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Leading God's People God's Way

Lesson 3: The Law of the Lid (Part 2)

Introduction

This is Lesson 3 in our course called *Leading God's People God's Way*. We are in the process of learning how to grow in our leadership ability as we study the laws of leadership. In this lesson we will finish our study of the Law of the Lid.

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In the last lesson we started to talk about the two most important questions concerning leadership that every leader must ask themselves. Those questions are:

1. Why is it important for me to grow as a leader?
2. What is the true nature of leadership?

Last time we began to answer the first question, Why is it important for me to grow as a leader. Our goal in this lesson is to conclude our answer to that question. We will answer the second question, What is the true nature of leadership, in our next lesson when we discuss the leadership Law of Influence. But let's get started with this lesson, as we finish our study on the Law of the Lid.

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Let's start by reminding ourselves what the Law of the Lid says. The Law of the Lid says this: **Leadership ability determines a person's level of effectiveness.** As you remember, our key verse for this law is Exodus 18:25-26 which says "Moses chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves."

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We are in the process of learning about the Law of the Lid. We have learned that a lid is anything in our lives that can hinder us from being effective and being able to reach our full potential in the Lord. In our last lesson we began to study the lives of King Saul and King David, the first two kings of Israel.

King Saul, from all outward appearances, seemed to be the perfect man to be the first king of Israel. He was taller than any other man in Israel. He stood head and shoulders above them all. The Bible says there was no other man like him in all Israel.

What could not be seen from the outside, however, were the many internal character flaws that were in Saul's life. Each of these flaws acted as a lid that hindered Saul and kept him from being the king that God had wanted him to be. These lids prevented

Saul from growing in his leadership. Instead of growing and becoming a better king, he progressively became worse and worse until, at the end of his life, he was so far away from God that he resorted to consulting a witch for guidance.

Saul's life is a very clear example of the negative impact that lids can have in our lives.

Last time we also began to look at the life of David, the second king of Israel. We saw that David also had many lids in his life, but he was able to lift them off. David's attitude was very different from Saul's. Where Saul walked in fear, David walked by faith and trusted God. From early on in his life until the very end David kept his heart right before God. No, he was not perfect. He sinned and made mistakes just like the rest of us. But he always made things right and repented before God. He truly was a man after God's own heart.

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Let's quickly remind ourselves about where the story of Saul and David falls in relation to the rest of the history of Israel, by looking at the slide on the screen right now.

The slide shows how Saul and David came after the period of the judges. If you remember, Moses brought the Israelites out of Egypt and then Joshua took over from Moses to lead Israel into the Promised Land. Joshua also led the nation in conquering the peoples who were living in the land at the time.

After Joshua died, the nation was led by a series of leaders who were called judges. This period was a period in which Israel went through many cycles of disobedience and obedience to the Lord. Israel had failed to completely wipe out the pagan nations living in Canaan as the Lord had commanded them, and as a result they repeatedly found themselves falling into the temptation of idolatry, worshiping the false gods of those pagan nations.

After about 350 years of being led by judges, Israel decided that they wanted a king so that they could be like the other nations. Samuel anointed Saul to be king in about 1050 B.C. In his outward appearance Saul looked like he would be the perfect man to be king. But what the people could not see were the character flaws in his life. Saul had many faults which became "lids" in his life that hindered him from being the kind of king God had purposed for him to be. We looked at those lids and saw how they hindered Saul in the last lesson.

About halfway through Saul's reign God rejected him as king, and the Lord instructed Samuel to anoint David as the next king. This was shortly before David killed Goliath. But it was not until twenty years later, after Saul died, that David actually ascended to the throne. Saul had reigned over Israel for forty years when he and his sons were killed in battle around 1010 B.C.

After Saul's death, David became the king of all Israel. He had been a leader for many years already, and had spent almost twenty years running from King Saul who sought to take his life. David ruled Israel for forty years. His reign was the beginning of a time in Israel's history which became known as the *golden years*. 1 Chronicles 29:28 says that David died at "a good old age, having enjoyed long life, wealth and honor."

He was probably about seventy years old when he died in around 970 BC.

King Saul and King David were two kings with different leadership lids. Why did Saul who appeared to be stronger actually fail as king, and David who appeared to be weaker succeed? The answer can be found in the Law of the Lid. David continually tried to become a better leader and had many lid-lifting experiences. But Saul's attitude and character flaws kept the lid on his leadership tightly closed.

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Before we go any further in our lesson, it would be good for you to read the scriptures pertaining to the rest of our story. Why don't you stop right now to take a moment and read the following scriptures if you have not read them already?

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Scriptures to read: 2 Samuel 5 & 6, 2 Samuel 11 & 12

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In the last lesson we stopped our story at the point when Saul died. If you remember, the Philistines had attacked Israel and routed them near Mount Gilboa. Saul's three sons Jonathan, Abinadab and Malki-Shua were all killed in battle that day. King Saul also died when he committed suicide by falling on his own sword.

The next day, when the Philistines found the body of Saul, they cut off his head and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines to proclaim the victory over Israel. Then they took the bodies of Saul and his three sons and tied them to the wall of Beth Shan for all to see.

When the people of Jabesh Gilead heard what had happened to Saul and his sons, their strongest men traveled through the night to Beth Shan. They took down the bodies and brought them to Jabesh Gilead where they burned them. They then took the bones and buried them under a tree near the town. Remember, Jabesh Gilead was the first town that Saul rescued from the Ammonites at the start of his reign. The people of Jabesh Gilead never forgot what he had done for him and showed their appreciation by giving Saul and his sons a proper burial.

