

292.1: Friendship (OT Gospel Doctrine Lesson 23, Updated)
[“The Lord Be Between Thee and Me For Ever”](#)

I think we spend too much time on romantic love. Sure, romantic love is great, but I feel by focusing so much on falling in love (which at some level can be largely infatuation), we miss the deeper secrets to a more important kind of love... the love of friendship. I love the idea that we “marry our best friend”, suggesting that at the core of even romantic relationships lies friendship. I summarize dating as “I like you. More please.” Find the people you want more of, and nurture those relationships. These chapters tell of David’s touching relationship with Saul’s children Jonathan and Michal.

Productive Sunday School

1. Discussion:
 - a. What makes a good friend?
 - b. Who is your best friend?
 - c. What would your best friend say about you?
2. Become the friend you want.
3. Why we prioritize ourselves
4. “Doctrine of showing up”
5. Investment
6. “Family of Choice” (Jonathan has to choose between his father and his friend)
7. Keys to friendship
 - a. Respect/Admiration
 - b. Trust
 - c. Actions/follow through
 - d. Communication
 - e. Tell and listen to each other’s stories
 - f. Differentiation/Adaptability
 - g. Enjoy each other
 - h. Recommit to each other as you nurture your friendship
8. Choose the friends who help you be your better self

Reading Review

Class Member Reading:

[1 Samuel 18](#) Jonathan becomes “one in spirit” with David and “loves him as himself” (what a great description of loving friendship. The Hebrew said their souls were “knit together”). David is successful and popular. Saul is angry because of pride, insecurity, comparison. (Note the troubling idea that “an evil spirit came from God onto Saul”; at this point in Israelite religion God is monistic rather than dualistic) Bit of foreshadowing, Saul puts David in danger in battles with the Philistines to get rid of him. David’s humility and diligence protect him from the king’s machinations. (And don’t think too much of the collection of 100 foreskins. This might be a

mocking death, given the practice of circumcision).

[19](#) The love and friendship of Saul's children, Jonathan and Michal, for David make them allies and protectors against their powerful father rather than enemy. Strange story of everyone prophesying when they searched for David, indicating the Lord's protection of David.

[20](#) (note the markers of older religion—oaths, idols, new moon festivals, worshipping with your clan, etc). They communicate, talk through their issues, and “reaffirm their love for each other” through covenants. Saul attacks Jonathan (literally) because of his devotion to David, and Jonathan continues to protect David and they share a touching reunion.

[23](#) David asks the Lord for guidance relating to his military actions. Saul hunts David and David and his men flee. Jonathan finds him, renews his commitment to David, vows that David will become king.

[24](#) A poignant plot twist. David is guilt-stricken for even cutting the corner off the King's robe, and respects him as king and as his father-in-law (the “Lord's anointed”). David's vulnerability, apology, and insistence of his good intentions gets through to Saul and he leaves David in peace (after asking that he not wipe out his family, which is what a new king did with the old king).

Additional Reading:

[1 Samuel 14:1-16](#) Story of Jonathan and his faithful armor bearer

[2 Samuel 1](#) David hears of Saul and Jonathan's death and gives a heartfelt tribute to both of them (also kills the messenger)

Other Reading:

[1 Samuel 31](#)

Productive Sunday School

1. Discussion:
 - a. What makes a good friend?
 - b. Who is your best friend?
 - c. What would your best friend say about you?
2. Become the friend you want. Love your neighbor as yourself: In other words, start with love for yourself (Get to know ourselves, value ourselves, invest in ourselves) “David loved Jonathan as himself”
3. (We can't avoid prioritizing ourselves, because we only experience our own perspective. No one else's needs or feelings are naturally as urgent as ours. But when we care for ourselves, we have resources to care for others. Loving ourselves puts our emotions in order so that we value other relationships, but don't get overly enmeshed or needy)
4. “Doctrine of showing up”
5. Investment (note how much effort Jonathan puts into helping and encouraging David) This includes taking the time and effort to learn or “map” your friend, learn what they value, want, what annoys them, what is meaningful to them. (idea of Love Languages)
6. “Family of Choice” (Jonathan has to choose between his father and his friend)
7. Keys to friendship

- a. Respect/Admiration (the other person is worth listening to, taking seriously, learning from, etc)
 - b. Trust (more precious than love)
 - c. Actions/follow through
 - d. Communication (including problem solving and negotiation)
 - e. Tell and listen to each other's stories (how they became who they are, life lessons, silly stories, and the story of the friendship)
 - f. Differentiation/Adaptability (respecting and valuing each other as different, having a sense of what each person is like, being able to speak up for that. Allowing yourself and your friend to become new, better versions, allow both yourselves and your relationship to evolve)
 - g. Enjoy each other (Do things you both enjoy, have fun, etc)
 - h. Recommit to each other as you nurture your friendship
8. Choose the friends who help you be your better self (Jonathan and Michal chose and protected David because they shared the same values, and Jonathan recognized his father's evil intentions)

292.2: Friendship (OT Gospel Doctrine Lesson 23, Sunday School)

["The Lord Be Between Thee and Me For Ever"](#)

The story of the faithful friendship between Jonathan and David, destined political opponents who instead became dear friends, is a masterpiece of storytelling. Once again, these powerful examples rest on historical realities far more complex and even troubling. This portion of the episode discusses:

- What these stories tell us about friendship (focusing on Saul, Michal, Jonathan and David)
- Friendship's counterpoint: Jealousy and hatred
- Deep discussion of friendship
 - Importance of friendship
 - Friendship in a gospel context
 - Friendship with God
 - How can we be better friends?
- Conclusion

292.1: Friendship (OT Gospel Doctrine Lesson 23, Study Notes)
[“The Lord Be Between Thee and Me For Ever”](#)

This portion of the episode discusses:

II. Scholarship

- Jonathan and David’s love and friendship in literary perspective
- The historical Jonathan and David
- What do we learn from these stories?
- What can we draw from the disparity between these accounts?

III. Study Notes

- Return to the reading
- Friendships and social norms
- Boundary navigating in friendships