Loving Our Friends
My 12 People
by Bill Aumack

How many of you have seen the 1993 movie Tombstone? Anybody? A bunch of us. All right, good. For those of you don't know, it's a story of Wyatt Earp, the Clantons and the OK corral. And in this movie, a scene occurs where Doc Holliday is quite ill. He's dying of what they would call consumption, what we call tuberculosis. And he sounds horrible. He's coughing and hacking. Sometimes even coughing up blood. And the following dialog occurs. One of the characters Jack Johnson says to Doc, man, Doc, you sound terrible. You should be in bed. What are you doing this for? And Doc Holliday says Wyatt Earp is my friend. Jack Johnson says I have lots of friends. Doc Holiday says I don't. And Doc Holiday knew the value of a good friend. Right?

Because good friends are important. Friends are important. And good friends are essential. We have to have them, it's almost impossible to live your life without a good friend. Right?

Now, sometimes we have different sets of friends at different times in our lives. So maybe in elementary school, you had one set of friends. Maybe in high school, you had another set of friends. Maybe in college, it was yet another set of friends. And now that you're working another set of friend, if you're like me, and you moved a bunch, you got new friends every time you moved. Okay. And so you can have different sets of friends. But sometimes there's one or two friends that stay with you the whole time. Now, I'm not talking about a friend you had in high school, and then you didn't talk to him for like, you know, 20 years, but now you've connected on Facebook. Okay, that's cool. But that's not a good friend. Right?

A good friend is somebody you've been to their house, they've been to your house. A good friend is sometimes the person you know, when you're having a bad day. And someone says "how's it going?" "You know, it's okay, just a rough day." You're not talking to a good friend, when somebody else comes up says what's going on?" Your like "let me tell you what's going on today. Today has been a struggle." Now you're talking to a good friend. Okay. And so we know the difference between having a friend and having a good friend. And we can go on Facebook and we can look at our friend count, you got 100 or 200 or 700 or 1000 friends. I don't know, most of those are probably not your good friends. Okay, I've got friends on Facebook, I've never even met in person. They're just online friends. And I like them. They're okay people, but they're not my good friends. Right?

And so I want to do something here. You know, because, ladies, you have a term for this right? What do you call your good friends? BFF right, or besties and guys, we weren't just not gonna do that. There is no way any males in here are going to call their best friend my BFF. Just not gonna happen. But

guys, you know who your best friend is. You're not going to call them BFF or bestie. But you know who that person is. Right? And so I want to do something here. I want to talk I want to see how long we've had some of our good friends. Now for those of you who are married, your spouse doesn't count. You're gonna say Oh, my spouse is my best friend. No. your spouse is your family. Pastor talked about that last week. Okay, so we're talking about friends, not family, my grandma, my mom and dad, not your spouse. Not Your girlfriend's that you're gonna get married to, you know, okay, best friends, okay. And people online, you can join us on this. So we're going to who's had a friend for 10 years a good friend for 10 years? Raise your hand. Online, put a 10 in the comments. Okay. We got some going on. Who's had a good friend for 20 years, same good friend 20 years. Okay, online, let's see some 20s Do we have any showing up there yet? (online) The people online are still trying to figure out where the comments section is. That's okay. Who's had a good friend for 30 years, same good friend. 30 years. Now, some of you dropped out. Because like, Man, I'm only 30 years old. That's what you get for being young. I'm just kidding. Just kidding. I was going to try and do percentages, but that was too much math. Okay. So you know, if you're young, sorry. Who's had a good friend for 40 years? I have, I'm still got my hand up 40 years. And I have to drop out now because I'm only 40 years old. Don't fact check that. Okay. Who has had a good friend for 50 years? One, which would mean we went way down from the 40s to the 52. Well, we had two. Okay. 60. Though, so somewhere between 50-60 years is the longest? That's a good friend. That's a good friend. Right?