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We continue our story now as we find out what happened when David heard the news of Saul's death. David and his men had been fighting the Amalekites and had returned to Ziklag, the town where they were living among the Philistines. Three days after they got home, a messenger arrived to bring them news of Saul's death.

David's mortal enemy was dead. He must have been very happy, don't you think? Actually, his response was exactly the opposite. Let's see what happened.

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When the messenger arrived, he fell on the ground before David to pay honor to him. David asked him where he had come from and he said he had escaped from the

Israelite camp. He explained to David how the army of Israel had been routed by the Philistines, and he told David that Saul and his son Jonathan had died.

David asked him how he knew that Saul and Jonathan had died. The man told him that he was on Mount Gilboa and saw Saul leaning on his spear, wounded and with the Philistines almost upon him. He said that Saul had asked him to kill him so that he would not fall into enemy hands.

At this point the man lied to David. Perhaps he was thinking that David would reward him for killing the man that had hunted him for so many years. The messenger told David that he killed Saul because he knew that Saul would not survive his wounds. He brought Saul's crown and armband to David.

At this point David became angry with the messenger. Instead of rewarding him he demanded to know why the man dared to lift his hand against the Lord's anointed. Then he ordered his men to kill him. I don't think that was quite the reward the messenger expected..

David and all his men tore their clothes in mourning when they heard about the deaths of Saul and Jonathan. They mourned and wept and fasted until evening because Saul and Jonathan were dead and the army of Israel had fallen to the Philistines. Then David wrote a lament, a song of mourning, for Saul and Jonathan and ordered that it should be taught to all the men of Judah. You can read it in 2 Samuel 1:19-27.

Here again we see David's heart after God. He truly was humble and loved the man who was his king, even though Saul tried to kill him. Most men who are proud and whose hearts are far from God would have rejoiced to hear that their enemy was dead. Not David. He wept and mourned and fasted.

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After some time, David inquired of the Lord, asking if he should leave the Philistines and go back to the land of Judah. The Lord told him to go to the town of Hebron. So David and his wives and all of his men went up to Hebron and settled there.

Then the men of Judah came to David and anointed him to be king over the house of Judah. They also told him that it was the men of Jabesh Gilead who had buried Saul and his sons. David sent messengers to Jabesh Gilead to thank them for the kindness and faithfulness that they had shown to Saul. He promised them that he would show them the same favor because of what they had done.

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In the meantime Abner, who was the commander of Saul's army, took Saul's son Ish-Bosheth and made him king over Israel. Ish-Bosheth was forty years old at the time, and reigned for two years. The house of Judah, however, followed David. David was king over Judah for seven years. During this time fighting broke out between the house of Saul, led by Abner, and the house of David, led by Joab the commander of David's army.

The war between the house of Saul and the house of David lasted for a long time. David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker. During the war, Abner had been strengthening his own position within the house of Saul, until Ish-Bosheth accused him of sleeping with one of his father's concubines. Abner was furious at the accusation and swore to hand the kingdom over to David.

Abner sent messengers to David saying that he wanted to help David become King over all Israel and Judah. David agreed, so Abner went to the elders of Israel and told them to assemble the people and make David king over Israel.

When Joab, the commander of David's army, heard that David had made an agreement with Abner he was angry. He was certain that Abner was trying to deceive David, and he was also bitter because Abner had killed his brother. Joab sent messengers and tricked Abner into coming back to Hebron. When he and Abner were alone, he stabbed him in the stomach to avenge his brother's death.

Later, when David heard about the murder, he ordered all the people to tear their clothing and put on sackcloth in mourning for Abner. He himself walked behind Abner's body in the funeral procession. After the funeral the people urged David to eat, but he refused to eat until after the sun had set. This pleased the people and they knew that David had nothing to do with Abner's murder.

Ish-Bosheth had two men named Baanah and Recab who were leaders of raiding parties. They were also brothers. When news of Abner's death reached Ish-Bosheth, he lost courage and Israel was alarmed, so Baanah and Recab plotted to kill him.

They went to his house at noon when he was resting from the heat of the day. They pretended to go into the house to get some food. Instead they went into Ish-Bosheth's bedroom where he was resting and stabbed him in the stomach. After he was dead, they cut off his head and took it with them as they slipped out of the house.

They traveled through the night and brought the head of Ish-Bosheth to David in Hebron and said, "Here is the head of Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, your enemy, who tried to take your life. This day the Lord has avenged my lord the king against Saul and his offspring."

Once again, they were acting under the assumption that David would be pleased that Ish-Bosheth was dead. But again David reacted in the opposite way. He told them what happened to the man who brought him news of Saul's death. Then he said to them, "How much more, when wicked men have killed an innocent man in his own house and on his own bed, should I not demand his blood from your hand and rid the earth of you!" David ordered his men to kill both of these wicked men. Again, I don't think that was the reward they were expecting, do you?

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About that time all the tribes of Israel came to David and asked him to become king over all Israel and Judah. David agreed and they anointed him king. David was thirty

years old when he became king and he reigned as king for forty years – seven years from Hebron and 33 years from Jerusalem.

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The first thing David did as king over all Israel was to attack the city of Jebus. When he marched to the city, the Jebusites who lived there mocked him. They said to him, "You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off." They were confident that their fortress stronghold could not be captured. But they were wrong.

