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David & Jonathan: Winning Friends

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1 Samuel 24:1—4

One thing I want to grow in is my spiritual passion. I want a passionate heart. I'm tired of skimming through life with no time and no depth and no passion for important things, let alone relationships. Maybe you're tired too. If you're like me, you make occasional attempts and resolutions, but it's like hitting your head against a brick wall. I believe there is a spiritual battle, and Satan loves the barriers we've put up. He likes nothing more than for us to cut ourselves off from other people and God so he can pick us off one by one. And if he can't destroy us, he isolates us so much so that we become ineffective in living for Christ. Here are some of our best barriers:

- Lack of time or margin in our lives to spend with anyone. We've filled our lives all the way to the edges. Who's got time today? Our schedules get packed with lesser stuff so much so that we have no time for relationships with other people, let alone a spiritual relationship with God. And we parents have fallen for the myth that our kids need more activities, when what they really need is more of *us*. And the velocity of our lives keeps us oblivious to the point we just don't know any better.
- Self-obsession. We wear our frenetic schedules like a badge. Dale Carnegie said "You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can make in two years by trying to get other people interested in you."
- Taking yourself too seriously. Listen: If you would become serious about taking yourself less seriously, you could have more friends. What's the most common reason some people aren't liked? It's that they take themselves too seriously!
- Not listening. Do you really listen, or do you just wait your turn to talk?
- Ignoring the value God has placed on love and friendship. "Our American culture produces people who more closely identify with characters on a TV show than with their next door neighbor." Steven Hamon. And we Christ-followers fall into this trap!
- And one that has many of us adults and most of our kids totally missing out: the myth that you should base your friendships only on similar interests, rather than on the people themselves. I'm a huge opponent of this myth. For me it was in 9th grade something that wonderful happened. A great group of us with a great variety of interests decided it was stupid to have friends only because we all liked basketball or soccer, or softball or to be popular, or to party, or to study, or to play music. Each of those activities is fine, but to base who your friends are solely on your hobbies, sports, and interests is lame! So for me in 9th grade instead, there was this great coming together of people who became friends because we enjoyed each other! We would cheer each person on in their interests and endeavors. If you never give the time of day to people unless their favorite sports, hobbies, and interests line up with yours, you simply must know "you're missing out on SO many great people."
- As Andy Rooney once said, "Good old friends are worth keeping whether you like them or not." ☺

In my quest to quit skimming and have a passionate heart, I discovered David. God has given us an extended example through his life. And early on in his life, we see: *he's not alone*. He becomes close with none other than the jealous king's son. They make a covenant of friendship three times. It seems even the most passionate heart for God needs close friendship. Jonathan risked his *life* to keep David safe from his own father's schemes to have David killed. Yet *we* have this idea that if we become passionate for God that we'll be cut off from having really close friends.

So who was Jonathan? He was a great warrior (1 Samuel 13, 14) saving Israel through amazing accounts of bravery. Jonathan was the son of King Saul, *and* he was a faithful follower of the Lord God. It was after David fought Goliath that Jonathan and David became great friends with a strong love relationship. Listen:

1 Samuel 18:1 “After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. 2 From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house. 3 And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. 4 Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.”

It was just after this time that Saul's jealousy arose. And here's Jonathan, the son of Saul, seeking to protect David from his own father's rage. King Saul told Jonathan that David was to be killed, and Jonathan intervened and brought about a temporary peace, until again Saul decided to rid himself of his rival David by direct means. Think about it: *Jonathan* was to become king after Saul, but *he* was content to be second to David. When David was on the run in despair, Jonathan “*went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God.*” 1 Samuel 23:16. Even the most passionate of hearts needs to be strengthened by a friend. There is something you can do, and something you can be, but will never be, apart from true friends. How does God provide this for David and Jonathan?

First, Jonathan was drawn to David in his Coming. David came fighting Goliath. He came without fanfare. He came from obscurity. And I want to parallel here, and ask: Why do we love Jesus? Is part of it the nature of His coming? The great mystery: God the Creator came as a tiny baby, so quietly, that almost everyone missed it.

Second, Jonathan was drawn to David in his Character. David's character was full of courage, with a passionate heart for God. He had integrity. Unlike today, when we say “If you make a good impression, that's all that matters,” David had grown in obscurity. His character was built, all alone, not for show, but for God. Now think of the nature of Jesus' character: holy, separate from sin, going around “doing good,” having grown up in obscurity Himself, till His time. “Though he was in the form of God, he did not regard equality with a God a thing to be grasped. Instead, he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, a slave.” Philippians 2:6—7.

Third, Jonathan was drawn to David in his Conquest. David went into the valley as the champion of Israel, in place of Saul and Jonathan. He fought Goliath. David asked was he too big to fight, or too big to miss? David destroyed the one with the power of death. Now think of Jesus. Jesus' conquest was into the valley of death, to the hill of Calvary, where he destroyed death itself.

Friendship and love cannot exist without gifts. (I'm not just talking about presents here). “*3 And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. 4 Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.*” 1 Samuel 18:3—4.

