

David: A Leader After God's Own Heart

Franklin Church of Christ
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PM Worship

Introduction:

Some folks get all the breaks, don't they? Take David for instance. Here is a little shepherd boy who becomes king. Obviously another average Joe who just got lucky. Right? Wrong. It is easy for us to look at the success of Bible characters and think they got where they did by the luck of the draw. God, for some unknown reason, picked them to do great things, but that will never be us. That simply isn't so. God chose David because of his character. He was a man after God's own heart (**I Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22**). What was it that made David such a great leader? And what can we do to be like David?

Discussion:

- I. First, note the factors that did not play a part in God's choosing David.
 - A. David's appearance was not a factor. Samuel was sure that Eliab was kingly material, but God said not to look at the outer appearance (**I Samuel 16:6-7**). Saul had the stature of a king, but he squandered the position (**I Samuel 9:2**).
 - B. David's age was not a factor. David was described as a youth when he was chosen to be king and when he fought Goliath (**I Samuel 16:11; 17:33**). When he finally became king he was only 30 years old (**II Samuel 5:4**). Putting this in perspective, one must be 35 to be our President.
 - C. David's family background was not a factor. When Saul was mentioned in **I Samuel 9:1**, his genealogy was traced back to Ephiah a mighty man of valor. David was simply a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite (**I Samuel 16:18**). David didn't inherit a legacy of great family background.
 - D. David's early family years were not a factor. In fact, when Samuel took the family of Jesse to the sacrifice, David was left with the sheep (**I Samuel 16:11**). When David came to give his brothers food on the battle lines, Eliab insulted him (**I Samuel 17:28**). David's leadership wasn't fostered and rooted in how his family viewed him and treated him in his early years.
 - E. Sinlessness was not a factor. We all know the event with Bathsheba described in **II Samuel 11**.
 - F. None of these factors explain God's choice of David. Yet, so many think these factors determine who is a good leader. God chose David, not for these reasons, but rather for reasons of the heart. Consider several characteristics that made David a leader after God's own heart.
- II. David knew his strength came from God.
 - A. From the very beginning David knew his strength came from God and he relied on God for that strength. When Saul claimed he was unable to fight Goliath, David did not discuss how amazing he was. He said God had delivered him before and would do it again (**I Samuel 17: 34-37**).
 - B. But this was not a one-time event for David. In later years, when Absalom rebelled and successfully stole the kingdom from David, David did not rely on his own strength, but rather relied on the Lord, that God would return good to him (**II Samuel 16:9-12**).
 - C. God chose David, because David chose God. This was not a lucky break. David became king because of his great faith. David became king because he was not wrapped up in his own power and ability, but because he knew the source of his ability and was willing to let others know the source of his ability.
- III. David grew as a leader by accepting and overcoming challenges, not by taking any shortcuts.
 - A. When you read the story of David, from the time he slew Goliath to the end of his life, you see a story of growth. As a youth watching the sheep, he began growing by facing the lions and bears that attacked his flock (**I Samuel 17:34-35**). He faced the giant of whom everyone was afraid, including the king (**I Samuel 17:41-54**). He then accepted appointments of leadership and faced challenges and grew (**I Samuel 18:5, 25-27**). Through facing these challenges David grew as a leader before God and the people. The people respected David early on, even after he faced Goliath (**I Samuel 18:7**). But it didn't stop there, David continued to act wisely under Saul and he became highly esteemed (**I Samuel 18:30**).
 - B. On the other hand, some try to be great leaders by taking shortcuts. Instead of working hard, they behave as Absalom did. Absalom won the hearts of the people away from David for a time. He did not do it through growth. He did not do it through wisdom. He did not do it through overcoming challenges. He took a shortcut. He marketed in slander and complaint. In **II Samuel**

15 when some one came to the king with a suit, Absalom would claim to be on his side and that he would help him if only he could (**II Samuel 15:1-6**). He backhandedly slandered the king as unjust. He grew his influence through a campaign of negativism and empty promises of his own undeveloped leadership. He stole the hearts of the men of Israel. Because of this campaign, he had a leader's influence, but he did not have a leader's heart. He could not hold on to the kingdom. Sometime you should read **II Samuel 19** to see the shame of the people who had been taken in by such a weak leader, when they finally realized who was the real leader.

- C. Shortcuts appear to make men great, but in the end, shortcuts fail. David was a leader after God's own heart because he did not take shortcuts. He faced the daily challenges and grew.

IV. David was not focused on positions.

- A. Consider where David was for several years. He was anointed to be king as a youth in **I Samuel 16:12-13**. He killed Goliath shortly after that (**I Samuel 17**). He had God's approval and the people's approval (**I Samuel 18:7**), yet he did not strive to take the throne away from Saul. David was not a man who coveted prestige. He was a man who would simply do the will of God no matter his position.
- B. Repeatedly, he refused to lift his hand against Saul (**I Samuel 24; 26**). He was best friends with Jonathan, Saul's son (**I Samuel 18:1; II Samuel 1:26**). David executed the man who claimed to kill Saul (**II Samuel 1:14-16**). David was not focused on position. He was not interested in battles over who got to be king. He was simply interested in serving the Lord.
- C. David's greatness stemmed from his belief that greatness did not come from his position before the people, but from his position before God.

V. David was secure enough with himself to empower greatness in others.

- A. Saul couldn't stand that some people thought David was better than he. The song of the women in **I Samuel 18:7-9** began Saul's hatred of David. But, this is not surprising from Saul. After all, he, unlike David, was very much focused on position, prestige and others' perceptions. When Samuel had told Saul the kingdom was taken from him, Saul asked that Samuel at least keep up appearances before the elders and the people (**I Samuel 15:30**).
- B. David was not so insecure. He was not afraid that others might kill giants and look better than he did. In fact, David had several giant killers under his service according to **II Samuel 21:18-22**. People can accomplish great things when they are not so caught up in having to do the work themselves or getting the credit for it. David was one of those people. He did great things because he was secure enough to empower the great men who served him to be as great as he was, possibly greater. Read **II Samuel 23:8-39** and see the mighty men David empowered.

VI. David repented when confronted with wrong.

- A. David was not a great leader because he was perfect. He was a great leader because he repented and changed when confronted with his sin. The two most memorable events in the life of David are the slaying of Goliath and his adultery with Bathsheba. The devil, through temptation, snared even this great leader. For a while, he had so justified his own sin and so covered his own sin that he did nothing about it. But when Nathan came to David in **II Samuel 12:7** and said, "You are the man." David repented.
- B. David did not argue against the Lord. David did not rebuke the Lord's messenger. David did not rebel against God's discipline. David repented and accepted from the hand of God what he was given, continuing his trust in God and his service to the Lord. He picked up the pieces and continued to lead according to God's will.

Conclusion:

Let's bring all this home to us. David was a great man, a great leader and a great king. We might be inclined to think he just got lucky breaks. Not so. God chose him, not through the luck of the draw, but because of the kind of person he was. You and I can be that kind of person. God can use us. We can be what David was. We can be chosen by God to do great things in His kingdom. Do not be discouraged if you don't have the family background, the appearance, the age, or any other external factor. Those do not make us great servants or great leaders. Face your daily challenges and grow, without taking shortcuts. Serve the Lord where you are. You too will be a leader after God's own heart.