

A Fresh Start in Your Relationships

Announcements

- **Starting Point** – Sunday, March 4, 5:00 pm at LCC, GCC and SSC.
Help get people in your small group connected in the church by inviting them to attend Starting Point.

Warm-up

Who was your best friend growing up? Why were you best friends?

Do you think that most people keep the same friends throughout life? Why or why not?

Word & Application

Everyone has a list of values in life. Where do you think most people place close friendships on that list?

Read John 15:15, Proverbs 17:17 and Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. What does the Bible teach about how God values close friendships? Close friendships don't just happen; we have to build and develop relationships with our parents, spouses, children, and friends.

Today we want to talk about **three ways to build or rebuild healthy relationships** by looking at a story of true friendship. **Read 1 Samuel 18:1-4.**

1) First, we want to focus on others' potential.

Jonathan could have been very insecure and cautious of David because of his fame and popularity in Israel. But, Jonathan had the humility to see the greatness and potential that God had placed on David's life.

Another great example of seeing the potential in others is found in **I Corinthians 1:4**. The Apostle Paul is writing to the church at Corinth. That church had big problems, such as immorality, abuse of the poor, and out-of-control church services. Someone once said that a friend is someone who sees all your faults, but still enjoys the view. Paul didn't overlook these problems. However, he chose to look past these issues to thank God for them because he saw their potential.

When you focus on people's problems, how does that hinder you from developing a relationships? When you focus on who people can become in Christ, how can that help build your relationships with others?

2) Second, we want to honor others with our words.

Read 1 Samuel 20:4. In these verses we see Jonathan continuing to encourage his friend, David, as he was fighting the battles of Israel as well as fighting for his life with King Saul. Read 1 Samuel 20:4 again to hear the encouraging words from Jonathan during a critical moment in David's life.

Read Hebrews 10:24. Why do you think criticism or verbally beating someone down does not bring out the best in others?

Love produces love and good works. What are some practical ways we can bring out the best in others?

3) Finally, we want to **invest in others**.

Read 1 Samuel 18:4. We learn from this scripture that if you want your relationships to thrive, you must invest in your friends – be a giver rather than a taker.

Read Luke 10:30-37. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho was a dangerous way to travel because of the difficult terrain and the bandits that would attack people.

What risks did the Samaritan take in order to help the injured man? What did it cost the Samaritan to help him?

Jesus taught that it was through the actions of the Samaritan that he showed what it meant to be a true friend – even to someone he didn't know.

Think about your relationships -- do your actions suggest that you are a true friend?

What is God challenging you to do to help develop friendships with those in your life?

Prayer

Take time to pray that everybody in your group would begin to develop relationships in their lives that are centered around God and the great plans He has. Also, take time to ask everybody in your group what specific prayer requests they have and also what prayers they have had answered recently.