

## **The Heart of a Friend**

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**Rich Nathan**

**August 5-6, 2006**

**1 and 2 Samuel: A Heart After God Series**

**1 Samuel 18.1-3; 20**

Just a few months ago there was a very disturbing study which indicated that more Americans than ever have no one that they can confide in regarding personal problems and troubles. See, there are some things we only discuss with people who are very close to us. And nearly one-quarter of all Americans say that there is no one in their lives who they can talk to about really important matters. There is no one they can use as a sounding board for very personal matters.

There was a major multi-year sociological study that was recently completed by sociologists from Duke University and the University of Arizona. They discovered that compared to a similar study done in 1985 the number of people that Americans have in their closest circle of confidantes has dropped from an average of 3 to 2 today. In other words, there has been about a 50% drop in the average number of folks that people can confide in. And compared to 1985 nearly 50% more people say now that their spouse is the only person they can confide in. But if their spouse gets sick, or they have trouble in the relationship with their spouse, this means there is a huge number of folks who have no one to turn to for help at all. One of the sociologists said that the image of those folks standing on their roofs in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina still haunts her because those people did not know anyone with a car.

And that is a picture of America – that in times of trouble more and more of us find that we have no safety net of close friends and confidantes.

You say, “What’s causing this growing isolation of Americans?”

Sociologists point to a number of factors. More adults are working longer hours. Many have two jobs to make ends meet. People are taking more time to commute to and from work which leaves people too exhausted for relationships. Certainly TV is a big part of the problem. Sitting around watching a rerun of “Friends” is not the same thing as having a friend. And watching “Desperate Housewives” is not necessarily going to improve your ability to sustain a meaningful relationship.

The internet is another thing that sociologists point to as increasing our social isolation. It is interesting that so many folks believe that the Internet is keeping them more connected to others. That may be true with folks who are already friends or who are in our families. But study after study has indicated that the more time people use the internet, the less time they spend in contact with real

human beings. That's a revelation, isn't it? You mean the more time we connect with the entire world, the less time we connect with an actual friend? You want a friend, google up his blog. Especially for young people, there may be many more relational ties, even global relational ties, but these ties are weaker.

Think about this. MySpace is the fourth most popular website in the English language. It has 95 million members and it is adding 500,000 new members each week. I'm sure lots of you or your kids use this networking website. And it is great for global networking. It is great for independent musicians and filmmakers to get discovered. But if you're 35 and logging four hours a day on MySpace, you need to get a life! MySpace is not a substitute for a friend who will watch your kids for a week when you have to go to the hospital.

The bottom line is that 21<sup>st</sup> century Americans have fewer friends than Americans of any prior generation. And it appears that we may have fewer friends than the residents of almost any other country in the world. Is it any wonder, therefore, that we are among the world's leaders in drug prescriptions for depression?

In contrast, people in the Bible seem to have a lot of friends. Jesus had a circle of 72 that followed him around. But there was a much closer relationship with 12 men that he called his friends. He said to these 12 men in John 15.13-15,

#### SLIDE

Jn 15:13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

Jn 15:14 You are my friends if you do what I command.

Jn 15:15 I no longer call you servants, because servants do not know their master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

And there were 3 that he was especially close to – Peter, James and John; and one, the apostle John, with whom he seemed to be more intimate than anyone. But Jesus, who modeled for us perfect humanity, had a substantial network of confidantes with whom he could disclose the things that were most important to him.

We see in Christian history many instances of great friendships, in fact, friendships that changed the world. Back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was a small group of mostly wealthy evangelical Anglicans that met together for years and supported one another in the goal of socially reforming England, particularly in the goal of ending the English slave trade. This group of friends was called the Clapham Sect. The name came from the little village of Clapham which then was south of London and today is part of Southwest London. But the sect included William Wilberforce, who was a member of Parliament and led the anti-slavery movement in England for 40 years. This group strategized together; they prayed

together; they did extensive research together; they encouraged one another in hard times; they challenged each other.

And as a result of this extraordinary network of friends, slavery was abolished throughout the British Empire. English criminal laws were reformed. The Bible Society was established. And so was the Church Missionary Society formed.

