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True Friendship

1 Samuel 20:1-17, 30-42

When I was growing up, I had a friend named David Miller. David and I met in grammar school. In the third grade we were in Cub Scouts together. In the fourth grade we had the same girlfriend. In sixth and seventh grade we went to camp together. Our relationship continued through high school, then we lost touch with each other, and later I moved to another city.

After many years, I went home for a visit and decided to stop by and see David. He was living in the same house—now with his wife and children. After the initial shock and joy at seeing each other, he invited me in. As I went inside, I felt as though I were stepping back in time. All the childhood memories associated with his house flooded back into my mind. What good friends we'd been!

GROUP DISCUSSION. What qualities do you appreciate most in a friend, and why?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. Think of someone you consider a very close friend. How has that person shown you love and faithfulness?

In this study we will explore the strong relationship between David and Jonathan. They help us see and appreciate the qualities of true friendship. *Read 1 Samuel 18:1-4 and 20:1-17.*

1. What impresses you about Jonathan's and David's love for each other?

2. How does their love express itself in their commitment to each other?

3. What kinds of mutual commitments can strengthen our friendships with those we love?

4. *Read 1 Samuel 20:30-42; 2 Samuel 1:25-27.* How does Jonathan's experience with Saul demonstrate some of the cost of friendship?

5. In what other ways can friendship be costly?

6. What do we learn about the level of intimacy between Jonathan and David (1 Samuel 20:41-42; 2 Samuel 1:25-27)?

7. Do you think it is more difficult for women or for men to achieve that kind of intimacy in friendship? Explain.

8. What factors enhance or inhibit intimacy in a relationship?

9. Think of your closest friend. If you could pick one area in which you'd like your friendship to be more like Jonathan and David's, what would it be?

What specific steps can you take to achieve that goal?

Ask the Lord to help you be more like David and Jonathan in your relationships with others.

Now or Later

George Gallup Jr. writes, "We are physically detached from each other. We change places of residence frequently. One survey revealed that seven in ten do not know their neighbors. As many as one-third of Americans admit to frequent periods of loneliness, which is a key factor in the high suicide rate among the elderly" (*Emerging Trends*, Princeton Religious Research Center, March 1997). Why are friendships not just a luxury but a necessity in life?