

A Covenant Between Friends

1 Sam 18:1-5; 19:1-7
SS Lesson for 08/04/2019

Devotional Scripture: John 15:12-17

OUTLINE

LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Key Verse: 1 Sam 18:1

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

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- Friendship that comforts during grief (Gen 38:12)
- Friendship that loves at all times (Prov 17:17)
- Friendship that never forsakes (Prov 27:10)
- Friendship that provides earnest counsel (Prov 27:9)
- Friendship that provides strength (Eccl 4:9-12)

Made with love (3)

- Love because it is the only thing that counts in the Kingdom of God (Gal 5:6)
- Love because love comes from a pure heart and good conscience (1 Tim 1:5)
- Love because it prompts all to do good works (Heb 10:24)
- Love because love is commanded (Heb 13:1)
- Love because it means that we love God (1 John 4:21)
- Love because love compels us to edify others (John 21:15-18)

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- A warning through leaders (Ps 2:10)
- A warning that if we repent God will relent and not bring on disaster (Jer 18:7-8)
- A warning that is responded to with faith (Heb 11:7)

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Lesson Background and Key Verse

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

In the 1990s, the Promise Keepers organization took Christian men by storm in the U. S. Tens of thousands from many backgrounds—different denominations, different races and ethnicities, even non-Christians—would drive hundreds of miles to fill football stadiums to praise God together in song, prayer, and preaching. The key theme of the movement was integrity. A Christian man should be a man of his word: a promise keeper to God, family, friends, acquaintances, and everyone else. Of course, this directive is not just for men. All God’s people need to be promise keepers. Spouses need to keep commitments to each other. Children and parents must build trust by keeping their word. Employers and employees must act in accordance with hiring agreements. We can learn from those who went before us how to keep faith in our relationships.

In the Christian arrangement of the books of the Old Testament, 1 and 2 Samuel are included with the historical books (Joshua–Esther). They record the transition from theocracy (being governed by the Lord) to monarchy (being governed by an earthly king). The books of 1 and 2 Samuel can be divided into these sections:

- The end of the period of the judges (1 Samuel 1–8)
- The Lord’s selection and rejection of Saul, Israel’s first king (1 Samuel 9–15)
- The Lord’s selection of David and the fall of Saul (1 Samuel 16–31)
- The establishment of David’s throne (2 Samuel 1–10)
- The sin of David and consequent flight from Jerusalem (2 Samuel 11–18)
- The reestablishment of David in Jerusalem (2 Samuel 19; 20)
- The legacy of David (2 Samuel 21–24)

Samuel is a pivotal figure in the history of Israel, being the last of the judges and the first of the prophets (see Acts 3:24; 13:20). The Israelites, tired of the abuses of Samuel’s sons, demanded that Samuel give them an earthly king “like all the other nations” (1 Samuel 8:20). This flew in the face of God’s desire for Israel to be a priestly, holy nation under his rule (Exodus 19:6; 1 Samuel 12:12–16). The Lord required Samuel to proclaim the negative consequences of becoming like the nations by having an earthly king (1 Samuel 8:11–18), but God still chose to grant their request. The Lord selected Saul, but Saul did not faithfully carry out the Lord’s commands (13:7–14; 15). Thus the Lord instructed Samuel to tell Saul of his rejection and then to anoint David to be Saul’s heir even while Saul still lived (13:14; 16:1).

