

## Traits of a True Friend

1 Samuel 20:30-34, 41-42

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### A. Loyal (vs. 30-31; Proverbs 17:17):

1. Burned against Jonathan - Jonathan's love for David led him to protect him before his father, Saul. When his father realizes this, his anger increases to the point that he fusses at Jonathan, desiring to punish him for protecting David.

a) For the observance of new moon festivals in Israel, see II Kgs 4:23; Isa 1:13; Amos 8:5. It was not merely a religious festival (Num 10:10; 28:11-15), but also a civil festival. Apparently it was used as an opportunity for religious instruction (II Kgs 4:23). David, as a member of the royal household, was expected to be present at the new moon sacrificial meal.<sup>[1]</sup>

· Saul was not angry with his wife; it was the son alone upon whom he meant, by this style of address, to discharge his resentment, and the principle on which it is rounded seems to be that a genuine filial instinct it is a more inexpiable offense to hear the name or character of a parent traduced than any personal reproach. In every Eastern family, the great object of respect and devotion is the mother. There are familiar expressions that show this very strongly. 'Pull my father's beard, but do not speak ill of my mother.' 'Strike me, but do not curse my mother' (Urquhart's 'Spirit of the East'). This was, undoubtedly one cause of 'the fierce anger' in which the high-minded prince left the table without tasting a morsel. (from Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary)

b) Do I not know? Saul was able to distinguish the good that Jonathan had in his heart toward David. He knew that Jonathan was not going to change his heart from doing what he was determined to do.

- c) Chosen—Jonathan had decisively made up his mind, was able to think things through carefully, that he was going to protect David.
- d) As long as David lives – As long as David goes about doing what is good and vital for the nation of Israel Jonathan would not be a prince.

- Here, Saul demonstrated his selfish concern for his family's welfare over God's sovereign will. Compare Eli's appropriate response to God's judgment (3:18).<sup>[2]</sup>

- e) Your kingdom will be established—Jonathan's reign, if David continues to live, would not be firmly established so that it is enduring. Jonathan is to allow his father Saul to kill David so that Jonathan's royal rule of Israel is immovable. Even though this is true, Saul does not like David.

- After David's absence on the second day, Saul was filled with rage toward David and also toward Jonathan (vv. 30, 33). As long as David lived, Saul said, there was no hope that his own dynasty would continue (v. 31).<sup>[3]</sup> Lousy Selfishness and jealousy do not build relationships. They tear them into pieces.

- f) Send and bring – Saul commands Jonathan to get the soldiers to search for David and kill him.

- Saul begins his pursuit of David to kill him after David killed Goliath, especially after a second war with the Philistines (19:8-24). Saul did this after he promised his son Jonathan that he would not kill David (19:6).

- g) Die - Saul wanted someone to kill David, execution style.

- h) What David said to Jonathan has been completely exposed (1 Samuel 20:1-13, especially 12-13).

## **B. Truthful (vs. 32):**

1. Jonathan answered Saul and said – Jonathan, with no hesitation, repeatedly responded to Saul, telling him he was wrong about David. When confronted by David, even Saul would have to confirm Jonathan's convictions(1 Samuel 24:16-20).

a) Jonathan knew that he would never be king of Israel because the Lord had chosen David to succeed his father. He loved David (18:1; 20:17), and they covenanted together to spare each other's lives. Jonathan agreed to signal David in the field if his father again planned to kill him.<sup>[4]</sup>

b) A true friend is not jealous of his friend's achievements. A true friend does his best to help his friend succeed.

2. Put him to death – Jonathan refuses to accept that his father needs to continuously do everything he can to put David to death.

3. What has he done? Jonathan asks his father to justify his actions, just like David does in verses 1-4.

a) Jonathan and David became close friends after David killed Goliath in 1 Samuel 18:1-5; and 19:1-7.

4. What has he done? - David should only die if he deserves death.

a) Why should he be put to death? What has he done?" (1 Sam 20:32). As king over God's people and thus chief enforcer of the Torah (cf. 1 Kgs 1:3), Saul must not execute the innocent (Exod 23:7), and David had not committed any capital offense.<sup>[5]</sup>

5. What has he done? - Jonathan stood for what was right (vs.12-13) and then let things fall where they must.

6. What has he done? - Jonathan protected David not just because he loved him, but also because his father was wrong.

7. Hurled to smite him—Saul reaction to Jonathan's response was to take his spear, and in much anger, i throw it towards Jonathan with every intent to wound him or kill him.

a) Saul's attempt to kill Jonathan with his spear recalls his earlier attempts to kill David (see 18:11 and 19:10).<sup>[6]</sup>

8. Know, teach—Because Jonathan's father threw the spear to kill David, he was now convinced that Saul was continuously going to do whatever it took to kill him.

a) That is, Jonathan, recollecting the former attempt at assassinating David, was convinced that the present threats of his father were by no means empty words; but, coupling the present with the former scene, could not now doubt that his father did really cherish the deliberate purpose of slaying David. (See an article on this passage, 'Christian Observer,' vol. xiv. Pp. 715, 716). (from Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary)

9. Had decided—Saul was not just going to do his best to kill David; he was completely committed to doing every possible thing to kill David.

10. Put him to death; Die – Saul's intent was to kill David execution style, with no possibility that David would survive his attack on his life.

11. Then Jonathan arose from the table – Jonathan got up from the table with the intent to continuously work to execute the plan he and David had put in place and strategically organized (20:18-29).

a) It has been translated "sprang up" (NAB, AB) and "jumped up" (Klein). Contextual translation may require something like this, even if the textual evidence favors rose.<sup>[7]</sup>

12. In fierce anger – When Jonathan left the table, he was intensely angry. He seems angry because his father had no reason to kill David, and because he trusts in his father, he is deeply disappointed in Saul's decision.

a) Jonathan did not grieve because of the humiliating or murderous treatment accorded him by his father but because of “his father’s shameful treatment of David.” Jonathan’s reaction thus serves as one of the purest displays of human loyalty found in the annals of human history.<sup>[8]</sup>

13. Grieved—Jonathan’s disappointment is completely and vividly portrayed in his outrage and mental anguish when he leaves the table without eating anything.

a) You would think that Jonathan would be hurt that his own father threw a spear at him. Not at all. Jonathan was grieved because his father violated the law towards his friend David, whom he truly loved.

14. His father dishonored David - David had accomplished a lot. David did this because of his love for God his people and respect for Saul’s leadership (1 Samuel 17; 18:1-3; 23-24). Saul’s reaction to all that David did humiliated David and brought him much shame and disgrace. Because Jonathan loved David (1 Samuel 18:1-4; 20:1-17)

### **C. Respectful (vs. 41-42):**

1. Fell – David threw himself on Jonathan with no plans to stop. He knew he was safe with Jonathan because Jonathan did not give him up to his father. David knew how much it cost Jonathan to protect him.

2. Bowed; Worship – David bowed with respect to who Jonathan was even though David was anointed king, and Jonathan accepted him as king.

a) Bowed...three times - Sign of submission and respect (Gen 33:3; 42:6).