

## LIFE GROUP GUIDE: FRIENDSHIP WEEK of April 29-May 5 2018

### PREPARE:

Please make sure to review the material in the guide so you are prepared for the conversation in your Life Group. Also remember to pray for what God wants to do tonight.

### WELCOME:

Take a few minutes to reconnect with Life Group members. An icebreaker question could be to choose their favorite fast food chain.

### VIDEO:

Watch the video together. Pastor Jonathan will be setting up the discussion on Friendships.

### SCRIPTURE:

Read 2 passages from 1 Samuel together.

#### **1 Samuel 18:1-14** (NIV)

*Saul's Jealousy of David*

<sup>1</sup> After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. <sup>2</sup> From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return home to his family. <sup>3</sup> And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. <sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> Whatever mission Saul sent him on, David was so successful that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the troops, and Saul's officers as well.

<sup>6</sup> When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with timbrels and lyres. <sup>7</sup> As they danced, they sang:

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“Saul has slain his thousands,  
and David his tens of thousands.”

<sup>8</sup> Saul was very angry; this refrain displeased him greatly. “They have credited David with tens of thousands,” he thought, “but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?” <sup>9</sup> And from that time on Saul kept a close eye on David.

<sup>10</sup> The next day an evil<sup>a</sup> spirit from God came forcefully on Saul. He was prophesying in his house, while David was playing the lyre, as he usually did. Saul had a spear in his hand <sup>11</sup> and he hurled it, saying to himself, “I’ll pin David to the wall.” But David eluded him twice.

<sup>12</sup> Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with David but had departed from Saul. <sup>13</sup> So he sent David away from him and gave him command over a thousand men, and David led the troops in their campaigns. <sup>14</sup> In everything he did he had great success, because the Lord was with him.

**1 Samuel 20:1-17 (NIV)**

*David and Jonathan*

<sup>1</sup> Then David fled from Naioth at Ramah and went to Jonathan and asked, “What have I done? What is my crime? How have I wronged your father, that he is trying to kill me?”

<sup>2</sup> “Never!” Jonathan replied. “You are not going to die! Look, my father doesn’t do anything, great or small, without letting me know. Why would he hide this from me? It isn’t so!”

<sup>3</sup> But David took an oath and said, “Your father knows very well that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said to himself, ‘Jonathan must not know this or he will be grieved.’ Yet as surely as the Lord lives and as you live, there is only a step between me and death.”

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<sup>4</sup> Jonathan said to David, “Whatever you want me to do, I’ll do for you.”

<sup>5</sup> So David said, “Look, tomorrow is the New Moon feast, and I am supposed to dine with the king; but let me go and hide in the field until the evening of the day after tomorrow. <sup>6</sup> If your father misses me at all, tell him, ‘David earnestly asked my permission to hurry to Bethlehem, his hometown, because an annual sacrifice is being made there for his whole clan.’ <sup>7</sup> If he says, ‘Very well,’ then your servant is safe. But if he loses his temper, you can be sure that he is determined to harm me. <sup>8</sup> As for you, show kindness to your servant, for you have brought him into a covenant with you before the Lord. If I am guilty, then kill me yourself! Why hand me over to your father?”

<sup>9</sup> “Never!” Jonathan said. “If I had the least inkling that my father was determined to harm you, wouldn’t I tell you?”

<sup>10</sup> David asked, “Who will tell me if your father answers you harshly?”

<sup>11</sup> “Come,” Jonathan said, “let’s go out into the field.” So they went there together.

<sup>12</sup> Then Jonathan said to David, “I swear by the Lord, the God of Israel, that I will surely sound out my father by this time the day after tomorrow! If he is favorably disposed toward you, will I not send you word and let you know? <sup>13</sup> But if my father intends to harm you, may the Lord deal with Jonathan, be it ever so severely, if I do not let you know and send you away in peace. May the Lord be with you as he has been with my father. <sup>14</sup> But show me unflinching kindness like the Lord’s kindness as long as I live, so that I may not be killed, <sup>15</sup> and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family—not even when the Lord has cut off every one of David’s enemies from the face of the earth.”

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<sup>16</sup> So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, “May the Lord call David’s enemies to account.” <sup>17</sup> And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.

### REFLECTION/VISION STATEMENT TIME:

Provide 4-5 minutes for quiet reflection on the passage, so your Life Group members can collect their thoughts and questions. But before you do, say something like:

*“I encourage you to first take a couple minutes to reflect on this passage and the video, come up with any questions, connections, or what the passage says to you tonight.” Ask people to think about their own friendships and if they feel grateful for the friendships they have or if they long for more or deeper relationships.*

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### QUESTIONS/OBSERVATIONS/SCRIPTURES:

*(Choose ahead of time your favorites. You won’t be able to ask all of these.)*

**Question:** What makes for a great friend?

Or: What are one word attributes of a great friend and why? (Ex/ loyal)

**Question:** Do you believe that friendship is a biblical principle or a good idea? Why?

**Question:** How can a good friend point you towards Jesus and his gospel in your life? Has anyone ever done this for you?

**Question:** In what ways have friends been a life line for you in your life?

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**Question:** What stood out to you in the passages from tonight?

**Question:** What made David and Jonathan's relationship so special?

**Question:** Have you ever prayed for friends for yourself? For your kids? Spouse? How has God answered that prayer?

**Question:** 1 Samuel 18:3 says "Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself." How does loving yourself play into your ability to have healthy relationships?

**Question:** 1 Samuel 18 paints a picture where Saul created a toxic environment for David to be in. What have you learned that helps sustain you when you are in a tough environment? Where do you go to?

**Question:** What are the ways you hope to be a better friend in the future?

**Question:** What value do you see in friendships?

**Question:** What's the hardest part for you about friendships?

**Question:** On a scale of 1-10, 1 being never and 10 being the perfect balance, how would you rank yourself on prioritizing healthy friendships in your life? Why?

**Observation:** In his book, *The Company We Keep: In Search of Biblical Friendship*, Jonathan Holmes says: "Deep and meaningful friendships don't come easily—even within the church, and sometimes especially within the church. And because from time to time we all sense that things ought to be different, we can find the challenges of biblical friendship perplexing, frustrating, and discouraging." This is one of the reasons we have life groups is to foster relationships. What's been your favorite part of life group relationships this year?

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**Observation:** Jonathan Holmes says: “Biblical friendship exists when two or more people, bound together by a common faith in Jesus Christ, pursue him and his kingdom with intentionality and vulnerability. Rather than serving as an end in itself, biblical friendship serves primarily to bring glory to Christ, who brought us into friendship with the Father. It is indispensable to the work of the gospel in the earth, and an essential element of what God created us for.”

**Follow up Question:** What do you see as the goal of friendships?

**Observation:** Many people subconsciously want a church or for their friendships to look like them, talk like them, have similar interests, and be a similar age.

**Follow up Question:** What might you be missing out on if this is the filter for friendships?

**Observation:** Sometimes we feel plain, boring, or unlikeable. We end up feeling lonely. Solomon in Proverbs 18:24 shares that if we want friends, we must be friendly and reach out to others. But this is risky. Because we are often afraid of rejection, many of us are unwilling to reach out to others. We take the safer route to wait for others to pursue us.

**Follow up Question:** What’s your biggest hurdle to making good friendships?

### **PRAYER:**

Pray for those who are longing for deeper friendships in their life and any other requests of the group.

**THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
CONSISTENT AND FAITHFUL LEADERSHIP!**