Key Verse: 1 Sam 18:1

Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

18:1-7. David, as has been seen, was not only chosen from eternity to be the founder of the messianic dynasty of kings, but he was also providentially prepared by the Lord to undertake his royal responsibilities. David had served as a shepherd in the fields and had the loving, protective heart of a shepherd, a fitting attribute of a king. He had learned responsibility and courage by confronting and slaying wild beasts that threatened his flock (17:34-36). He had learned to play the harp, a skill that would make him sensitive to the aesthetic side of life and that would help him compose the stirring psalms which extol the Lord and celebrate His mighty exploits. David had been brought into the palace of the king as musician and warrior so that he might acquire the experience of statecraft. Though an uninitiated novice at the time of his anointing, he was eminently equipped to be king of Israel at his coronation some 15 years later. But his education was not always pleasant. With his rising popularity among the people came a deterioration of his relationship with **Saul**, for the king became insanely jealous of Israel’s new hero. After David’s dramatic victory over Goliath, Saul brought him into his palace once again, this time as a commander of his **army** (18:5). David’s favored position in the court was further strengthened by the personal affection felt for him by **Jonathan**, Saul’s oldest son (vv. 1, 3). So close did this friendship become that **Jonathan**, though heir apparent to the throne of Israel (cf. 20:31), stripped himself of his own royal regalia and placed it on **David** in recognition of David’s divine election to be king (18:4; cf. 23:17). More than once the covenant of friendship between the two men would work to David’s advantage. Meanwhile David became so effective militarily that his exploits were celebrated in song: **Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands.**

18:8-16. So enraged was **Saul** at the diminishing of his glory that he, inspired by the demonic **spirit** (v. 10; cf. 16:14-16; 19:9), tried to **spear** David (18:10-11; 19:9-10). But God delivered **David** and gave him even greater popularity (18:12-16).

18:17-30. When **Saul** then saw that he could not destroy **David** personally, he determined to let **the Philistines** kill him. This he arranged by proposing that **David** marry his oldest **daughter, Merab**. Saul had already reneged on one marital promise to David (17:25). **David** protested, however, that he was a commoner and had no sufficient bridal **price** (18:25, *mōhar*, not “dowry” as in KJV and others). Before anything further could develop, **Merab... was given** to another man (v. 19). Again **Saul** offered his second daughter, **Michal**, who at that time loved **David** (v. 20; cf. 2 Sam. 6:16). But again **David** argued that he was unsuitable to be a **son-in-law** of the king because of his low status (1 Sam. 18:23). In an act of apparent generosity **Saul** waived the usual bridal payment and demanded only that David kill **100** Philistines and bring back their **foreskins** (v. 25), a requirement he more than met by slaying **200** (v. 27). **Saul** had been hoping, of course, that the exploit would cost **David** his life (v. 25). As a result, Saul was again **afraid of** David (v. 29; cf. vv. 12, 15). But **David** became Saul’s **son-in-law** by marrying **Michal** (v. 27), and his military **success** and his popularity increased (v. 30).

Chapter 19. After an initial and successful attempt by **Jonathan** to soothe his father’s feelings toward **David** (vv. 1-7), **Saul** set in motion further steps to destroy David. First he tried to slay him once more with his own hand (vv. 9-10); then he hired conspirators to murder him **in his bed**, a plot foiled by **Michal** (vv. 11-17). Next Saul **sent men to Naioth at Ramah** where **David** had taken refuge with **Samuel** (vv. 18-24). (**Ramah** was Samuel’s hometown.) Their efforts were also unsuccessful for they, and later **Saul**, were overwhelmed by **the Spirit of God** who **came** on them and caused them to “act like prophets” (NIV, **prophesied**, vv. 20-21, 23-24). This means that they fell into a trance or an ecstatic state, a condition which immobilized them and made them incapable of accomplishing their evil intentions.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Covenant Made (1 Sam 18:1-5)

1 Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

2 Saul took him that day, and would not let him go home to his father's house anymore.

3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

4 And Jonathan took off the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt.

5 So David went out wherever Saul sent him, and behaved wisely. And Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

Made with friendship (1-2)

Friendship with God first (James 2:23)

23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend.

Friendship that comforts during grief (Gen 38:12)

12 After a long time Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua, died. When Judah had recovered from his grief, he went up to Timnah, to the men who were shearing his sheep, and his friend Hirah the Adullamite went with him.

