

David and Jonathon: A Lesson on Christian Friendship

By Doug Hamilton

Using the relationship of David and Jonathan from the books of 1 and 2 Samuel, we will attempt to find the definition of a Christian relationship.

Introduction to Jonathan the son of Saul

1 Samuel 14:49, Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan and Ishvi and Malchi-shua; and the names of his two daughters were these: the name of the firstborn Merab and the name of the younger Michal.

1) A Christian Friend Loves Your Soul.

1 Samuel 17:57-18:1, So when David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the Philistine's head in his hand. ⁵⁸ Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, young man?" And David answered, "*I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.*" ¹ Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself.

Jonathon and David had a love for each other which was soul deep. A soul-deep love is the deepest type of love that another person can have for another, for it is anchored with the perspective of forever.

- 1 Peter 1:22-23, Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, ²³ for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God.
- Hebrews 13:17, Obey your leaders and submit *to them*, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

2) A Christian Friend Loves You as Himself

1 Samuel 18:3-4, Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. ⁴ Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, including his sword and his bow and his belt.

Narcistic tendency is when a person places themselves first and the relationship second. It is a very selfish love which focuses on ME, MYSELF and I. A Christian friendship is the antithesis of it, being able to put others ahead of themselves.

- Galatians 5:13-14, For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴ For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the *statement*, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."

3) A Christian Friend Comes to Your Defense

1 Samuel 19:1-7, Now Saul told Jonathan his son and all his servants to put David to death. But Jonathan, Saul's son, greatly delighted in David. ² So Jonathan told David saying, "Saul my father is seeking to put you to death. Now therefore,

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please be on guard in the morning, and stay in a secret place and hide yourself. ³ “I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I will speak with my father about you; if I find out anything, then I will tell you.” ⁴ Then Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, “Do not let the king sin against his servant David, since he has not sinned against you, and since his deeds *have been* very beneficial to you. ⁵ “For he took his life in his hand and struck the Philistine, and the LORD brought about a great deliverance for all Israel; you saw *it* and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood by putting David to death without a cause?” ⁶ Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan, and Saul vowed, “As the LORD lives, he shall not be put to death.” ⁷ Then Jonathan called David, and Jonathan told him all these words. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as formerly.

King Saul was a jealous and spiteful ruler who felt threatened with David. Even though Jonathan was the son of Saul, he came to the defense of his true friend David, because that is what friends do. A true Christian friend is concerned about your well-being that they will come to your defense.

4) A Christian Friend Warns You When There is DANGER!

1 Samuel 20:35-42, Now it came about in the morning that Jonathan went out into the field for the appointment with David, and a little lad *was* with him. ³⁶ He said to his lad, “Run, find now the arrows which I am about to shoot.” As the lad was running, he shot an arrow past him. ³⁷ When the lad reached the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan called after the lad and said, “Is not the arrow beyond you?” ³⁸ And Jonathan called after the lad, “Hurry, be quick, do not stay!” And Jonathan’s lad picked up the arrow and came to his master. ³⁹ But the lad was not aware of anything; only Jonathan and David knew about the matter. ⁴⁰ Then Jonathan gave his weapons to his lad and said to him, “Go, bring *them* to the city.” ⁴¹ When the lad was gone, David rose from the south side and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed three times. And they kissed each other and wept together, but David *wept* the more. ⁴² Jonathan said to David, “Go in safety, inasmuch as we have sworn to each other in the name of the LORD, saying, ‘The LORD will be between me and you, and between my descendants and your descendants forever.’ ” Then he rose and departed, while Jonathan went into the city.

Jonathan felt obligated to inform his best friend that there was danger in store for him. If you have a true Christian friend who is in danger, you should feel obligated to say something to them, particularly when it is spiritual danger. A true Christian friend will say something when they see something. They will tell you what you need to hear, not what you want to hear.

