

## **White Knuckles**

### **Ready:**

“Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands!” – 1 Samuel 18:7

### **Set**

White-knuckle people are control freaks who are driven by fear and anxiety. In the Bible, King Saul was a white-knuckle leader. He gripped his power in his closed fists. Nobody was going to take it from him, even if it meant giving up his life!

The young warrior, David, was the new hero. A new, popular song was being sung about him: “Saul has killed his thousands and David has killed his tens of thousands” (1 Samuel 18:7). Saul did the math, and he was losing his power and fame. Saul was grasping his kingship with everything he had, but it was being ripped from his white knuckles. Not by David, but by God.

Imagine if Saul embraced God’s plan and invested in David as a young leader. Imagine if he saw the greatness in David and helped him grow and develop as the next king. It would have been one of the best biblical examples of mentoring. Instead, it was a horrific example of pride, control and jealousy. Saul even tried to kill David, because insecure people try to take out anyone who is a potential threat. White-knuckle people cannot empower others; they only empower themselves.

*“Only secure leaders give power to others.” - John Maxwell*

We either hold tightly or give, control or empower. It is impossible to do both at the same time. It is one or the other, and the choice is yours.

We shy away from empowerment because we love power too much, and it becomes intoxicating. When we control things, we get white knuckles. We hold onto our position, our people, our programs, our paycheck and our perks. Releasing is difficult but necessary.

White knuckle people are everywhere, and they come in all forms. There are white-knuckle leaders, white-knuckle parents, white-knuckle coaches, white-knuckle employees, white-knuckle athletes and white-knuckle kids. The bottom line is, we have white knuckles!

The key to empowerment is leading with open hands. With open hands, you are free to invest in others, give responsibility away and to believe the best in others. It means we give up control, and give away power by believing in others and investing in them.

It is natural to hold onto things and unnatural to give away. Blessing others and giving the gift of power seems foreign. Even if we do finally learn to invest in others, we do it for the wrong reasons such as pride, pleasure and profit. These self-centered motives will stunt our impact

capacity. Seeing greatness in others and asking the Lord for opportunities to empower others keeps our hearts pure and full of right motives.

There are three important principles of empowerment:

### **1. Empowerment comes through relationships... not roles.**

You do not empower others because of the role they play or the responsibilities they have. Empowerment happens through healthy, vibrant relationships.

### **2. Empowerment comes through investment... not involvement.**

Making an investment in others is pouring out what God has poured into you. We need to intentionally empower the next generation. Give them ownership.

### **3. Empowerment comes through anointing... not availability.**

Empowerment will produce lasting fruit when there is a calling by God on their life, not just availability. Anointing allows the person to hear from God and walk the path God has for them with power.

Coaches and athletes, it's time to empower others! The choice is yours—white knuckles or open hands. When we live with open hands, we honor God. Live a life committed to giving up control and giving away power.

## **Go**

1. **ASK:** When do you have white knuckles? When do you resist giving power to others? What prevents you from empowering others: fear, anxiety, insecurity or control?
2. **WHO:** Whom has God put in your life that needs to be empowered? Are their leaders on your team who need empowered?
3. **HOW:** How can you intentionally invest in them? How can you create a culture of empowerment on your team?

## **Workout**

- 1 Samuel 18
- Romans 16:17-18
- 2 Timothy 3:1-5

## **Overtime**

“Father, I realize that I have white knuckles. There are areas of my life that I want to control and do not want to release. Lord, pry my fingers open no matter how painful it is. Today, I come to you with open hands. In the name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.”

## **Bible Reference:**

1 Samuel 18:7  
Romans 16:17-18  
2 Timothy 3:1-5  
1 Samuel 18:1-30



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