



FR1ENDSH1P

LESSON 5

HOW TO LOSE A FRIEND IN 10 DAYS

HOW TO KEEP ONE FOREVER

Part 2



Get Healthy: Friendship

Lesson Five: How to Lose a Friend in 10 Days; How to Keep One Forever (Part 2)

Look Back: 10 Minutes

1. In our last lesson we looked at how insecurity can bleed into friendship, causing our friendships to be less healthy than we'd like. Discuss one thing you learned about how insecurity affects friendship. How did you seek to be a healthier friend this week?
2. Last week our life application instructed us to re-read Romans 12:9-21, and ask God to show us any way he wants us to apply these verses. Did you do this? If so, discuss. If not, take time now to read Romans 12:9-21 and discuss.
3. Did you experience any victory over allowing insecurity to negatively affect your friendships? If so, share how.

Look Forward: 50 Minutes

"That girl is in my English class", my daughter whispered after we passed a dark-haired girl who looked to be around twelve, the same age as my daughter at the time.

"Why didn't you smile, and say 'hi'?"

"Oh mom, I couldn't say 'hi'. We don't know each other that well, and we're in public."

Clearly, I wasn't privy to the rules of middle-school friendship. In my mind, a smile when you pass someone you recognize is just plain common courtesy. When did friendship rules become so complicated? And weird?

The more I thought about my daughter's comments, the more I became convinced that no matter what society says, the guidelines of good friendship are really not so difficult--or different--than they've always been. And I told her so.

The more things change, the more things stay the same. People want to be noticed. And wanted. And loved. They always have; they always will.

That's why this week we turn our attention back to the timeless story of David and Saul--but this time we add the element of a third party--Saul's son, Jonathan.

Standing in stark contrast to the insecurity plagued relationship between Saul and David, we find the loyal friendship of Jonathan and David. What makes their friendship especially noteworthy is the obvious issue that could have made them competitors rather than comrades: Jonathan was Saul's son, next in line to be king, yet God had anointed David as Saul's successor. Talk about a recipe for a friendship disaster!

And yet, despite everything, Jonathan and David remained lifetime friends.

- 1. It's our last lesson together, so for the last time, review the definition of a good friend (page 2 of Get Healthy: Friendship). Can you say it by memory? Keep the definition in mind as you read about the friendship between Jonathan and David.**
- 2. Jonathan and David met shortly after David killed Goliath. 1 Samuel 18:1 recounts the beginning of Jonathan and David's friendship. Read the verse, written below.**

"After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself." 1 Samuel 18:1

- a. Fill in the blanks: Jonathan became _____ in _____ with David, and he _____ him as _____.**
- b. Read Mark 12:28-31. What is the second greatest commandment, according to Jesus?**
- c. How does the second greatest commandment parallel with the first mention of Jonathan and David's friendship in 1 Samuel 18:1?**
- d. Do you think "loving your neighbor as you love yourself" is necessary in order to be a good friend? (Think back to our definition of a good friend) Why, or why not?**

- e. **1 John 4:7-8 begins with two words: “Dear friends”. What does John tell his “dear friends” to do for one another? Why?**
- f. **What does love between friends look like? Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, written below, and underline every description of love.**

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

⁸Love never fails.

1 John commands love. 1 Corinthians 13 describes love. But Jonathan and David's friendship shows us what love looks like in real life.

- 3. **The following four passages chronicle Jonathan and David's lifelong friendship. You'll see they faced some pretty heavy stuff together. As you read each passage, note any attitudes and actions that embody 1 Corinthians 13 kind of love. Relate these actions and attitudes to your friendships.**

1) 1 Samuel 19:1-7

Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David. But Jonathan had taken a great liking to David ² and warned him, “My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. Be on your guard tomorrow morning; go into hiding and stay there. ³I will go out and stand with my father in the field where you are. I'll speak to him about you and will tell you what I find out.”

