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Who sticks with you?

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CORE VERSE

Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous.

1 Peter 3:8

When Peter writes the words *love as brothers* here, he knew exactly what that looked like in his own life. Peter was a close friend with the apostles James and John. These three traveled just about everywhere with Jesus. Their bond of loving friendship extended for the rest of their lives as

they worked together with unity of purpose to accomplish the mission Jesus had given them. Just imagine the stories these friends will have to tell you when you meet them!

READ 1 SAMUEL 18:1-5, 1 SAMUEL 19:1-7.

This week's passages come immediately after the story of David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17). In fact, David had just delivered Goliath's head to King Saul! In this moment, Jonathan, Saul's son and heir, was immediately drawn to David. They may have been close to the same age, but Jonathan saw in David someone worth befriending. While his dad was anything but warm to the young giant killer, Jonathan almost instantly loved David as a true friend, as his own soul (18:1).

Based on his strong connection of friendship to David, Jonathan made a covenant with him, an agreement to be there for David in any way that he could (18:3). To prove how serious he was, Jonathan gave David his own royal robe, armor, sword, bow, and belt—a huge gift from the heir to the throne to the one who would become king instead (18:4). From that moment on, David and Jonathan were lifelong friends.

King Saul, on the other hand, almost immediately became overwhelmed with jealousy toward David and wanted him dead (18:8-11). It's understandable, isn't it? David killed the giant that Saul could not. All of the people loved David (18:16). And every scheme of Saul's to kill David just backfired and made the young hero even more popular (18:30).

So when he finds out his father is trying to kill David again in Chapter 19, Jonathan was desperate to help his friend—either to protect David from Saul or to use his influence to get Saul to let go of his murderous hatred toward David. Either move was risky.

If Saul realized Jonathan was siding with or even helping the king's enemy, there would be a high price to pay. While Jonathan eventually got Saul to calm down and David was temporarily restored (19:6-7), the peace between Saul and David wouldn't last long (19:10). And as we see over the next several chapters, Jonathan risks his life and legacy to protect his best friend several times. In the end, Israel's greatest king was saved by his best friend, one of Israel's greatest princes. David would never forget his best friend's help and proved to be just as good a friend in return.

Friendships like Jonathan's and David's don't come along every day. Jonathan loved David as he loved himself, consistently putting David's needs ahead of his own. David returned that love and friendship for Jonathan. Jonathan was generous with David, not expecting anything in return. And David showed generosity to Jonathan's son after Jonathan's death in battle (2 Samuel 9). Jonathan was loyal to David even in opposition to his own father, the king. Ultimately, David became a better king because of the time he spent with Jonathan.

In Proverbs, we read that ... *there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother* (Proverbs 18:24). It is certainly possible that the writer had Jonathan and David in mind when he wrote these words. But to have friends like this, we must first act friendly. And we must choose our friends wisely, since the people that we spend time with will ultimately alter the course of our lives in significant and powerful ways (Proverbs 12:26). When we find friends like Jonathan or David, we should treat them as the true gift from God that they are.

CORE CONCEPTS

God designed our
friendships to help shape us.

PHILEO:

Friendship love, the bond
between non-family
close friends

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE OVER THE NEXT TWO DAYS

- » WHAT DOES THE GREEK WORD **PHILEO** HAVE TO DO WITH THE STORY OF JONATHAN AND DAVID?
- » HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS?
- » HOW HAS GOD USED ONE OR MORE OF YOUR FRIENDS TO STEER THE DIRECTION OF YOUR LIFE?
- » WRITE YOUR OWN QUESTION: