

## Message #42

## I Samuel 18:1-9

Not long ago there was an article written that caught my attention. The article was called “How to find a good friend.” In the article there were some steps that were recommended to find a good friend:

- 1) Go to social places where potential friends go.
- 2) Join a club that is of interest to you.
- 3) Go to local events to meet others.
- 4) Use social online media and forums.
- 5) Look for those who have common interests.
- 6) Accept invitations.

There are some good tips in the article; but the one thing that was left out is that you will find your greatest friendships with those who love the Lord and love the word of God. No matter what your age group, the most special and valuable friendships you will ever develop will be friendships based on a like-minded commitment to God and His word.

I Samuel chapters 18-20 are unique chapters in the Bible and they are very unique to the Samuel narrative. Samuel describes David’s service in Saul’s court, which forms a very special friendship with Saul’s son, Jonathan. In fact, this text here is devoted to that friendship beginning.

I Samuel 18-20 features parts of a triangular relationship that develops between Saul, David and Jonathan. This friendship that David develops with Jonathan is something God will use and will become a key to David’s survival. **The truth is David’s biggest and longest fight would not turn out to be the one with Goliath; it would turn out to be with Saul.**

There is a very important point to see here:

**GOD IS SOVEREIGN AND HE KNOWS WHAT WE WILL FACE IN THE FUTURE AND HE WILL PROVIDE LOYAL AND FAITHFUL FRIENDS WHO WILL HELP US COPE AND SURVIVE WITH DIFFICULT AND THREATENING THINGS.**

This passage is a great statement of God’s sovereignty. God knew David would need a good, strong, loyal, faithful friend and He gave him one. That friend would be Jonathan, Saul’s own son.

David would be the next king of Israel who would replace King Saul. Saul was a fickle, emotional, irrational and unspiritual disaster. God knew that this friend Jonathan would be a key asset to David’s survival. David had no idea what was in store for him in the future, but God did.

God will always put the right people in our world at just the right time. Those people will be a real key to help us accomplish God’s will. There are seven narrative observations we want to see here:

**NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #1** – God causes Jonathan to become David’s friend. **18:1**

Proverbs 18:24 says, “there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” For David, Jonathan would become that kind of friend.

According to **verse 1**, as Saul was talking with David, something was taking place in the mind, soul and heart of Jonathan. Jonathan was moved to join himself to David.

Jonathan, himself, had been a brave man to fight the Philistines. We may recall that Jonathan and his armor bearer risked their lives to sneak in and attack the Philistines, which led to a great victory for Israel (I Sam. 14). There would be an instant camaraderie between two warriors like David and Jonathan.

I appreciate something Dr. J. Vernon McGee said. People often speak of a love between a man and woman and it is a wonderful thing. In fact, both David and Jonathan had wives (II Sam. 4:4). But Dr. McGee observed there is nothing nobler than a close friendship between two men of God. Two men who love the Lord and the word can have a special bond no man or woman will ever have. It is a friendship rooted in the mysteries of the sovereignty of God (Thru the Bible, Vol. 2, *I Samuel*, p. 158).

There is no question that Martin Luther had a great wife named Katie, who really supported him and encouraged him in ministry. But Martin Luther also had a great friend named Phil Melancthon, who was a real key to him during the dark days of the reformation.

Lewis Sperry Chafer had a wonderful wife, but there was a friendship formed between him and C. I. Scofield that literally changed the world. There is nothing so important than good friendships between two powerful men of God.

Now the fact that Jonathan was moved in his soul to be David’s friend was very unique and quite remarkable at this point for **three reasons**:

**Reason #1** - Jonathan does not even know David at this point.

Jonathan is just getting to know David and usually a friendship takes time. This is an instant friendship God is causing and orchestrating to take place in his soul.

**Reason #2** - Jonathan is much older than David.

In the second year of Saul’s reign, Jonathan was old enough to command military campaigns (I Sam. 13:1-3). David was not born until 8-10 years after Saul began to reign, so Jonathan must have been 25-30 years older than David. He was probably old enough to be his father.

Good friendships can develop with people of different ages; especially in the things of God. Ruth, for example, had a great friendship with Naomi, who was old enough to be her mother. There is no better friendship to have than with one who is older and loves God and His word.

**Reason #3** - Jonathan was the heir apparent to Saul's throne.

If anyone had a right to be jealous over the fact that David had toppled Goliath, it would have been Jonathan. But Jonathan was not jealous of David; he wanted to be David's friend.

God was in this. Jonathan will develop a friendship with David that will be based on truth, love, loyalty, respect, devotion, protection and self-sacrifice. It will be based on God's word and will.

**NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #2** – Saul wants David to permanently stay with him. **18:2**

Now when you first read this, it seems like such a positive thing. David is a true military hero and Saul is honoring him by having him living near him. Also David is still playing his harp for Saul as his key court musician (**18:10**). David had complete access to Saul and it looks impressive.