Another wonderfully influential group of Christian friends connected with each other from Oxford University from the 1930's to the 1950's. They were professors in the English department at Oxford. They had a lawyer friend join them and some relatives also joined them. They used to meet together for a beer or over tea at the Eagle and Child's Tavern in Oxford to read to each other what they were writing; to challenge each other's thinking; and to particularly argue theology. The two most prominent members of this group were C.S. Lewis, the author of the *Narnia Chronicles*, and JRR Tolkien, the author of the *Lord of the Rings*. This friendship between Lewis and Tolkien has influenced the lives of tens of millions of people in the last half century or so.

It was Tolkien who God used as the last link in the chain to bring C.S. Lewis to Christ. Tolkien was a Roman Catholic Christian and he convinced C.S. Lewis of the truth of the gospels. Lewis became a great explainer and defender of the Christian faith. Many people place C.S. Lewis among the top 3-4 most influential Christians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century along with Billy Graham, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Pope John Paul II. And it was Lewis who convinced Tolkien to write down his ideas about middle earth and continued to encourage Tolkien as Tolkien was writing the Lord of the Rings Trilogy.

Praise God for this encouragement. Academics from around the world declared that Tolkien, this Roman Catholic Christian, was the most important author of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Well, today I'm going to talk about another friendship that changed the world – the friendship between David and Jonathan in the Old Testament book of 1 Samuel. As I continue this series that focuses on the heart, we are going to look at this wonderful friendship between these two great men. I've called today's talk, "The Heart of a Friend." Let's pray.

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

1Sa 18:2 From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return home to his family.

1Sa 18:3 And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.

1Sa 18:4 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.

Virtually every great thinker and writer in history has had something to say about friendship. The Greek philosopher, Aristotle said,

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Without friendships no one would choose to live, even if they had all other good things in life.

C.S. Lewis, my favorite Christian writer, said,

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I have no duty to be anyone's friend and no man in the world has a duty to be mine. No claims, no shadow of necessity. Friendship is unnecessary, like philosophy, like art, like the universe itself (for God did not need to create). It has no survival value; rather it is one of those things which give value to survival.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century American writer, Elbert Hubbard said,

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A friend is the person who knows all about you and still loves you.

It is not just the great writers and thinkers that have spoken about friendship. Len Wein, who used to write Superman Comics and then switched over to Marvel Comics, said,

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A friend is someone who is there for you when he would rather be anywhere else.

The Beatles put it really simply when they sang,

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I get by with a little help from my friends.

We need friends. Friends make life worth living. Friends move us past survival towards the experience of life as it was meant to be lived. There are few things in life I value more than my friendships.

Now, in a group this size there is going to be different kinds of people. I've seen two extremes regarding this issue of friendship as I've interacted with people in the church. On one extreme in the church there are people who say, "I don't need friendships; and, I don't care if I have any friends." Some of you may believe that about yourself. You don't need friends; you don't need someone to confide in; you don't need to be transparent with anyone; and, you don't care if you have any friends.

And the other extreme in the church, I've met people who say, "I need friends and the church owes me friendship. It is the church's problem if I don't have any friends."

Now, both of these extremes are expressions of pride. I don't need any friends is an expression of proud, self-sufficiency. I'm above the need to give love or receive love from anyone else. The other extreme, you owe me, is also a form of pride. I demand that you serve this particular need in me. Any time we approach another human being like that, we approach our wife or husband, "I have this need and I demand that you meet this need; I need to be cherished; I need sex; I need to be listened to," whenever we say to another human being, "you owe me and you must fill this need," it is just simply pride. I demand that you revolve around me.

And don't we do that to each other? You owe me. We do that to our spouses. We do that with our children and our parents. We do that with other people in the church. You owe me. You must fill my need bucket. The Bible calls that sinful pride.

Now, listen to me. As we talk about friendship today, I'm not going to talk about how you can meet your needs, or how I can meet my needs. I'm not going to talk about how to have friends, how to get other people to serve you, how to show interest in others, listen to others, or smile at others so that you can get other people to like you. That is just a form of American self-interest, "how to win friends and influence people" kind of thinking. I'm not going to talk today about how to have friends. I'm going to talk about how to be a friend.

What we are going to learn today from the relationship between Jonathan and David is that you cannot choose to have a great friend, but you can choose to be a great friend. And that is something that the Lord wants for each of us – to learn how to be great friends.

