (verse 1), God is the God of gods (verse 2), God is the Lord of Lords (verse 3), God can perform great wonders (verse 4), and God has wisdom (verse 5). To move from grief, we must start with the response of being grateful until our feelings turn to genuinely being grateful.

◆ My Notes ◆



## God is in Control

As I stated earlier, life can be difficult and often force us to deal with various things that we are not prepared to deal with. However, we must know that God is in control. We may feel that our lives are upside down, but that should not cloud our reality that God is yet in control. Believing that God is in control requires that we execute faith and trust in God. We must also remind ourselves of the truth that God is not like man and what may seem crazy and out of control in our eyes is what we see and feel not God. The fifth verse in our scripture says, “to him that by wisdom made the heavens for his mercy endureth forever.” God had the wisdom to make the heavens (and all thing), which should help us to feel confident of God’s ability to move us out of our grief and all other situation. God is in control, and for that, we should be thankful.

Grief has a way of clouding the reality that God is in control which directly affects our ability to be grateful, because of the other feelings that enter our minds. (i.e., fear, doubt, insecure, helpless, etc.) When we dismiss the fact that God is in control and that God has wisdom beyond our human understanding, we can forget about what God has done for us in the past, which is the comforting testimonies that we ought to have to encourage us that God can move on our behalf again. Gratitude allows us to reflect on what God has done for us in the past, inspire us despite our grief, and rest in the fact that God is in control.

◆ *My Notes* ◆



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### Questions to Ponder

◆ My Notes ◆

*What benefits might you gain as a result of accepting that God is in control?*

*In what way(s) have you allowed grief to take control in your life?*

*What practice(s) can you implement to create a culture of gratitude in your organization?*

### Suggested Resources:

**Radical Gratitude: Discovering Joy through Everyday Thankfulness**

by Ellen Vaughn