Friendship that loves at all times (Prov 17:17)

17 A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

Friendship that never forsakes (Prov 27:10)

10 Do not forsake your friend and the friend of your father, and do not go to your brother's house when disaster strikes you — better a neighbor nearby than a brother far away.

Friendship that provides earnest counsel (Prov 27:9)

9 Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel.

Friendship that provides strength (Eccl 4:9-12)

9 Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: 10 If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! 11 Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? 12 Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Made with love (3)

Love because it is the only thing that counts in the Kingdom of God (Gal 5:6)

6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

Love because love comes from a pure heart and good conscience (1 Tim 1:5)

5 The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

Love because it prompts all to do good works (Heb 10:24)

24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

Love because love is commanded (Heb 13:1)

1 Keep on loving each other as brothers.

Love because it means that we love God (1 John 4:21)

21 And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

Love because love compels us to edify others (John 21:15-18)

15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." 16 Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." 17 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. 18 I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go."

Made with service (4-5)

Service with the motive it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35)

35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Service that bears the failings of the weak and tries to strengthen them (Rom 15:1-2)

1 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. 2 Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.

Service that carries other's burdens (Gal 6:2)

2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Service that meets the needs of others (James 2:15-17)

15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

Service that has action, not just words (1 John 3:16-18)

16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. 17 If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? 18 Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

Covenant Confirmed (1 Sam 19:1-7)

1 Now Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and to all his servants, that they should kill David; but Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted greatly in David.

2 So Jonathan told David, saying, "My father Saul seeks to kill you. Therefore please be on your guard until morning, and stay in a secret place and hide.

3 And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I will speak with my father about you. Then what I observe, I will tell you."

4 Thus Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father, and said to him, "Let not the king sin against his servant, against David, because he has not sinned against you, and because his works have been very good toward you.

5 For he took his life in his hands and killed the Philistine, and the Lord brought about a great deliverance for all Israel. You saw it and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood, to kill David without a cause?"

6 So Saul heeded the voice of Jonathan, and Saul swore, "As the Lord lives, he shall not be killed."

7 Then Jonathan called David, and Jonathan told him all these things. So Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as in times past.

Confirmed through a plan (1-3)

A plan to fulfill by pressing on toward the goal (Phil 3:12-14)

12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

A plan to fulfill by not losing heart, but focusing on the eternal (2 Cor 4:16-18)

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

A plan to fulfill by depending on the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 5:1-5)

1 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. 2 Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, 3 because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. 4 For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

A plan to fulfill by keeping the faith (2 Tim 4:7-8)

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

A plan to fulfill by committing oneself to God (Prov 16:3)

3 Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.

Confirmed through a warning (4-5)

A warning that shouldn't be refused (Heb 12:25)

25 See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven?

A warning through God's word (Ex 19:23)

23 Moses said to the Lord, "The people cannot come up Mount Sinai, because you yourself warned us, 'Put limits around the mountain and set it apart as holy.'"

A warning through leaders (Ps 2:10)

10 Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.

A warning that if we repent God will relent and not bring on disaster (Jer 18:7-8)

7 If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, 8 and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned.

A warning that is responded to with faith (Heb 11:7)

7 By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

Confirmed through a deliverance (6-7)

Deliverance from deadly peril (2 Cor 1:10)

10 He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us,

Deliverance from troubles (Ps 34:19)

19 A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all;

Deliverance from trials (2 Peter 2:9)

9 if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.

Deliverance from temptations (1 Cor 10:13)

13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

Deliverance from evil attacks (2 Tim 4:18)

18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

Preliminary Observations

A number of characteristics become apparent the more one reads and meditates on this text. Allow me to share some of these to prepare you for this exposition and to stimulate your own study of the passage.

First, a number of significant repetitions should be noted:⁷³

- David's success (verses 5, 14, 15, 30)
- The fact that God is with David (verses 12, 14, 28)
- Love (verses 1, 13, 16, 20, 22, 28)
- Saul's fear (verses 12, 15, 29)
- Saul's emotions, inner thoughts or motives are revealed (verses 8-9, 11-12, 15, 17, 20-21, 29)

Second, the author seems to contrast Saul's attitude toward David and his kingdom with Jonathan's attitude toward David.

