



## Honest to God

David: Profiles of an Authentic Life

### Session 5 – Authentic Friendship

Abbey D’Agostino never imagined doing the right thing would cause such a stir. It was one of the most celebrated moments of the Rio Olympics. The 5000-meter runner reached out to help a competitor who tumbled and they both went down. Both were injured but instead of scrambling to finish her own race, they helped each other cross the finish line. Kindness and spirit at its finest.

The same could be said of Jonathan. He didn’t think twice about doing the right thing. He was a man of courage and selfless faith. People loved him and he loved people. It’s easy to see why David and Jonathan became inseparable friends.

#### Goals for this Session:

- Discover Jonathan’s role in God’s plan to make David king.
- Consider what it takes to build enduring friendships.
- Examine how we respond to success and cope with adversity.
- Pray honest prayers that instill trust and lead to authentic friendship.

#### Ice Breaker

What qualities do you appreciate most in a friend?

#### Day One – The Big Picture

Read **1 Samuel 18:1–19:10** and **20:1–42** to get the overall picture. Follow the story line closely but without getting bogged down in details. Our focus will be on David and Jonathan’s friendship.

1. What is the central topic? State the main point of this passage in a sentence or two.
2. What insight does this chapter give you into God’s ways and our relationship to Him?
3. The Bible shapes our core beliefs about God and our conduct toward others. Share one takeaway lesson from this chapter and how you can apply it to your life.

## Day Two – Friends for Life

### Read 1 Samuel 18:1–16 and 19:1–10.

After David's victory over Goliath, Saul brought him into full-time service. For a brief time, David was everyone's favorite, including Saul. But not for long.

1. If you've ever met someone and hit it off right away, you can relate to the way Jonathan and David's friendship began. Their souls were knit—they just *clicked*. Jonathan was, by some estimates, at least ten years older than David. What might they have had in common?
  
2. The pledge of friendship (covenant) between Jonathan and David was a recognition of being equals, united in heart and bound to look out for each other. But at this point in time, no one viewed David as Jonathan's equal. Only Jonathan could have initiated this friendship.
  - a. Put yourself in Jonathan's shoes. He was a celebrated hero and a favorite son. In both categories, he could have viewed David as a rival. Instead, what character traits and qualities of friendship do you see in Jonathan?
  
  - b. Put yourself in David's shoes. He is about 18 years old. Most of his life experience has been in the field with sheep. After killing Goliath, David is an instant celebrity who finds himself commanding an elite troop (verse 18:5) before he is technically old enough to join Saul's army! In what ways would Jonathan's friendship be so beneficial for David?

Some things become more significant over time. In retrospect, Jonathan's gifts to David were symbolic of who would be king. Was Jonathan aware of David's anointing? We don't know. But in the moment, Jonathan's selfless generosity conveyed to David that he had a friend for life.

3. David would need a trusted friend soon enough. Saul convinced himself that David was scheming for his throne and became obsessed with eliminating him.
  - a. David's sudden fame came with advantages and perils and he "*behaved himself wisely*" through it all (1 Samuel 18:5, 14–15, 30). In your observation, what stands out most about David's conduct and attitude during this time?
  
  - b. Praise is like a refining furnace that tests what's in the heart (Proverbs 27:21). If it fuels pride or resentment, we're not ready for promotion. David wasn't the only one being tested by the people's praise. What did it bring to the surface in Saul's heart?

Saul tried to remove David every way he could think of. Spear throwing. That first time was presumably followed with a lame excuse (“I don’t know what got into me”). Then Saul demoted him from an elite troop (verse 5) to ordinary field command (verse 13). Saul offered to make David his son-in-law for an impossibly high, extremely dangerous dowry price. And in all these veiled attempts, David *behaved himself wisely*.

4. When Saul’s murder-by-marriage scheme failed, he openly declared that David must die. Briefly describe how Jonathan intervened for David.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Saul put his son in a difficult position and Jonathan handled it with courage and wisdom. He did not betray his friend and he approached his father with respect. With the example of Jonathan’s conversation in mind, what do we learn about the power of our words?

Proverbs 12:18

Proverbs 15:1–2

Colossians 4:6

### **Memory Verse**

Write the verse and let it be part of your prayers every day. Ask the Holy Spirit to work it into your heart and mind.

