

**Women's Bible Study – Fall 2009**  
**What's in the Heart?**  
**September 23, 2009**  
***A Heart of Friendship***  
**1 Samuel 18-20**  
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When I was a little girl, my mom used to drag us around the state of Kentucky to libraries. Now, I love books, but these were not your ordinary libraries filled with the classics or contemporary works of literature. These were libraries specializing in reference materials: microfiche, microfilm, old newspapers, this after all was the 1970's.

I can remember my mother spending what seemed like hours driving to a library and searching through volumes of data while I entertained my younger brother and sister. My mother was engaged in a massive project, she was writing our family history. In a similar way we are going to do some research of our own into the friendship of David and Jonathan.

### **Historical Context**

Let's begin by setting our scripture passage in its historical context. If you are new to Bible Study you will quickly realize that although my mother went to her grave thinking none of her children shared her love for history; I actually began to take a great interest in history when I began teaching Women's Bible Study.

Last week we began in the year 1025 B.C. The Jews had left Egypt and settled in Canaan, which is modern day Israel and Palestine. They had gone through the period of conquest and the judges. When the Israelites clamored for a king, God gave them King Saul, who proved to be a disaster.

In chapter 16, God told the high priest Samuel that he would tear the kingdom away from Saul and give it to someone new, one of the sons of Jesse. Shockingly the youngest son, David was chosen. Last week in Chapter 17, we studied one of the most familiar events in David's life, the slaying of Goliath.

## Scripture Passage

This morning our study will span chapters 18, 19, 20. Obviously, we won't read all those chapters aloud, but there are many details there that you would enjoy reading on your own. Let's pick up the narrative at the end of Chapter 17.

Please open your Bibles if you have them; I am reading from the New King James Version. 1 Samuel chapter 17 beginning with verse 57: <sup>57</sup> Then, as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. <sup>58</sup> And Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, young man?" So David answered, "I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."

<sup>1</sup>Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. <sup>2</sup>Saul took him that day, and would not let him go home to his father's house anymore. <sup>3</sup>Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. <sup>4</sup>And Jonathan took off the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt.

These four verses will be our focus, although we will cover many other sections in the next three chapters as we study the friendship of David and Jonathan. As always notes are available on the website, so you don't have to furiously scribble down references.

## The Friendship of David and Jonathan Differences

Doesn't it seem like an odd thing that the Prince of Israel, the rightful Heir to the Throne would approach a young shepherd to initiate a relationship that would be of such a deep quality that they would describe their souls as being knit together? These men were very different; looking at them from this snapshot there seems to be almost nothing that would compel them to be friends.

- To begin with David is a shepherd. Jonathan is a prince.
- David has a working class background, Jonathan is royalty.
- David probably had a limited education; Jonathan would have had access to the very best education offered in Israel.
- Although both were from large families, David was the youngest in his family. Jonathan was the oldest.
- They were from different tribes. David was from the tribe of Judah, while Jonathan was from the tribe of Benjamin.
- They were of vastly different income levels. David himself in 1 Samuel 18:23 says that he is poor. Jonathan would have enjoyed access to the wealth of the kingdom.

When you look at these two men's occupations, family backgrounds, education, and socio-economic status they have very little in common. However, we learned last week in 1 Samuel 16:7, the . . . "the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." As you might imagine this narrative is about much more than two men with different backgrounds living in ancient Israel. This narrative describes a part of the heavenly drama that is taking place in real time, in real space, and with real people. Let's take our lens and get a wider angle on this snapshot and see what might have been some of the qualities that God used to develop their friendship.

## Similarities

### 1. Both Men were Kings in Waiting

It didn't look like that at first glance. However, this young harp playing shepherd had been anointed by God earlier in chapter 16. Jonathan was the biological heir; but David, the King in Waiting, was the spiritual heir. You see this dynasty had long before been prophesied. God created it and He would give it to David.

### 2. Both Men were Warriors who faced overwhelming odds.

David, of course, wasn't a typical warrior. He wasn't clothed in soldier's armor. He wasn't serving in the military. However, when the God of Israel was insulted, and His armies threatened, David stood in the gap and faced the challenger despite overwhelming odds.

Jonathan understood this well. You see not long before he had had a similar experience. Israel was having a tough time with the Philistines. They seemed to have the upper hand. Chapter 13 recorded that they had gathered together to fight Israel with thirty thousand chariots, six thousand horsemen, and "people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude". And when the men of Israel saw that they were in danger they hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits. They were afraid. King Saul wasn't able to do much to inspire courage. It is finally Jonathan that breaks the deadlock.

**(1 Samuel 14:6)** <sup>6</sup> Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the Lord will work for us. For nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few." <sup>7</sup> So his armorbearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart. Go then; here I am with you, according to your heart." <sup>8</sup> Then Jonathan said, "Very well, let us cross over to these men, and we will show ourselves to them.

