

Prime Time Day 2009

Friendship for a Lifetime

By Derl Keefer



Scripture Background: 1 Samuel 18-20

Scripture Text: 1 Samuel 18:3

Building relationships begins with building friendships. Friends may be separated by a continent or they may be separated by a yard, but when they get together, they make you feel like they have never been apart.

Columnist Walter Winchell said, “A real friend is one who walks in when the rest of the world walks out.”

David’s victory over the Philistine giant, Goliath, put a jealous spirit into King Saul’s soul and led to a desire for David’s death. But the King’s son, Jonathan, had a totally different feeling about David. Their friendship reflected Walter Winchell’s statement about friends. As time passed and David was hunted and haunted by Saul, Jonathan’s friendship did not collapse. As much as Saul tried to chop away at Jonathan and David’s friendship he could not succeed. Jonathan was as loyal and dependable as any friend could possibly be to David.

- I. Friendship for a lifetime is relationship. 1 Samuel 20:16
David is not king at this point of the biblical narrative. Saul remains King of Israel despite his mental illness. David is a peasant, but his friend Jonathan is a prince in line for kingship. Their social standing did not change their friendship for one another.
 - A. Authentic friendship stands at the core of relationships.
 - B. Authentic friendship voluntarily gives loyalty to relationships.
 - C. Authentic friendship shares a mutual respect for relationships.
 - D. Authentic friendship forges covenant bonding relationships.

Charles Spurgeon the great Baptist preacher had a pastor friend, Newman Hall. Dr. Hall wrote a book entitled, *Come to Jesus*. Spurgeon thought it a great book, but not everyone agreed. Another pastor published an article which scorned and mocked Hall’s article. Dr. Hall endured the scathing article for a while. As the article gained notoriety Hall sat down and wrote a letter. His answer to the protest was full of retaliatory invectives and criticisms that outdid anything in the article that attacked him. Before mailing the letter Hall made a wise decision to show the article to his friend, Spurgeon.

Spurgeon read it carefully, handed it back to his friend, agreed that it was what the writer of the article deserved. “But,” Spurgeon added, “It just lacks one thing.” After an emphatic pause Spurgeon continued, “Underneath your signature you ought to write the words, author of *Come to Jesus*.”

The two godly men sat quietly for a few moments. Then Hall tore the letter to shreds. He knew the letter he had penned was not authentically from the heart of a Jesus follower.¹

II. Friendship for a lifetime is encouragement. 1 Samuel 19:4

Friends encourage one another with words that build up. In 1 Samuel 19:4 it says, “Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul...” That should happen in any relationship; friendship, marriage, family, anyone we know well. We need to foster friendships with words and actions.

- A. An encouragement that unifies when there is a need.
- B. An encouragement that serves when there is a need.
- C. An encouragement that gives courage when there is a need.
- D. An encouragement that shows appreciation when there is a need.

“One of the highest of human duties is the duty of encouragement. It is easy to laugh at men’s ideals; it is easy to pour cold water on their enthusiasm; it is easy to discourage others. The world is full of discouragers. We have a Christian duty to encourage one another. Many a time a word of praise or thanks or appreciation or cheer has kept a man on his feet. Blessed is the man who speaks such a word.” (William Barclay). Encouragement! A watchword for our times. Shout it out. Sing its song. Pass it around!

III. Friendship for a lifetime is God centered. 1 Samuel 20:42.

Jonathan says to David, “Go in peace for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the Lord, saying, ‘The Lord is witness between you and me and between your descendants and my descendants forever.’”

There is a bumper sticker that reads, “A FRIEND IN NEED IS A PEST!” that is certainly not true of a God-centered relationships.

- A. A God-centered friendship is given without strings; unconditional love.
- B. A God-centered friendship is given with a feeling of security; never wavers.
- C. A God-centered friendship is given with inexpressible comfort and ease; never having to weigh thoughts or measure words.
- D. A God-centered friendship is given with a common heart.