4 Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, “Let not the king do wrong to his servant David; he has not wronged you, and what he has done has benefited you greatly. 5 He took his life in his hands when he killed the Philistine. The Lord won a great victory for all Israel, and you saw it and were glad. Why then would you do wrong to an innocent man like David by killing him for no reason?”

⁶Saul listened to Jonathan and took this oath: “As surely as the Lord lives, David will not be put to death.”⁷ So Jonathan called David and told him the whole conversation. He brought him to Saul, and David was with Saul as before. (1 Samuel 19:1-7)

- a. **Briefly describe the circumstance.**

- b. **What did Jonathan do in verse 4a, as it related to David?**

- c. **Do you speak highly of your friends to others? Always? Why or why not?**

- d. **Which of the following reasons causes you *not* to speak well of a friend?**
 - Get sucked into other's gossip or negative conversations
 - Anger or frustration with a friend
 - Jealousy or envy
 - Habit
 - Don't think about what I say before I say it

- e. **What we say about our friends when they aren't present says more about us than it does them. If someone were to record what you say about other women for one week, what would they conclude about you, as a friend? (Be honest. This question is absolutely crucial because it goes to the issue of trust and loyalty.)**

- f. **Do you think your friends speak highly of you to others? Why do you think this is important?**

- g. **What kinds of things did Jonathan say about David to Saul? (v. 4b-5)**

- h. Do you defend your friends' integrity when called into question? If not, what stops you? And just as important - have you chosen friends whose integrity you can defend?**
 - i. Do you notice any other attitudes or actions that made their friendship healthy and strong? If so, discuss.**

Early in their friendship, Jonathan earned David's trust. Jonathan warned David about potential danger, and he defended David's character. Why? Because they were friends. And that's what real friends do.

Jonathan convinced his father not to harm David, and Saul relented. Eventually, though, Saul's envy-driven hatred reared its ugly head. Again. Read on to see how...

2) 1 Samuel 20:1-15, 42

David now fled...and found Jonathan. "What have I done?" he exclaimed. "What is my crime? How have I offended your father that he is so determined to kill me?"...

⁴ *"Tell me what I can do to help you," Jonathan exclaimed.*

⁵*David replied, "Tomorrow we celebrate the new moon festival. I've always eaten with the king on this occasion, but tomorrow I'll hide in the field and stay there until the evening of the third day. ⁶If your father asks where I am, tell him I asked permission to go home to Bethlehem for an annual family sacrifice. ⁷If he says, 'Fine!' you will know all is well. But if he is angry and loses his temper, you will know he is determined to kill me. ⁸Show me this loyalty as my sworn friend—for we made a solemn pact before the Lord—or kill me yourself if I have sinned against your father. But please don't betray me to him!"*

⁹*"Never!" Jonathan exclaimed. "You know that if I had the slightest notion my father was planning to kill you, I would tell you at once."*

¹⁰*Then David asked, "How will I know whether or not your father is angry?"*

¹¹*"Come out to the field with me," Jonathan replied. And they went out there together.¹² Then Jonathan told David, "I promise by the Lord, the God of Israel, that by*

this time tomorrow, or the next day at the latest, I will talk to my father and let you know at once how he feels about you. If he speaks favorably about you, I will let you know. ¹³But if he is angry and wants you killed, may the Lord strike me and even kill me if I don't warn you so you can escape and live. May the Lord be with you as he used to be with my father. ¹⁴And may you treat me with the faithful love of the Lord as long as I live. But if I die, ¹⁵treat my family with this faithful love, even when the Lord destroys all your enemies from the face of the earth."

⁴²At last Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, for we have sworn loyalty to each other in the Lord's name. The Lord is the witness of a bond between us and our children forever."

a. Briefly describe the circumstance.

b. Who fled? (v 1) _____ Who did David flee to? _____ What does this tell you about the level of trust David had in Jonathan? Why do you suppose David trusted him?

