

When Words And Misunderstandings Hurt

1Samuel 20:1-17

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 3-13-2011

Introduction

Dr. Samuel Johnson, was a devout Anglican, and the author of the most famous English dictionary prior to the Oxford Dictionary. He was an amazing scholar, but he was very, very down-to-earth and practical as well. He once said, “A man, sir, should keep his friendships in a state of constant repair.” Like ships, automobiles, or anything else in life, friendships need to be kept in a state of constant repair. That implies that misunderstandings and sins can hurt friendships. It also implies that we should not allow hurts to make us cast friends aside. It implies thirdly that such hurts can happen easily and frequently. And it implies fourthly that just as we shouldn’t be surprised that our automobiles need occasional repairs, we shouldn’t be surprised when we have to work at overcoming hurt feelings in friendships.

I would hope that you wouldn’t throw away a car simply because it has a dent in the fender. You fix it. And I would hope that you would fix a friendship rather than taking the easy way out and getting a new friend every time there is a dent in the fender of your friendship. God’s grace must be at work in all of our lives, and that includes our friendships. The Gospel was not intended to just get us saved. It was intended to transform the way we look at life and live out live. I sometimes stand amazed at how easily some people can write off friendships simply because of some hurts that have happened.

I. Jonathan misunderstands David

A. *David speaks with reproach (v. 1)*

Jonathan and David had a great friendship – a lasting friendship. And yet in this chapter both Jonathan and David hurt each other through careless words and misunderstandings. We’ll look first at the misunderstanding that Jonathan had of David. Verse 1 says, “**Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and went and said to Jonathan, “What have I done? What is my iniquity, and what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?”**”

David is speaking from the emotion of his heart. And who wouldn’t? He has lost everything and is being hunted down like a dog by Jonathan’s

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father. Who wouldn't be emotional? He's taking a huge risk even being seen with Jonathan in Gibeah. And I'm sure that his adrenalin is still flowing pretty strong. In those kinds of situations it is easy to be misunderstood because you tend to speak emotionally. And it is precisely in such emotional moments when hurt feelings can arise.

David is not trying to accuse Jonathan of anything, but the emotional way in which he asks this question makes it seem as if David is reproaching Jonathan. "What have I done? What is my iniquity?" It would be perfectly OK to ask such questions of Saul, who is trying to kill him, but Jonathan has no idea that Saul has even done this, and it may seem as if David is accusing him of not being fair.

Furthermore, since Jonathan does not believe that his dad has done what he did in chapter 19, the rest of sentence might make him a little bit defensive too: "...**and what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?**" At this point he doesn't realize that his father has done any sin.

Have you ever watched the reactions of airline ticket people when customers who have just been bumped start yelling at them? It's very easy to get defensive, isn't it? And because the desk is associated with the airline, it is very easy for the one complaining to get frustrated with the person at the desk. Or perhaps you have been to the front desk of a hotel and watched someone venting because he is upset with something that is not right about his hotel room. In a less emotional state, those people complaining would likely not think that the clerk at the front desk had anything to do with the bump or anything to do with the filth in the hotel room. It wasn't their fault. But because they are the first ones to encounter the blast of emotion, it is easy for them to get defensive or testy themselves. It's easy to take it personally. Such clerks need to learn that the person is mad about the problem in general and isn't directly mad at them. But it is sometimes hard to separate the issue from the emotion that is being unloaded in your direction.

B. Jonathan's naïve assumption that he knows what is going on. He completely denies that David's accusations of his father could be correct (v. 2)

Jonathan does what every clerk is carefully instructed not to do – he denies that there is a problem. There couldn't be a problem. I'm not aware of any problem. Look at verse 2: "**So Jonathan said to him, 'By no means! You shall not die! Indeed, my father will do nothing either great or small without first telling me. And why should my father hide this thing**

from me? It is not so!” He may not have realized it, but he was basically calling David a liar. “You’re crazy! My dad wouldn’t do that without telling me. You’re making this up.” Here’s how one translation has it: “No, you won’t die. Listen, my father doesn’t do anything, great or small, without telling me. So why would he hide this matter from me? This can’t be true.”

