

Faithful  
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Allen Power

1 Samuel 18:1-5; 20:35-42

Opening: With the text message and social media came a new term: BFF, best friends, forever. People throw the term friends (and even best friend) around pretty easily. Many times we refer to someone as a friend when they are really just a nice acquaintance. Let's talk about true friendship, intimate friendship. **Describe what it means to have a true, intimate, and faithful friend.**

Whether you make friends easily, or you're shy and introverted, we humans are wired for relationship. Friendship enhances life! You may have many acquaintances, but it's been said you are blessed if you have two or three truly intimate friends.

I'm talking about the kind of friend you call in an emergency at 2 a.m. and they'd come running. One you could tell about your deepest frustrations and fears and know it would be kept safe. It's the kind of friend who knows you for who you really are and loves you for who you really are. That's an intimate friend.

Friendships ebb and flow in seasons. But intimate friends are ALWAYS in season. In spite of distance or time, with an intimate friend you can pick right back up where you left off.

Big idea: Friendship is wonderful; godly friendship is a special gift! Followers of Christ can enjoy the deepest and highest kind of friendship -- godly friendship with another follower of Christ. Two people who are committed to God as well as each other takes friendship to the highest level of all.

- When we last left David, not yet twenty years old, he had killed Goliath.
- He gained the appreciation of King Saul and a job in Saul's army.
- Unfortunately, Saul's appreciation would soon shift to jealousy and then murderous rage. Remember, Saul knew God was

- going to replace him as King of Israel. He just didn't know when, or who would take his place.
- David's fame as a great warrior exploded and so did Saul's paranoia.
  - Saul had a son named Jonathan. Jonathan was also a very accomplished warrior who had won his own battles. The rest of this book seems to indicate that unlike his father Saul, Jonathan was God-honoring young man.

### 1 Samuel 18:1–5 (NLT)

After David had finished talking with Saul, he met Jonathan, the king's son. There was an immediate bond between them, for Jonathan loved David. <sup>2</sup> From that day on Saul kept David with him and wouldn't let him return home. <sup>3</sup> And Jonathan made a solemn pact with David, because he loved him as he loved himself.

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan sealed the pact by taking off his robe and giving it to David, together with his tunic, sword, bow, and belt.

<sup>5</sup> Whatever Saul asked David to do, David did it successfully. So Saul made him a commander over the men of war, an appointment that was welcomed by the people and Saul's officers alike.

- When Jonathan met David, an instant and lasting connection occurred.
- The KJV translates this as: *"the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David"*<sup>1</sup> In the NIV: *"Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself."*<sup>2</sup>
- This wasn't just fondness or admiration it was genuine love.
- Saul would soon hate David and want to kill him. **Why would it have made more sense for Jonathan to be jealous and feel threatened?**
- **How can jealousy toward others cause us to miss out on the benefits of a great friendship?**

Our Lesson Commentary makes the point well:

*"It does not matter what our profession is. Salespeople, teachers, office workers, and pastors all must decide whether they will rejoice in the success of others, consider them partners, and learn from them, or if instead they will descend into petty envy. Whatever our career, age, or gender, we can all strangle friendships in the cradle by looking upon gifted colleagues as threatening rivals."*

- It would have been tough enough for Jonathan to simply tolerate much less admire David. What jumps off the page about this friendship is that Jonathan, the son of Saul and the crown prince, saw greatness in David, loved him, and fully accepted that David would one day be king.<sup>3</sup>
- He literally made a life-long covenant with David and sealed it by giving David his royal tunic, sword, bow, and belt. This kind of unselfish friendship could only come because of the power of God in Jonathan's life.
- Let's talk about the godly friendship between two Christians.
- It's possible to have a great friend who is NOT a follower of Christ. I have some and I bet you do too. We need to try to reach them for Christ.
- But there's just something different, and special about a close, intimate friend who is also a follower of Christ. **Why would that kind of godly friendship be deeper and better? What would cause it to be that way? What are some of the qualities of a godly friend? Good friendships require some investment. What are some ways we can be INTENTIONAL to invest in a godly friendship?**
- The point: When Christ is living in the hearts of two friends, it makes for a special friendship! We could say that about the marriage relationship too!
- Let's finish our text for this morning. As we said, Saul became so jealous of David he began to try to kill him. David fled for his life.
- What a predicament for Jonathan who loved David yet was loyal to his father Saul. At first Jonathan couldn't believe it was true. Surely David was wrong! How could Saul want to kill David?
- So, David and Jonathan came up with a plan to confirm whether Saul was truly trying to murder David. David missed an important celebration. He told Jonathan if Saul began asking about where he was, to say he went home to Bethlehem for an annual sacrifice.
- David told Jonathan, if Saul was okay, then no problem. But, if Saul became angry, it was proof he wanted David nearby so he could kill him.