<sup>11</sup> So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the Philistines said, "Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden." <sup>12</sup> Then the men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armorbearer, and

said, "Come up to us, and we will show you something." Jonathan said to his armorbearer, "Come up after me, for the Lord has delivered them into the hand of Israel." <sup>13</sup> And Jonathan climbed up on his hands and knees with his armorbearer after him; and they fell before Jonathan. And as he came after him, his armorbearer killed them. <sup>14</sup> That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armorbearer made was about twenty men within about half an acre of land. <sup>15</sup> And there was trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and the raiders also trembled; and the earth quaked, so that it was a very great trembling. And in verse 23 we read, "the Lord saved Israel that day".

David and Jonathan both knew what it was like to go forth in battle against overwhelming odds. I think when Jonathan saw what had happened with Goliath he knew he had kindred spirit.

### **3. Both Men were Committed Believers in God.**

Their attitudes, their actions, and their words demonstrate this. David when he entered the battlefield and faced Goliath said, <sup>45</sup> . . . "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. <sup>46</sup> This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. <sup>47</sup> Then all this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands." (1 Samuel 17:45-47)

Jonathan as he was climbing up to face the Philistines in their own garrison said, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the Lord will work for us. For nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few." (1 Samuel 14:6)

Jonathan knew that God did not need a large army that He could save Israel by whatever means he chose, but someone needed to step out in faith and face the enemy. No wonder their souls had been knit together, they trusted God to the point of risking their very lives for his honor and for his glory.

### **4. Both had been Treated Unjustly by the King and threatened with Death.**

Remember David who had become the national hero who had just stepped out in faith and defeated the Giant; instead of gaining Saul's long term respect and gratitude, they don't even make it through the victory parade before David experiences the King's wrath.

1 Samuel 18:

<sup>5</sup> So David went out wherever Saul sent him, and behaved wisely. And Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants. <sup>6</sup> Now it had happened as they were coming home, when

David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments. <sup>7</sup> So the women sang as they danced, and said: "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands."

<sup>8</sup> Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?" <sup>9</sup> So Saul eyed David from that day forward. <sup>10</sup> And it happened on the next day that the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house. So David played music with his hand, as at other times; but there was a spear in Saul's hand. <sup>11</sup> And Saul cast the spear, for he said, "I will pin David to the wall!" But David escaped his presence twice.

It won't be the last time that Saul tries to kill him, just in this one chapter he tries several more times. Saul had promised that whoever would face the Giant Goliath and defeat him would get several rewards from the Crown. One of those rewards was Saul's daughter. But Saul doesn't hand her over without a price, in fact he won't even hand over the daughter that was to be his wife. But he happened upon another opportunity.

<sup>20</sup> Now Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David. And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. <sup>21</sup> So Saul said, "I will give her to him, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." Therefore Saul said to David a second time, "You shall be my son-in-law today." <sup>22</sup> And Saul commanded his servants, "Communicate with David secretly, and say, 'Look, the king has delight in you, and all his servants love you. Now therefore, become the king's son-in-law.'" <sup>23</sup> So Saul's servants spoke those words in the hearing of David. And David said, "Does it seem to you a light thing to be a king's son-in-law, seeing I am a poor and lightly esteemed man?"

<sup>24</sup> And the servants of Saul told him, saying, "In this manner David spoke." <sup>25</sup> Then Saul said, "Thus you shall say to David: 'The king does not desire any dowry but one hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king's enemies.'" But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. <sup>26</sup> So when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to become the king's son-in-law. Now the days had not expired; <sup>27</sup> therefore David arose and went, he and his men, and killed two hundred men of the Philistines. And David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full count to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law. Then Saul gave him Michal his daughter as a wife.

You might think there would now be a time of peace but no, Saul tries to use David's new wife to trap him. Saul even goes down and sends soldiers to take a supposedly sick David from his bed and bring him bed and all to him so he can kill him. David has done nothing wrong. He has submitted to Saul's authority. He has behaved wisely. He has done nothing to provoke him in word or in deed.

## **Jonathan**

Unfortunately Jonathan can relate to being unjustly accused by the King, even though the King is his father. Remember when Jonathan had climbed up into the Philistine Garrison and had begun the slaughter of the Philistines. Well, in the mean time Saul had put the entire army under a rash oath, "Cursed is the man who eats any food until evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies." Well, with a threat like that no one had eaten. They came to a forest with lots of honey on the ground and the soldiers were starving, but they didn't dare eat. Except Jonathan, for he had not been present to hear the oath of his father.

The battle proceeds, but in taking the spoil the soldiers rush to kill the animals, but do not take care to drain the blood as was required. Saul seeks God's advice and God does not answer him. Saul assumes it is because someone has sinned. They cast lots and Jonathan was taken. Saul decides he must die for the sin of eating honey.

Another time, Saul also speaks terribly to his son because of his relationship with David, at one point he says to him, (1 Samuel 20:30) "You son of a perverse rebellious woman! Do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness?" And just a few verses later he throws his own spear at his son in an attempt to kill him.

Both men knew the unjust accusations and treatment of the King. Both had faced the immediate prospect of death at his hands.