Third, there is a strong sense of progression or development in this chapter. On the one hand, Saul's enthusiasm for David and his ministry deteriorates to suspicion and then to fear. On the other, David's popularity and prominence in Israel are ever-growing. Every step upward for David seems to be a step downward for Saul. And every attempt Saul makes to squelch David's popularity only enhances it.

Fourth, a subtle connection exists between Saul's efforts to be rid of David and David's later efforts to be rid of Uriah, Bathsheba's husband. Saul attempts to put David into dangerous military situations so that he will be killed in battle. This will get David out of the way in a manner that does not put Saul in a bad light (compare 1 Samuel 18:17 with 2 Samuel 11:14-17). Does David learn such underhandedness from Saul?

Fifth, Saul's fear of David and his intentions to murder him are masked by Saul in chapter 18, but they are unveiled in chapter 19. In chapter 18, Saul tries to do away with David in an underhanded way. He seems to promote David by placing him in positions of authority over his army and then to reward David by offering him his daughter(s) in marriage. Underlying all of this, however, is a very sinister motive revealed to us in the text, but not publicly revealed to those living in that day. Saul speaks with the most pious vocabulary ("... be a valiant man for me and fight the Lord's battles. . ." – verse 17), but his intent is utterly evil ("My hand shall not be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him." – verse 17). When all of these underhanded methods do not work, Saul's opposition to David becomes public in chapter 19, where he orders Jonathan and his servants to kill David (19:1). Hypocrisy is everywhere in chapter 18, but it is set aside by open hostility in chapter 19. Thus, in chapter 18 we must not look at things the way they appear – the way Saul wants others to see them – but as they are, in the light of the revelations of Saul's heart and mind, provided by the inspired author of 1 Samuel.

Sixth, chapter 18 (as with chapter 16) does not focus on David as much as it does upon Saul, Jonathan, and Michal. We might say this chapter "focuses on the family" of Saul. It begins with Jonathan's love for David and ends with Michal's love for him. All the way through, we learn of Saul's growing fear and animosity toward David, who becomes his son-in-law as well as his superior.

Seventh, the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament some time in the second century, B.C.) leaves out a number of the verses found in the original Hebrew text (verses 1-5, 10-11, 17-19).

David "Has a Nice Day" (18:1-5)

1 Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself. 2 And Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father's house. 3 Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. 4 And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, including his sword and his bow and his belt. 5 So David went out wherever Saul sent him, and prospered; and Saul set him over the men of war. And it was pleasing in the sight of all the people and also the sight of Saul's servants.

This must have been a glorious day for David and a good day for Saul as well. The drawn-out stalemate between Israel and the Philistines has finally ended. Goliath, who frightens every Israelite soldier and proves to

be a great embarrassment to Saul, is dead at the hand of David. This leads to a rout, with the bodies and spoils of the Philistines strewn from the battlefield to the gates of the principle cities of Philistia. When David returns from killing Goliath, he is brought before Saul by Abner. Saul ascertains, once again, who David's father is. I am not as certain as I once was that this was to forgive his father's taxes. It seems reasonable from the fact that Saul asks Jesse's permission to hire David part-time (16:19) that Saul would once again ask his father's permission to keep David with him full-time.

The conversation he has with his father, Saul, clinches matters for Jonathan (18:1). No doubt Jonathan is impressed by David's victory over Goliath, but David's words with his father seem to be what impresses Jonathan most. Is it David's faith in God? Is it the fact that David is careful to give the glory to God? Is it David's humility and humble spirit? Is it David's care for the people of Israel? We are not told exactly what impresses Jonathan so much in this conversation, but it is clear that from this point in time onward these two men are kindred spirits.

