

Relationship Reboot

DEVOTIONAL | FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

APRIL 25, 2021

Discussion Starter: What characteristics do you think make a good friend?

Key Passage: “As soon as 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 And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father’s house. ³ Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. ⁴ And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt. ⁵ And David went out and was successful wherever Saul sent him, so that Saul set him over the men of war. And this was good in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul’s servants.” (1 Samuel 18:1-5)

Sacrifice For and Be Loyal to Your Friends

One of the closest friendships in the Bible was between Jonathan and David. In our text, we see these two men forming an agreement in which Jonathan was to be second in command when David would become king in the future, and David would protect Jonathan’s family (also see 1 Samuel 20:16-17, 42; 23:16-18).

In this special friendship between Jonathan and David, we learn two qualities of genuine friendship:

1. Sacrifice

In v.4 of our text, we see Jonathan giving David his robe, armor, sword, bow, and belt. Jonathan understood that David would replace his father, Saul, as king of Israel. Rather than being jealous, Jonathan yielded his own right to the throne and his will to God’s will.

Discuss: When has a friend sacrificed for you?

Discuss: When have you sacrificed for a friend?

2. Loyalty

In 1 Samuel 19:1-3, we see Jonathan’s loyalty toward and defense of David. Jonathan’s father, King Saul, had told his followers to kill David. Jonathan confronted Saul and reminded him of David’s loyalty to him in killing Goliath.

Discuss: When has a friend demonstrated loyalty toward you?

Discuss: When have you demonstrated loyalty to a friend?

Pray for Your Enemies

In Matthew 5:43-45, Jesus said, “*You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven.*”

Normally, when someone strikes out at us, our inclination is to strike back at them. But Jesus calls us to a higher standard. And Jesus exemplified that higher standard when, in the middle of His own agony of crucifixion, He cried out, “*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing*” (Luke 23:34). Jesus showed compassion on the deceived people who were killing Him.

Here are 4 perspectives that help us understand why we should pray for our enemies:

- 1. Hurt people hurt people.** Most people who hurt others are themselves, hurting. They may be influenced by Satan (2 Corinthians 4:4), or their thinking may be shaped by wounds inflicted upon them in their past (Judges 15:7), or their actions may be influenced by peers (2 Kings 12:13–14). Of course, none of these justifies their mistreatment of you or minimizes the damage they cause, but it may help you understand *why* they do what they do. So, you can pray that God will “*open the eyes of their hearts that they will be enlightened*” about truth (Ephesians 1:18). Enemies are acting by the flesh instead of by the Spirit. You can pray that God will open their hearts with understanding so that they will learn from their mistakes and grow wiser.

Discuss: What situations can you think of in your own life or in others’ situations when a person acted in a hurtful way out of the pain in their own life?

- 2. Pray for your enemy’s repentance.** 2 Timothy 2:25 says that “*opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth.*” It is God who softens hearts enough for repentance.

Discuss: Why is an enemy’s repentance a good thing to pray for?

- 3. Remember that you were once an enemy of God, but now you are His child.** “*For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.*” (Romans 5:10)

Discuss: How can remembering that you were once an enemy of God, but now you are His child, help you to pray for your enemy?

- 4. Praying for enemies makes you more like Jesus.**

Discuss: How can praying for our enemies make us more like Jesus?

For Further Study

The Prayer That Turns the World Upside Down R. Albert Mohler Jr.

“What Did Jesus Really Mean by ‘Love Your Enemies?’” article at www.crosswalk.com.