This past year I took a series of classes at Case Western Reserve, my alma mater in Cleveland. The classes were all about leadership. One of the exercises they had us do is to imagine our funerals and you are overhearing what people are saying about you. What would you want to have said about you? One of the first things I wrote down is that I would like a number of people to say, "Rich was a great friend to me." Don't you want that? That before you die you learn how to be a really great friend?

I think from the relationship between Jonathan and David we can draw some principles of what being a great friend might look like.

Let me just give you a little bit of background here. King Saul was the first king of the Old Testament nation of Israel. But he repeatedly sinned against God, refusing to do God's will. And so God rejected him as king, withdrew the

anointing on King Saul's life, and God began blessing David, a young shepherd boy. God's hand was on David's life.

Well, King Saul had a son named Jonathan. Jonathan was heir to the throne. Jonathan and the young man who would take over the kingdom became best friends – the prince and the shepherd boy. What do we learn from their friendship?

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Christian friends make friendship with God their first priority.

1 Sam. 18.1,

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<sup>1Sa 18:1</sup> After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself.

One in spirit. They were soul brothers. They had the same passions in life. The same goal, the same aim.

C.S. Lewis said the issue of friendship is not do you love me, the issue of friendship is do you see the same truths as I do? Are you caught up with the same passions? Do you have the same goal in life as I do? Are you caught up with the same love as I am?

Jonathan and David both shared the same truth, the truth found in the God of Israel. They had the same aim in life, to see God's kingdom extended throughout the earth. They had the same goal to see God's will done. They had the same love, a love for the person and purposes of God.

A Christian friend makes friendship with God their first priority. Jonathan was a God-dominated, God-saturated man. And David was a God-saturated man. In fact, when David was being hunted by Jonathan's father, Saul, it says in 1 Sam. 23.16,

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<sup>1Sa 23:16</sup> And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God

See, to be a friend does not mean to try to draw the other person to yourself, or to try to be this other person's Savior. To be a friend means that I am constantly pointing my friend to God, and I'm trying to encourage their love for God even as I have a love for God.

Have you ever been in a group of people in which you realize these few folks are enjoying real communion with God? I don't mean just union with God, I mean communion. Everyone of us who has turned to Christ as Savior and Lord is objectively in union with Christ. 1 Cor. 1.9 says this:

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1Co 1:9 God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The apostle Paul tells us that by faith we are in fellowship with Christ. We are in union with him; we are connected to him; we are the Body of Christ, and Jesus himself is the head. He is the vine and we are the branches. We are in union with Christ.

But have you ever been with a group of people who are not only objectively in union with Christ, but they are in communion with him? You say, "I am out of my deep here. These women seem to know God in an intimate way, in a way that I do not know God." "These men are fellowshiping with God. They are friends of God in a way that I do not know the friendship of the Lord." You get around people who are in communion with Christ, who are really friends of Jesus, and you discover that these folks have a secret history with God. They are not just going from Sunday to Sunday trying to jumpstart their spiritual lives on a weekly basis, while they live apart from Christ from Monday to Saturday. These folks are building a secret history with God.

What do I mean by communion with Christ? I mean you get around someone and they can tell you what God is doing in their lives. They are in touch with the Spirit of God and they can say to you at any given time, "Here is something that God is putting his finger on; here is a place that the Spirit of God is bringing conviction to my heart. He is speaking to me about being more charitable towards others, giving people the benefit of the doubt, seeing not only what's wrong, but what's good and what God is doing in the life of another. Here is something that the Lord spoke to me about from his Word this morning, or yesterday morning."

The person seems to be alive in Christ and when you are with that person, the conversation at some point is going to drift towards what God is doing in their life, in the church, and in the world.

Have you ever been around a group of people who are in communion with Christ, who are really friends of Jesus Christ? It is challenging, isn't it? But I will tell you that this is the source of true friendship when you can say about yourself: One of my great aims in life is to become a friend of Jesus Christ. Can you say that about yourself?

You know, it is because people today know very little about friendship with God that they have read into the relationship of Jonathan and David homosexual overtones. There are any number of books out that discuss the homo-erotic overtones of the relationship of Jonathan and David. When I read things like that I think to myself, "This author is simply revealing how little of real friendship he or she understands. The author is simply revealing their ignorance of what it looks like when two men are in communion with Christ, and they seem the same truth, and they go after the same goal together."

