

Searching for a “David”...what to look for in a future leader

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In the world of Christian ministry it is common to search for someone who can grow into the senior leadership position. Much like the biblical David, one might have abilities evident in one area that translate into being a foundational skill needed in another application. The challenge is identifying and then effectively grooming these “Davids” for what God might have for them as future leaders.

Observing David and identifying his characteristics could be helpful in finding such people to groom and grow. David had a **healthy sense of self-confidence** anchored to an understanding that ultimately the confidence needed to tackle “bears, lions and giants” came from God, the provider of skills, insights, courage and wisdom to tackle any problem. He **understood his limitations** (e.g. the fact that Saul’s armor was not appropriate) but had confidence to tackle new and bigger problems, trusting in God’s provisions.

David was a man after God’s heart because, while imperfectly manifested from time to time, he was motivated primarily out of a desire to love, honor and serve God. His **motivation to be a leader** came from this driving purpose to follow God’s leading.

One factor in David’s qualifications was his **respect for leadership**, recognizing that even if a leader is not perfect (Saul) that leader is still due respect and deference where appropriate. David also had a **teachable spirit** which is essential for maturing and effective leadership. At various points of correction (most notably Nathan’s confrontation regarding Bathsheba) his response was not self-defense but ownership of his “sin” and immediate steps to seek reconciliation.

Scriptures cited David as “**as a man after God’s own heart,**” a person who practiced following God and seeking ways to stay close to him. Demonstration of this characteristic translated into being **authentic** and **transparent** and **not self-serving**. Showing an **exemplary life** and **demonstrating a passion** to do what God is directing can lead to a **contagious enthusiasm, trust, honesty, integrity, and leadership** that **causes others to wish to follow**. David was also an **over-achiever** (i.e., beating the bear and lion) and was **willing to take risks**.

Other desirable “David” characteristics might include: **being comfortable in the limelight** but not dependent on it (**humility**); being at ease with people, power or wealth (**self-confident**); attracting people (being **charismatic**); adjusting one’s approach to be most effective (**having excellent “EQ”**); displaying a willingness to ask for prayer or a donation (**boldness**); knowing what one doesn’t know and purposefully seeking input (**self-awareness**); having a **strong work ethic** yet with balance (**self-discipline**); doing the right thing even in the face of opposition (**courage**); valuing continuous improvement (**life-long learner**); embodying **knowledge** and **wisdom** coupled with **people skills, team building** and **understanding how organizations work** (business acumen); **learning and improving from criticism** (openness); and **striving for excellence** (high standards).



Searching for “Davidic” qualities is important but should always be tied to the realization that God is continually working in individuals. A person can become far more effective and influential as they grow in their career. God can see potential and the attitude of one’s heart.

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Searching for a “David” Checklist:

- Self-confident
- Understand one’s limitations
- Mature motivation
- Respect for leadership/authority
- Teachable spirit
- “Man (or woman) after God’s own heart”
- Authentic, transparent
- Not self-serving
- An example
- Demonstrates passion, causes contagious enthusiasm in others
- Trusted, trustworthy
- Others wish to follow
- Honest, has integrity
- An overachiever
- Takes calculated risks
- Comfortable in the limelight, yet doesn’t need it
- Humble
- Charismatic
- Has high “EQ” (Emotional Quotient)
- Willing to ask for support-counsel, connections, financial (boldness)
- Self-awareness
- Has a strong work ethic yet balance to life
- Strong self-discipline
- Has courage, will do the right thing even in the face of opposition
- Life-long learner
- Has wisdom
- Solid people skills, good at team building
- Has business acumen
- Results oriented
- Values feedback/criticism, seeks to learn from, improve
- Does things with excellence