

A Mighty Redwood/ Jonathon – Friends Forever

Lesson 11

FRIENDSHIP, WITH GOD AT THE CENTER

11/29/15

A Mighty Redwood intertwines its roots with other trees, forming a strong bond that strengthens everyone.

Principle: *“How many friends we have is never an issue to God. His concern is whether or not we are being the type of friend He desires to the people He brings into our lives. True friendship requires mutual honesty and commitment, with God holding the relationship together at the center.”- Fran Sciacca*

“Friends drive you to or from God.” – Jerry White

“Do not be deceived; bad company corrupts good morals.” 1 Cor. 15:33

Bible Character: **Jonathon**

Background: Jonathon was the eldest son of Israel's first king, Saul. By birth he was the heir apparent, destined to become Israel's second king. He was also a valiant warrior, highly respected and popular within his father's army. But in the sovereign plan of God, he was to play a role altogether different from what he expected.

David was God's choice to be king. He and Jonathon were destined to become brothers-in-law and share a family heritage and also to become close friends. Jonathan's name means “gift from God”, and that is what he was to David. He is an example of what friendship can become when the Lord is at the center, and also a unique role model of a true friend. (Taken from *To Stand and Not Be Moved* by Fran Sciacca.)

Scripture: 1 Samuel 19-20; 23:7-18 (NIV, selected verses)

- 19:1 Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David. But Jonathan was very fond of David
- 2 and warned him, "My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. Be on your guard tomorrow morning; go into hiding and stay there.
- 3 I will go out and stand with my father in the field where you are. I'll speak to him about you and will tell you what I find out."
- 4 Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, "Let not the king do wrong to his servant David; he has not wronged you, and what he has done has benefited you greatly.
- 20:3 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."
- 4 Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you want me to do, I'll do for you."
- 13 But if my father is inclined to harm you, may the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if I do not let you know and send you away safely. May the LORD be with you as he has been with my father.
- 14 But show me unfailing kindness like that of the LORD as long as I live, so that I may not be killed,
- 15 and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family – even when the LORD has cut off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth."
- 16 So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the LORD call David's enemies to account."
- 17 And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.
- 23:16 And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God.
- 17 "Don't be afraid," he said. "My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father Saul knows this."
- 18 The two of them made a covenant before the LORD. Then Jonathan went home, but David remained at Horesh.

Illustration

My wife Trisha really knows how to cultivate friendships and be a true friend. I sometimes kid her that she's a friend “to the death!” She's loving, longsuffering, patient, and full of fun things to do. She gave our kids a powerful example of how to be a friend to a variety of people, even to those in whom others saw little value.

- Is God pointing out someone in your life to spend time with, encourage, and with whom to cultivate a friendship?

General Discussion

- 1 Sam. 18:1 says, "After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself." What do you think was most likely the single greatest factor that drew Jonathan to David, leading to their lifelong friendship?
- Jonathan exhibits many of the traits of a true friend. Identify some of those traits expressed in the following passages from 1 Samuel. Look at each passage and extract a quality of true friendship.

18:1	<i>After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself.</i>
19:1-2	<i>Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David. But Jonathan was very fond of David and warned him, "My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. Be on your guard tomorrow morning; go into hiding and stay there."</i>
19:4-5	<i>Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, "Let not the king do wrong to his servant David; he has not wronged you, and what he has done has benefited you greatly. He took his life in his hands when he killed the Philistine. The LORD won a great victory for all Israel, and you saw it and were glad. Why then would you do wrong to an innocent man like David by killing him for no reason?"</i>
20:34	<i>Jonathan got up from the table in fierce anger; on that second day of the month he did not eat, because he was grieved at his father's shameful treatment of David.</i>
23:16	<i>And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God.</i>
23:17	<i>"Don't be afraid," he said. "My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father Saul knows this."</i>

Small Group Discussion

- If the Bible's words of caution about friendship are left unheeded it can lead to serious hurt, anger, and resentment in our lives. What do the following verses have to say that shed light on our friendships?

Prov. 27:6	<i>Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.</i>
John 16:32	<i>"But a time is coming, and has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me."</i>
Prov. 27:8-10	<i>8 Like a bird that wanders from her nest, So is a man who wanders from his home. 9 Oil and perfume make the heart glad, So a man's counsel is sweet to his friend. 10 Do not forsake your own friend or your father's friend, And do not go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity; Better is a neighbor who is near than a brother far away.</i>
Dt. 31:6	<i>"Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you."</i>

- What word or phrase from 1 Cor. 13:4-8 identifies a quality you need to strengthen in your friendships?

Love is *patient*, love is *kind*. It *does not envy*, it *does not boast*, it *is not proud*. It *is not rude*, it *is not self-seeking*, it *is not easily angered*, it *keeps no record of wrongs*. Love does not delight in evil but *rejoices with the truth*. It always *protects*, always *trusts*, always *hopes*, always *perseveres*. Love *never fails*.

Next Time: – Daniel – Stability of Mind / *Staying True When It Matters Most*