Let me speak to the women here because I believe there is a danger in the friendship of women that tends to not be there in the friendships of men. Women, if Christ is not your first love, if your friendship with Christ is not place above other friendships, then what I often see in women's friendships is an idolatry of heart entanglement with another woman. Because women in general tend to be more nurturing than men, because in general women tend to move towards emotional intimacy more than men do, women can often replace friendship with Jesus with friendship with another woman.

There was a marvelous article written about a year ago in the *Journal of Biblical Counseling* by a woman titled, "Close Friends or Entangled Hearts: Joys and Dangers in Woman to Woman Relationships." The author of this article asked some probing questions of women. She asked:

- For married women, is there a friendship with a woman that your husband is bothered by because you speak so much about this other woman? You quote her. You refer to her. You have secret conversations with her. This other woman has become almost a competitor for your affections. Is there someone like that in your life? Is there some friend who preoccupies your thoughts and feelings? Is there someone you consider to be a best friend and is your friendship utterly exclusive? Are you threatened or insecure when someone encroaches upon your friendship with another woman? Who do you find yourself talking to when you have a need? Who do you find yourself confiding in most often? How do you express physical affection to one another, if God is not in first place?

If the great commandment to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength is not what you are all about, you and I will not be the kind of friends God intends us to be to someone else because in some way or another you are going to reach into that other person for something that only God can give you.

Here is the second thing,

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Christian friends aim at loving our friends as we love ourselves.

1 Sam. 18.1



SLIDE

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

SLIDE – 1 Sam. 18.3

1Sa 18:3 And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.

SLIDE – 2 Sam. 20.17

1Sa 20:17 And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.

Jonathan fulfilled the second greatest commandment in his relationship with David.

We read in Mark 12.28-31 these words:

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Mk 12:28 One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating.

Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

Mk 12:29 "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

Mk 12:30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

Mk 12:31 The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

These two commandments are related to each other. We cannot love someone as we love ourselves unless first we love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Because as we've found, unless we're in communion with Christ, having Christ meet our needs, filling ourselves and feeding on Christ, we are going to somehow try to fill ourselves and feed upon another person – our spouse, our children, our friends.

What does it mean to love someone as we love our selves? In lots of contemporary writing these words of Jesus are turned on their head and it is alleged that you can't love someone until you love yourself – that Jesus is actually urging us to three loves in the two commandments: Love for God; love for people; and love for yourself.

Now there is certainly room in the Bible for healthy self-respect. There is room in the Bible for great gratitude to God for what God has made us to be. Gratitude to God for the gifts that God has given us. But self-respect and self-affirmation are not the fullness of the biblical picture regarding how we deal with ourselves. The

Bible often speaks to us about self-denial. So we read passages like this in Mark 8.34-35,

#### SLIDE

Mk 8:34 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said:  
“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

Mk 8:35 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.

John Stott, who is one of the great Bible expositors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century struck the right balance when he said,

#### SLIDE

We need to affirm what we are by way of creation and we need to deny what we are by way of the fall.

By way of creation, what has God made me to be? That needs to be affirmed. I need to be thankful for the man I am, the gifts that God has given me, and the situation in life that God has placed me in. What I need to deny and crucify what I am by way of the fall – my selfishness, my tendency to exalt myself, my pride, my demand that other people serve me. Jesus is not here referring to healthy self-respect when he tells us to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Jesus is assuming that you and I are people who do promote our own interests. Jesus is assuming that you and I are people who like to get our own way. Jesus is assuming that you and I do put ourselves first. And what Jesus is telling us is that if you want to be a friend, in the same way that you promote your interests, promote this person's interests. What Jesus is telling us is if you want to be a friend in the same way that you've learned to put yourself first, put this other person's interests before your own.

Jesus is saying that if you want to be someone's friend, in the same way you've learned how to nurture and care for yourself, learn to nurture and care for someone else. Jesus is assuming that you know how to serve yourself. You know how to make life work for you. You know how to make things convenient for yourself. If you want to be a friend, make life convenient for someone else.

This leads to the third principle of friendship,

#### SLIDE

Christian friends are willing to sacrifice themselves for their friends.