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

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### **Think it over . . .**

Consider what the phrase “*at all times*” conveys about friendship. In what way is it beneficial? In what way is it a responsibility?

## Day Three – Uncommon Loyalty

### Read 1 Samuel 20:30–42.

Imagine being at Saul's family dinner that night. Saul was raging again, and this time Jonathan could not reason with him. There is no longer any doubt in Jonathan's mind that his father means to kill David.

1. Jonathan was a friend who had nothing to gain and everything to lose, but he didn't see it that way. In what ways did Jonathan show that he was David's loyal friend?
  - a. Think of a time when you have felt pressure to cut and run in a friendship. If you had it to do over, would you do anything differently? Why or why not?
  
2. We use the term *friend* loosely to describe all sorts of relationships. But one defining trait stands out, front and center, in Jonathan and David's friendship: "May the Lord be between you and me" (1 Samuel 20:23, 42).

Any friendship we have will not be of lasting value without Christ being at the center of it. The Bible says, "Can two walk together without agreeing on the direction?" (Amos 3:3 NLT).

- a. Name one friend who consistently points you to God by their life and conversation. In what way?
  
  - b. What are some practical ways we can be a friend who points others to Jesus through our life and conversation?
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3. "May the Lord be between you and me" means: (Check all that apply)
    - a. I will lift you up and be there for you. (Ecclesiastes 4:9–10) \_\_\_\_\_
    - b. I give you permission to sharpen my rough edges. (Proverbs 27:17) \_\_\_\_\_
    - c. I will keep confidence with you. (Proverbs 11:13) \_\_\_\_\_
    - d. I will look out for you and seek your best. (Philippians 2:3–4) \_\_\_\_\_
    - e. Add your own thoughts to the list \_\_\_\_\_

## Memory Verse

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### **Think it over . . .**

What will it require to cultivate this kind of friendship in terms of . . . availability . . . accountability . . . and transparency?

## Day Four – A Brother for Adversity

### **Read 1 Samuel 23:14–18.**

It's been said that a true friend is someone who comes in when the whole world has gone out. Jonathan was certainly that kind of friend for David. After parting with Jonathan in the field, David was on the run for his life.

The story picks up some months later. David is a fugitive. Innocent men have been slaughtered for aiding him. With nowhere to go, he ended up in Gath (Goliath's hometown), where he faked insanity so the Philistines wouldn't string him up. Instead, they kicked him out and he ended up in a cave. His family joined him (what choice did they have?) and so did 400 men. He's considered an outlaw, but when the Philistines attack a vulnerable Jewish town, David protects them. They tell Saul where he is (who can blame them?) and David is forced out into the wilderness.

1. Jonathan believed something that Saul refused to accept—that David would be king, by God's will and with his friend's blessing. At this point, Jonathan may have been more confident of that than David. It was a risk for Jonathan to go find David, but that's what friends do. Note what stands out to you about their conversation and why it would be meaningful to David.  
**"Fire is the test of gold. Adversity is the test of strong men."  
Seneca**
2. Jonathan helped David find his strength in God. He encouraged his faith. When you need a listening friend and prayer, are you more likely to initiate that conversation or do you wait for a friend to reach out to you? Explain why.
3. Authentic friendship is not one-sided. We all have times when we need a listening friend, and times when we need to be the listening friend. Which role is easier for you, and why?

## Memory Verse

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### *Think it over . . .*

Is there a friend who has been there for you through a time of adversity? Tell them so.

## Day Five – Show Me Your Friends

What a friend Jonathan was to David! He was a brave and big-hearted man who would have made an excellent king, but that was not God’s plan and he knew it. No question about it, David would not have become the man he was without the strong, godly influence of his friend Jonathan.

Authentic friendship doesn’t happen overnight, but all it takes is a spark to get it started. It was C.S. Lewis who said, “Friendship is born the moment one person says to another, ‘What! You too? I thought I was the only one.’”

Friendship can start easily enough, but it won’t grow without care and feeding. Jonathan put himself out there to find David and strengthen his hand in God. We can all take that lesson to heart in our relationships. Why not make a plan to do that with two friends this week?

1. A longtime friend: \_\_\_\_\_
2. A relatively new friend: \_\_\_\_\_

## Memory Verse

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### *Think it over . . .*

Are my friends stronger—or weaker—in Christ after spending time with me?



