



David & Jonathan

Kicking It Off:

If you could instantly become best friends with any biblical character, who would you choose and why?

Read:

1 Samuel 18:1-4

Summary

In a world marked by increasing loneliness and superficial connections, the power of deep, covenantal friendships cannot be overstated. Even as believers, we are not immune to feelings of isolation. However, the story of David and Jonathan's intimate friendship offers a compelling model of what it means to love sacrificially and remain committed to one another through life's challenges.

As Christians, our understanding of friendship is ultimately rooted in Jesus. In John 15, He redefines friendship in terms of laying down one's life for others, obeying His commands, and bearing lasting fruit. Jesus Himself embodies this sacrificial love by giving His life for His disciples and for all of humanity. If we want to experience the depth and richness of true friendship, we must look to Jesus as our guide and our source of strength.

While we are called to love and serve all people, God does not expect us to have equally deep friendships with everyone. Instead, He invites us to invest intentionally in a

few covenantal relationships, allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us in forming these intimate bonds. This may require stepping out of our comfort zones and reaching out to people who are different from us, embracing the diversity of the body of Christ.

Being a true friend involves contributing to the needs of others, practicing hospitality, and bearing one another's burdens. It means walking alongside our friends in their struggles, offering support and encouragement, and sometimes lovingly confronting sin. As we seek to reflect Christ's love to our friends, we can trust that He will use these relationships to bring healing, growth, and joy.

Ultimately, the antidote to loneliness is found in Jesus and the transformative power of Christ-centered friendships. By prioritizing these deep, sacrificial connections and allowing them to shape us more into the image of Christ, we can experience the abundant life He promises and extend His love to a hurting world.

Discussion Questions

1. In the sermon, we learned about the growing problem of loneliness in our society, affecting both churchgoers and non-churchgoers alike. Even King David, a man after God's own heart, experienced deep loneliness (Psalm 38:9-11). **Have you ever experienced a season of loneliness in your life? What helped you navigate through that time?**
2. The story of David and Jonathan's friendship showcases the power of covenantal friendships. These relationships are characterized by unconditional loyalty, commitment, and a willingness to sacrifice for one another, even in the face of difficult circumstances. **Have you experienced a covenantal friendship in your life? What makes these friendships unique and valuable?**
3. Jesus redefines friendship in John 15, emphasizing sacrificial love, obedience to His commands, and bearing lasting fruit. He models this kind of friendship by laying down His life for His disciples and for all of us. **How does Jesus' example challenge**

your understanding of what it means to be a true friend? In what ways can you practice sacrificial love in your friendships?

4. We are called to invest deeply in a few covenantal friendships, while also stepping out of our comfort zones to reach out to people who are different from us (Galatians 3:28). This requires us to embrace the diversity of the body of Christ. **How can you intentionally cultivate covenantal friendships in your life? What steps can you take to build friendships with people who are different from you?**
5. Being a true friend involves contributing to the needs of others, practicing hospitality (Romans 12:13), and bearing one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2). This may involve walking alongside friends in their struggles, offering support, and sometimes lovingly confronting sin. **Share an experience where a friend demonstrated sacrificial love to you during a challenging time. How can you practice bearing your friends' burdens while still maintaining healthy boundaries?**

Bible Passage

1 Samuel 18:1-4

As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. ²And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house. ³Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. ⁴And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt.

Outline

1. Introduction
 - a. Declining friendships and increasing loneliness in the United States
 - b. The impact of technology on face-to-face interactions
 - c. Loneliness affects both non-churchgoers and churchgoers
 - d. Even King David experienced intense loneliness (Psalm 38:9-11)
2. The Power of Covenantal Friendship
 - a. The story of David and Jonathan's friendship
 - i. Jonathan's leadership and military success (1 Samuel 13)
 - ii. The bond between Jonathan and David (1 Samuel 18)
 - b. The depth of their covenantal friendship
 - i. Jonathan's sacrifice for David, despite being next in line for the throne
 - ii. Their friendship persevered through difficult circumstances
 - c. The rarity and value of covenantal friendships
 - i. Unconditional loyalty and commitment
 - ii. Willingness to sacrifice for one another
3. The Ultimate Friend
 - a. Jesus' definition of friendship (John 15)

- i. Laying down one's life for friends
 - ii. Obeying Jesus' commands
 - iii. Chosen by Jesus to bear fruit
 - b. Jesus as the ultimate example of friendship
 - i. Laying down His life for His disciples
 - ii. Demonstrating true friendship through sacrifice
- 4. Our Call to Be and Make Friends
 - a. The call to have covenantal friendships with a few people
 - i. Not a call to befriend everyone
 - ii. Recognizing the Spirit's leading in forming deep friendships
 - b. Breaking out of our comfort zones
 - i. Reaching out to people who are different from us (Galatians 3:28)
 - ii. Not limiting friendships based on similar thinking or opinions
 - c. How to be a friend
 - i. Contribute to the needs of others and show hospitality (Romans 12:13)
 - ii. Bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2)
 - 1. Walking alongside friends through their struggles
 - 2. Lovingly addressing sin while supporting the person

Notes

Loneliness is a growing concern in our society, and it's not just affecting those outside the church. Even as believers, we can struggle with intense feelings of isolation, much like King David expressed in Psalm 38. I believe that one of the most powerful antidotes to loneliness is the cultivation of covenantal friendships.