David captured the city and renamed it Jerusalem. It was also known as Zion and the City of David. David took up residence in the fortress and built up the area around the city. He continued to grow in power because the Lord was with him. Jerusalem became the capital city for the whole kingdom of Israel.

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When the Philistines heard that David had become king of all Israel, they gathered their forces to attack him. David inquired of the Lord to ask if he should go up and face the Philistines. The Lord told him to go, and David had a great victory over them. A little while later the Philistines attacked David again, and again he inquired of the Lord. This time the Lord told him to go around them and attack them from behind. He did as the Lord said, and again he had a great victory.

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Now that David had a capital city in Jerusalem, he wanted to bring the Ark of the Covenant there. He called all the men of Israel together and they went to Baalah of Judah, also called Kiriath Jearim, to get the ark and bring it to Jerusalem. They moved the ark from Abinadab's house and put it on a new cart with two men, Uzzah and Ahio guiding it.

David and all the men with him rejoiced and celebrated with all their might before the Lord, with songs and with harps, lyres, tambourines, cymbals and trumpets. When they came to the threshing floor, Uzzah reached out and touched the ark to steady it because the oxen pulling the cart had stumbled. As soon as he touched the ark God struck him dead. David was angry at God and also afraid of him. He said, "How can the ark of the Lord ever come to me?"

He took the ark and left it at the house of a man named Obed-Edom. It stayed there for three months. During that time the Lord blessed Obed-Edom and his whole household.

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David had made a mistake. He had not moved the ark in the manner prescribed by Moses. You see, the ark was a holy object. It was consecrated to God, and there were specific things that needed to be done when moving it. It could only be moved by men from the priestly tribe of Levi, and it had to be carried with poles on their shoulders.

But David was teachable. He learned from his mistakes. He studied the law to find out how to move the ark and then made all the preparations to bring it to Jerusalem. He prepared a place for it and pitched a tent, or tabernacle, to put it in. Then he gave instructions to the men saying, "No one but the Levites may carry the ark of God, because the Lord has chosen them to carry the ark of the Lord and to minister to him forever."

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After the preparations were made, David again summoned all the men of Israel. He called together all the descendants of Aaron and the Levites and told them to consecrate themselves so that they could bring the ark of the Lord to the place he had prepared for it. David admitted his mistake. He said to them, "It was because you, the Levites, did not bring it up the first time that the Lord our God broke out in anger against us. We did not inquire of him about how to do it in the prescribed way."

So the priests and the Levites consecrated themselves so that they could carry the ark. Then they put it on their shoulders using poles to carry it in the way that the Lord had told Moses. David told the Levites to appoint singers and musicians to sing joyful songs and make music before the Lord.

So David and all the men of Israel brought the ark to Jerusalem with great rejoicing and celebrating before the Lord. David himself set the example. He danced before the Lord with all his might. David's wife Michal, who was also Saul's daughter, saw him and despised him. Later she rebuked him for being so undignified before the people. She said this because David had taken his outer robes off and was wearing only a linen ephod when he danced before God. David said to her, "I will celebrate before the Lord, and I will become even more undignified than this if I need to be. I will be humiliated in my own eyes so that God may be glorified."

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Over the course of time David fought and defeated all the enemies of God. He defeated the Philistines, the Moabites, the Rehobites, the Arameans, the Ammonites, the Edomites and the Amalekites. The Lord gave David victory wherever he went. David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all of his people.

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David was not perfect, as we have already seen. But he did keep his heart right before God, and when he made a mistake he was teachable and humbled himself before God. He never lost sight of the fact that he always had room to grow and improve himself. We just saw that in the story of when he brought the ark to Jerusalem. The first time he tried, he failed. But he didn't let his failure keep him down. He got up, inquired of the Lord and tried again, this time successfully.

Failure is a major lid in the lives of many leaders. If you think you will never fail, you are in for a big surprise. It's not a question of *if* you will fail. It's a question of *when*. So what are you going to do when you fail? Are you going to let your failure keep you down, or are you going to get up and try again like David did?

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[Discussion – in pairs or groups of 3 or 4]

- a) David was not perfect. He made mistakes and sometimes failed. Can you think of a time in your life when you made a mistake or failed at something?*
- b) David did not allow the lid of failure to stop him from moving forward in the things God had for him. How have you responded to failure in your life? Did you let it stop you, or did you get up and try again?*

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In the spring, the time when kings went off to war, David sent Joab, the commander of his armies, out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army to fight the Ammonites. But David stayed behind in Jerusalem.

We don't know why David stayed behind, but it does seem like he wasn't supposed to be in Jerusalem. The Bible says it was "the time when kings go off to war." David was a king, so why wasn't he off at war? We don't know. But we do know what happened to him because he stayed home.

One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful and David, he sent someone to find out who she was.

The servant came back and told David that the woman was Bathsheba. He also told David that she was married to Uriah the Hittite. Uriah was one of David's mighty men. At this point David should have exercised self-control, but he didn't. Remember, he wasn't perfect.

David sent for Bathsheba and she came to him and he slept with her. After she went home, she found out that she had conceived and sent word to David that she was pregnant. David had sinned. He had committed adultery with another man's wife, and now he had to face the consequences. But, rather than confessing his sin, he tried to cover it up.

He sent word to Joab and told him to send Uriah the Hittite to him. When Uriah arrived David asked him how the soldiers were and how the war was going. Then he suggested that Uriah go home to rest a while before returning to the battle. David was hoping that Uriah would go home and sleep with Bathsheba, his wife. Then it would look like the child she was carrying was actually Uriah's child.

But Uriah was a noble man. He did not go home as David had said. Instead he slept in the entrance to the palace with the rest of David's servants. When David found out, he said to Uriah, "Haven't you just come from a great distance? Why didn't you go home?" Uriah replied to him, "The ark and all Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my master Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open fields. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!"

David was running out of ideas. He told Uriah to stay one more night and then he would send him back. That night David invited Uriah to eat with him. David made him drunk, hoping that he would forget what he had said and go home to sleep with his wife. But again Uriah refused. He slept on a mat with the other servants and did not go home.

By now David was desperate. He wrote a letter to Joab, telling him to send Uriah to the front lines where the fighting was the fiercest. Joab put Uriah in a place where he knew the enemy was the strongest. It was not long before Uriah was killed in battle.

When Bathsheba heard that her husband had been killed, she mourned for him. When the time of mourning was over, David brought her to his house and she became his wife and bore David a son. But the Lord was not pleased with what David had done.

Notice how David is acting. He has sinned before the Lord. Not only has he committed adultery, but also he has plotted to kill her husband. He is guilty of murder as well. Worst of all, he is acting like he has done nothing wrong. Slowly but surely pride is creeping into his heart.

The Lord sent the prophet Nathan to David. Nathan told David a story about two men, one who was very rich and the other who was very poor. The rich man had a large number of sheep and cattle. The poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb that he had bought. He raised the lamb, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup, and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.

One day a traveler came to visit the rich man. But, instead of taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler, the rich man took the ewe lamb belonging to the poor man. He slaughtered it and prepared a meal for the traveler.

When David heard the story he burned with anger and said, "As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this deserves to die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity." Nathan said to David, "You are the man!"

David was devastated. He realized that he had sinned against the Lord. Nathan told him that the Lord had forgiven his sin, but because he had caused the enemies of the Lord to show contempt, the son born to Bathsheba would die. David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and spent the nights lying on the ground. When his servants tried to make him get up and eat, he refused.

On the seventh day the child died. David's servants were afraid to tell him because they did not know what he would do. He noticed them whispering about something and asked them, "Is the child dead?" When they said that he was, David got up, washed himself, changed his clothes and went to the house of the Lord to worship. When he was done worshiping he asked for food and ate.

I want you to notice the difference between Saul and David. When the prophet Samuel confronted Saul when he disobeyed God's command to completely destroy the Amalekites, Saul did not repent. Instead he made excuses and even blamed the

people for his actions. He did not accept responsibility for his disobedience. On the other hand, David immediately repented and threw himself on God's mercy. He did not try to blame someone else, but accepted responsibility for his own actions.

Afterwards, David comforted his wife Bathsheba. She conceived again and gave birth to a son, whom they named Solomon. Solomon became the next king of Israel after David.

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[Discussion – in pairs or groups of 3 or 4]

- a) *Saul and David both sinned but they responded differently when confronted with their sin. When you are confronted with your sin, how do you respond? Are you like Saul, who responded in pride and did not repent for his sin? Or are you like David, who responded in humility and repented for his sin?*
- b) *Is there anything in your life that you have not confessed to God and repented of yet? Why don't you take a moment to do that now?*

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Lessons from this Story

We have been studying the lives of King Saul and King David, the first two kings of Israel. We have seen how, even though Saul looked like he should be a good king from his outward appearance, he actually failed as king. David, on the other hand, although he was young and had many things against him, turned out to be a very successful king. The difference between the two was that Saul had many lids in his life which hindered him, while David was a lid lifter. He too had lids in his life, but he was able to lift them off so that they did not hinder him from reaching his potential in God.

Let's take a look and see what leadership principles or lessons we can learn from the lives of Saul and David, so that we can apply them to our own lives. There are four main things that we observe about the Law of the Lid in this lesson, which are:

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1. Every person has the potential to become a leader.

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2. Every leader has lids.

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3. Some lids can be lifted by the leader.

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4. Few leaders let others lift lids in their lives.

We will look at each of these observations in more detail. Let's begin with the first one.

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1. Every person has the potential to become a leader.

The first thing we observe about Saul and David is that every person has the potential to become a leader. Some of us are like Saul. From his outward appearance, he looked like a leader. Remember, Saul stood head and shoulders above all the other men in Israel at the time. The Bible says there was no man like him in all Israel. Others of us are more like David. He did not look like a leader from the outside, but God looked at his heart and found a man who modeled God's heart.

So, in our story we find two men, both with potential to be kings, but they ended up with very different results. Let's look at the similarities and differences between them.

[Click PowerPoint Slide 16]

1. Both were anointed by God.

God chose both Saul and David to be king over Israel. Remember that up to this point in Israel's history, God had been their king. When Israel asked for a king like the other nations, God was the one who chose Saul. He sent the prophet Samuel to anoint Saul. But, after Saul disobeyed God time after time, God rejected him as king and looked for a man after his own heart. He found David, and again sent Samuel to anoint him as king.

Both men were chosen and anointed by God. What made the difference between Saul and David was neither their calling nor their anointing. What made the difference was their heart towards God.

Saul became full of pride and took matters into his own hands. He tried to do things in his strength. Even though, at times, he prayed and sought the Lord, he never fully walked in obedience to the Lord, because his heart was not fully towards God. His outward appearance was strong, but his inner character was weak.

