



## 15: A Covenant For Life!

(1 Sam 19:8-20:42)

*Discover how David and Jonathan's unbreakable covenant reveals the kind of loyalty, love, and faith that stands firm even when life falls apart. Respond to the challenge to renew your covenant with God, your family, and your faith family—and to live with the same lifelong commitment that honors Him.*

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\* All Scripture is from the Christian Standard Bible (CSB) unless otherwise noted.

### 1 Samuel 19:8-17

When war broke out again, David went out and fought against the Philistines. He defeated them with such great force that they fled from him. Now an evil spirit sent from the LORD came on Saul as he was sitting in his palace holding a spear. David was playing the lyre, and Saul tried to pin David to the wall with the spear. As the spear struck the wall, David eluded Saul, ran away, and escaped that night. Saul sent agents to David's house to watch for him and kill him in the morning. But his wife Michal warned David, "If you don't escape tonight, you will be dead tomorrow!" So she lowered David from the window, and he fled and escaped. Then Michal took the household idol and put it on the bed [no clue why an idol is in their house - these are certainly looked down on in Scriptures - no graven image], placed some goat hair on its head, and covered it with a garment. When Saul sent agents to seize David, Michal said, "He's sick." Saul sent the agents back to see David and said, "Bring him on his bed so I can kill him." When the agents arrived, to their surprise, the household idol was on the bed with some goat hair on its head. Saul asked Michal, "Why did you deceive me like this? You sent my enemy away, and he has escaped!" She answered him, "He said to me, 'Let me go! Why should I kill you?'"

Yahweh has brought great success to David. But King Saul, rather than being grateful of his servant's accomplishments, is super jealous. As David returns from battle, he continues to serve Saul by playing the lyre to calm him down.

🌟 **Bill Arnold** writes: "Our story seems to have degenerated into a soap opera. Jonathan has deceived and disobeyed his father for David's sake. Michal shamelessly tricks her father and then lies to cover it up. David has endured the humiliating escape through a window and is now on the run, never to appear in Saul's court again."<sup>1</sup>

Christians might struggle with this ethical dilemma - we are to be people who speak *TRUTH*, not lies. But here there is a greater good than telling the truth - that is: protecting innocent human life.

- Multiple examples where God honors those who LIE to protect the innocent: e.g. Hebrew midwives who lie to Pharaoh rather than follow his order to kill newborn Hebrew baby boys - Ex 1:15-21; Rahab hiding the Hebrew spies in Jericho Jos 2:4-6, Heb 11:31, Jam 2:25.

### 1 Samuel 19:18-21

So David fled and escaped and went to Samuel at Ramah and told him everything Saul had done to him. Then he and Samuel left and stayed at Naioth. When it was reported to Saul that David was at Naioth in Ramah, he sent agents to seize David. However, when they saw the group of prophets prophesying with Samuel leading them, the Spirit of God came on Saul's agents, and they also started prophesying. When they reported to Saul, he sent other agents, and they also began prophesying. So Saul tried again and sent a third group of agents, and even they began prophesying.

Instead of training their weapons on the ones they are hunting, instead of removing them from the house in handcuffs, these agents drop their weapons and begin to have a religious experience - speaking on behalf of God - and unable to accomplish the task they came for in the first place.

### 1 Samuel 19:22-24

Then Saul himself went to Ramah. He came to the large cistern at Secu and asked, "Where are Samuel and David?" "At Naioth in Ramah," someone said. So he went to Naioth in Ramah. The Spirit of God also came on him, and as he walked along, he prophesied until he entered Naioth in Ramah. Saul then removed his clothes and also prophesied before Samuel; he collapsed and lay naked all that day and all that night. That is why they say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

God WILL NOT ALLOW DAVID TO BE TOUCHED by Saul or his agents. Can God protect His people if He wants to? YEP!!!!

<sup>1</sup> Bill T. Arnold, 1 & 2 Samuel, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 284.

### 1 Samuel 20:1-8

David fled from Naioth in Ramah and came to Jonathan and asked, "What have I done? What did I do wrong? How have I sinned against your father so that he wants to take my life?" Jonathan said to him, "No, you won't die. Listen, my father doesn't do anything, great or small, without telling me. So why would he hide this matter from me? This can't be true." But David said, "Your father certainly knows that I have found favor with you. He has said, 'Jonathan must not know of this, or else he will be grieved.'" David also swore, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you yourself live, there is but a step between me and death." Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you say, I will do for you."