If you are in David’s situation, and you have barely escaped with your life, to have someone tell you that it just can’t be true is going to make you a bit upset. “Of course it’s true. I just experienced it!” It will make you upset first of all because you aren’t being believed, and it will make you upset second because your horrendous problem is being minimized. Right? When you are going to the clerk at the front desk, you don’t want your problem to be minimized. You want it to be taken seriously.

And I hope you guys will take these applications as we go through the sermon, because I won’t be repeating them at the end. If you are a David, try to take some of the emotion out of your venting, and try to make your Jonathan realize that you love him and you aren’t directing this against him. We need to realize that our emotion, however legitimate our emotion might be, can easily be misconstrued as an attack. And if you are a Jonathan, don’t minimize the perceived problems of others. Even if they are wrong, you have to deal with perception. You have to be sensitive even though you think it’s not a big problem. Don’t immediately deny the problem or minimize the problem. Doing so leads to hurts.

I have to constantly remind myself that the person in India on the end of the phone is not the one who is personally at fault, and I shouldn’t get testy with him. But it can sometimes be hard, can’t it? It can be hard for children whose parents don’t take their fears and concerns seriously. It can sometimes be hard for wives to keep their cool when their husbands minimize the horrendous problems they have been facing during the day. These are the kinds of ways in which we can hurt other people’s feelings. Well, as usually happens, it gets worse as we go through the passage.

C. David swears more than once that what he has said is true, but mollifies his reproach by assuming Jonathan’s ignorance (v. 3)

Verse 3 shows David trying to defend himself when he was really hoping for sympathy. “**Then David took an oath again** [So that implies that he had already taken an oath, and Jonathan still didn’t believe him. “Then David took an oath again”], **and said, ‘Your father certainly knows that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said, “Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.” But truly, as the LORD lives and as your**

soul lives, there is but a step between me and death.” He is trying to convince Jonathan to believe him and to take seriously the problem that he is facing. But, he is also wisely giving Jonathan an out – maybe you don’t know.

D. Jonathan tries to accommodate David (v. 4) but obviously is still skeptical of David’s assertions (v. 9)

Jonathan realizes that he’s not going to convince David otherwise, so he does the right thing: he decides that it can’t hurt to investigate. Verse 4 – **“So Jonathan said to David, ‘Whatever you yourself desire, I will do it for you.’**” If he keeps talking he realizes that he’ll just upset David even more, so he figures, “Fine, I’ll go along with it. I guess it can’t hurt.” There is wisdom in that. But even though both David and Jonathan are trying to be reasonable in their speech, we will see that their emotion gets in the way.

II. David misunderstands Jonathan

A. He implies that Jonathan’s skepticism is a reluctance to protect him (vv. 5-7 – “let me go” and “be sure”)

David’s emotions have already kicked in, and he misunderstands and/or misrepresents Jonathan’s words and intentions and he ends up hurting Jonathan’s feelings. This is the way it goes with emotion if you are not careful. It’s so easy to add fuel to the fire. Let’s read verses 5-7:

1Samuel 20:5 And David said to Jonathan, **“Indeed tomorrow is the New Moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king to eat. But let me go, that I may hide in the field until the third day at evening.**

1Samuel 20:6 If your father misses me at all, then say, **“David earnestly asked permission of me that he might run over to Bethlehem, his city, for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.”**

1Samuel 20:7 If he says thus: **“It is well,’ your servant will be safe. But if he is very angry, be sure that evil is determined by him.**

At first David words himself fairly carefully, though even here, his statement “let me go” implies some reluctance on Jonathan’s part when Jonathan has just finished saying, **“Whatever you yourself desire, I will do it for you.”** David didn’t have to say that. I’m sure David didn’t mean to contradict Jonathan, but this could easily be taken wrong. And when he says, “be sure” it could be taken in a negative way; a patronizing way.