When I look at the story of David and Jonathan, I'm struck by the depth and resilience of their bond. Despite the challenging circumstances they faced, their friendship was characterized by unconditional loyalty, commitment, and a willingness to sacrifice for one another. Jonathan, who was next in line for the throne, chose to prioritize his friendship with David over his own political ambitions.

In our modern world, where technology has made it easier to connect superficially but harder to develop deep, face-to-face relationships, I believe we need to rediscover the power of covenantal friendships. These are the rare, precious relationships where we can be fully known, loved, and supported through life's ups and downs. They require investment, vulnerability, and a readiness to put the needs of our friends before our own, but the rewards are immeasurable.

As I think on what it means to be a true friend, I can't help but turn to Jesus as the ultimate example. In John 15, He redefines friendship in a way that challenges me to my core. Jesus says that the greatest expression of love is to lay down one's life for one's friends. He doesn't just talk about it; He lives it out by sacrificing His own life for the sake of His disciples and for all of us.

Jesus also ties friendship to obedience, reminding me that being His friend means following His commands. It's not about a superficial, feel-good connection, but a deep commitment to living out His teachings. And yet, even as He calls me to obedience, Jesus emphasizes that He has chosen me to be His friend, not the other way around. What a humbling thought, to be selected by the Son of God to bear fruit that will last!

As I navigate my own friendships, I want to look to Jesus as my model. Am I willing to lay down my life, my priorities, my comfort, for the sake of my

friends? Do I see friendship as a call to sacrificial love and obedience to Christ? These are challenging questions, but ones I believe are essential if I want to experience the depth and richness of true, Christ-centered friendship. As I consider what it means to live out Christ's call to friendship, I realize that it's not about trying to be everyone's best friend. Instead, I believe God calls me to invest deeply in a few covenantal friendships, allowing the Holy Spirit to guide me in forming these intimate connections.

At the same time, I feel challenged to step out of my comfort zone and reach out to people who are different from me. Galatians 3:28 reminds me that in Christ, there is no division based on race, social status, or gender. I don't want to limit my friendships to those who think and act just like me, but to embrace the diversity of the body of Christ.

So what does it look like to be a friend? Romans 12:13 urges me to contribute to the needs of others and practice hospitality. This means being attentive to my friends' struggles and finding practical ways to support them. It also means creating a welcoming space where they feel loved and accepted.

Galatians 6:2 takes it a step further, calling me to bear my friends' burdens. This involves walking alongside them in their pain, offering a listening ear and a shoulder to cry on. It may also require the courage to lovingly confront sin, while still communicating unwavering support and commitment to the friendship.

Ultimately, I believe the antidote to loneliness is found in Jesus and the deep, sacrificial friendships He calls us to build. As I seek to reflect Christ's love to my friends, I trust that He will use these relationships to bring healing, growth, and joy, both to me and to those I love.

David & Jonathan

1 Samuel 18:1-4

As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. 2 And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house. 3 Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. 4 And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt.

In today's world, loneliness has become an epidemic in the United States. A recent study by Cigna revealed that nearly half of Americans report feeling alone or left out always or sometimes. This sense of isolation is particularly prevalent among younger generations, with Gen Z and Millennials scoring the highest on the loneliness scale. The rise of technology has undoubtedly contributed to this growing problem. While social media and instant messaging apps have made it easier to connect with people across the globe, they have also led to a decline in face-to-face interactions and genuine, deep relationships. We may have hundreds of "friends" on Facebook, but how many of them would be there for us in times of need?

As Christians, we are called to live in community with one another. The Bible is filled with examples of the importance of meaningful friendships, from the bond between David and Jonathan to the early church in Acts. These relationships not only provide us with support and encouragement but also help us grow in our faith and become more like Christ.

In 1 Samuel 18:1-4, we read about the friendship between David and Jonathan. Despite their different backgrounds – Jonathan was the son of King Saul, while David was a humble shepherd – the two formed an instant bond. The Scripture tells us that "the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul" (1 Samuel 18:1). This deep connection led Jonathan to make a covenant with David, promising to stand by his side no matter what. As a symbol of this commitment, Jonathan gave David his robe, armor, sword, bow, and belt – precious possessions that represented his status as a prince.