Only a wicked and perverse generation could see in the words of our text an occasion to imply that the relationship between David and Jonathan is perverted. David and Jonathan are soul-mates. Jonathan loves David as himself. Is this not the way every believer should feel toward his brethren? Jonathan and David make a covenant on this day. While the details are not supplied, it is not difficult to infer what they are. On his part, Jonathan seems to recognize that David is the one God has chosen to be Israel's next king. Jonathan is more than happy to relinquish his hopes for his father's throne in deference to God's choice – David.

I believe this is symbolized by Jonathan's gift of his clothing and armor to David. From the Old Testament, we know that Joseph's coat was a symbol of his authority (Genesis 37:3, 23). Before Aaron died, his priestly garments were removed, to be worn by his son, Eliezar (Numbers 20:22-28). Elijah placed his mantle over Elisha, who was to take his place (1 Kings 19:19-21).

In a footnote from his book, *Looking on the Heart*, Dale Ralph Davis refers to an Akkadian document, found at Ugarit, of a record about a thirteenth century king who divorced his wife. His son could choose which of the two of his parents he would live with, but if the crown prince chose to live with his mother, he had to relinquish his right to the throne. If he chose to live with his mother, and in so doing give up his right to the throne, he would indicate this symbolically by leaving his clothes on the throne.⁷⁴ This seems to be so with Jonathan's gift of his robe and his armor to David.⁷⁵ Here is a magnificent man, with a spirit like that of John the Baptist (John 3:30) and Barnabas.⁷⁶

Jonathan is willing to relinquish his right to the throne and to serve David as God's choice for the next king. No such spirit is found in Saul. At best, Saul is excited about David because of what David can do for him. As usual (see 14:52), Saul is eager to add skilled military men to his forces. Thus, Saul promotes David to a full-time employee. As far as the biblical record is concerned, nothing is done about the rewards Saul had offered the man who would do away with Goliath. David is a faithful servant of Saul, going wherever he is sent, and prospering as he goes. All the people are impressed with David, even Saul's servants (who must do so with a certain measure of risk, knowing how jealous Saul can be – see 16:2). David has the "Midas touch." It is as though everything he touches prospers, and so it does because the hand of God is upon him (verse 12).

Rescued by Reason (18:30—19:7)

30 Then the commanders of the Philistines went out *to battle*, and it happened as often as they went out, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul. So his name was highly esteemed. 19:1 Now Saul told Jonathan his son and all his servants to put David to death. But Jonathan, Saul's son, greatly delighted in David. 2 So Jonathan told David saying, "Saul my father is seeking to put you to death. Now therefore, please be on guard in the morning, and stay in a secret place and hide yourself. 3 "And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I will speak with my father about you; if I find out anything, then I shall tell you." 4 Then Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father, and said to him, "Do not let the king sin against his servant David, since he has not sinned against you, and since his deeds *have been* very beneficial to you. 5 "For he took his life in his hand and struck the Philistine, and the LORD brought about a great deliverance for all Israel; you saw *it* and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood, by putting David to death without a cause?" 6 And Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan, and Saul vowed, "As the LORD lives, he shall not be put to death." 7 Then Jonathan called David, and Jonathan told him all these words. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as formerly.

The one thing Saul cannot stand in his servants is their success. Like Satan, Saul does not take well to being in second place (see Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28). And so when the Israelite commanders go out to battle, David is among them (see 18:13), and he does better than all of them (18:30). Without intending to do so, David

continues to grow in fame. His wisdom (undoubtedly the product of the Spirit; see 16:13) sets him apart from all the other commanders. He is a man highly esteemed.

This is just what Saul fears most. Abandoning his cloak and dagger tactics, Saul now orders his servants – including Jonathan – to kill David. Jonathan has made a covenant with David, which he most certainly does not intend to break. But the underlying reason Jonathan does David no harm is because he **“greatly delighted in David.”** Protecting David is more than Jonathan’s duty; Jonathan delights in David. He truly loves David as himself (18:1). Jonathan sets out then to reverse his father’s order to kill David. If need be, Jonathan will violate this command, but he would far rather reason with his father to revoke it. This he accomplishes in verses 1-7.

