

Love That Lasts

Connect Group Guide - 2.8.26

Opening Prayer

Icebreaker

Share about your best friendship memory or tell the story of how you met your closest friend. What made that relationship special?

Key Scripture

- **1 Samuel 18:1-4** - The covenant between David and Jonathan
- **1 Samuel 20:4, 14-15** - Jonathan's loyalty and request
- **John 15:13** - "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends"

Key Takeaways

- Covenant love gives; romantic love takes
- Real friends celebrate your promotion, not compete with your calling
- The closer we get to God, the closer we get to each other
- Covenant love lasts generations; Valentine's love has an expiration date
- Jesus is the ultimate example of covenant love—He didn't just risk His life; He gave it
- We need God in our relationships because only He knows us better than we know ourselves

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Message

1. **What struck you most about Jonathan's sacrifice?** He gave up the throne, his royal garments, and risked his relationship with his father. What does this teach us about true friendship?
2. **Pastor Mike said, "If romance is all you have, then your love could be very fragile."** What did he mean by this? How have you seen this play out in relationships around you?
3. **Read 1 Samuel 18:1.** The text says Jonathan and David's souls were "knit together." What does soul-level friendship look like in practical terms?

Going Deeper

4. **The Triangle Illustration:** How does seeking God individually strengthen our relationships with others? Share an example from your own life where growing spiritually improved a relationship.
5. **Jonathan celebrated David's anointing even though it cost him the throne.** When have you struggled to celebrate someone else's blessing or promotion? What made it difficult? How can we overcome envy in relationships?
6. **"Covenant love doesn't expire."** David honored his covenant with Jonathan by caring for Mephibosheth decades later. What does long-term faithfulness look like in your friendships? In your marriage?
7. **The message mentioned that most people only have 2-3 close "Jonathan and David" type friends.** Why do you think deep friendships are so rare? What prevents us from developing covenant-level friendships?

Personal Application

8. Transactional vs. Covenant Relationships:

- In your marriage (if applicable): Are there areas where your relationship has become transactional rather than covenant-based?
 - In your friendships: Do you have friends who know your heart? Who fights for your destiny?
9. **Pastor Mike asked: "Who stands with us spiritually?"** Do you have someone in your life who holds you accountable and prays for you regularly? If not, what steps can you take to develop that kind of friendship?
 10. **Jonathan said to David: "Whatever you want me to do, I'll do for you."** This came from his surrender to God first. What would need to change in your life to make that kind of commitment to a friend or spouse?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose one or more of these action steps to practice this week:

11. **For Married Couples:** Have a conversation with your spouse about moving from transactional to covenant thinking. Pray together about one specific area where you can sacrifice for each other rather than keeping score.
12. **For Singles/Everyone:** Identify one friend who needs encouragement. Reach out this week specifically to celebrate something good in their life, even if you're going through a difficult season yourself.
13. **Spiritual Growth:** Commit to seeking God more intentionally this week (prayer, worship, Bible reading). Journal about how growing closer to God affects your relationships.
14. **Covenant Friendship:** Ask someone to be an accountability partner—someone who will "know your heart" and "fight for your destiny." Set up a regular time to meet.
15. **Honor Past Covenants:** Is there a friend from your past you've lost touch with? Reach out this week to reconnect and honor that relationship.

Leader Notes

Be sensitive to those who may be struggling in marriages or feeling isolated in friendships. Create a safe space for honest conversation while pointing people toward God's design for covenant relationships. Remind the group that building covenant relationships takes time and intentionality.

Prayer Requests & Closing