B. Implies that Jonathan’s skepticism is a lack of kindness (v. 8a)

But when he gets to verse 8, David’s emotions make him not careful in the way he talks. **“Therefore you shall deal kindly with your servant,**

for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you,...” This call to be kind to David, while innocent enough, implies what? It implies that Jonathan might be willing to be unkind to David. In any case, it could be taken wrongly when Jonathan is already a little bit testy.

C. Reminds Jonathan of his covenant, implying that Jonathan might go back on his word (v. 8b)

And reminding Jonathan that he needs to be kind because he has pledged himself in a covenant could be taken as implying that Jonathan might go back on his word. Does Jonathan really need to be reminded of that? It’s easy to take offense at slight things if you are already testy.

D. Insults Jonathan when he questions his covenant (“Nevertheless”) and asks Jonathan to kill him himself rather than to bring David to Saul (v. 8c)

But it is the last part of verse 8 that was really insensitive on David’s part. “**Nevertheless** [Sometimes a “but” or a “nevertheless” is trouble. That word implies that notwithstanding Jonathan’s solemn covenant vows – “Nevertheless”] **if there is iniquity in me, kill me yourself, for why should you bring me to your father?**” That is a total misunderstanding of Jonathan’s true feelings and intentions. Jonathan may be naïve about his father’s intentions, but he certainly doesn’t appreciate David’s questioning his loyalty, his friendship, his integrity, or his love. And to suggest that Jonathan kill him – that is very insensitive. But how many husbands, wives, and children have I counseled who say hurtful things like that out of emotion? They are not being careful with their speech, and they end up saying things that could be interpreted way, way wrong.

III. Hurt feelings

A. Jonathan feels hurt that David is questioning his motives (v. 9), that David thinks Jonathan will treat this lightly (v. 10), and that David apparently doesn’t believe him (v. 12a)

So it is very understandable that Jonathan gets upset and shows hurt feelings in verse 9. “**But Jonathan said, ‘Far be it from you! For if I knew certainly that evil was determined by my father to come upon you, then would I not tell you?’**” There was nothing that Jonathan had ever done to warrant the kind of words that David said in the previous sentence. After all, of his own volition and initiative Jonathan had warned David of his father’s intentions in chapter 19:2, and he had talked his father out of doing

anything to David. In fact, his father had sworn an oath to Jonathan in 19:6, “**As the LORD lives, he shall not be killed.**” For Jonathan, that settled the matter. His dad had never kept secrets from him before, and had taken a solemn oath to never do to David what David is now insisting that he was indeed going to do. It makes Jonathan feel bad.

And verse 10 doesn’t help. David cautiously asks, “**Who will tell me, or what if your father answers you roughly?**” It is conceivable that David is just trying to be sensitive to the difficult spot this would put Jonathan in. “If you can’t come to warn me, who will? And besides, I hope you don’t get in trouble when your dad answers you roughly.” But based on Jonathan’s answer, it sounds like Jonathan thinks David is questioning his willingness. He himself swears an oath in verses 12-13. “**Then Jonathan said to David: ‘The LORD God of Israel is witness!** [In other words, ‘Hey, I’m not lying. I swear I’m telling the truth.’ – ‘The LORD God of Israel is witness!'] **When I have sounded out my father sometime tomorrow, or the third day, and indeed there is good toward David** [that’s his first assumption – that David is wrong about his dad. When I find out that “indeed there is good toward David”], **and I do not send to you and tell you, may the LORD do so and much more to Jonathan. But if it pleases my father to do you evil, then I will report it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety.**” Tsumura points out that the literal Hebrew, “the evil thing,” is actually a euphemistic expression that shows that he wants to believe the best about his father. But he also wants to believe the best about David. He’s conflicted. Nevertheless, it is clear that Jonathan has hurt feelings.

B. David no doubt feels hurt that Jonathan doesn’t believe him (v. 3, 9,12) and that he implies that his attitudes could result in Jonathan’s death (v. 14) and the death of his children (v. 15) when David becomes king.