C.S. Lewis said, “True Friends don’t spend time gazing into each other’s eyes. They may show great tenderness toward each other, but they face in the same direction; toward common projects, interests, goals, and above all, toward a common Lord.”²

Conclusion:

Out of the crucibles of war come many true stories of sacrificial friendship. In World War I, two male friends enlisted together, trained together, were deployed overseas together, and fought side by side in the trenches. During an attack they were in the open barbed wire field retreating to their foxhole where their companions were located. One of them was shot and lay critically wounded. The other made it safely back to the foxhole only to discover his friend was not there. As he turned he saw his friend

¹ Charles Swindoll, *The Case for the Tardy Oxcart* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1998), 41.

² Albert Wells, Jr., Compiler, *Inspiring Quotations* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1988), 76.

lying a distance away with bullets whizzing overhead. It was suicidal to try and reach his fallen comrade. Yet, he started out only to be stopped by his sergeant and ordered not to go. "It's too late. You cannot do him any good, and you'll only get yourself killed."

A few minutes later, the sergeant turned his back; the man leaped out and made his way to his friend. A few minutes later, he staggered back, mortally wounded, with his friend, now dead, in his arms. The sergeant was both angry and deeply moved. "What a waste," he blurted out. "He's dead and you're dying. It just wasn't worth it."

With almost his last breath, the dying soldier responded, "Oh, yes, it was, Sarge. When I got to him he said, 'I knew you'd come, Jim.'"

Friendship can be costly.

Jonathan was that kind of a friend to David. Who would you die for? Who did Jesus die for? You!

**Order of Worship – Contemporary
2009 Prime Time Day
Friendship for a Lifetime**



Instrumental Prelude

Call to Worship: 1 John 1:3, 7

Worship and Praise:

“Friend of God” (2003 *Vertical Worship Songs and Integrity’s Praise!*)

“Holy Is the Lord” (2003 worshiptogether.com/songs)

Scripture Reading: John 17:11, 21-23

“Humble King” (1999 *Vineyard Songs*)

Prayer of the Community: Prime Time adult

Response Reading: “Loving From the Heart” #680 (*Sing to the Lord*)

Passing of the Peace: Led by a Prime Time adult (Instrumental – “Not To Us” (2002 worshiptogether.com/songs))

Drama Sketch: (*A Friend in Need*, Martha Bolton or *The Myth of Brotherly Love*, Doug Smee)
Prime Time actors or another drama group

Testimony of Holiness: Prime Time adult

Tithes and Offerings: Instrumental Offertory (Prime Time adults)

Good News: “Friendship for a Lifetime”

Congregational Response Song: “Make Us One” (2003 Ariose Music)

Closing Prayer: Prime Time adult

Benediction: Senior pastor

Instrumental Postlude

Readings are taken from the *Sing to the Lord*, Lillenas Publishing.

Worship and praise songs can be found through the CCLI website www.ccli.com.

Drama sketches can be downloaded at www.lillenasdrama.com.

**Order of Worship – Traditional
2009 Prime Time Day
Friendship for a Lifetime**



Instrumental Prelude March: Hymn #672 “Tis a Glorious Church”

Call to Worship: 1 John 1:3, 7

Worship and Praise:

“Come, All Christians, Be Committed” #544 (*Sing to the Lord*)

“Bind Us Together” (1977 Thank You Music, Word Music, *Songs for Praise and Worship*)

Scripture Reading: John 17:11, 21-23

“The Servant Song” #679 (*Sing to the Lord*)

Prayer of the Community: Prime Time adult

Response Reading: “Loving From the Heart” #680 (*Sing to the Lord*)

Passing of the Peace: Led by a Prime Time Adult (Instrumental – Hymn #682 “The Bond of Love” – Sing to the Lord/ Hymnbook)

Drama Sketch: (*A Friend in Need*, Martha Bolton or *The Myth of Brotherly Love*, Doug Smee) Prime Time actors or another drama group

Testimony of Holiness: Prime Time adult

Tithes and Offerings: Instrumental Offertory (Prime Time adults)

Good News: “Friendship for a Lifetime”

Congregational Response Song: “I Then Shall Live” Hymn #732 (*Sing to the Lord*)

Closing Prayer: Prime Time adult

Benediction: Senior pastor

Instrumental Postlude: “Tis a Glorious Church” #672 (*Sing to the Lord*)

Hymns are taken from the *Sing to the Lord*, Lillenas Publishing.

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