

Connecting the Old and the New

Friends Forever

Twenty-five percent of Americans admit they don't have a single close and trusted friend. That's not what life was designed to be, and it's definitely not how our relational God created us. This week we are going to look at two different groups of friends and how their friendships may not have made sense to others, but made perfect sense.

Best Friends

David sought out Jonathan's help in learning the king's intentions. David's use of covenant terminology showed he and Jonathan understood their friendship was built on the foundation of their relationship with God.

Jonathan accepted responsibility for devising the plan for David's escape. He swore an oath before God, not only to help David but to do everything within his power to ensure his friend was not harmed. Even the son of the king of Israel was subservient to the Lord. God's claim on his life was greater than even that of his father.

Read 1 Samuel 18:1-5;20:1-42

- What promise did Jonathan make to David before God?
- What promise did Jonathan ask David to make to him?
- What emotion prevailed in the relationship between David and Jonathan?
- What did Jonathan remind David of before they parted company?
- How do you think Jonathan felt about being caught between his father and his friend?
- What does it say about Jonathan that he chose to remain loyal to David, even to the point of working against his own father's commands?

Unlikely Friends

Apparently Barnabas saw evidence of God's work in Paul's life and recognized Paul as a true disciple and brother in the Lord. Consequently, Barnabas demonstrated his bold faith when he took Paul to the apostles—perhaps only Peter, James, and John (see Galatians 2:9). By endorsing Paul, Barnabas risked his reputation and his life.

Read Acts 9:26-31.

- After spending some days with the Christians in Damascus, what did Saul do?
- Who mistrusted Saul in Jerusalem?
- Who welcomed Saul in Jerusalem?
- How did Barnabas help the apostles accept Saul?
- Why do unbelievers sometimes oppose those who tell others about Christ?
- How have you changed because of knowing Jesus?
- What fellow Christian has served as an inspirational example to you?

As a result of Barnabas's defense, the apostles accepted Paul into their fellowship, and they opened doors of opportunity for him to minister and spread the gospel in Jerusalem. Boldness characterized Paul's evangelism.

Putting it All Together

Is there a relationship in which you need to work on being a better friend? Who is someone you need to reconcile with or apologize to for the type of friend you've been?