David on the other hand, remained humble. From the beginning he relied on God. Remember when he faced Goliath he said, "I come to you in the name of the Lord." He knew that in his own strength he could not defeat Goliath. If they faced each other man-to-man (or in this case man-to-boy), Goliath would squash him like a bug. But David knew his God. He knew that God was much greater than Goliath and he put his trust in the Lord. This attitude never left him. As we saw, David was not perfect. He was a man just like the rest of us, and he sinned. But he remained humble and kept his heart after God.

[Click PowerPoint Slide 16]

2. Both received counsel from godly men.

The second thing about Saul and David is that they both received counsel from godly men. Saul received counsel from the prophet Samuel. David also received counsel from Samuel, and from Nathan the prophet.

Saul never really understood the true nature of leadership. The day he was appointed to be king he actually hid from the people in fear. Perhaps he realized his inability to lead. But after he tasted success in battle, he mistook his position as king for true leadership. He had the position, the title, and the power, but he never truly led the nation. He was made a general, but he never attracted a large standing army. In fact, on at least one occasion his men scattered and he was unable to influence them to stay. He also created no organized government to sustain and preserve what he gained. And, when God finally rejected him as king, he thought his position entitled him to continue leading.

David, however, seized opportunities to grow in his leadership. He learned to be a warrior. He attracted men to him and built a standing army and conquered his enemies. He chose a city and captured it to become the nation's new capital. Then he built a lasting government there. Much of what he accomplished, he did before he actually sat on the throne. From the beginning the people loved David. He attracted citizens, warriors and leaders alike, and he led them well. David understood that leadership is not about position or title. It is about influencing people. We will learn more about that in the next lesson.

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3. Both faced great challenges.

Both Saul and David faced great challenges. Every leader faces obstacles, tests, and trials. Saul and David faced some of the same ones, like Goliath, for example. When Goliath mocked the Lord's armies, both Saul and David heard him. Yet they responded differently. Saul, Israel's greatest warrior, should have been the one to face Goliath, but he hid in fear. David, a young shepherd boy, was eager to face the challenge and win honor for God.

What was Saul's reaction when David volunteered to go and face Goliath? He offered David his armor. Why not? He wasn't going to be using it!

What's the lesson here for us? It's this. While others stand around and see what's going to happen, leaders step forward and rise to the challenge.

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4. Both had the choice to change and grow.

Both Saul and David had the chance to grow. Neither of them was perfect. They were men just like we are. But we see what was really in their hearts when they are confronted with their mistakes.

Do you remember when Saul became impatient while waiting for Samuel to arrive and offered the burnt offering to God? Samuel rebuked him for what he did. The scripture has no record of any sorrow or repentance by Saul. In fact, it shows Saul making excuses for his actions and trying to shift the blame to others. He then continues with his campaign against the Philistines like nothing had happened.

David's reaction to his sin was remarkably different. When the prophet Nathan

confronted him after he committed adultery with Bathsheba and sent her husband to his death, David repented before God.

Both kings had opportunities to change and grow. David did, but Saul did not.

[Click PowerPoint Slide 16]

5. One lifted the lid, the other did not.

Both Saul and David had lids in their lives. In a moment we will look at some specific lids that each of them had. Saul repeatedly proved incapable of lifting the lids in his life. David, however, continually lifted the lids off his life and off the lives of others.

David's interaction with the prophet Nathan is indicative of his attitude throughout his life. He was more concerned with what God thought of him than with what men thought of him. He was never afraid to humble himself, admit his shortcomings, and ask for God's forgiveness. Many leaders think they will appear weak if they do this. But David's life proves that this attitude, in fact, will cause the lid on your leadership to be lifted higher and higher.

We can all learn from David. If we want to reach our potential and become the person that God has called us to be, then we need to lift the lids on our lives. That's the only way we can advance to the next level.

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2. Every leader has lids.

Our second observation from the lives of Saul and David is that every leader has lids in their lives. In fact, nobody is born without them. And these lids don't just disappear when we receive a title, achieve a position, or are given power. The issue is not whether you have lids. The issue is what you do about them.

When God made Saul king of Israel, he removed the external lids from Saul's life. Saul received God's anointing, took the position of king, and had the potential to become a great leader. But, even though the external lids were gone, there remained many internal lids in Saul's life. We pointed them out as we went through the story, but let's summarize them again quickly. Here are the internal lids that limited Saul from being the person that God had called him to be:

[Click PowerPoint Slide 17]

1. Fear.

Fear raised its ugly head repeatedly in Saul's life. On the day he was appointed to be king, he hid in the baggage. When Goliath mocked the armies of God, Saul cowered in fear like the rest of the men. Time and again Saul allowed fear to control him, rather than put his faith in God.

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2. Impatience.

Saul refused to wait for Samuel and took matters into his own hands when he offered the burnt offering. Making sacrifices to God was the job of priests. Saul was a king, not a priest. His impatience caused Samuel to rebuke him before the Lord.

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3. Lack of Influence.

Saul was unable to encourage or inspire his men to stay with him until the prophet Samuel arrived. He lacked influence.

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4. Denial.

Even after Samuel told Saul that God had rejected him as king, he continued as if nothing had changed.

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5. Impulsiveness.

Saul was reckless and rashly made an oath that almost resulted in his son Jonathan being killed.

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6. Pride.

Saul set up a monument in his own honor. He began to think too highly of himself.

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7. Disobedience.