So David told him, "Look, tomorrow is the New Moon [a day for rest & feasting], and I'm supposed to sit down and eat with the king. Instead, let me go, and I'll hide in the countryside for the next two nights. If your father misses me at all, say, 'David urgently requested my permission to go quickly to his hometown, Bethlehem, for an annual sacrifice there involving the whole clan.' If he says, 'Good,' then your servant is safe, but if he becomes angry, you will know he has evil intentions. Deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought me into a covenant with you before the LORD. If I have done anything wrong, then kill me yourself; why take me to your father?"

Here we are reminded of the covenant Jonathan had made earlier with David (1 Sam 18:3). A covenant is a friendship founded on faith - a commitment to have each other's back, but it is also a commitment made before Yahweh.

David reminds Jonathan of their covenant & wants to make sure that Jonathan isn't trying to trick him like a double agent might.

### 1 Samuel 20:9-13

"No!" Jonathan responded. "If I ever find out my father has evil intentions against you, wouldn't I tell you about it?" So David asked Jonathan, "Who will tell me if your father answers you harshly?" He answered David, "Come on, let's go out to the countryside." So both of them went out to the countryside. "By the LORD, the God of Israel, I will sound out my father by this time tomorrow or the next day. If I find out that he is favorable toward you, will I not send for you and tell you? If my father intends to bring evil on you, may the LORD punish Jonathan and do so severely if I do not tell you and send you away so you may leave safely. May the LORD be with you, just as he was with my father."

**May Yahweh be with you, just as he was with my father.** With these last words it sure seems that Jonathan recognizes that David, not himself, is next in line for the throne. This becomes even more apparent in the next things Jonathan says.

### 1 Samuel 20:14-17

"If I continue to live, show me kindness from the LORD, but if I die, don't ever withdraw your kindness from my household—not even when the LORD cuts off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth."

Then Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the LORD hold David's enemies accountable." Jonathan once again swore to David in his love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.

**If I die, don't ever withdraw your kindness from my household.** We are going to see this exact scenario come into play later in the life of David.

Jonathan is so committed to David that he prays and believes that **Yahweh** will hold **David's enemies accountable**, that Yahweh will bring justice against them, and that includes...HIS OWN FATHER (referred to as David's enemy at least a couple of times - 1 Sam 18:29, 19:17). Jonathan is MORE committed to David than he is to his own father! If there was any question of Jonathan's commitment to David, Jonathan reaffirms his deep and abiding love to the brother his heart is bound to. This is A COVENANT FOR LIFE! Jonathan's commitment to David foreshadows the kind of commitment that Jesus demands that we have of Him, when He says,

### Matthew 10:37

The one who loves a father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; the one who loves a son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

### 1 Samuel 20:18-34

Then Jonathan said to him, "Tomorrow is the New Moon; you'll be missed because your seat will be empty. The following day hurry down and go to the place where you hid on the day this incident began and stay beside the rock Ezel. I will shoot three arrows beside it as if I'm aiming at a target. Then I will send a servant and say, 'Go and find the arrows!' Now, if I expressly say to the servant, 'Look, the arrows are on this side of you—get them,' then come, because as the LORD lives, it is safe for you and there is no problem. But if I say this to the youth, 'Look, the arrows are beyond you!' then go, for the LORD is sending you away. As for the matter you and I have spoken about, the LORD will be a witness between you and me forever." So David hid in the countryside. At the New Moon, the king sat down to eat the meal. He sat at his usual place on the seat by the wall. Jonathan sat facing him and Abner took his place beside Saul, but David's place was empty. Saul did not say anything that day because he thought, "Something unexpected has happened; he must be ceremonially unclean—yes, that's it, he is unclean." However, the day after the New Moon, the second day, David's place was still empty, and Saul asked his son Jonathan, "Why didn't Jesse's son come to the meal either yesterday or today?" Jonathan answered, "David asked for my permission to go to Bethlehem. He said, 'Please let me go because our clan is holding a sacrifice in the town, and my brother has told me to be there. So now, if I have found favor with you, let me go so I can see my brothers.' That's why he didn't come to the king's table." Then Saul became angry with Jonathan and shouted, "You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don't I know that you are siding with Jesse's son to

your own shame and to the disgrace of your mother? Every day Jesse's son lives on earth you and your kingship are not secure. Now send for him and bring him to me—he must die!" Jonathan answered his father back, "Why is he to be killed? What has he done?" Then Saul threw his spear at Jonathan to kill him, so he knew that his father was determined to kill David. He got up from the table fiercely angry and did not eat any food that second day of the New Moon, for he was grieved because of his father's shameful behavior toward David.

