

# Loving Friends

- Ron Stullenbarger -

*“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity”* (Proverbs 17:17).

Good friends are one of God’s greatest gifts. Not one of us is meant to go through life alone and without help. God wants to use us as His hands and feet to those around us. He wants to make us a friend as He is a friend to us -- in order to bless others and extend the reach of His kingdom.

1 Samuel 18:1-3 tells of the powerful friendship of David and Jonathan. *“Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself. Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father’s house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.”* (NASB)

Jonathan was an incredible example of God’s heart for friendship. Jonathan was the rightful heir to the throne of Israel. Behind Saul’s pursuit of killing David was his desire to make Jonathan king. But instead of seeking earthly success, Jonathan humbled himself before David and served him, thereby serving his heavenly Father as well. Jonathan chose friendship over worldly power. As a result, David became Israel’s greatest king and ushered in the lineage of Christ.

Proverbs 17:17 says, *“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.”* God wants to transform us into a friend who loves others unconditionally. It is in the hard times that we most need our friends. Yet in the hard times, many friends abandon us for relationships that require less of them. The heart of God is to stick with us through trials, sin, and bad decisions. He never leaves us or forsakes us, and He longs to make us like Him. He longs to make us friends that will love through every season of life. He longs to empower us to love, serve, honor, and bless those around us.

God is calling us to love our friends *“at all times.”* He is calling us to a lifestyle of service and grace. What friend of yours needs your help right now? Who can you choose to serve over yourself? What friend is God calling you to love with the love He has shown you?

1 Corinthians 13:7 says, love *“bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”* May we exhibit the heart of our heavenly Father to our friends by loving them as He has loved us.