- 1 Corinthians 10:12-13, Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

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5) A Christian Friend Will Encourage You Until the End

1 Samuel 23:15-18, Now David became aware that Saul had come out to seek his life while David was in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh. ¹⁶ And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David at Horesh, and encouraged him in God. ¹⁷ Thus he said to him, "Do not be afraid, because the hand of Saul my father will not find you, and you will be king over Israel and I will be next to you; and Saul my father knows that also." ¹⁸ So the two of them made a covenant before the LORD; and David stayed at Horesh while Jonathan went to his house.

This would be the last time these best friends would be together, for Jonathon would soon die in battle. Jonathan "encouraged him in God" until the end. A true Christian friend has the power to encourage, i.e., to place courage in the heart of another.

- 2 Timothy 4:6-11, For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; ⁸ in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. ⁹ Make every effort to come to me soon; ¹⁰ for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens *has gone* to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. ¹¹ Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service.

6) A Christian Friend Will Be Missed

2 Samuel 1:17-27, Then David chanted with this lament over Saul and Jonathan his son, ¹⁸ and he told *them* to teach the sons of Judah *the song of the bow*; behold, it is written in the book of Jashar. ¹⁹ "Your beauty, O Israel, is slain on your high places! How have the mighty fallen!" ²⁰ "Tell *it* not in Gath, Proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon, Or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice, The daughters of the uncircumcised will exult. ²¹ "O mountains of Gilboa, Let not dew or rain be on you, nor fields of offerings; For there the shield of the mighty was defiled, The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil. ²² "From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, The bow of Jonathan did not turn back, And the sword of Saul did not return empty. ²³ "Saul and Jonathan, beloved and pleasant in their life, And in their death they were not parted; They were swifter than eagles, They were stronger than lions. ²⁴ "O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, Who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet, Who put ornaments of gold on your apparel. ²⁵ "How have the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan is slain on your high places. ²⁶ "I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; You have been very pleasant to me. Your love to me was more wonderful Than the love of women." ²⁷ "How have the mighty fallen, And the weapons of war perished!"

This was one of the greatest losses which David suffered in his life. The death of Jonathon nearly crippled him with grief. When a true friend leaves this life, it always hurts greatly. This type of loss is captured in the hearts of the widows in Acts 9.

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- Acts 9:36-39, Now in Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which translated *in Greek* is called Dorcas); this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did. ³⁷ And it happened at that time that she fell sick and died; and when they had washed her body, they laid it in an upper room. ³⁸ Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, having heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him, imploring him, “Do not delay in coming to us.” ³⁹ So Peter arose and went with them. When he arrived, they brought him into the upper room; and all the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them.

7) A Christian Friend is Willing to Lay Down His Life for You.

1 Samuel 20:12-17, Then Jonathan said to David, “The LORD, the God of Israel, *be witness!* When I have sounded out my father about this time tomorrow, *or* the third day, behold, if there is good *feeling* toward David, shall I not then send to you and make it known to you? ¹³ “If it please my father *to do* you harm, may the LORD do so to Jonathan and more also, if I do not make it known to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. And may the LORD be with you as He has been with my father. ¹⁴ “If I am still alive, will you not show me the lovingkindness of the LORD, that I may not die? ¹⁵ “You shall not cut off your lovingkindness from my house forever, not even when the LORD cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.” ¹⁶ So Jonathan made a *covenant* with the house of David, *saying*, “May the LORD require *it* at the hands of David’s enemies.” ¹⁷ Jonathan made David vow again because of his love for him, because he loved him as he loved his own life.

There are four types of LOVE in the New Testament. The highest love, AGAPE, is a “Lay Down Your Life” love for another. When someone is willing to sacrifice their life for your life, then that love has reached a pinnacle.

- John 15:13, “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.
- John 10:11-15, “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. ¹² “He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters *them*. ¹³ “*He flees* because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. ¹⁴ “I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, ¹⁵ even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.