- Jonathan came up with a clever way to secretly communicate to David what he would learn. David would hide in a field and Jonathan would go out for some target practice with bow and arrow. If he shot the arrows a certain way, David would know the truth.
- Sadly, not only was Saul mad about David's absence. He was furious.

#### 1 Samuel 20:30-33 (NLT)

<sup>30</sup> Saul boiled with rage at Jonathan. "You stupid son of a whore!"\* he swore at him. "Do you think I don't know that you want him to be king in your place, shaming yourself and your mother? <sup>31</sup> As long as that son of Jesse is alive, you'll never be king. Now go and get him so I can kill him!"

<sup>32</sup> "But why should he be put to death?" Jonathan asked his father. "What has he done?" <sup>33</sup> Then Saul hurled his spear at Jonathan, intending to kill him. So at last Jonathan realized that his father was really determined to kill David. <sup>4</sup>

#### 1 Samuel 20:35-42 (NLT)

<sup>35</sup> The next morning, as agreed, Jonathan went out into the field and took a young boy with him to gather his arrows. <sup>36</sup> "Start running," he told the boy, "so you can find the arrows as I shoot them." So the boy ran, and Jonathan shot an arrow beyond him. <sup>37</sup> When the boy had almost reached the arrow, Jonathan shouted, "The arrow is still ahead of you. <sup>38</sup> Hurry, hurry, don't wait." So the boy quickly gathered up the arrows and ran back to his master. <sup>39</sup> He, of course, suspected nothing; only Jonathan and David understood the signal. <sup>40</sup> Then Jonathan gave his bow and arrows to the boy and told him to take them back to town.

<sup>41</sup> As soon as the boy was gone, David came out from where he had been hiding near the stone pile.\* Then David bowed three times to Jonathan with his face to the ground. Both of them were in tears as they embraced each other and said good-bye, especially David.

<sup>42</sup> At last Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, for we have sworn loyalty to each other in the Lord's name. The Lord is the witness of a bond between us and our children forever." Then David left, and Jonathan returned to the town.

- The story of Jonathan would end tragically. He would have been a terrific second in command for King David. Instead, he would die in battle with his sinful father King Saul.
- Still, David would honor their friendship after Jonathan's death. After he became king, David remembered his oath to Jonathan to care for Jonathan's family and made special provision for his crippled son Mephibosheth. (2 Sam. 9:7)
- Before we wrap up, let's pause briefly to address some controversy about this text. Sadly, there are some who attempt to use the language of this chapter and some other verses (1 Sam. 20:17; 2 Sm 1:26) to say the love between David and Jonathan was a homosexual relationship.
- Anyone who has studied the whole Bible seriously knows that's not true. Scripture teaches that God disapproves of homosexual activity (Lv 18:22; 20:13; Rm 1:24–27; Jd 7). Jonathan and David were men who were careful to obey God in all matters (1 Sm 23:16; 1 Kg 11:4), with the notable exception of David's sin with Bathsheba. It is reasonable to conclude that these two men obeyed God in this matter as well.<sup>5</sup>
- My simple conclusion: If this was a same sex relationship and God approved of it, scripture would celebrate it. If this were a same sex relationship, in light of God's disapproval, we'd see them held accountable as David was for his adultery. This was a deep friendship and that's all.
- Let's get back to the point of this lesson: The gift of godly friendships.

So, What's the Takeaway?

Chuck Swindoll described close intimate friendship this way:

*"When your heart is broken, you can bleed all over a friend like this and he will understand. He won't confront you in your misery or share with you three verses, then tell you to straighten up. When a good friend is hurting, let him hurt. If a good friend feels like weeping, let him weep. If a good friend needs to complain, listen. An intimate friend doesn't bale; he's right there with you. You can be yourself, no matter what that self looks like."*<sup>6</sup>

- Intimate friendship is wonderful; godly, intimate friendship is a special gift!

- The fact that both people have surrendered their hearts and life to Christ makes for a richer, sweeter, deeper kind of friendship because we are on the same page about the most important things in life.
- What can we this week do to live out this lesson? Here are some ideas.
- If you don't really have a close, godly friend ask God to bring one into your life. Don't force it, just pray for it and watch God work!
- If you ARE blessed with a godly, intimate friend, make sure to nurture that relationship in some way this week. Have you made sure that friend knows how much you love and appreciate them?
- Write a note; make a call; pay a visit to express how special that friend is!
- Ask God to help you BE this kind of godly friend.
- Intimate friendship is wonderful; godly intimate friendship is a special gift!
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<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible: King James Version*. (2009). (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., 1 Sa 18:1). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>2</sup> *The New International Version*. (2011). (1 Sa 18:1). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

<sup>3</sup> Lifeway. (n.d.). *Explore the Bible Commentary 1 Samuel 18-20*.

<sup>4</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (1 Sa 20:30–33). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>5</sup> Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (p. 435). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

<sup>6</sup> Great Lives: David: A Man of Passion and Destiny (Great Lives Series Book 1) by [Charles R. Swindoll](#)