And I think we can understand David if he has hurt feelings, because the whole speech shows that Jonathan is still skeptical of what David is saying. But to add insult to injury, Jonathan implies that David might kill Jonathan and his children when he becomes king. It makes me shudder that a friend would even say these words. But they are tit for tat. David had just talked about Jonathan killing him. So look at verses 14-15:

1Samuel 20:14 **And you shall not only show me the kindness of the LORD while I still live, that I may not die;** [These are almost the same words that David had used – show me kindness and don’t kill me. He’s throwing back what David had thrown at him. Verse 15:]

1 Samuel 20:15 but you shall not cut off your kindness from my house forever, no, not when the LORD has cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.”

It almost makes you cringe to realize the way both have gotten emotional enough that they could accuse each other of wanting to kill them. Each one believes his own version of the situation, which, without even intending to, will make the other person feel as if he has been put into a bad light. Has anything like this happened in your marriages? The Bible is such a realistic book.

They are kind of at an impasse, and with lesser people, this might be the end of the relationship. David could walk away thinking, “Jonathan is calling me a liar, is willing to endanger my life by bringing me before his dad again, and doesn’t believe a word that I am saying. With attitudes like that, who needs such a friend?” Jonathan could have thought the same thing. He could have thought, “David is allowing the past to totally poison his perspective on my father. He needs to learn to forgive. I have extracted an ironclad promise from my father to not lay a hand on David. What more could David want? I know my dad would tell me if he intended to hurt David. This is ridiculous. I can’t believe that David won’t believe me. With distrust like that, who needs David as a friend?”

I have seen exactly that kind of downward spiral of emotional words result in broken relationships that should never have been broken. Harsh words were said because of a total misunderstanding. And they never were able to patch things up again. Why didn’t that happen with Jonathan and David? The misunderstandings are severe enough that they definitely could have parted with permanently hurt feelings. Yet we will see in the future that both of them remain just as steadfast in their friendship with each other as ever. Even at the end of Jonathan’s life David loved Jonathan more than any other person he had ever known. Despite hurts and despite misunderstandings they stayed committed to each other as friends. How did they do that?

IV. But based on the Gospel they were able to work toward a solution

A. They pursued each other rather than bailing out of the relationship (vv. 1,9,11,12)

I believe that both were trying to live out the Gospel to the best of their abilities. As we have already seen, all the way through they are blowing

it, but they are trying. The first very obvious way they were trying was by pursuing each other rather than bailing out of the relationship.

On David's part, going back to the capital city, Gibeah, to talk to Jonathan was a huge risk. But Jonathan's friendship was worth the risk. David flees from Naioth while Saul is still prophesying, but it is a huge risk to go back to Saul's hometown to speak with Jonathan. But love seeks to pursue a relationship, not bail out of a relationship.

And all the way through we see that both did this. In verse 9 Jonathan affirms, **"If I knew certainly that evil was determined by my father to come upon you, then would I not tell you?"** That is the impulse of love – to come to the other person and to seek the welfare of the other person. Despite being hurt, Jonathan still affirms this. Despite both being hurt, in verse 10 they go off by themselves to talk. Jonathan affirms that no matter what happens, he wants to seek David out.

And if we would do this with each other even in the midst of hurts, we would almost always be able to overcome the obstacles to rich relationships. But too frequently we allow hurts to make us roll over in bed, or walk out of the room, and sometimes to slam the door on the way out. What David and Jonathan are doing is not natural to the flesh. It is the Gospel that makes us overcome our pride and to pursue the relationship. It is the Gospel that makes us forgive one another as God in Christ forgave us. Husbands and wives – take note. We must keep friendships in a constant state of repair. Escape is easier than pursuing the other person, but it is only pursuit that will enable us to keep friendships in that constant state of repair. Have you lived out the Gospel on this first point? If not, write it down as an action item.

