



"Love is not an affectionate feeling, but a steady wish for the loved person's ultimate good as far as it can be obtained."
—C.S. Lewis

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Souls Knit Together (Part Two)

In Part One, we began to see what Scripture reveals about the character of Jonathan son of Saul. Not only was he a capable leader who inspired confidence and loyalty in his men, but he also had a strong [faith](#) in [God](#) that those around him recognized. As Saul's heir, Jonathan had qualities that would have made him an excellent king. God, though, had other plans.

[I Samuel 13:22](#) records that Saul and Jonathan had the only real weapons in Israel. The rest of the Israelites had to use their mattocks, axes, sickles, and whatever else they could find to fight with, and the Philistine sharpening fees were highway robbery. Yet, [I Samuel 18:3-4](#), which chronicles the time just after David slew Goliath, shows Jonathan surrendering all his weapons to David, as well as his robe and his belt! As noted above, Jonathan was next in line to be king over Israel, and his fine robe was a symbol of his royalty.

By this time, Samuel had already anointed David king per God's instructions ([I Samuel 16:1](#), 13). There is no biblical indication that Jonathan knew about this, but his giving his robe to David symbolically transferred his right to the kingship to him. He seems to have had no reservations about doing so at all. His depth of affection for his newfound friend and his recognition of God's

hand in David's life were so strong that he humbly submitted to God's will, even to the point of giving up his own status.

Because of David's success in battle and his resulting popularity, by the time I Samuel 19 opens, Saul is consumed with jealousy and orders David to be killed. Present at this occasion, Jonathan said nothing to his father until all the servants had gone, then he spoke to him privately. It is likely that Jonathan realized that his father's days as king were numbered; he could see that his father was not acting like a man who was submitting to God. Even so, being discreet, he takes Saul out in a field alone where they can talk without being overheard and confronts his father about David.

Somehow, Jonathan remained loyal to David while simultaneously remaining loyal to his father. Between his fathers' mood swings and David having begun to doubt him, Jonathan held steady. In I Samuel 20, Saul is jealous again and David is hiding out in a field, so Jonathan once more approaches his father on behalf of his friend. In verse 30-33, Saul harshly accuses his son of conspiring with David, reminding him, "as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, you shall not be established, nor your kingdom."

Typically, Jonathan does not even respond in regard to his own welfare; his only concern is for his friend. There does not seem to have been a selfish bone in this man's body! This time, Saul tries to kill his own son, so Jonathan knew there was no hope for any kind of reconciliation between Saul and David. Even so, throughout the whole ordeal, Jonathan balanced his loyalties to David and his father to the end, dying with his father in battle on Mount Gilboa.

What did Jonathan see in David after his battle with Goliath? The same thing I saw in others more than three decades ago when I began attending the church: God's Holy Spirit! Jonathan clearly appears to have been a converted man, having God's Spirit. The Holy Spirit in them drew these two men to each other, knitting their souls together. Jonathan's godly faith allowed him to keep things in proper perspective, being loyal first to God, then to his father and to David.

In all the examples we have seen, God drew the people together through His Spirit, something not very many people had back in those times. Has not

God done the same with us? Few of us would even know each other if God had not drawn us together.

It is no secret that the Church of the Great God has never been a large group. When we hear of certain ones leaving our fellowship for this reason or that, it may be quite distressing and upsetting. I find myself thinking, "I thought they were our friends, yet they hide behind some excuse that makes no sense at all. And now they are gone! They left without saying goodbye! Where is their loyalty? Do they somehow think they can be loyal to God but not His Body?"

When I was a kid, one of our favorite pastimes was fishing, and where we lived, there were a lot of little rivers, creeks, and ponds. All we needed was a pole and a can of worms, and off we went. We never had a lot of fancy fishing equipment, just a cane pole with hook, line, and a cork. A while back, my son and I went down to a nearby pond where I noticed the remnants of someone's fishing line, a cork still tied to it, caught in a tree and blowing in the wind.

This started me thinking. How many times have I seen corks hung up in a tree or stuck on some underwater obstruction? The cork would be just waving in the breeze or floating on the water, bobbing up and down aimlessly, serving no purpose at all. How many of our brethren have gotten themselves hung up on some small twig, leave the fellowship, and just blow in the wind or bob up and down, serving no purpose to anything or anybody? Worse, maybe they have floated out to sea never to be heard from again!

How does this benefit the Body of Christ? We need to apply this to ourselves as well. Are we contributing to the growth of the Body, discerning the Body, if you will, or are we just hanging around, bobbing up and down and serving no purpose? Or are we knit together with the Body?

[Jesus Christ](#) is the one flawless example in the Bible. His relationship with His disciples and His loyalty to His Father and to His friends is, of course, unmatched in history. In [John 15:15-17](#), He tells His disciples that He holds nothing back from His friends—not even His life, which He freely gave. Notice in verse 16, He says that He chose them to "bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain." John 15 contains several instances of Jesus using the

words "abide" and "remain," and the concept of laying down one's life. It sounds as if He desires a close, lasting relationship!

The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery comments:

Friendship entails responsibilities and benefits. The proverb that "a friend loves at all times" ([Proverbs 17:17](#)) expresses both an obligation and a benefit. In a similar vein is the proverb that "there are friends who pretend to be friends, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother" ([Proverbs 18:24](#) RSV). In the Bible friendship is a mutual improvement activity, honing one for godly use. Biblical friendship is a face-to-face encounter, signifying proximity, intimate revelation and honesty. It is also a bonding of affections and trust, knitting one's very soul to another. In its ultimate reaches, it is union with God.

Are we knitting our souls with each other and with God?

- Ronny H. Graham

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Friendship Within the Church](#)

by Mark Schindler

William Jennings Bryant (and Senator John McCain) used the term "my friends" and biblical allusions to evoke a bond of intimacy and unity for the sake of political expediency. The effusiveness in Bryant's "Cross of Gold," depicting a friend of the entirety of the world, is not a substitute for real sincere friendship, one that has a greater bond than a natural brother. This kind of friendship ought to be practiced throughout the body of Christ, emulating Christ as in John 15:12. The bond formed by Helen Keller and her teacher Anne Sullivan exemplifies this kind of love, as Sullivan wrote letters into her hand, awakening her to the miracle of language and a world of feelings, enabling her to feel remorse, repentance, and joy. We need to be as responsive to God as He communicates to us. We will be judged on this

responsiveness and our subsequent friendship with our brethren, a friendship that goes through the grave for all eternity.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Devoting Ourselves to Fellowship](#)

by Clyde Finklea

We do not often think of fellowship as a means of devotion, but when we look into the book of Acts at the unity of the early church, fellowship was a priority of those first members of God's church. Clyde Finklea reveals that Christian fellowship is more than just getting together on a regular basis; it is sharing with each other on a higher, spiritual level.

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