



## “Real Friendship”

1 Samuel 18:1-4, 19:1-7

### Gearing Up



We shared so many adventures I do not know where to start. My friend, Horace, has been gone from this life for several years but the memories always bring a smile to my heart. We hunted for years together, camping in tents for weeks at a time on more than on occasion. We slept in old barns, falling down houses and workshops on other occasions as we hunted. We shared good times and bad times in the field. Times of harvest and times of drought were part of our lives. I never liked him deer hunting because he snored and killed more deer than I did but I loved him.

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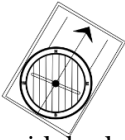
We spend nights laying on lakeshores by campfires talking and waiting for the fish to bite. We also squirrel hunted but in was really nothing more than an excuse to get out in the woods to look for deer sign. I liked him squirrel hunting because I could kill the ones he couldn't see. Frog gigging is still another story for another time.

He always wanted to seek out new territory to hunt. He would find a place and we would plan and dream as we got ready for the upcoming season. As I said, he is now gone. I value that true friendship more now than I probably did when we were crawling through the mud, ice, snow and rain hunting and fishing.

Most of us are fortunate if we develop real friendships with other men in our life. We have a lot of friends but most never reach the depth of real friendship.

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In this expedition we head deep into the relationship of perhaps the greatest example of real friendship recorded for us in the Bible. David, the man who became the second king of Israel, is a teenager and Jonathan, the son of King Saul; the first King developed a real friendship. So let's journey together and explore their friendship.



## **Getting Our Bearings**

**D**avid had been anointed King by Samuel (1 Samuel 16) when he was a young boy. After this he killed the giant Goliath and King Saul asked his men to find out who he was. He was brought before Saul with the head of Goliath in his hand and tells Saul he was the son of Jesse. We pick up our GPS (God Provided Scripture) immediately after David finishes speaking.

### **GPS Location**

1 Samuel 18:1-4. 19:1-7

1 Samuel 18:1-4 When David had finished speaking with Saul, Jonathan committed himself to David, and loved him as much as he loved himself. 2 Saul kept David with him from that day on and did not let him return to his father's house. 3 Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as much as himself. 4 Then Jonathan removed the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his military tunic, his sword, his bow, and his belt.

1 Samuel 19:1-7 Saul ordered his son Jonathan and all his servants to kill David. But Saul's son Jonathan liked David very much, 2 so he told him: "My father Saul intends to kill you. Be on your guard in the morning and hide in a secret place and stay there. 3 I'll go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are and talk to him about you. When I see what he says, I'll tell you." 4 Jonathan spoke well of David to his father Saul. He said to him: "The king should not sin against his servant David. He hasn't sinned against you; in fact, his actions have been a great advantage to you. 5 He took his life in his hands when he struck down the Philistine, and the LORD brought about a great victory for all Israel. You saw it and rejoiced, so why would you sin against innocent blood by killing David for no reason?" 6 Saul listened to Jonathan's advice and swore an oath: "As surely as the LORD lives, David will not be killed." 7 So Jonathan summoned David and told him all these words. Then Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he served him as he did before.

This friendship that developed instantly and strong between David and Jonathan seems to defy logic. Jonathan would be the next King if it were not for David. Jonathan, as Saul's son was next in line to the throne. Jonathan could have easily seen David as a threat but did not.

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## Pursuing the Challenge



**D**id you notice that Jonathan presented some articles of his clothing to David? Look back at verse 4 again. David would have only been dresses in his shepherd garments. This is Jonathan giving not only clothing but also some of the honor he had as the son of the King.

When you think of this what pictures comes to mind? Have you ever heard the saying, “He would give you his shirt off his back.” Jonathan literally did. One thing about real friendship is that the welfare of one is the welfare of the other.

When we think of loving other men the world tries to pervert it and make it something immoral, unnatural and unclean. It says here that Jonathan loved David as much as himself. Men, let me make a statement as strong as possible. It is natural to love other

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men and it can be a wholesome love. I would suggest that if we do not have other men we love we are missing out on life. Lets not allow the perversion of the world to rob us of our ability to love other men.

Wow! What a challenge in **1 Samuel 19** to the friendship and love of Jonathan and David. Saul ordered David killed. The background of this is found in **1 Samuel 18:6-8** *As David was returning from killing the Philistine, the women came out from all the cities of Israel to meet King Saul, singing and dancing with tambourines, with shouts of joy, and with three-stringed instruments. 7 As they celebrated, the women sang: Saul has killed his thousands, but David his tens of thousands. 8 Saul was furious and resented this song. "They credited tens of thousands to David," he complained, "but they only credited me with thousands. What more can he have but the kingdom?"*

And now, we find the order to kill David given to his son and all the servants. This was after he had himself tried to kill David. (see **1 Samuel 18:10-11**)

You may have heard the old saying, “*blood is thicker than water,*” which means that blood relatives stand together. The

depth of the friendship of David and Jonathan is being tested. Will Jonathan take the side of Saul, his father, blood kin, or will he stay loyal to the friendship bond he has with David? Another thing about friendship is that they do what is best regardless of the cost to self. Jonathan became an advocate for David with his father. He had David's back.

What do you think that real friendship looks like? Is it a commitment to others in good times or is it a rock solid one that can stand the test of life?

We see in the focal passage that Jonathan intercedes for David and Saul brings him back into the palace as before. This, however, was short lived. We go just a few verses down in the narrative and find Saul again trying to kill David. **1 Samuel 19:9-10** Now an evil spirit from the LORD came on Saul as he was sitting in his palace holding a spear. David was playing the harp, **10** and Saul tried to pin David to the wall with the spear. As the spear struck the wall, David eluded Saul and escaped. That night he ran away.

What do you think that real friendship looks like?

David flees and is aided by his wife, Saul's daughter. Later he returned and talked with Jonathan and they devise a plan to see if David is still in danger. Jonathan again interceded with Saul but the result is that Saul throws a spear at Jonathan and tried to kill him. Real friendship has the potential to put us in danger at times. When a boat sinks, when someone has an accident and needs rescued many times it is a dangerous undertaking. When a grizzly bear is attacking and a friend needs help. There are a thousand possibilities that can and do occur in the outdoors that require intervention.

Jesus told us in **John 15:13** No one has greater love than this, that someone would lay down his life for his friends. Now that is

**Real Friendship**

real friendship. No great love than being willing to risk your life to protect the life of a friend.

## **Packing out the Trophy**



**W**hat are you willing to risk for a friend? We can all pray that we will never be called upon to risk our life or even limb for a friend. Most of us would probably react without thinking in a lot of situation for a friend. After all they would do the same for us.

Still there is one more thought that we need to pack out in this expedition. Think about this, what greater thing can we give a friend than to give them the gift of eternal life in Christ. We might not find it alarming to us to think about helping in a crisis but the idea of witnessing to them frightens us. May I repack an old saying by stating, real friend don't let their friends die without Jesus?

**The fact is we all need real, deep and rich friendships with other men.**

Have you been challenged on this expedition to expand your love for other men into a healthy natural relationship of depth greater than you have had before?

Another advantage of developing deep friendships is that each profit from the other. The Bible says in **Proverbs 27:17 Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.** The fact is we all need real, deep and rich friendships with other men.



**What trophy are you packing out of this lesson?**

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