B. They loved each other (v. 17) and love covers over a multitude of sins.

The second evidence of God's grace was the undying love that they had for each other. This is not mere human love or affection. This is the characteristic of God-given, agape love, which is willing to sacrifice in order to maintain relationship. Despite being hurt, verse 17 says, **"he loved him; [and then he repeats] for he loved him as he loved his own soul."** Love has an ability to go past offenses and still seek the person. Yes there were offenses and misunderstandings in this chapter. Jonathan was the one with the most misunderstandings, but both had them. Yet both loved the other sufficiently to work on the friendship rather than ditching the car because there is a dent in the fender. Ask God to replace your human love with divine love. Song of Solomon 8:7 says that true, divine love is enduring. It

says, **“Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it. If a man would give for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised.”** Divine love goes way beyond such circumstances and makes us keep trying. 1 Corinthians 13 describes divine love as a kind of love that suffers long and is kind; does not envy; does not parade itself; does not behave rudely; does not seek its own; is not easily provoked; thinks no evil; rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. It is only the Gospel that enables us to have this kind of divine love. I would encourage you to rate the degree to which the Gospel characterizes your friendships by praying through 1 Corinthians 13, the love chapter, and asking God to forgive you for any points in which your love is deficient, and asking Him to apply the Gospel to those weak point and to give you a 1 Corinthians 13 love. God allows these kinds of testings to show us how much more we need to grow in his Gospel love.

C. They took the misunderstandings in perspective. Jonathan offers to do the (apparently) unnecessary in order to please David (v. 4) and David is willing to be open to Jonathan’s viewpoint (v. 7).

Third, both took the misunderstandings in perspective. They were both saying in effect, even if the other person *has* misunderstood, it surely won’t hurt to take their concerns seriously. They weren’t totally successful in doing this, but they tried. There is plenty of evidence that they tried. In verse 4 Jonathan offers to do whatever David wants, even though he is convinced that it is a waste of time and a misunderstanding on David’s part. They will know in a day or two anyway which person is correct, so why sweat it? And in verse 7 David tries to act as if Jonathan’s theory is a possibility. He says, **“If he says thus: ‘It is well,’ your servant will be safe. But if he is very angry, be sure that evil is determined by him.”** So it is not as if David is conceding that he is wrong, but he at least tries to let Jonathan feel that he is willing to be proved wrong. He is taking Jonathan’s perspective seriously. And honestly, that is quite a concession. David has escaped by the skin of his teeth. He is 100% convinced that Saul is going to kill him. So to even be trying to look at it from Jonathan’s perspective shows grace and humility. But this is the stuff of which good friendships are built.

I love the perspective that trial lawyer Clarence Darrow had. He said, “I have suffered from being misunderstood, but I would have suffered a lot more if I had been understood.” It doesn’t matter how poorly someone may think of you, you can have the perspective that if they really knew what was in your heart, this misunderstanding would be nothing. “I’m a whole lot

worse than he thinks I am. Yeah he is wrong on this misunderstanding, but there are enough defects in me that the other person doesn't know about, that I shouldn't be too concerned about this misunderstanding." I'm not sure that Jonathan and David were doing that entirely, but they were at least open to the opposite viewpoint. Staying there was hard because the emotions came up, but their commitment to thinking well of the other person was an underlying foundation that helped them to work through this. I think it is a great example of how to keep our friendships in a constant state of repair.

D. They look to the interests of each other even though they have both felt insulted (vv. 4,10,11,13-16,18-23)

The fourth way that they show forth the Gospel was that they looked to the interests of each other even though they had felt insulted. And this is remarkable. If you know how emotions work, this is remarkable. Our emotions make us want to lash out with a flame-thrower. They punch us verbally and we want to punch back verbally. That's the natural man at work. And there was some of that in Jonathan and David. But there is evidence that they were working against that.