On more than one occasion Saul disobeyed what God told him to do. When God told him to destroy the Amalekites completely, he spared the life of the king and the best of the sheep and cattle. He then tried to justify what he had done.

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8. Deceit.

He used his daughter as a bribe by offering her in marriage to David if he would fight the Philistines. His real hope was that David would die in battle.

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9. Jealousy.

He became enraged when the people compared him to David. From then on he kept a jealous eye on David and considered him an enemy.

[Click PowerPoint Slide 18]

10. Anger.

More than once he attempted to kill David with a spear while David was playing the harp for him. He also tried to kill his own son Jonathan with a spear on one occasion.

The majority of Saul's lids had to do with weak character. Eventually, the Law of the Lid became Saul's downfall. He did nothing to change or grow and become a healthy, more effective leader. Because he never removed the lids in his life, God had to remove him from the throne of Israel.

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David also had lids in his life, some internal and some external. Let's look at the lids that did not limit David's life:

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1. His Family.

David's limitations started at home. When Samuel came to his father, Jesse, and asked him to gather his sons, David was not even invited to attend. His father overlooked and under appreciated him.

The same thing happened with his brothers. When David went to the battlefield to visit them and bring them supplies, their contempt for him was clearly visible. When David spoke out against Goliath's blasphemous challenges, his brothers insulted him and told him to go home.

Nobody in David's family saw his potential to be king. They put a lid on his life that would have stopped him from reaching his potential in God had he listened to them. But David chose to put his hope and trust in the Lord and, as a result, he was able to lift the lid that his family put on him.

[Click PowerPoint Slide 19]

2. His Leader.

Saul was continually trying to inhibit David's leadership and effectiveness. When David volunteered to face Goliath, the first thing Saul did was to tell him, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight him." Then Saul put his armor on David. The armor was obviously going to be too big. Remember, Saul was a tall man and David was just a boy. When David put the armor on he couldn't even move in it.

After David succeeded in killing Goliath, his influence in the nation grew beyond that of Saul's. This angered Saul and made him jealous to the point that he tried to kill David on numerous occasions. From that point on, for about twenty years, David was literally fleeing for his life as Saul chased him all over the country trying to kill him.

Without a doubt Saul tried to hinder David. Saul was a lid in David's life, but David did not allow Saul's attitude toward him to keep him from being all that God intended for him to be. In fact, on more than one occasion, when David had the

opportunity to kill Saul he refused to do so because he would not touch the Lord's anointed.

That's a lesson for all of us who have leaders who hinder us. We must recognize that those leaders are also anointed by God. Rather than focusing on the leader, we must focus on God like David did. We must recognize that God is able to deal with those who hinder us from doing his work. It is God's job to deal with them, not ours.

[Click PowerPoint Slide 19]

3. His Background.

Saul came from a good and powerful family. His father was a man named Kish, who is described as a "mighty man of power." He was probably a landowner, a leader in his tribe, and a military commander in the time of war.

David, on the other hand, was from a lowly family of poor shepherds. His father's name was Jesse who is described simply as "Jesse the Bethlehemite." He did not come from a distinguished family nor did he have a powerful position. Also, David was not the eldest son. He was the eighth son and the youngest in his family.

By all worldly standards, Saul should have been the one who succeeded and David should have been the one who failed. But David did not allow his background to stop him from walking in the ways of God. He refused to look at where he had come from but instead kept his eyes on the Lord and allowed him to lead and guide him. As a result David fulfilled God's purpose for his life while Saul did not.

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4. His Youthfulness and Inexperience.

When David was anointed by the prophet Samuel to be the next king of Israel, he was only a boy, probably only eight or nine years old. He had no experience leading anyone or anything except sheep. When he stepped forward to fight Goliath, he was laughed at because he was "only a boy." and he had never fought in a battle.

Time after time people underestimated and disrespected David because he was young and had no experience. But, once again, David refused to let other people's thoughts about him hinder him in doing what God called him to do.

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[Discussion – in pairs or groups of 3 or 4]

- a) Every leader has lids as we have seen in the story of Saul and David. In your leadership, have you been more like Saul or like David?
- b) We have looked at many different lids that were in the lives of Saul and David. What lids exist in your life? How can you lift those lids off your life?

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[Fade in PowerPoint Slide 21]

3. Some lids can be lifted by the leader.

David was able to go far despite difficult circumstances and many limiting lids in his life. Why? Because he became a lid lifter. As you look at David's life, you see a pattern of lifting lids in his own life, and in the lives of those around him, that helped him to keep growing as a leader and advancing to the next level. David proved that when a leader lifts lids, he not only increases his own potential, but also the potential of his people and the whole organization. Let's look at how David was a lid lifter.

[Click PowerPoint Slide 21]

1. David lifted the lid for himself first.

As a leader, the first person you must lead is yourself. How can you expect to lead others if you can't even lead yourself? David's life demonstrates this truth. Look at his attitude when he faced Goliath. Even though he had never fought in battle, he used what experience he did have and stretched himself to grow. As a shepherd he had learned to use a sling, and he had faced attacks from a lion and a bear, both dangerous animals much more powerful than him.

David was able to take the lessons he learned from his experience as a shepherd and apply them to other situations in his life. As a result he grew in valor, confidence, and faith in God. So on the day that he faced Goliath and came face-to-face with the lid of his inexperience in battle, he lifted the lid and won the victory..

People often ask what it takes to grow an organization. The answer is simple. If you want to grow the organization, you must grow the leader. Because David lifted the lids off his own life and grew as a leader, he was able to lead the entire nation to victories and greatness that Saul was unable to do.

