

- ***READ I Samuel 18:1-5*** Directly on the heels of his ginormous victory over the great Philistine giant Goliath, David is standing before Saul and he meets a man that would become his greatest friend and fellow soldier that he would ever have. The friendship between David and Jonathan serves as a true example and definition of Biblical friendship. The Scriptures tell us that these two men's souls were knit together, and Jonathan loved David as himself. I have no doubt that David felt the same way towards his friend Jonathan based upon how he lamented his death in **II Samuel 1:25-27**, and as he said that Jonathan's love for him was "more wonderful than the love of women." There are some who would like to take this verse and apply a homosexual connotation to it, but that is an extremely poor conclusion to draw. Instead, I am convinced that David simply means that the love Jonathan had for him far surpassed the temporal love that a woman might shower upon David. Jonathan's love for David was true and lasting.
- But I wonder...I wonder what made Jonathan such an amazing friend to David? I think this is a worthwhile question to consider since we are blessed by so many friendships with those who have been placed in our lives by our good God. If God has been so great to us by giving us so many wonderful friends...you might say so many "Jonathan"s...then wouldn't it be logical to consider what we can do to be a Jonathan to others? Wouldn't it be good for us to come to recognize what made Jonathan such a great friend so that we too can be a great blessing to others? I think this is a good thing, and I think we can see what made Jonathan such a good friend not just in the stories in I Samuel, but we can see in the wisdom of the Proverbs what made Jonathan such a good friend. But he wasn't just a good friend... Jonathan was the best of friends to David and he was the type of better friend that each of us ought to strive to be to those who are around us. We ought to want to be the type of friend that benefits our friends as is said in **Proverbs 13:20**, *"He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm."*
- This evening, I want to consider from the Proverbs and the story of Jonathan's friendship with David four ways in which we can be a better friend to our friends. Of course, there will be some that we naturally are closer to than others. That's just how things are. That's how it was for these two men, but these are good general friendship principles that can help us to grow stronger in all of the friendships that we have been blessed with in this life. Let's consider how to be a better friend through the wisdom of the Proverbs and the example of Jonathan and David's friendship.

4 Ways To Be A Better Friend

I. Be a godly friend.

- A. The first thing that made Jonathan such a good friend was that Jonathan was a godly friend. As opposed to his father Saul, Jonathan was rock solid in his faith as far as we can see in Scripture, and he always sought to be a positive influence in the life of David. From his very core, from who he was in his foundational character, Jonathan sought to be a better friend by being a godly friend. He sought to keep David founded in God, even in the most difficult of times. (**I Samuel 23:15-18**)
- B. That's where being a better friend begins. It begins with being the right kind of person to our very core. After his introductory words in **Proverbs 1**, Solomon gets right to the point concerning the type of person that he expected for his son to be. Beginning in **1:8** and going through **v.19**, we see Solomon encouraging his son not to go in the way of the sinners. He speaks of enticement to sin and the temptation that his son will more than likely face to do those things that might seem inviting but are sinful in the end.
- C. I think these verses fit in very nicely with our consideration of being a better friend to those who are around us. The admonition from Solomon to his son is to avoid friends and those people he could associate himself with who might lead him to do what is wrong in the sight of God. If wisdom teaches us to avoid friendships with people who could do this to us, then wouldn't another logical conclusion then to be that we ought not be the type of friend who would lead our friends to do those thing which are wicked? We can be a great and better friend like Jonathan was by being godly in our character and seeking to lead our friends closer to God ad as far away from sin as possible.

II. Be a dependable friend.

- A. Secondly, if I want to be a better friend then I need to be a person that my friends can depend upon. This is exactly who Jonathan was to David throughout the entirety of their friendship. David certainly saw his fair share of difficulties and storms during his ascension to the throne of Israel...most coming at the hand of Jonathan's own father, but the entire time Jonathan continued to be there by his side supporting his friend.
- B. **Proverbs 17:17**, says *"A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity."* A true friend, a friend that we might even refer to as a brother, as David would certainly refer to Jonathan as, is someone who is there through thick and thin. He is one who loves you all the time. He is there when you are successful and he is there when you are failing. But you might be thinking, *"Nick, you sound like you're talking more about marriage than you are a friendship."* I think, if anything, that type of statement speaks to the necessity of developing ourselves as good friends to those who are around us. Our friendships and how we develop in our character in those relationships will help to shape us into the type of spouses that we will be.
- C. Surely, we are seeing the importance of putting in the effort to grow in our roles as friends to those around us. But continuing on this thought of being dependable, consider **Proverbs 19:22**. *"What is desirable in a man is his kindness, And it is better to be a poor man than a liar."* I think Solomon's point is that we seek out friendships with people who are of the right kind of character more than people who might have goods that might help us. The NET says, *"What is desirable for a person is to show loyal love"* The ESV phrases it, *"What is desired in a man is steadfast love."* Who are the best friends that we have? Are they the people who are there for us at a moment's call no matter the situation? Or do we prefer those friends who have everything in the world to help us, yet when we call they are no where to be found? Jonathan didn't always have much to offer David besides an ear to listen and a shoulder to lean upon, yet that was all that David needed at times, and sometimes that is all our friends need. *"A man of too many friends comes to ruin, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."* (**Proverbs 18:24**) David probably had many friends who supported him while things were going well in his life, but Jonathan was the type of friend who stayed even through the difficult times. That's just who Jonathan was, and that's who we ought to strive to be, as well.

