

# A Covenant Between Friends

**Key Verse:** “As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.”

—**I Samuel 18:1,**  
*English Standard Version*

**Selected Scripture:**  
**I Samuel 18:1-5**

## **THIS CONVERSATION**

between David and Saul came on the heels of David’s stunning defeat of Goliath. The man who would be Israel’s champion and kill the Philistine giant had been promised freedom from taxes, great riches, and the hand of Saul’s daughter in marriage. (I Sam. 17:25) However, David’s motivation was the glory of God.

When the Philistine mocked David and cursed him by his gods, David said to him, “You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin,

but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD’s, and he will give you into our hand.”—vss. 45-47, *ESV*

It is not unreasonable to assume that Saul's son, Jonathan, heard David's response to Goliath. He was a commander in Israel's army and likely stood by Saul's side as David returned from the battle. While Saul's interest in David might be characterized as exploitive, Jonathan's was altruistic. He saw in David the same noble ideals which he himself endeavored to live by, and one of the tenderest friendships recorded in the Bible blossomed between them. "Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt."—I Sam. 18:3,4, *ESV*

Even when it had become apparent that Saul's reign was doomed to end and he sought David's life, Jonathan went to David and assured him, "Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Saul my father also knows this. And the two of them made a covenant before the LORD."—I Sam. 23:17,18, *ESV*

While we don't know the particulars of that covenant, we certainly may take a lesson from it. Those who serve the Heavenly Father faithfully become our dearest and truest friends, and we may rightly pledge fidelity and friendship to those with whom we walk in the Christian way. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. ... I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you."—John 15:12-15, *ESV*

"A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." (Prov. 18:24, *ESV*) With our brethren in Christ, let us stick closer than a brother and offer our love and loyalty as a covenant between friends. ■