[Click PowerPoint Slide 21]

2. David lifted the lid for others close to him.

As soon as a leader lifts a lid in his or her life, amazing things begin to happen. Before David arrived, the entire army of Israel stood shaking in fear of the Philistines. Every morning and evening for forty days they endured Goliath's abuse and mockery, but nobody did anything. Even Saul, the king, the one who stood head and shoulders above the rest, did nothing. Saul was a lid on the entire army.

But David exercised lid-lifting leadership when he killed Goliath. He lifted the lid of fear off the entire army. Listen to what happened:

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1 Samuel 17:51-52

⁵¹David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine's sword and drew it from the scabbard. After he killed him, he cut

off his head with the sword.

When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran. ⁵²Then the men of Israel and Judah surged forward with a shout and pursued the Philistines to the entrance of Gath and to the gates of Ekron. Their dead were strewn along the Shaaraim road to Gath and Ekron.

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David continued to lift the lid for others as he grew in his leadership ability. When he was fleeing from Saul and hiding in the cave of Adullam, he attracted four hundred men to him. The Bible describes these men as "all those who were in distress or in debt or discontented." David lifted the lids of distress, debt, and discontentment that were in these men's lives and they became his mighty men. These were the men who became the core of David's army and with whom David experienced many victories.

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3. David lifted the lid for the whole nation.

Over the course of his life and reign as king, David continued to exercise deep faith and sound leadership. In doing so, he lifted the lid for the entire nation. That process began almost immediately after he killed Goliath as the people sang, "Saul has killed his thousands and David his tens of thousands."

With David's leadership the people finally began to believe that with God's favor they could do anything. And Israel's victories over its enemies grew. By the end of David's reign, his kingdom had been firmly established in the regions of Israel and Judah, and also incorporated the areas of Edom, Moab, Ammon, and Zobah. The nation grew in power. David's kingdom set the stage for Israel's golden years under the reign of his son Solomon.

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4. David lifted the lid before he had an official position.

Did you notice that David began lifting lids before he was officially on the throne? He lifted the lid of his family when he was anointed to be king, and when he refused to allow his older brothers to discourage him from fighting Goliath. He lifted the lids that Saul tried to put on him when he stepped forward to fight Goliath. He lifted the lid for the whole army and the nation when he allowed God to work a miracle through him in slaying the giant.

Everyone loves an opportunity. But many of us want an opportunity to come to us before we start trying to grow and improve ourselves. Maybe we think something like this, "When I get that position, then I'll start growing." But that's doing things backwards. David had it the right way around. He grew first by lifting his personal lids. By the time his opportunity came, he was ready for it. He didn't wait until he

became king to start growing and practicing leadership. He started learning when he was still a shepherd boy.

Think about it this way: The things that you do today will determine what you will be tomorrow.

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4. Few leaders let others lift lids in their lives.

There are times when leaders face a problem or limitation that they cannot lift by themselves. When some leaders hit those lids, they give up and stop trying to grow. That is the beginning of the end of them being able to reach their full potential in God.

But other leaders, those with courage and the humility to learn, get together with other people who are able to be lid lifters in their lives. That's what David did. And\ the person who lifted the lid for him was none other than Jonathan, a son of King Saul.

Let's look at three qualities that Jonathan had that helped him to be a lid lifter in David's life. These are qualities you can develop in your own life, and that you can look for in others, when you need help lifting a lid off your life.

[Click PowerPoint Slide 24]

1. Lid lifters lift others up with their words.

Lid lifters are encouragers. The Bible records that Jonathan made a covenant with David. Listen to his words in 1 Samuel 20:12-16:

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1 Samuel 20:12-16

¹²Then Jonathan said to David: "By the LORD, the God of Israel, I will surely sound out my father by this time the day after tomorrow! If he is favorably disposed toward you, will I not send you word and let you know? ¹³But if my father is inclined to harm you, may the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if I do not let you know and send you away safely. May

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the LORD be with you as he has been with my father. ¹⁴But show me unfailing kindness like that of the LORD as long as I live, so that I may not be killed, ¹⁵and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family—not even when the LORD has cut off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth."

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¹⁶So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the LORD call David's enemies to account."

Jonathan constantly lifted David up. He was an encouragement to David when his future looked the darkest. He gave David hope and helped him to find the courage to keep going despite his desperate circumstances.

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2. Lid lifters raise others up with their actions.

Speaking positive words of encouragement to someone is fairly easy. It takes much more commitment to back those words up with actions. But Jonathan was willing to do that, even though it almost cost him his life. After he encouraged David and made a covenant with him, he followed through with their plan to test and see where his father's heart really was concerning David. Do you remember when he stood up to his father and told him that David couldn't be at the feast because he had to go to Bethlehem? His father, Saul, became so angry that he cursed Jonathan and then threw a spear at him, almost killing him.

Jonathan was true to his word and reported to David that his father intended to kill him. But even before that, Jonathan had taken an active role in David's promotion and well being. When he gave David his robe, tunic, sword, bow, and belt, he was making a statement. The royal robe would make David, a commoner, stand out among the other people in Israel. And the giving of his tunic, sword, bow and belt not only equipped David but also honored him and indicated Jonathan's willingness to be subject to him.

When Jonathan told David, "Whatever you want me to do, I will do it" (1 Samuel 20:4), he really meant it. And he backed up his words with action.

