

Daily Devotional, May 3, 2020

“I Will Add To Your Yoke”, (1 Kings 12:14, NKJV)

“My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!” (1 Kings 12:14)

These words were spoken by Rehoboam, who succeeded his father Solomon as King of Israel in 931 BC. The people had come to the new king, hoping to have an understanding of what life would be like under the new reign. They had hoped for an understanding based on mercy and mutual respect, but instead they got the opposite. The result was that the kingdom fractured in Israel, and the ten northern tribes of Israel split off under their own king.

If you are in a position of authority, be diligent to use your authority in a wise way, and communicate and act with mercy and understanding. This is true for kings, presidents, and governors. But it is also true for teachers, church workers, and parents. There are even instances where a store worker, warehouse worker, or business owner will have to enforce various rules at their place of employment or business. Specifically, this is a challenge for fathers, so much so that Scripture has this admonishment, *“And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord”* (Ephesians 6:4). In this day and age, when so many single mothers are struggling to raise their children, application can also be made for them on this point.

Let us therefore exercise any authority that we may have firmly, but wisely, remembering that we are speaking to other human beings who, like us, are made in the image of God. People will follow a leader who leads strongly with wisdom (like Solomon), but people will rebel against a leader who attempts to rule with a strong and unmerciful hand. Sometimes it is a fine balance, but it is one that we all do well to pray for God’s wisdom in exercising. May we learn from the Bible record in First Kings Chapter Twelve what is likely to happen when one in authority says in arrogant abuse of power, *“I will add to your yoke.”*