

# Going Deeper

Your weekly guide to understanding God with others

## David - Part 4 - The Art of Friendship

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### Introduction

Followers of Jesus understand that we were created by design, which includes God's intention for us to live all aspects of our lives in relationship. Whilst a moment of solitude can be rejuvenating, we were not designed to be 'an island'. Pastor Sam cited a long-term Harvard study on happiness that demonstrated "Strong relationships have a better chance of making a long, happy life than social class, intelligence or even genetics."

In the Creation narrative in Genesis, scripture declares that it is not good for man to be alone. Throughout the Bible, this theme carries over to all aspects of our lives and underpins the importance of healthy relationships in marriage, family, friendships and community.

### Discuss

- If we are designed by God to benefit from being in good relationship, why do we see ruined relationships at every level being so prevalent in our world?
- Is this the work of Satan, or the human heart drifting away from God, or a combination of both or other factors – who do we blame?
- What is the cure? As believers, what can and should we do about it? Where do we start?

The relationship between Jonathan and David is one of the strongest examples of a healthy friendship ever recorded. The account begins at 1 Samuel 18:1 and continues until circumstances force the men to go in separate directions at 1 Samuel 23:18. However, their bond continues even after Jonathan is killed in battle, and becomes a legacy benefitting Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth. Both David and Jonathan were men of character (illustrated in 1 Samuel 14 and 1 Samuel 16 respectively). Both were used of God mightily and miraculously to deliver Israel.

David needed a friend, and God provided the selfless, kindred spirit of Jonathan. Let's review some of the attributes of this friendship.

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### **Read 1 Samuel 18:1-4, Ephesians 5:21**

1. Something clicked between Jon and Dave. What part did their respective relationships with God, and David's anointing, play in this?
2. Both Jon and Dave had a spiritual anointing; David was anointed by the prophet Samuel and Jonathan as heir to the throne. Yet Jonathan surrendered his possible earthly inheritance in the light of God's evident anointing upon David. We today are anointed by God through His Holy Spirit to live as servants of Christ. How does surrendering to each other's gifting strengthen friendships?

### **Read 1 Samuel 19:1-6, 1 Samuel 20:1-4**

3. When hard times hit, we need meaningful relationships and support networks that warn us and speak on our behalf. Share an incident where this has made a difference in your own life.
4. Jon's commitment to Dave was a massive sacrifice and potentially costly. Dave could have asked for anything, but he did not exploit it to an extent that was unreasonable. Discuss the importance of both sides here – Jon's willingness and trust, and Dave's respect and value of the offer.
5. Jonathon warns David of something he was unaware of. We all have blind spots in our lives at one time or another, and could use a friend to prevent us from making a mistake. But sometimes it hurts to hear the truth. Could you be that friend who speaks the truth, even if it is hurtful? Could we receive a hurtful truth from a friend who loves us? How can we know the telling, or receiving, is done with the right motive?

### **Read 1 Samuel 23:14-18**

6. Dave was losing focus, so Jon "strengthened his hand in God", reminding him of his calling. Friends help each other to find the spiritual truth, to remember who they are, to get a focus on where they are heading, and encourage each other in the right direction. Do you have the courage to be that kind of friend?
7. What difference would it make to you to have a Jonathan in your life?
8. Have you positioned yourself to have friends like this?

### **Respond**

The Body of Christ (the Church of believers) is stronger when we value each other's contribution and gifting, bond together as a loving family and stand together in times of hardship. Each of us has something valuable to contribute that will benefit others, something that God has put within you that will bring spiritual health, development and growth to the Body of Christ. This in turn builds you, too. What is one thing that you could do each week that would make you a Jonathan type of friend? Who is that one person you should/could contact this week?