The friendship between David and Jonathan serves as a powerful example of what it means to be a true friend. In a world where relationships are often superficial and transactional, we need to learn how to cultivate covenantal friendships that reflect the love and sacrifice of Christ. Their friendship is one of the most remarkable examples of covenantal relationships in the Bible. After David's victory over Goliath, he was brought before King Saul, and it was there that he met Saul's son, Jonathan. The Scripture tells us that "the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul" (1 Samuel 18:1). This instant bond between the two men was not based on mere compatibility or shared interests but on a deep, spiritual connection. Jonathan recognized in David a kindred spirit and a man after God's own heart. Despite their differences in status and background, they formed a friendship that would endure through both triumph and adversity.

As a symbol of their commitment to one another, Jonathan made a covenant with David. In biblical times, covenants were solemn agreements that bound two parties together in a relationship of mutual loyalty and obligation. By making a covenant with David, Jonathan was pledging his unwavering support and devotion, even at great personal cost. Jonathan's sacrificial gifts to David further demonstrated the depth of his love and commitment. He gave David his robe, armor, sword, bow, and belt – precious possessions that represented his status as a prince and a warrior. In doing so, Jonathan was not only honoring David but also symbolically transferring his own identity and authority to him.

So, what can we learn from the friendship between David and Jonathan about the nature of covenantal relationships? Here are four key characteristics:

Selflessness (Philippians 2:3-4)

In a covenantal friendship, both parties put the needs and interests of the other above their own. As Paul writes in Philippians 2:3-4, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." Jonathan exemplified this selflessness by risking his own position and safety to protect and support David.

Loyalty (Proverbs 17:17)

Covenantal friends are loyal and steadfast, sticking by each other's side through both good times and bad. As Proverbs 17:17 says, "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." Jonathan demonstrated his loyalty to David by defending him against Saul's jealousy and anger, even when it put him at odds with his own father.

Sacrificial Love (John 15:13)

Covenantal friendships are marked by sacrificial love, a willingness to lay down one's life for the sake of the other. As Jesus says in John 15:13, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." Jonathan's love for David was so great that he was willing to give up his own claim to the throne and risk his life to protect him.

Encouragement (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Finally, covenantal friends encourage and build each other up in the faith. As Paul exhorts in 1 Thessalonians 5:11, "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing." Jonathan encouraged David by affirming his calling and destiny, even when others doubted or opposed him.

If we want to cultivate covenantal friendships like David and Jonathan's, we need to learn how to be a friend. Here are four practical steps we can take:

Cultivating a heart of service (Galatians 5:13)

To be a good friend, we need to have a heart of service, putting the needs of others before our own. As Paul writes in Galatians 5:13, "Through love serve one another." We can cultivate this heart of service by looking for opportunities to help and support our friends, even in small ways.

Being a good listener (James 1:19)

One of the most important skills in friendship is being a good listener. As James 1:19 says, "Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger." By giving our friends our full attention and listening without judgment or interruption, we create a safe space for them to share their hearts.

Showing empathy and compassion (Colossians 3:12)

Covenantal friends show empathy and compassion, entering into each other's joys and sorrows. As Paul writes in Colossians 3:12, "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience." By seeking to understand and share in our friends' experiences, we demonstrate the love of Christ.

Forgiving and seeking forgiveness (Ephesians 4:32)

Finally, covenantal friendships require a willingness to forgive and seek forgiveness when conflicts arise. As Paul exhorts in Ephesians 4:32, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." By extending grace and mercy to our friends and humbly acknowledging our own faults, we create a foundation of trust and reconciliation.

Cultivating covenantal friendships like David and Jonathan's is not easy, but it is one of the most rewarding and transformative experiences we can have as Christians. By learning from their example and putting these principles into practice, we can build relationships that reflect the love and faithfulness of God. In a world that is increasingly lonely and divided, such friendships are a powerful witness to the reality of the gospel and the hope that we have in Christ.

1. In the blog post, we learned about the instant bond between David and Jonathan and the covenant they made with each other. Jonathan demonstrated his loyalty and commitment to David by giving him his robe, armor, sword, bow, and belt. **Have you ever experienced a deep, instant connection with a friend that led to a long-lasting, committed friendship? What qualities do you think are essential for building and maintaining such a friendship?**

2. The blog post highlighted four key characteristics of covenantal friendships: selflessness, loyalty, sacrificial love, and encouragement. We also learned practical steps to cultivate these characteristics, such as having a heart of service, being a good listener, showing empathy and compassion, and being willing to forgive and seek forgiveness. **Which of these characteristics or practical steps do you find most challenging to implement in your own**

friendships? How can you rely on God's help and guidance to grow in these areas and strengthen your friendships?