For example, Jonathan looks out for David's interests by being present in his friend's life when his friend has a need. In verse 4 he is willing to do whatever it is that David needs. In verse 11 he looks to David's immediate safety by taking him away from where other people might see him. In verse 13 he is willing to sacrifice the joy of David's presence in order to preserve David's safety. He wishes the Lord's presence with David. He naively says, "**And the LORD be with you as He has been with my father,**" little realizing that God had departed from his father. Nevertheless, he shows that he is thinking in terms of David's best interests in this dialogue. That makes all these misunderstandings much easier for David to take. Even Jonathan's complaints in verses 13-16 imply that Jonathan is absolutely committed to David being the future king. He shouldn't have asked David to spare his life. That was insulting. That was totally unnecessary. But he shows that he is committed to David being the future king. We can't overlook that. His plan for the next three days in verses 18-22 shows sensitivity to David's safety. So whatever his mistakes in this speech, he clearly shows that he has David's best interests at heart. That's the Gospel at work. It's easy to focus on the negative if your defensive emotions have kicked in, but you need to look at both sides.

On David's part, he shows many evidences of valuing Jonathan's friendship and wanting Jonathan to know what is happening. He doesn't

want Jonathan worrying about him without knowing the truth. That's why he risked coming in the first place rather than fleeing without Jonathan's knowledge. He values Jonathan, even if his words were a bit hurtful in the way they were said. He values Jonathan. In verse 10 David shows some sensitivity, realizing that Jonathan is in a tough spot. In verses 14-17 David shows a commitment to the safety of Jonathan and his descendants. He covenants with Jonathan.

When people misunderstand or misrepresent you and you feel hurt, it is much easier to take when you know that they truly do want what is best for you. And the more we can affirm that we really are for the other person during times of misunderstanding, the easier it will be to maintain a good friendship. These are the kinds of contexts in which misunderstandings do not break relationships. They show that the Gospel is at work.

E. They keep this misunderstanding private (v. 11)

Point E is a very important one – they kept this misunderstanding private. Verse 11 is clear on that. One reason for going out into the field alone might have been safety, but the main reason seems to have been to keep their disagreement on how to interpret the situation in private.

Too many friendships have been tossed on the garbage heap because one or both parties started complaining about the friend to others and discussing their hurts with others. That makes the hurts deeper than they need to be, and reinforces the destructive dents in the fenders. In fact, failing to keep such things private is itself a further denting with a hammer of the body of the vehicle. One of the fundamental principles in the book, *The Peace Maker*, by Ken Sande, is Christ's command, to go and tell the person their fault between you and him *alone*. That is the way of the Gospel. And I hope you are evaluating your various friendships by these points and asking if the Gospel is at fully at work in you as it should be.

F. They try to talk things out in a more extended way (v. 11 with 1-23).

The sixth thing that I see in this passage that flows from God's grace is that they tried to talk things out. You see it throughout the passage, but you see it especially in verse 11. Jonathan could see that this was not going to be a short conversation, so he said, "**Come, let us go out into the field.**" To work the misunderstandings out, it would take quite a bit more talking. And while it is true that it was emotional talking that was creating the issues in the first place, you don't solve those disagreements by clamming up.

Some people claim to be friends, but they refuse to talk about hurts that the friend is experiencing. They don't want to talk about it. People sometimes think that walking away until they have cooled off will resolve the issue. It rarely does.

There are circumstances where you simply can't talk with a person because they are acting like a fool. But even in those circumstances, if you can change the forum in which you talk, it can sometimes take the emotion out of the discussion. Instead of saying, "Let's go out into the field to talk this through," Jay Adams recommends the family conference table. And if you don't have a copy of that, I can give you one after the service. I have brought ten with me. It really is a cool concept that is very simple.

When you have a specific table that is reserved for working out problems it automatically adjusts your thinking to trying to be more objective when you sit down at that table. It brings God, and the context of the rules, and purpose of the table into your mind. The purpose of the conference table is to hear the other person's perspective, write it down, to verbalize it back ("Is this what you meant" and you read back what you understood the other person to say), to take the other person's issues seriously, to try to brainstorm on how you can come to a common understanding of a mutually satisfactory solution. He's got rules for the family conference table that may seem artificial, but they help to take the emotion out of the discussion. Many people have found that his approach has helped to resolve longstanding impasses that they have never been able to get past. So when emotions get too high, do what Jonathan did. Tell the other person, "I'm sorry that you feel offended. Let's sit down and let me try to understand what you are saying." You may think they are nuts, but don't tell them so. Let them figure that out themselves through the process of communication. But the purpose is not to convince them of your viewpoint. The purpose is to wrestle through the misunderstandings to see if you can resolve the issues.