Jonathan first warns David, informing him of his father’s orders. He urges David to be on guard and hide himself until after he can speak to his father. Strangely, he tells David he will meet with his father in the very same area where David is to hide (verses 2-3). Is this so David can observe the whole thing? Does Jonathan want to assure David that nothing is going on behind his back? In addition, he promises to report the outcome of his discussion to David.

Jonathan’s dealings with his father on behalf of David are a model for us in several regards. *First*, we find here an example of a friend who loves his neighbor as himself. Confronting (or should we say “crossing”) Saul is dangerous business (see 16:2, 4; 20:33; 22:11-19), yet Jonathan does it. *Second*, Jonathan subordinates himself and his own personal interests (e.g. in the throne) to those of David (see 23:17). *Third*, Jonathan is a faithful and submissive son to his father, Saul. Jonathan approaches his father directly and speaks to him with respect. He speaks well of David. He appeals for David’s life on the one hand, but on the other he appeals to his father to do that which is in his own best interest. He reminds Saul that David is his most faithful and devoted servant, whose actions have always benefited Saul. He also reminds his father that when David killed Goliath, he rejoiced in David’s victory, because it was Saul’s victory as well (19:5). To act in a hostile manner against David would not be just or wise, and even worse, it would be sin, for it would be shedding innocent blood (19:4-5).⁸⁰

For the moment, Saul is persuaded by Jonathan’s reasoning. He swears that **“as the Lord lives”** David will not be put to death (verse 6). It is not a promise that will last long, but it is a temporary and partial admission of guilt on Saul’s part and a confession of David’s innocence. Jonathan calls David, tells him about the meeting with his father and its outcome, and then brings him back into his father’s presence. For a short time, at least, things are like they used to be (verse 7).

(Adapted from URL:<https://bible.org/seriespage/15-david-joins-sauls-family-1-samuel-181-30>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

His covenant with David put Jonathan in a difficult situation. When he learned of the king’s unjust plot on his closest friend, he risked (at best) alienation from his father and (at worst) death. Nevertheless, Jonathan was true to his covenant with David without being disloyal to his father, reconciling Saul and David. The Lord is pleased when we are covenant-keepers. That’s true for simple promises, such as being on time for dinner, or major ones, such as honoring marriage vows.

Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary

A Committed Friendship - David killed Goliath and gained great favor with the existing royal family, especially King Saul’s son, Jonathan. The two young men both had a genuine relationship with God. They agreed early in their friendship to stick together no matter what. Everyone expected Jonathan to take the throne after his father’s death. However, Jonathan realized God appointed David to be the next king. Jonathan wasted no time being jealous and envious of his friend. He and David committed themselves wholeheartedly to God’s plans, and that greatly enhanced their friendship.

Saul’s Pride - However, the king became increasingly resentful as David became more popular. Saul’s envy toward David’s favor with God got the best of him. Instead of taking this matter to the Lord, Saul began to deal with this situation his own way. He ordered Jonathan and his servants to put David to death.

Coming to a Friend’s Defense - Because he loved David like a brother, Jonathan told him about his father’s evil plan. After Jonathan reasoned with his father, the Lord touched Saul’s heart, the king reversed the order to kill David, and allowed David to come back into the palace for a time.

The Value of Christian Friendships - When God brings two people together in Christian friendship, this can be a great benefit for both of them and the Body of Christ. The Christian life is designed to include the companionship of others. One sister describes an agreement she and other single women in her Bible study group made to each other: "We all were struggling in relationships and wanting very much to recommit to staying sexually pure as Christian women. We prayed for each other, kept each other accountable, and hung out together on those lonely Friday nights. All of us in the group agree our friendship helped us get through a very difficult and challenging time."