#### SLIDE – 1 Sam. 18.4

1Sa 18:4 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.

Jonathan is stripping himself of the prerogative and attributes of his future kingship – his sword, his robe, his bow and his belt. He was surrendering his right to the throne so that God's purposes in David's life could be fulfilled.

It is impossible to read this story of Jonathan stripping himself so that his friend, David, could be promoted without immediately having our minds drawn to Jesus Christ. Jesus tells us in John 15.12-13,

#### SLIDE

Jn 15:12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

Jn 15:13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

And how did Jesus prove his friendship to us? Like Jonathan of the Old Testament, Jesus stripped himself of all of the prerogatives, all of the rights of king and heir of the universe. He gave up everything for our sakes. We read in Phil. 2.6-8,

#### SLIDE

Phil 2:6 Who, being in very nature <sup>1</sup> God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

Phil 2:7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature <sup>2</sup> of a servant, being made in human likeness.

Phil 2:8 And being found in appearance as a human being, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!

Jesus gives us his robe, his robe of righteousness, so that we can stand before God in right relationship. Jesus places his merits in our account so that we can be justified by faith. Jesus gives us his Spirit so that we can live successful lives and fulfill God's purpose for our lives. Self-sacrifice.

I read a wonderful biography this past year called *Team of Rivals* by Doris Kearns Goodwin. It is the best biography of Abe Lincoln I've ever read, and I've read about a half dozen biographies of Lincoln. But in *Team of Rivals*, Doris Kearns Goodwin talks about Lincoln's capacity to demonstrate friendship towards others.

In 1855 Lincoln was a candidate for the US Senate in the State of Illinois. In those days Senators were not directly elected by the people. Instead, they were elected by the State legislatures. Lincoln ran under the old Whig Party and received 45 votes from the Illinois State Senate, which was against 41 votes

against his Democratic opponent, James Shields, and five votes for man named Lyman Trumbull. Lincoln needed 51 votes to win. They kept re-voting through the night. Lincoln got 47 votes, four shy of victory. But Trumbull, who was splitting the Whig Party refused to turn his four votes over to Lincoln.

In the morning, Lincoln turned to his floor manager and said, "I want you to release all of my delegates to Trumbull." Lincoln's floor manager, at first, refused. He said, "This is utterly unjust. Why should you give 47 votes to this man who only has four votes?" Lincoln said, "It is more important that the cause of anti-slavery win than that I win. The cause is to be preferred to men."

An incredible act of self-sacrifice. Well, you know, Trumbull and his floor manager never forget this act of sacrifice. And when Lincoln was running for President just a few years later, these men would have allowed themselves to be run over by a truck than to see Lincoln defeated. They worked tirelessly to line up delegates for Lincoln. It was these kinds of acts of self-sacrifice that won friendships for Lincoln throughout the country.

To be a friend means that you are willing to pay a price. Jonathan paid an enormous price to be David's friend when he said, "David, here's the kingdom. You are the one the Lord picked, not me. Take the kingdom that I have by way of inheritance. It is yours." Better that God's purposes be fulfilled than that I win.

Jesus paid an enormous price to turn us who were his enemies into friends of God.

There is a great cost to long-term friendship. Do you know that? The reason why most people don't have long-term friends is because they aren't willing to pay the cost. The friendship becomes inconvenient.

- I have a new love in my life, so my friend is now inconvenient.
- My friend is going through a difficult time, they are depressed and a drag to be around. They aren't nearly as much fun as they used to be, so I'm going to drop them as a friend.
- My friend is not as able to put our emotionally as they were in the past.
- My friend is having marital problems.
- My friend is not traveling in the circles that I want to advance in.
- My new friends don't really like my old friend so I guess I can't be friends with my old friend.

True friendships are expensive. And if you want to be a friend, true friendship is not going to come cheaply.

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Christian friends demonstrate both private and public loyalty.

Jonathan and David swore loyalty towards one another. 1 Sam. 18.3

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1Sa 18:3 And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.

I will talk about the covenant between Jonathan and David next week. But suffice it to say David and Jonathan swore mutual loyalty to one another. And this loyalty was not just something they practiced in private when they were in the presence of one another. The covenant loyalty extended to the way they related to one another when the other was absent.