**Robert Bergen:** "Though Saul's spear missed him, Jonathan got the point—his father intended to kill David."<sup>2</sup>

#### 1 Samuel 20:35–41

In the morning Jonathan went out to the countryside for the appointed meeting with David. A young servant was with him. He said to the servant, "Run and find the arrows I'm shooting." As the servant ran, Jonathan shot an arrow beyond him. He came to the location of the arrow that Jonathan had shot, but Jonathan called to him and said, "The arrow is beyond you, isn't it?" Then Jonathan called to him, "Hurry up and don't stop!" Jonathan's servant picked up the arrow and returned to his master. He did not know anything; only Jonathan and David knew the arrangement. Then Jonathan gave his equipment to the servant who was with him and said, "Go, take it back to the city." When the servant had gone, David got up from the south side of the stone Ezel, fell facedown to the ground, and paid homage three times. Then he and Jonathan kissed each other and wept with each other, though David wept more.

A **kiss** in their culture is *NOT* unnatural for a man. This is *NOT* a kiss to the lips but to the cheek or the hand. You might remember that Samuel had earlier kissed Saul when he anointed him as king (1 Sam 10:1).

These brothers **wept**, knowing this might be the last time they would see each other on this side of eternity. As it turns out, David & Jonathan will see each other one more time, but they weren't certain of that.

#### 1 Samuel 20:42

Jonathan then said to David, "Go in the assurance the two of us pledged in the name of the LORD when we said, 'The LORD will be a witness between you and me and between my offspring and your offspring forever.' " Then David left, and Jonathan went into the city.

Did you know that Jesus offered to make a covenant for life with YOU? You *TRUST* Him; He will come in and *TRANSFORM* you.

#### John 7:38–39a

The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him." He said this about the Spirit.



➤ Reaffirm your covenant to your spouse & family.

➤ Reaffirm your covenant to Jesus.

➤ Reaffirm your covenant to your faith family.

## hereto serve you

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

\* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), **Caleb** (864-315-8015), **Gary** (850-673-2507), **Betty** (850-973-3266), or another follower of Jesus soon!

\* Or call our **deacons & wives: Alan & Christy Androski** (850-464-1428), **Steve & Debbie Bass** (850-673-7952), **Noel & Patricia Barnes** (813-767-2881), **Derek & Emily Beaty** (813-763-4421), or **Tim & Joni Hughey** (850-464-1156).

<sup>2</sup> Robert D. Bergen, 1, 2 Samuel, vol. 7, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 218.

# Discussion questions

These discussion questions are designed to help you LIVE what you LEARN with your Family, Friends, or Small Group.



## Getting Started

1. When have you made a promise that truly cost you something to keep? What made you stay faithful to it?
2. Why do you think God takes covenants (not just promises) so seriously?



## God's Protection & Presence (1 Samuel 19:8–24)

3. How does this passage show that God can protect His people even when evil seems to have the upper hand?
4. What stands out to you about how God stopped Saul and his men from harming David?
5. When have you seen God's hand protect or redirect you in a way you didn't expect?



## The Power of Covenant Friendship (1 Samuel 20:1–23)

6. How did David and Jonathan show trust in one another even when everything around them was unstable?
7. Jonathan risked his position & safety to protect David. What does that teach us about covenant friendship and loyalty?
8. What does Jonathan's humility (recognizing David's future kingship) show about his faith in God's plan?



## When Loyalty Costs You (1 Samuel 20:24–34)

9. Saul called Jonathan's loyalty to David "shameful." How might our loyalty to Christ sometimes appear foolish or shameful to others?
10. How can we stay faithful to God and others when doing so brings conflict with those we love?
11. Have you ever had to choose between loyalty to God and loyalty to someone close to you? What helped you stay true?



## A Covenant for Life (1 Samuel 20:35–42)

12. What makes this moment between David and Jonathan so moving?
13. How do their tears, humility, and parting words reflect the kind of love God wants in His people?
14. How is Jonathan's covenant with David a picture of the covenant Jesus offers us through His sacrifice?



## Living It Out

15. How can you reaffirm your covenant commitment this week—to your spouse, family, or faith family?
16. Which of these three relationships needs the most intentional attention from you right now?
17. What's one practical way you can express covenant love to someone before this week ends?