

David vs. Saul: What's the Difference?

Consider the following differences between two kings of Israel, David and Saul, taken largely from 1 Samuel 16-17:

David

- Unimpressive stature
- Inexperienced
- Heart after God
- Repentant
- God-reliant
- Spirit-filled

Saul

- Impressive stature
- Experienced
- Hardened heart
- Resistant
- Self-reliant
- Spirit-possessed

God uses the unexpected, unimpressive, and inexperienced to accomplish remarkable things. Saul was a head above most men. David was ruddy and smaller in stature. Saul was driven by an evil spirit and died a crazed, God-forsaken man. David drove an evil spirit from Saul with the sound of his lyre. Saul hid out in his tent when Goliath taunted the Israelites. David stood up for his people and God and defeated Goliath. What made the difference between these two leaders?

The Spirit of the Lord

The Holy Spirit made all the difference between these two men. The chronicler of Israel's history reveals the primary difference between these two kings. He writes: "And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah. Now the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul..." (1 Sam. 16:13-14).

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SAUL AND DAVID – A CONTRAST IN LEADERSHIP

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When we think of these two kings—Saul and David—we immediately think of the drastic differences between these men. Saul's failed leadership was monumental. By contrast, David was a man after God's own heart. Even though David had a number of faults, he was very successful as a leader. **Why the difference?** That is an especially significant question when you consider all that these two men had in common.

Both men had a common opportunity. They were both chosen by God to be king.

Both Saul and David had a common cause. They were both used by God for the purpose of propagating the nation of Israel.

These two men shared the same counselor: Samuel, God's prophet, was present to guide each of them.

David and Saul faced a common enemy. Both had to face the armies of the Philistines.

They shared common choices. Both Saul and David had opportunity to repent when they sinned.

With so much in common, you might think these men would turn out to be much the same when it comes to leadership. But they were not the same at all. **What was the difference in these two men? Read on.**

THE FINAL WORD

The differences in Saul and David can be summarized in just a couple of words: "obedient faith." Though David had some shortcomings in this regard, Saul was a complete failure. He constantly found himself on the wrong side of obedience.

When Saul was found to be disobedient to God, he tended to make excuses, blame others, and exhibit a lack of trust in God.

By contrast, David possessed humility and dedication to God. When David found himself on the wrong side, he repented of his wrong. It takes strength of character to admit to wrong. David was a man of character; Saul was not.

What do you do when you are wrong? How do you handle mistakes in your life? How do you deal with sin?

How do you deal with those things that tell a lot about your character. It also reveals a lot about your ability to lead others. Some folks believe

leaders must never admit to any wrongs—that admission of wrong shows weakness. The opposite is true. Leaders need to be humble enough to acknowledge their shortcomings.

Blessings to you, my humble friends,

—Max

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