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3. Lid lifters give up so others can go up.

It's one thing to give encouraging words and resources to people in order to lift them up. But it's a whole other thing to make personal sacrifices for them so that they can advance to another level. But that's what Jonathan did.

As Saul's eldest son, Jonathan was next in line to be king in Israel. Jonathan should have hated David, the man God had anointed to take his place on the throne. But, in contrast to his father who was jealous of David, Jonathan was willing to give up everything for his friend. Listen to his words in 1 Samuel 23:15-18:

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1 Samuel 23:15-18

¹⁵While David was at Horesh in the Desert of Ziph, he learned that Saul had come out to take his life. ¹⁶And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God. ¹⁷"Don't be afraid," he said. "My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you.

Even my father Saul knows this." ¹⁸The two of

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them made a covenant before the LORD. Then Jonathan went home, but David remained at Horesh.

Jonathan, whom everyone would expect to be a heavy lid on David's life, was instead determined to be his lid lifter. Without Jonathan's help, David would never have survived and made it to the throne.

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There are some lids in life that you can lift on your own. But then there are those that require the help of a lid lifter to lift them. Sometimes, as in the case of David, a lid lifter will look for you. Other times you will have to go out and find one. But, no matter what, if you want to go to the highest level, you can't get there alone.

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[Discussion – in pairs or groups of 3 or 4]

- a) *David was a lid lifter. He lifted lids off his life, and off the lives of others. What lids, in your life or in the life of others, can you lift?*
- b) *There were some lids that David could not lift by himself. He needed a lid lifter named Jonathan to help him. Who are the lid lifters in your life? Who are you accountable to that is helping you lift the lids that you cannot lift by yourself?*

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This Law in the Life of Jesus

As we look at the life of Jesus, we see that many times people tried to put restrictions on him, or tried to make him do things that were not part of his Father's plan for his life. But, like David, Jesus was a lid lifter. Not only did he lift lids off his own life, but he also did so in the lives of others.

I believe Jesus' ability to lift lids was rooted in main things. These were:

1. He had a close relationship with his Father.
2. He knew his purpose in life.

Just like David, Jesus had a very close relationship with God, his Father. In fact, Jesus' relationship with his Father was even closer than David's was. Jesus said that his only goal was to accomplish the things that his Father had for him. Listen to his words in John 5:19:

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John 5:19

¹⁹Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father

doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.

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Jesus also clearly knew his purpose in life. He was not confused about what he was supposed to do. Listen to his words in Luke 19:10 when he summarized his purpose for coming to earth:

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Luke 19:10

¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.

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Because Jesus walked closely in relationship with his Father and knew his purpose in life, he was able to stay focused. He was not easily distracted. When things came along that tried to distract him and hinder him from reaching his God-given purpose, he was able to overcome them and keep moving forward in the plans his Father had for him. Here's an example of this:

In Matthew 16:21-23 we read the account of Jesus preparing his disciples for what was going to happen to him. He explained to them that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law, that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. He was explaining to them what he must do to accomplish his Father's purpose for his life.

The disciples were not thinking the same way as Jesus. They were looking at things from their own perspective and not from God's perspective. As a result they tried to put a lid on Jesus. They tried to hinder him from doing God's will. Listen to what happens next, and how Jesus handled it:

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Matthew 16:22-23

²²Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" ²³Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

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Jesus also lifted lids off the lives of many people. In fact, there were very few people, if any, whose lives did not change after coming in contact with Jesus.

If you think about it, Jesus came to earth to be a lid lifter. He came to fulfill the requirements of the law so that the lid of the law could be lifted off our lives. He came to pay the penalty for sin so that the lid of sin could be lifted off our lives. He came to have stripes laid across his back so that the lid of sickness and disease could be lifted

off our lives. Jesus is the ultimate lid lifter. If you need a lid lifted off your life, Jesus can do it for you.

This brings us to the end of this lesson in *Leading God's People God's Way*.

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In our next lesson, which is about the Law of Influence, we will study the life of Joshua. We will see how Joshua had to grow in influence before the people of Israel would follow him. Joshua had two opportunities to lead Israel into the Promised Land. The first time, when he was one of the twelve spies sent by Moses to spy out the land, he and Caleb were unable to influence the people to go in and possess the land. He was already a leader, because each of the spies was a leader in his own tribe, and he was saying the right things, but no one would follow him. By the time his second opportunity came, about forty years later, he had grown in influence and the people followed him into the land.

Thank you for listening to the last two lessons on the Law of the Lid. I hope that you are getting a new perspective on what leadership is and now know why it is important to grow as a leader. Let's pray as we bring this lesson to a close:

Heavenly Father, thank you for what we have learned in this lesson about lids that can hinder us in our ability to do the things that you have called us to do. Lord, we want to grow in our leadership ability. Please give us a teachable attitude and show us the lids that are in our lives. Help us to see the areas in our characters where we need to grow and become more like Jesus. Would you give us the grace that we need to be able to change the things that are not from you? Help us to put to death the things of the flesh so that we can walk in your Spirit. Lord, when we face lids in our lives that are outside of us and beyond our control, would you please send us lid lifters like Jonathan who can help us to lift those lids off our lives. We want to be the best that we can be, and reach our full potential in you. We want to walk humbly before you so that you can work in us and through us to accomplish great things for your kingdom. Thank you, Lord, for the work that you are doing in our lives. Thank you for helping us to become better leaders. Thank you for helping us to grow in our ability to influence others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.