Jonathan gave His Robe: this speaks of **his position**, the son of the King. It was like saying “David, I love you. I want you to have my position. I'd like them to see *you* in that position.” Each of us occupies a position: dad, mom, son, daughter, friend, neighbor, coworker, someone in the community. What if we said “Jesus, I'd like them to see you in my position”? What kind of a friend would we look like to people

Jonathan gave his Garments: **his possessions**. “David, had you not come, all I have would've belonged to Goliath.” Could you say something like that? “Jesus, when you went into the valley of death for me, you deserved to have it all.” What if everyone gave up all they had for Christ's Kingdom? There'd be no shortage of friends or love.

Jonathan gave David his Sword: **His protection**. In authentic friendship, we must surrender our right to self-defense. It's hard to give up, and it's the first thing we take back when things get tough. Jonathan, by giving

his sword to David, he was allowing David to defend him. Spiritually, have you given Jesus permission to be your protection? Have you handed him your life, warts, sin, and all, allowing for Him to protect you?

Jonathan gave his Bow: this was **a great skill** of his. (Okay, most of us know what we're good at). Jonathan was saying "David, if you can use it, do! Go for it! I'll use my skill under your direction, at your command." Pray for God to put together your dream, that you would lay your skills at his feet, in friendship. Christ loved the church and gave himself for her. How cool to use your skills for Christ's Kingdom?

All that can be summed up in this: **The Key to Friendship is laying aside your Agenda.** Lay aside your agenda. You'll never get to know me if you don't. Lay aside your agenda. You'll never get to know God like you could, if you don't.

There is the kind of friendship you can only find when you *find a friend* in God, like David and Jonathan. But even greater is today, because of God's Holy Spirit, and Jesus' great act of love, there is a kind of friendship you can only find when you find a friend *in God*. Love means laying aside your agenda, except your agenda to please God. Jesus himself said "*I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.*" John 15:14

Until we surrender our rights and die to ourselves, we can achieve nothing. "*Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.*" Matthew 10:39. You will never know how many friends you have until you learn to lay aside your agenda. There's so much more to know! "*When you become friends with God, everything He has belongs to you.*" Gal. 4:7.

This week, put your agenda in check...for your sake, for your family's sake, for your friends' sake, and for God's sake. Imagine if 400 less people were going around carrying their agendas, freed to be there for people, freed to be winning friends, and freed to be an influencing people.

David & Jonathan—True Friendship Sermon Notes

1 Samuel 18:1 "*After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. 2 From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house. 3 And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. 4 Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.*"

1. The Story So Far—A Bit About Jonathan
2. Barriers to Love & Friendship
3. Jonathan was Drawn to David
 - a. In His _____
 - b. In His _____
 - c. In His _____
4. Jonathan Gave
 - a. His Robe— _____
 - b. His Tunic— _____
 - c. His Bow— _____
5. The Key to Friendship: Laying Aside Your _____
6. Considering Friendship with God

Study Guide

Monday—Ish-Bosheth Assassinated. 2 Samuel 4. This story shows how difficult times were during the

reign of David! Following the death of his general, Saul's son Ish-Bosheth lost courage. He had been competing with David for the authority of Israel. 2 assassins kill him, thinking it would please David. They must not have understood David's passionate heart! (David reacted just as strongly to other assassins). Have you ever assumed you would be rewarded for something you did, only to find out differently? How did it make you feel? Why would David have been upset by this? What did David's reaction teach the rest of the people of Israel?

Tuesday—David Anointed King, Jerusalem Made the Capital, Philistines defeated. 2 Samuel 5. What is different between this anointing and Samuel's (in 1 Sam. 16?) What had David between then and now? Jerusalem was not always the capital. Here is where it all began. Is there a place you feel special connection to God? David was becoming still more powerful. But he didn't trust in the might of his army alone. We see him deep in prayer asking for God's guidance. How important is prayer in your daily struggles?

Wednesday—David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem. 2 Samuel 6. Just in time for the latest Indiana Jones movie! The Ark of the Covenant (a wooden box containing the original tablets of the 10 Commandments) was a reminder of God's presence. Why would David want it in Jerusalem? Have you considered that by placing your faith in God, you have entered into a covenant with God? What items remind you of God's covenant? David is so full of joy he dances in a loin cloth as the Ark is being paraded through Jerusalem. Read 2 Sam. 6:16, 20-23. How undignified are you willing to be for God's sake?

Thursday—God's Covenant with David. 2 Samuel 7. This is a powerful chapter. First, we meet a new prophet of God, Nathan. Though David was a man of war, and often times would fall from God's plan, God makes a covenant with him through Nathan to always bless David and his descendents. Can you name some of the promises God has made to *you* as His child and a follower of Jesus? God's promise to have a descendent of David on the throne forever was fulfilled in Jesus. Have you ever thought of Jesus as being a King...or *your* King? Now reread David's prayer to God as a result. Can you model your prayer life after this?

Friday—David's Wars. 2 Samuel 8. This chapter is a short overview of many of the battles David and his armies fought and won. What does this teach about how David ruled over God's people? What enemies has God given you victory over? What "spoils" from your life could you give to God, the way David dedicates his winnings over to God?