But frankly, this is all a fickle, phony charade because Saul will soon want him away from his presence and will want to kill him (**18:13**). Saul is jealous of David and he is actually demonic (**18:10**). People who are demonic are not your friend. They are emotionally fickle and deranged. One minute they say they love you and the next they want you dead.

Saul wants to keep his eye on David because he realizes David is an up and coming key man of God. At this point, David doesn't know this, but God does and Jonathan will play a key role in protecting David.

**NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #3** – Jonathan makes a covenant with David. **18:3**

According to Proverbs, a good faithful friend will always tell you the truth (**Prov. 27:6**) and will always give godly counsel (**Prov. 27:9**). Jonathan made a covenant friendship alliance with David, because he loved him like himself.

At this point, this is a unilateral covenant, which means it is bound by only one person and party. Jonathan was binding himself to David and he was not demanding reciprocity in the relationship.

He apparently senses this is a key man of God and he binds himself to him. Now why is God sovereignly causing this? Because God knows David is going to need this friendship to survive the demonic insanity of Saul.

**NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #4** – Jonathan gives David his own royal attire. **18:4**

At this point, David was a shepherd boy who was not wearing high-end clothing. Jonathan decided to share his royal clothing. **This verse proves that Jonathan had a very real sense that David would become a king.**

In fact, the wilderness meeting that Jonathan will have with David substantiates this fact (I Sam. 23:15-18). Jonathan knew, by Sovereignty of God, that David would become the next king. There is no hint that David told him of Samuel's anointing, God is doing this.

Jonathan gave David three things:

- 1) He gave him his royal robe. **18:4a** = kingly royalty
- 2) He gave him his royal armor. **18:4b** = kingly defensive protection
- 3) He gave him his royal weapons. **18:4c** = (sword, bow, belt) = kingly offensive protection

All of these things were designed to display royalty and to protect royalty. These were not the type of things the average man owned.

**NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #5** – David is promoted by Saul to military commander. **18:5**

This is a very important verse. Saul did promote David initially. He did honor him initially. Some of your worst enemies may initially be those who seem to initially honor you and appreciate you.

Now carefully observe from this verse that wherever David went “he prospered.” No matter where Saul sent David or what assignment he gave to David, David prospered. God's hand was on him.

That word “prosper” is interesting in Hebrew and in the theology of the O.T.. Deuteronomy 29:9 uses the same word and it says if one faithfully keeps the word of God, God will prosper him.

What this word means is that David acted wisely and prudently in doing his best to obey the word of God and it was that which led to success.

Just because David knew God was on his side, when he beat Goliath, did not mean he could just live life any way he wanted in life. He needed to follow the word of God in every area. He could not act like Gomer Pyle. He was not like some dope that would walk out in the middle of a battlefield with no weapons. **He prospered because he was faithful to God and His word.**

Notice the end of **verse 5**, all of the people and all of Saul's servants were pleased with the appointment of David. But some of these same people will turn against David, which is why a friend like Jonathan is so critical.

**NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #6** – David’s success prompted praise to God for Saul and David. **18:6-7**

When David was returning from his amazing victory over Goliath and the Philistines, the women of God came out from all of Israel’s cities and were singing and dancing and praising God. This was a joyous time. These women were happy. Good things were happening for them and their families and they were rejoicing and praising God.

This kind of thing for national Israel was somewhat rare, but it was not something that had never happened. Truth is, there have not been that many national moments in Israel’s history that would cause this kind of thing. But there have been a few.

By the way, this is not the kind of thing that was done at weekly worship services. This was only something that occurred in special moments of victories for national Israel.

It happened when God delivered Israel through the Red Sea (Ex. 15:20-21). It also happened when God had given Israel a victory over the Amorites (Judges 11:34). It happened here when God gave Israel victory over the Philistines through David and Saul.

For a church to suggest that a bunch of women should dance with tambourines in a church service is a total and complete heretical application and a total and complete denial of dispensational truth that only pertains to national Israel. Any church that would use these verses to promote this is a devilish misrepresentation of true exegesis and hermeneutics.

**NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #7** – Saul views David negatively from this moment forward. **18:8-9**

David has not done one thing wrong. He is a man submitting to Saul and carrying out his assignments. But look at Saul’s responses:

**Response #1** - Saul is angry with David. **18:8a**

**Response #2** - Saul is displeased with David. **18:8b**

**Response #3** - Saul is suspicious of David. **18:9**

**Response #4** - Saul is afraid of David. **18:12, 15, 29**

It is not only ironic, but also prophetic in that Saul realized the only honor left for David to receive would be the Kingdom.

He was beginning to sense that this would be the one who would replace him. David had his son’s royal items, he had success and accolades and it was beginning to eat at Saul.

**PRACTICAL LESSONS:**

- 1. God will see to it that you have the right friends to help you survive warfare.**
- 2. Don't be surprised if some of your greatest friends are much older physically and spiritually.**
- 3. Some who initially appear to be your friend may not really be your friend.**
- 4. God is totally and completely sovereign over everything in our world.**