

Power: Friendship - The Path of Empowerment

For the Children:

The wisest book in the Bible, the proverbs, says this:

"An enemy will want to make you feel good so you let you guard down.
But an honest friend will tell you the truth even when it hurts your pride."
So here is something to always remember about friendship.

Tell the truth.

The apostle Paul also reminds us that truth by itself is not enough.

He tells us to "Speak the truth in love."

In other words, always speak to someone in a caring and loving manner.

The Apostle John, one of Jesus' closest disciples tell us that Jesus was just like this.

He says, Jesus was "full of grace & truth."

So remember this about friendship.

A real friend speaks the truth in love.

May you not only have such friends but be such a friend.

Amen.

True Love Will Find you in the End (Daniel Johnston)

G

true love will find you in the end

C

you'll find out just who was your friend

E A minor

don't be sad i know you will

C

but dont give up until true love will find you in the end

G

this is a promise with a catch

C G

only if your looking can it find you

G

cause true love is searching too

C

but how can it recognise you

G

unless you step out into the light, the light

E A minor

don't be sad i know you will

C

don't give up until true love finds you in the end

G

1 Samuel 18:1-9

After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. ² From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return home to his family. ³ And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. ⁴ Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.

⁵ *Whatever mission Saul sent him on, David was so successful that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the troops, and Saul's officers as well.*

⁶ *When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines and lyres. ⁷ As they danced, they sang:*

*'Saul has slain his thousands,
and David his tens of thousands.'*

⁸ *Saul was very angry; this refrain displeased him greatly. 'They have credited David with tens of thousands,' he thought, 'but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?'* ⁹ *And from that time on Saul kept a close eye on David.*

How do you destroy a person?

Convince them that they have no friends.

It will cause nightmares in primary school.

It will bring suicide in high school.

It will generate angst in young adults.

It will make full grown men and women cocoon themselves, create masks so they can survive.

Through the decades it will isolate, alienate and eviscerate.

Betrayal, disloyal, fearful, grasping, gasping loneliness devours and decays.

And if they survive the years of torture with their coping mechanisms of sex, money, drugs, work, self-deception

They will still find themselves alone at the end of their life.

Old, decrepit, bitter.

How do you destroy a person?

Convince them they have no friends.

The real darkness of the devil and demons is this:

We keep convincing ourselves we have no friends.

Not even God.

Especially not him.

When have you felt most alone?

The Prince & The Pauper

There were two young men in the Bible that teach us about friendship.

One was the youngest in a rural family -

often left out of important family events -

kind of neglected, a footnote.

If there was a favourite, it wasn't him.

The other, born into a glorious royal household - a prince.

They could not have more different upbringings.

But they shared certain traits in common.

They had ridiculous courage.

The prince, as a warrior, with his squire, brazenly challenged an enemy camp situated at the top of a cliff. (1 Samuel 14)

In the only instance of rock climbing in Scripture, the prince and his retainer climbed the cliff to face their enemies.

One can only imagine the taunts turning to screams when the two reached the top only to begin to slaughter their enemies.

The prince and his shield-bearer killed twenty men and set the rest to flight.

That was the kind of man the prince was.

The pauper, on the other hand, a mere boy not old enough to own a sword (1 Samuel 17)

Seeing the soldiers of his own nation afraid and outclassed,

Indignant at the insults against his people and God

He accepts a challenge by an enemy champion no else was willing to face.

It was an impossible matchup.

A nobody against a champion.

You know how this ends.

David and Goliath.

An unexpected end.

And so, even though they were from different worlds,

David found Jonathan and Jonathan found David.

They were kindred spirits that shared single heart.

"They loved each other as they loved themselves."

One spirit, united by courage, against a common threat.

Are you open to making new friends?

How do you make a friend?
Have you a Kindred Spirit?
One true friend?
Or are you still looking?
What do you look for in a friend?

Unguarded

David's star rose - his fame spread.
Celebrity came upon him like wildfire and the crowds chanted his name. (1 Samuel 18)
Saul, Jonathan's father, however was an insecure man.
Instead of embracing David like his son did,
King Saul feared David,
Envied him,
Saw him as a rival as the women chanted, "Saul has killed his thousands, but David his tens of thousands!"

Battle after battle, danger after danger, David did not only survive but he thrived.
And as Jonathan and he grew closer
Saul grew more afraid, more angry, more bitter.
And so the truth comes out:
Not everyone is going to be your friend!
Not everyone should be your friend.
Even if you long for it or want it.
Some people will never be your friend.
Even so they do not have to be your enemy.

Friendship is not a popularity contest.
It isn't a beauty pageant or a game show where you triumph over others.
It isn't a footrace, it isn't about the Stanley Cup, isn't about being the best,
Because that isn't about friendship it is about rivalry, a fear and power and guilt and shame.

Unlike his father, Jonathan set aside his privileges and gave them to David.
Symbolically, his armor, his weapons, these he gave to his friend.
As a warrior, the very trappings of his identity,
He lowered his guard,
Lay down his weapons,
becoming vulnerable to his best friend.

What angered his father most,
Was that Jonathan did not fear David's successes.
Did not envy, felt no threat.
He was an open book.
Friendship is forged not in the sharing of our strengths
but in the mutual sharing of our brokenness.

Who do you tell your true thoughts to?
Who are you vulnerable with?
What is it that allows you to lower your guard with another person?

Treasured

Saul eventually hunted David like an animal.
Even tried to kill Jonathan in his rage. (1 Samuel 20)
Before fleeing Saul's rage, David & Jonathan met one last time.
There, before God they made a covenant of peace between each other.
And they never saw each other again in this world.

Saul, in his hunt for David twice found himself at David's mercy.
Remember, not everyone is going to be your friend

but you do not have to make them your enemy.
David spared Saul.
Saul saw an enemy in David
But David saw a man at the mercy of God.
And in this is true power.
Having the ability and right to elevate yourself, but choosing not to.
The power to choose restraint.

Sadly, both Jonathan and Saul were killed in the long ongoing war with the Philistines.
When David heard of their deaths, he did not gloat.
He tore his clothes and wept for Jonathan.
Wept for a friend he would not see again in this lifetime.
Never take your friends for granted.

Have you ever wept for a friend?
Have you ever felt such longing, missed someone so sorely?
Is there someone you need to thank or connect with as treasured friend?

Those who wanted David's favour hunted down his enemies. (2 Samuel 9)
The house of Saul was destroyed by their enemies.
But there was a lone survivor.
Jonathan had a son, who, when they fled the slaughter was dropped as a child and became cripple.
As was the practical political practice of the ancient world,
All rivals and potential rivals were put to death.
But David, remember his covenant with his best friend,
Took the crippled Mephibosheth into his own house
and told him that he would always have a seat at his table all his life.
True friends look after each others' families and provide for them.
There is a legacy of friendship between generations.

One True Friend

And so what does it mean when Jesus says to his disciples,
"I no longer call you servants... Instead I call you friends?" (Jn 15:15)
What does it mean for Jesus to call you friend?
The prince of heaven who lays down all his glory to be crucified on a cross.
Who makes a covenant in his own blood.
Who empowers you rather than dominate or control you.
What do you say to such a friend?
This is why we worship him.
Jesus is Lord.
Jesus is my friend.