
SOLA FIDE

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Friendship

Introduction:

Relationships are important in Christian living. There are many types of relationships, including marriage and fraternal/maternal. But regardless of whatever relationship, friendship is at the center of a genuine, loving relationship. Therefore, what do these friendships look like? Apart from simply hanging out and having a meal, how can we build, develop, and maintain friendships that not only pleases God, but also strengthens one another, as iron sharpens iron? (Prov. 27:17). Thankfully, God provides us with His Word, which demonstrates many examples of genuine friendships that glorified God. In this case, we turn to David and Jonathan's relationship, and how they became bound in a close friendship (1 Sam. 18:1).



Foundation:

Before Jonathan and David bound themselves in this close friendship, one clear similarity existed in both men: love for God (friendship that brings honor to God). During this time Jonathan's father, King Saul was changing into an arrogant, malicious individual. Jonathan was a man of faith who believed in God's provision in battle (1 Sam. 14:6), and must have experienced incredible difficulty seeing this drastic change in his father. Consequently, Jonathan is in complete disbelief when Saul began to seek David's death (1 Sam. 20:2). Recognizing his father's fall from faith, Jonathan was drawn to David because of his faith in the Lord. In the defeat of Goliath, David proved to the people that he is a man of faith, exclaiming, "I am coming against you in the name of the Lord of armies, the God of the armies of Israel..." (1 Sam. 17:45). As a result, Jonathan and David became close friends because of their initial, individual faith in God. The true foundation that God's Word expresses

is all strong friendships are built on the foundation of loving and honoring God. By doing so, the purpose of fellowship and friendship is answered: to worship the Lord and spur one another on in continuing to worship the Lord (Heb. 10:23-24).

Preservation:

So how do we maintain a righteous, lasting friendship? To respond to this question, we return to David and Jonathan, who share two keys to doing so in their relationship. First, both men demonstrate continued selfless care for one another—neither man succumbed to jealousy. In this particular situation, Jonathan recognizes that David is called to be the next king (1 Sam. 16: 12-13). Instead of lashing out in anger or frustration knowing his own father is current king, Jonathan continues to love David as his brother. This is seen when Jonathan swears an oath with David to allow him to safely escape from Saul. Even Saul questions his own son by exclaiming, “as long as the son of Jesse lives on this earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established,” (1 Sam. 20:31). Yet Jonathan does not once succumb to self-interest, as his father did by plundering and building monuments in his own honor (1 Sam. 15:17-19). He recognizes that David is ordained as king by God, even though he is the heir to the throne. Jonathan’s ability to overcome jealousy, even the potential of ruling his own kingdom, directly correlates to the second key of their friendship: loyalty.

Jonathan and David are loyal to one another in the midst of their struggles because of God’s love. Again, returning to Jonathan’s oath with David (oath for David’s safe passage – 1 Sam. 20-31), Jonathan swears to tell David the truth about his father’s intentions. He doesn’t make this promise lightly. Instead, he declares the Lord, the God of Israel to be witness and asks God to be with David just as He was with Saul (1 Sam. 20:12-13). Jonathan concludes his oath by having David swear again his love for him, “for he loved him as he loved his own soul.” (1 Sam. 17). Imagine the predicament Jonathan faces during this time- choosing between honoring his father by killing David, and saving his best friend. But because he loved the Lord, Jonathan fulfilled his oath with David, promising him safety from his father. In the end, both men wept together, demonstrating their loyalty by being vulnerable, concluding “Go in peace, because we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord,” (1 Sam. 20:42).

Encouragement:

David and Jonathan’s love for God laid the foundation of their friendship. Although both men were far from perfect, and faced dangerous situations, they continued to preserve their friendship by rejecting self-interest and honoring loyalty, which in turn established a friendship that honored God. God calls us to be in genuine friendships to edify one another. He desires for us as His chosen people to become wise (Prov. 19:20) and “put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony,” (Col. 3:14). Therefore, let us pursue such friendships to spur one another in glorifying our God, so that we may be mutually encouraged by one another! (Rom. 1:12).