We read in 1 Sam. 20 that Jonathan defended David's reputation to his father, Saul. And Jonathan was willing to incur his father's wrath and anger. Part of the commitment of loyalty that Jonathan had with David was to speak well of David. It says in 19.4-5,

## SLIDE

1Sa 19:4 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.

1Sa 19:5 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?"

Part of friendship then is a commitment to privately speak well of another person, to uphold their reputation, to defend them when there are innuendoes made about their character or their behavior. Let me ask you a question: Are you a loyal person to the people you claim as friends, even when these folks are absent? When your friends are not around, are you committed rock solid to speak well of them – no little shading, no innuendoes, no little "she has a problem here and there, but I just love her, don't you?" Loyalty extends to those times when your friend is doing badly, when your friend has totally screwed up, or screwed their lives up.

Back in 1948 a man named Alger Hiss was accused of being a Communist spy while working in the State Department in the 1930's by another man named Whittaker Chambers. Hiss helped found the United Nations. He was the organizer of the conference that laid its foundation and drafted its charter. He was the chief advisor to the US delegation at their first meeting of the General Assembly. But he was accused of being a Communist. And Richard Nixon catapulted himself into national prominence by his attacks on Alger Hiss.

Well, Alger Hiss was convicted of perjury, of lying about his relationship with former communist, Whittaker Chambers. Dean Acheson, who was then the

Secretary of State, said in a news conference that he was not going to turn his back on Alger Hiss no matter what Alger Hiss had done. So he visited Hiss in prison. He said, "He's my friend." Dean Acheson paid a huge price for his loyalty. Wisconsin Sen. Joseph McCarthy used that as Exhibit A to show that the whole State Department was infested with communists.

Being a friend means that we demonstrate public and private loyalty. Being a loyal friend means that we have a commitment to speak well of another person. Loyalty, by the way, doesn't mean we don't speak the truth to our friends. Loyalty means we uphold the purposes of God in our friends' lives. Being a loyal friend means that we are committed to stand by someone even when they go through bad times and are unpopular. Being a loyal friend means that we are committed to stand by someone even when they succeed well beyond us.

There is a maxim that says:

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A friend in need is a friend indeed.

But that is not the entire story of loyalty. A friend in triumph is hard to find, isn't it? It is easier to be a savior to our friends, than to be a cheerleader when our friends are soaring high. But loyalty involves also being a cheerleader for our friends' successes.

And the last point,

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Christian friends extend their friendship to their friends' children.

We read in 1 Sam. 20.42,

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<sup>1</sup>Sa 20:42 Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the LORD, saying, 'The LORD is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.' " <sup>a</sup> Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town.

David demonstrated his friendship to Jonathan not only by being Jonathan's friend, but by caring for Jonathan's children. We're going to read about that next week.

But I have always believed that part of my responsibility as a friend to someone else was to extend friendship to their children. Do you believe that? You know, one of the places that I see this principle coming into play is in second marriages. I've watched people who are married a second time not extend love to their spouse's children. "Oh, I love you, but I'm not going to open up my heart to your

kids.” It is impossible to say to someone, “I love you, but I have no room for your kids.”

Someone’s kids are part of the package we sign up for in friendship and in love. Friendship is one of the rare things that moves us human beings past survival toward real living. And friendship with Christ moves us past living to abundant living, towards eternal living. Let’s pray.

## **The Heart of a Friend**

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**Rich Nathan**

**August 5-6, 2006**

**1 and 2 Samuel: A Heart After God Series**

**1 Samuel 18.1-4; 20**

I. Isolated Americans

II. Valuing Friendship

III. Being A Friend

- A. Christian Friends Make Friendship With God Their First Priority  
(1 Sam. 18.1)
  - 1. Union And Communion (1 Cor. 1.9)
  - 2. Entangled Hearts
- B. Christian Friends Aim At Loving Our Friends As We Love Ourselves  
(1 Sam. 18.3; Mk. 12.30,31)
- C. Christian Friends Sacrifice Themselves For Their Friends  
(1 Sam. 18.4; Phil. 2.6-8)
- D. Christian Friends Demonstrate Both Private And Public Loyalty  
(1 Sam. 18.3; 19.4,5)
- E. Christian Friends Extend Friendship To The Children Of One's Friends  
(1 Sam. 20.42)