Trust happens over time. Trust is built when people prove reliable, loyal, and honest, even in circumstances where it might be easier, or more convenient, to be unreliable, disloyal, or dishonest. Think of trust like this:

Time + Tests = Trust

c. Are you more prone to trust too easily, or have difficulty trusting? How can remembering "Time + Tests = Trust" help you have a healthier perspective on relational trust?

All healthy relationships--*every single one*--are built on trust. This is why being a trustworthy woman, and finding trustworthy friends is foundational for healthy friendships. It's also why betrayal can deal a deathblow to friendships.

How does one friend betray another? Sharing something told in confidence, talking about a friend behind her back, using a friend for selfish gain, and lying are a few of the most common examples of betrayal.

If you've been betrayed, you know the hurt is real, the wound is deep, and the scar takes time to fade. But did you also know that Jesus understands your pain because he personally experienced betrayal, too? One of Jesus' closest friends--Judas--betrayed him with a kiss. The symbol of affection was used as a symbol rejection. Talk about cold-hearted betrayal! (See Matthew 26:47-49) If you've experienced the pain of betrayal, please know you can freely pour out your heart to Jesus, because he's experienced it, too.

Because Jesus understands your hurt, Jesus can heal your heart. He really can.

d. Examine verse 4. What did Jonathan ask David? How did David respond, according to verses 5-8? Mark the correct answer below.

- "I don't really know how you can help"
- "It's OK. I'll be fine."
- "I don't want to bother you; I know you're busy."
- Gave Jonathan a specific way he could help

e. On a scale of 1- 10 (1 being never, 10 being always), how easily do you ask your close friend(s) for help when you really need it? How willing are your friends to help? How do you think this impacts the health of your friendships? Is there any way or anything you need to change in order to have healthier friendships?

David found himself in a tough situation, one where he needed Jonathan's help--but just as important--Jonathan's wisdom. David relied on Jonathan to help him see his life circumstances clearly. Accurately. Rightly. David's next step depended on being certain of what he *thought* was true, versus what was *in fact* true.

How does this scenario play out in the lives of women? Consider this example: A friend says her husband hurt her feelings and complains about what a jerk he is. Do you immediately agree, or do you ask what happened? Do you listen objectively? Do you think (and sometimes pray!) before you speak? Do you lovingly help your friend discern whether there could be an alternate explanation? Do you help her make sure she sees things accurately before she takes action? Why? Because **bad advice leads to bad outcomes.**

Proverbs 12:26 says, “The godly give good advice to their friends; the wicked lead them astray.” **Good friends give good advice. And godly advice.** Good friends keep us from making stupid mistakes and unwise choices. They help us see our life clearly. This is one of the greatest benefits of having godly, healthy friends!

- f. **Do your friends have the wisdom to help you see *actual* wrongs versus *perceived* wrongs? Are you able to help your friends view circumstances accurately, too? Discuss.**

- g. **Are you open to allow your friends to speak truth and wisdom to you? (Be honest!) If not, can you see how this might be preventing you from becoming the woman God had in mind when He created you? Discuss.**

This time, Jonathan’s loyalty to David can’t abate his father’s anger, and David is forced to flee for his life. David is safe for the time being, but eventually Saul pursues David, *again* (and you thought you were the only one who has wacko people to deal with!)

3) 1 Samuel 23:15-17

¹⁵ While David was at Horesh in the Desert of Ziph, he learned that Saul had come out to take his life. ¹⁶ And Saul’s son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God. ¹⁷ “Don’t be afraid,” he said. “My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father Saul knows this.”

- a. **In the previous passage, David found Jonathan, but in this situation, Jonathan “went to David and helped him...” Do you go to your friends when they are in need, or do you hope they will come to you?**

b. What prevents you from going to a friend in need? Mark all that apply.

