

# Sermon Notes

Practical Lessons for Understanding the Word of God



## Strong Friendships—Part 1

KEY PASSAGE: 1 Samuel 18:1-7

### SUMMARY

**Friendships come in a variety of forms ranging from casual to intimate.**

Casual friendships are plentiful and happen quickly, but intimate friends are few in number, and the relationship takes longer to develop. No matter what our position or status in life, we all need friends, especially those who are genuine, loyal, and lasting. If we've found a friend like this, we should be grateful because he or she is a priceless possession.

### SERMON POINTS

**In 1 Samuel 18:1-7, the story of David and Jonathan is a wonderful example of a true friendship.**

Immediately after David's victory over Goliath, "the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself" (v. 1). This was an unusual friendship because it appears to have developed suddenly, yet it reached deep into their souls. Being knit together is like having hearts linked to each other so they cannot be separated.

Jonathan, who was a great warrior himself, saw David's courage and felt an immediate bond with him. An intimate friendship requires the giving of one's self to another, and that's what Jonathan did. Because of his love for David, he made a covenant with him that day, giving him his robe and armor. And his loyalty was proven true when he rescued David a number of times from the jealous rage of his father, Saul. Although Saul saw David as a threat to his kingdom, Jonathan saw him as his intimate friend, and that friendship lasted until his death.

### Levels of Friendship

Our relationships with other people can be divided into three different levels.

- **Distant friends.** They are people we see occasionally, and our interaction with them is of a casual nature and on a surface level.
- **Close friends.** These are friends we see more often and whose company we enjoy. Our conversations are centered on common interests.
- **Intimate friends.** These are well-established and resilient relationships. Even when we've been apart for a while, we're able to simply pick up where we left off. We delight in being with them and feel encouraged in their presence. There's freedom to share deeply—even our hurts, disappointments, or embarrassments—knowing that we are loved and accepted.

### Characteristics of a Genuine, Intimate Friend

We all need a true friend who's loyal and impacts our lives. As we look at the characteristics of such a friend, we must ask ourselves if we have someone like this in our lives and whether we are this kind of friend to someone else.

### Intimate friends ...

- **Delight us.** We enjoy being with them and often make plans to meet again.
- **Develop us.** Their encouragement and involvement in our lives help us become better persons—as God desires us to be.
- **Drive us.** These are the friends who make an awesome difference in our lives because they see the potential in us and want to contribute to that

potential by looking for ways to encourage, help, and challenge us.

Genuine friends are a valuable blessing from the Lord, but the wrong friends are a negative influence that drags us down. That's why it's so important to evaluate our relationships to make sure they are uplifting and devoted.

### Building Friendships

A great relationship like Jonathan and David's doesn't usually happen automatically, but demands something from us. It requires ...

- **Time.** No relationship—whether it's with a friend, spouse, or child—will flourish without the investment of our time in their lives.
- **Talking.** Every friendship is founded upon two-way communication.
- **Tears and laughter.** A genuinely open relationship requires sharing of both our joys and sorrows. We'd prefer that it all be laughter, but true friendships include hurt, pain, and tears.
- **Triumphs.** We should be as excited about our friends' accomplishments and victories as we are about our own. These are times to commend them for a job well done and rejoice with them.
- **Trials.** Every relationship goes through trials and disappointments. However, troubles can be diminished when we learn to relate to others in a selfless, caring manner.
- **Thankfulness.** We should always thank the Lord for blessing us with good friendships; however, we also need to express gratitude to our friends. Saying "thank you" should come readily and sincerely to our lips for anything they do for us. And when they need our help, we should be grateful for the privilege of meeting their need.
- **Thoughtfulness.** Being thoughtful requires that we think about the other person, not just about ourselves. It flows from our love and concern and can be manifested in a variety of ways—a note, a call, a gift, or a visit—depending on our friend's need or circumstance.

- **Tolerance.** Being a genuine friend requires tolerance. We need patience when we'd prefer they change, forgiveness when we're wronged, and willingness to help in whatever way we can.
- **Touching.** A warm, godly hug is a wonderful way to convey our love and assure a friend of our prayers on their behalf. And when someone is hurting, a touch delivers comfort and encouragement. This is a way we can follow Jesus' example because He continually touched people as He ministered to them—even lepers. We should never underestimate the power of a touch.
- **Transparency.** To build an intimate friendship, we must be willing to be honest and open. Instead of trying to hide our weaknesses and hurts, we should freely share our struggles with a friend. This doesn't mean we have to reveal everything about ourselves, but we must be authentic and demonstrate that we really are who we appear to be.
- **Truthfulness.** Without a foundation of truth, we cannot build a relationship. We must be confident that the other person is speaking truthfully, and he or she should be able to trust that we will do whatever we have said.

## RESPONSE

- Do you have a genuine, intimate friend? If so, what has held you together? If you don't have such a friend, what is hindering you from developing this kind of relationship? What can you do to begin cultivating a deeper relationship with someone?
- To have a loyal friend, we need to be one to someone else. Look over the list of requirements for building a true friendship. Which ones are characteristic of you? Which ones can you develop or improve?
- If you long for a close friend but have been unable to find one, ask the Lord to provide someone with whom you can share. Then ask Him to make you into the friend He wants you to be.

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