

Six Key Traits Of Unleaders

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Jane Overstreet, the president and CEO of Development Associates International, became so fascinated at the leadership differences she discovered between Saul and David when preparing for a conference presentation that she expanded her study into a book, "Unleader."

"I was surprised by what I found, because in a way, it's terribly simple," Overstreet said. "They're old biblical stories, but they're traits that you see today. Human nature hasn't changed much during these years."

She offers up six traits that distinguish the Davids -- the "unleaders" -- from the Sauls.

1. FEAR GOD MORE THAN YOU FEAR PEOPLE

What helps you make decisions as a leader? There are always things driving you. In Saul's context, oftentimes it was fear of what people thought. For David, it was always about what God thought.

2. ENABLE THE PEOPLE UNDER YOU

I find that leaders very consistently either use people or enable them. Saul used people and spit them out; in fact, he almost killed his own son at one stage because he hadn't obeyed. David,

on the other hand, took a band of discontented losers and turned them into mighty men that stuck with him for more than 40 years.

3. PUT GOD'S INTEREST ABOVE YOUR OWN

Most Christian leaders start out wanting to do something for God, but somewhere along the way, their success becomes their god. You see this so clearly with Saul and David.

4. LEAD WITH INTEGRITY

Integrity is being the same person whether you are on a platform, in the office or at home. As for Saul, though he started out with a heart for God, his desperation drove him to seek out answers from a witch. David, on the other hand, always lived by his principles. He had some mega failures, by the way, which is sad -- but nice in the sense that we can all relate to that. He was just quick to turn and ask forgiveness and clean it up when he saw it.

5. LET PEOPLE GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO LOVE YOU AS A LEADER

This surprised me when I saw it, because in Saul's life you can't find a story about someone close to him. In fact, even his family members distanced themselves from him eventually. And David's story is just full of good friends. There were people who

loved him deeply and would do anything for him.

I think a lot of times, leaders, even in our culture, are so busy and so success-driven that they alienate themselves from families, friends and everybody else. Eventually, that will get you. You will fail over that.

6. LET GOD LOVE YOU

We all know we're supposed to love God, but I've come to the conclusion that we have it a bit backwards. We need to make space to let God love us so that we automatically love him in return. It's a relationship; it's not a sort of to-do list that you can check off.

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