- Time
- Busyness
- Fear
- Ignorance
- Don't want to be inconvenienced.
- Other

Jonathan went to David because he knew David needed encouragement. Truthfully, we all need encouragement on a regular basis, whether we're stuck in a desert (like David was), or not. Life can feel too challenging, overwhelming, or difficult when we go it alone. We *need* encouragement from our friends. And our friends *need* encouragement from us.

c. On a scale from 1 - 10 (1 being rarely, 10 being frequently) how often do you encourage your friends? (Be honest.) If the number is low, what will you do to be a more encouraging friend? Be specific.

d. How easy is it for you to receive encouragement? Do you allow yourself to soak it in, or do you deflect it, or dismiss it?

e. Fill in the blank: " Jonathan went to David and helped him find _____ in _____. " (v 16)

f. What might be the difference between helping a friend find strength, and helping a friend find strength *in God*?

Recently, I heard a speaker say, "Too often Christian women confuse compassion with co-dependency". Wow! Quite the insight, huh?

What's the difference? Co-dependent friends enable, but compassionate friends empower. Compassionate friends care--maybe even more deeply, and purely, than co-dependent friends-- but they know they can't possibly be available 24/7.

But God can. God is.

That's why the grandest act of compassion is for one friend to join another friend in their wilderness (like Jonathan did for David) and help them find strength in God. God is the friend who will never leave, and will never forsake. *Ever.*

- g. Do your friends help you find strength in God? Do you help your friends find strength in God? What do you think this would look like?
Brainstorm ways friends have helped you find strength in God.**

- h. Is there any way a friend tried to help you find strength in God that was *not* helpful? If so, share briefly.**

- i. Is there any way God is prompting you to help a friend find her strength in God? If so, will you do it?**

Jonathan's encouragement gets David through a tough season. Years pass. And Jonathan turns out to be right: God protects David from Saul's vengeance. Sadly, though, Saul and Jonathan are killed in battle, and David is crowned king. However, David doesn't forget the vow he and Jonathan spoke to each other, years before, as young men. After Jonathan's death, David's thoughts turn toward his dear friend's children.

4) 2 Samuel 4:4, 9:1,3, 6-7, 13

Jonathan son of Saul had a son who was lame in both feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan's [death] came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled, but as she hurried to leave, he fell and became disabled. His name was Mephibosheth.

David asked, "Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?" ... Ziba answered the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is lame in both feet."

⁶ When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor.

David said, "Mephibosheth!"

"At your service," he replied.

⁷ "Don't be afraid," David said to him, "for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table. So Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's sons.

- a. Do you keep your promises to your friends? If not, what usually stops you from following through on your word? What will you do to become a friend who keeps her promises?**

- b. Do you treat your friend's family (especially her husband and children, if she has them) with as much respect and kindness as you treat your own? How do you think loving your friend's family makes friendship stronger and healthier?**

- c. Do you think its possible to sustain a lifetime friendship if you do not treat a friend's husband, child, sibling, or parent with kindness and respect? Why or why not?**

- d. Is there any way you have been unkind or unloving to a friend's family member? How will you change, and make things right?**

Every one of us wants friends. We *need* friends, because we were created for community. But we don't need more filtered versions of friendship we find on Facebook and Instagram. We need real, honest-to-goodness, authentic human friendships. Good friends are *essential* for emotional, relational, and spiritual health.

But what makes a good friend, *really*?

After five weeks together I hope you know: A good friend loves you as she loves herself. A good friend doesn't let insecurity drive her actions. A good friend initiates and responds. A good friend is loyal. A good friend can be trusted. A good friend gives good advice. A good friend encourages. A good friend keeps her word. A good friend helps you find strength in God.

A good friend propels you to be the best version of you—the one God had in mind when He created you.

A good friend is one of God's greatest gifts.

May God give you a good friend, and may you be a good friend to her.

"The only way to have a friend is to be one."

~Ralph Waldo Emerson