G. Both David (vv 3,8,17) and Jonathan (v. 12a,13a,16-17) try to bring everything before the Lord and Jonathan asks God's blessing upon David (v. 13b)

The seventh thing that we see is that both Jonathan and David constantly tried to keep this discussion before the Lord. You can see this in verses 3,8,12,13, and 16-17. It makes a huge difference psychologically when you do this. I remember arguing with my father about something when I was a teenager. I don't remember what the subject was about, but I do

remember the result of bringing the matter before God. Actually, it was my father who did. He simply said, “Let’s pray about this and ask for God’s wisdom.” And then he asked me to lead in prayer. Well, as soon as I started praying, I knew I was wrong. And I remember thinking, “This isn’t fair. That’s playing dirty.” I didn’t verbalize that. But as soon as I started praying I saw things in a different light. But everything we do should be before the face of God. When we live coram deo, we will find ourselves (however stumblingly) moving in the right direction. If the Gospel is at work in your friendships, you will want God’s input, His guidance, and His presence, you will stop and pray, “Lord, guide our conversation. Please take the veil off of my eyes and help me to see what my brother is saying.”

H. Though Jonathan still seems to assume that David is wrong, he says that he will research the matter and take whatever actions are necessary (vv. 12-13)

The eighth thing that I see that was helpful was that Jonathan was willing to do the research and take whatever actions would be necessary to find the truth. He was convinced that he was right. In the next sermon we will see that he was wrongly convinced. Just because you are 100% certain does not mean you are right. But you still think you are right; that’s the problem. But Jonathan helps the problem by being willing to do more research. And this humility made it easier for David to swallow the disagreement.

When you come to an impasse with someone, just telling them that you will definitely research this prayerfully is a statement that shows you honor the other person. You may be convinced that the research will still vindicate your position. But Jonathan’s promise was not an empty promise. He was going to thoroughly look at both sides of the question. And when you do this, you might find yourself surprised as you see your own perspective changed. Certainly Jonathan was totally surprised by what he discovered in the rest of the chapter. A willingness to prayerfully study to see if you are wrong shows that the Gospel is at work in your friendship.

I. Jonathan reaffirms his commitment and love to David (vv. 13b-16) and David reaffirms his commitment and love to Jonathan. Even his request that David be kind to his descendents is an affirmation of David’s kingship (vv. 14-15)

And then finally, Jonathan reaffirmed his commitment and love to David in verses 13-16; and David reaffirms his love and commitment to Jonathan in verses 14-15. And this is so important. Even if you never are

able to come to agreement on some debate, you can affirm your love and respect for each other, and you can let them know that you are committed to them. I mean, this is what God does with you, isn't it? We would all be in trouble if God would be a friend with us only if we had perfectly figured everything out and had no misunderstandings. It shows the depth of love that you have when you are committed to your spouse or your family or your friends even when you don't always see eye to eye. It means that winning the person is more important to you than winning the argument.

Now, it is not as if you don't stand for truth. Do not take this in a post-modern way. Both Jonathan and David stood for what they believed to be true about this situation. Jonathan is proved wrong and David is proved right. But they both had the integrity of saying what they believed to be true. But recognizing that they weren't infallible, they both were open to further discussion.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would urge you not to allow irritations, misunderstandings, or words that make you feel insulted let you get soured on your friendships. As Samuel Johnson said, "A man, sir, should keep his friendships in a state of constant repair." A friendship that does not need repair is likely to be a shallow friendship, just like a vehicle that never needs repair is likely to have never been driven very much. There are times when love can cover over misunderstandings. There are other times when love must rebuke. But separating may be an evidence that you are not fully applying the Gospel to your relationships. I am convinced that at least some of the people who have left this church over the past eleven years would likely not have left if they applied the principles of this passage. If your relationship with God undergirds your relationship with others, and if His love for you is allowed to define your love for others, such misunderstandings can actually highlight your friendship rather than destroying it.