III. Be a trustworthy friend.

- A. Thirdly, Jonathan was better than your average friend to David because he was trustworthy. In most instances, we probably won't be able to say that trust between friends is life or death, but that is exactly what could be said about David and Jonathan's relationship. Remember, Jonathan's dad was trying to kill David...he could've easily communicated with David, found out his location, and then betray him to his dad...but Jonathan was trustworthy and wouldn't do that to his friend. (**I Samuel 23:16**)
- B. Let's again be thankful that God created us to be relationship based creatures. We crave and need the friendships that we have with one another because we just don't do so well all by ourselves. *"He who separates himself seeks his own desire, he quarrels against all sound wisdom."* (**Proverbs 18:1**) When we are resigned to only rely upon our own wisdom...well we miss out on the wisdom of others that so often helps us when we are in need.
- C. So if we get why it is good to rely upon our friends, then what might stop us from doing so? What might stop others from relying upon us? It might be that we just are trustworthy enough to be relied upon. *"A perverse man spreads strife, and a slanderers separates intimate friends."* (**Proverbs 16:28**) When we are told things in confidence by our friends because they need help or assistance, we need to be the better type of friend that keeps those things in confidence. *"He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy conceals a matter."* (**Proverbs 11:13**) We need to be that trustworthy friend who keeps things where they need to be instead of being a gossip or busybody that likes to spread everyone's business out into the world when it ought not be so. Jonathan was a better friend because he was trustworthy in the mind of David, and we ought to behave in such a way that our friends see us in the same way.

IV. Be a discerning friend.

- A. Finally, what made Jonathan the best kind of friend is the fact that he was a discerning friend. He was able to identify what was going on and react in the appropriate manner. I want to look a bit closer at **I Samuel 23:15-18**. Notice that David is at a pretty low point in his life at the moment. He realizes that Saul is ready to come and take his life so he flees to the wilderness. We could only imagine the thoughts going through his head and the feelings within his soul. Yet, Jonathan hears that his friend is in need and he goes and *"encouraged him in God."* This better friend was godly and knew the right thing at that moment was for David to be reminded who he served and that his God would always be with him. We need to be the type of friend who knows the right thing to say at the right time.
- B. We need to be the type of friend who is a delight to our friends because we offer timely words. *"A man has joy in an apt answer, and how delightful is a timely word!" (Proverbs 15:23)* We need to be the type of friend that is able to discern what is needed at any point in time. It might be that a word of encouragement is needed like Jonathan gave to David. It might be that a word of correction is in order because of some sin or mistake that has been made by a friend. *"Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy." (Proverbs 27:6)* Could you imagine the heartache that could've been avoided in Jonathan had still be alive when David saw Bathsheba on that rooftop and he had found out about it before David made his foolish decisions. Or it might be that it is a time for crying because our friend is crying. It might be that it is time for rejoicing because our friend is rejoicing. The bottom line is that the best of friends are the ones who know the right thing to do at the right moment.
- C. I'm sure each of us has experienced the good that has been done by that word said at the right time, but we have probably also experienced that time when the wrong word was said. *"Like one who takes off garment on a cold day, or like vinegar on soda, is he who sings songs to a troubled heart." (Proverbs 25:20)* It does us no good when someone gives us encouragement when we really need correction and vice versa. Therefore, let us strive to be the better type of friends that are able to wisely discern what is needed at the moment so that we will be nothing but a blessing in the lives of our friends.

So much of our lives are built upon the friendships that we enjoy throughout the years we are on this earth. Our God has been so good to us to give us so many amazing people to experience life with, and I hope that each of us have taken the time to consider the kind of friend that we ought to be towards them. I am so thankful for the awesome example of Biblical friendship that we see between Jonathan and David. We have been blessed with Jonathan's in each of our lives and I hope the we are striving to be a Jonathan to others. May God continue to bless us in our friendships and may much good be done for others and the Kingdom through our efforts to be the best friends to others that we can be.

PRAYER