## **5. Both Men were Well Loved by the People**

Several times we read of the people's love for David. 1 Samuel 18:16 says, "But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them."

Jonathan was loved as well. When his father tried to kill him for eating the honey the people said to Saul, "Shall Jonathan die, who has accomplished this great deliverance in Israel? Certainly not! As the LORD lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, and he did not die. (1 Samuel 14:45)

Jonathan and David had much in common. On that day of the Great Battle with Goliath, they entered into a covenant relationship. That covenant I believe rose not from their differences which were many, but from their similarities which foundationally included a deep devotion to God.

David's most public success will now be followed by one of his most severe times of trial. David will eventually be forced to flee the kingdom and live in isolation. I think God provided this deep and rare friendship as a special gift to David, at a particular time

because he knew the difficulties David would face and the encouragement that he would need.

## **The Covenant**

The covenant Jonathan and David entered was based on some very common covenant principles that we find in the Old Testament. First, the covenant was initiated by the Greater to the Lesser. Jonathan was the greater. He had the royal title, the power, the influence, the wealth. He freely without coercion or without any opportunity for worldly gain enters into a covenant with David.

He offers gifts to David to seal the covenant: the royal robe, his armor, his sword, his bow, and his belt. Incidentally we read in Chapter 13, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people, but only Saul and Jonathan possessed them. They were rare gifts.

The covenant involves a sacrifice on the part of the one who initiated, Jonathan. The sacrifice is his wealth, power, and position. Jonathan is symbolically saying it is you who deserve to be King; you have stood in the gap for the nation of Israel. God is obviously with you. Jonathan is willing to lay it all aside. He will sacrifice his relationship with his earthly father as a result of the covenant.

As part of this covenant he will be loyal to David. He will defend him to his Father. He will seek his best interest. He will protect him. He will encourage him.

Does this remind you of any other Covenant Maker? Jesus Christ initiated a covenant with us. A covenant sealed with the sacrifice of his own blood. A covenant in which he gives us his righteousness and grants us his own garments in exchange for our filthy ones. He is loyal. He will never leave us or forsake us. He sits at the right hand of the Father interceding for us. He has given us the Holy Spirit to comfort, teach, and encourage us.

## **Lessons from Their Relationship**

What can we learn from this relationship between David and Jonathan? **First, we learn that this kind of relationship is Rare and Precious.** Unfortunately it is so rare and precious that many cannot grasp it and choose to tag it with a homosexual label. But there is no hard evidence for this and much to the contrary. This kind of friendship is rare and precious. You may in your lifetime have only one friendship of this level. You may be fortunate to have two or three, but it is unlikely that you will have more.

**Second, we learn something about how to develop this kind of relationship.** We need to be open minded in our friendships. Don't just look on the outside for similarities. Some of my deepest relationships are with those who on the surface don't

have anything in common with me. Be on the lookout for a kindred spirit that God may bring along. Be careful not to miss it because you have a rigid idea of who it should be. As Christians are deepest heart friendships will be with other believers because something so central to our character must be central to theirs.

We need to Pray for this kind of relationship. Surely David did, surely he asked God for someone who could relate to his unique situation. Ask God to provide a deep and precious relationship for you.

We need to wait. It may take many years to find a relationship as rare as David's and Jonathan's. Be patient and wait expectantly.

### **Third, we learn how to maintain and grow these types of relationships.**

They will require an investment in time and energy.

They will require sacrifice.

They will require trust.

They will require you to see the best in others.

They will require you to weather conflict.

No relationship is without conflict. How you deal with conflict will often determine the longevity and depth of your relationships. Even close friends will hurt your feelings. Even close friends will make poor word choices, lose their tempers, or react poorly under stress. Prepare in advance at least mentally how you will deal with disagreements. Learn to say, "I'm sorry." Learn to see your contribution to the conflict even when you think you are right.

**Fourth, we learn there are Transitions in relationships.** In some transitions we have a measure of control and in some we do not. For example, proximity is extremely helpful in building relationships. However, when friends move far away there will be a transition in the relationship. You can take steps to overcome this transition by taking care to maintain the relationship through long distance communication strategies.

Friendships can also transition for other reasons. Unfortunately our relationships are hindered by the fact that we live in a broken world and sometimes our relationships are broken. Perhaps there has been a great hurt, and even with appropriate apologies and efforts to reconcile the relationship simply cannot be mended. Perhaps there have been misunderstandings. Perhaps there have been sharp disagreements. Paul and Barnabus even faced this (Acts 15:36-41). Sometimes with time these relationships can be mended, sometimes they cannot.

Sometimes matters of faith can transition or end a friendship, perhaps you have become a Christian and your friend is antagonistic about your new found faith and now

something is terribly lacking in your relationship. The relationship may come to an end or take on less importance.

Sometimes friendships end without the permission of either party either through circumstance or death. David and Jonathan parted because David had to flee the kingdom. Jonathan was eventually killed in battle.

**Finally, realize that as a Christian you already have at least one precious friend, Jesus.**

No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. (John 15:15)

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