Billy Graham told the story of two fishermen in Scotland who were having tea at a little inn after a day of fishing. One of the fishermen was gesticulating with his arms just as the waitress was bringing the tea by, and he accidentally knocked the teacup out of her hand and against the whitewashed wall. A dark stain immediately formed on the wall. The man, very embarrassed, was apologizing profusely to the hostess of the inn. It just so happened that Sir Edwin Landseer, England's foremost painter of animals, was present. He immediately asked if he could make something of

the stain. He set to work with ink in and around the ugly stain, and sketched what Graham called a magnificent royal stag with a huge set of antlers. I believe that is what David and Jonathan did with the stain of their misunderstandings. They worked on the misunderstandings and found that this incident drew them together in an even deeper and more beautiful bond.

Brothers and sisters – keep your friendships in a constant state of repair by imitating Jonathan and David. The more deeply you taste of the incredible love that God has given to you in the Gospel, the easier it will be for you to do so. Let's pray.

When Words And Misunderstandings Hurt 1Samuel 20:1-17

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 3-13-2011

Introduction

- I. Jonathan misunderstands David
 - A. David speaks with reproach (v. 1)
 - B. Jonathan's naïve assumption that he knows what is going on. He completely denies that David's accusations of his father could be correct (v. 2)
 - C. David swears more than once that what he has said is true, but mollifies his reproach by assuming Jonathan's ignorance (v. 3)
 - D. Jonathan tries to accommodate David (v. 4) but obviously is still skeptical of David's assertions (v. 9)
- II. David misunderstands Jonathan
 - A. He implies that Jonathan's skepticism is a reluctance to protect him (vv. 5-7 – "let me go" and "be sure")
 - B. Implies that Jonathan's skepticism is a lack of kindness (v. 8a)
 - C. Reminds Jonathan of his covenant, implying that Jonathan might go back on his word (v. 8b)
 - D. Insults Jonathan when he questions his covenant ("Nevertheless") and asks Jonathan to kill him himself rather than to bring David to Saul (v. 8c)
- III. Hurt feelings
 - A. Jonathan feels hurt that David is questioning his motives (v. 9), that David thinks Jonathan will treat this lightly (v. 10), and that David apparently doesn't believe him (v. 12a)
 - B. David no doubt feels hurt that Jonathan doesn't believe him (v. 3, 9,12) and that he implies that his attitudes could result in Jonathan's death (v. 14) and the death of his children (v. 15) when David becomes king.
- IV. But based on the Gospel they were able to work toward a solution
 - A. They pursued each other rather than bailing out of the relationship (vv. 1,9,11,12)
 - B. They loved each other (v. 17) and love covers over a multitude of sins.
 - C. They took the misunderstandings in perspective. Jonathan offers to do the (apparently) unnecessary in order to please David (v. 4) and David is willing to be open to Jonathan's viewpoint (v. 7).
 - D. They look to the interests of each other even though they have both felt insulted (vv. 4,10,11,13-16,18-23)
 - E. They keep this misunderstanding private (v. 11)
 - F. They try to talk things out in a more extended way (v. 11 with 1-23).
 - G. Jonathan brings everything before the Lord (v. 12a,13a,16-17) and asks God's blessing upon David (v. 13b)
 - H. Though Jonathan still seems to assume that David is wrong, he says that he will research the matter and take whatever actions are necessary (vv. 12-13)
 - I. Jonathan reaffirms his commitment and love to David (vv. 13b-16) and David reaffirms his commitment and love to Jonathan. Even his request that David be kind to his descendents is an affirmation of David's kingship (vv. 14-15)

Conclusion



By Sir Edwin Landseer