Good friends are essential to us. And in the Bible. We have quite a few examples of friendship. Some of them had kind of family relations to I think of Abraham and Lot. You know, they were related, but they were probably friends. Naomi and Ruth. They are related through marriage, not blood related, but I think they were good friends. We have Daniel and his friends. Right? We have in the New Testament, we have Jesus and the disciples and the disciples are friends. And Jesus is friends with them. And Jesus is kind of closer friends with a couple of them. We see in Paul's writings that he's friends with Timothy, even though Paul's probably a little bit older, and Timothy is a little bit younger, they still have a strong friendship. We see him a lot of Paul's writings, where he writes, Hey, tell so and so hi. Or encourage so and so. I'm praying for you so and so. He's talking to his friends. Okay. Friends are important. But I think probably the best story of friendship in the Bible is who? David and Jonathan right, open your Bibles with me. We're gonna go to 1 Samuel chapter 18. While you're turning there, I'm give a little bit of the backstory. And in 1 Samuel 17, David kills Goliath. Great, great story that I'm going to try and go through kind of quickly, but it's so hard to go through quickly because it's such a great story. So Israelites are kind of on a little hill. The Philistines are kind of on a little hill, and there's this valley between them. And they're getting ready to go to war. But the Philistines have Goliath. Anybody remember how tall Goliath was? Nine feet nine inches. Oh my! You thought Shaq was big. Even Shaq pales in comparison to nine feet nine inches. And of course the Philistines want to have a big royal Smackdown, let's get ready to rumble of Goliath against whoever the Israelites want to send out because, you know, they're pretty confident in their nine foot nine inch monster. Right? And along comes a little David shepherd boy bringing some food to his brothers. And he's like, what's going on? He says I will fight him. And everybody's looking at him like, dude, man, you're 14, No. Saul tries to put his armor on him remember, but the armor doesn't fit and he says it's not me. He takes the armor off. Course we know the story. He picks up the stones, plants one right in the forehead of Goliath. That apparently that doesn't kill Goliath but knocks him down or out. And the Bible says he takes the sword kills him and cuts off his head. Great story. Don't you love telling the kids that?

And I have a picture in my mind of the Philistines over here. The Israelites over here. Dead Goliath, and a 14 year old scrawny boy holding up Goliath's sword that he can barely hold with one hand, and Goliath his head and the other. And both sides are shell shocked. What just happened? Did the you just see that.... what??? And the Israelites are like, Let's get them. They pour down over the hills and the rout is on.

Meanwhile, Saul looks at Abner, his commander in chief and says, who's his dad? That's a really strange question. Who's his dad? Now remember, Saul had given a big reward to whoever could kill Goliath. Right? David wasn't old enough to get the reward. It's like when you play the sweepstakes must be 18 years old enter, you know, David didn't qualify. So they had to figure out who his dad was, so they could give the reward to him. The really interesting part here is Saul knew who David was. Because David was already playing harp in Saul's Palace to try and get him to go to sleep. And so when David shows up to kill Goliath, Saul must look and go, aren't you the kid that plays the harp at night, so I can go to sleep? The fact that they let him go do this just amazes me. Because there was a lot riding on this, you're gonna become slaves if you lost, right? This wasn't just "Well David is going to get himself killed. Idiot." You know, there was a lot riding on this. But they let it go forward, and we know what happens. Okay. All right.

So now we're ready to go the 1 Samuel 18:1-2. It says, After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. And from that day, Saul kept David with him and did not let him return home to his family. Because remember, David was going back and forth between home and the palace. Okay. Now, that doesn't seem like much, but this is really important. And number one, this this kind of makes it sound like this happened, like the same afternoon that David killed Goliath. And I don't know if that's true. There may be some time in here. Okay. Because later in the chapter, David has to marry one of Saul's daughters, and I'm sure he didn't do that, you know, like that week, you know, that took a little bit to develop, and happen. So there may be some time in here. But in any case, somehow, Jonathan, and David become very close.

Now, do you remember a few chapters earlier? Jonathan is trapped with a large part of the Israel army. Down in a valley. There's two cliffs with Philistines on either sides. There's something about cliffs and Philistines, I don't know. But Philistines are up on this cliffs. Israelites are trapped down in this valley for days. And finally, Jonathan goes, That's it, I'm tired. And he calls his armor bearer over who would be even a younger male, probably 13 to carry a shield. And he said, Let's go out there and stir something up. Perhaps God will act on our behalf. I love that. One of my favorite stories. Let's go out there and do something. Maybe God will act on our side. So they come up with this big plan if Philistine say this, they'll do that and whatever. It ends up with them crawling up the cliff, getting to the top while the Philistines taunt them, and they're waiting for them to come up. Cause there's a bunch of them up there. There's only one young guy and the 13 year old kid carrying his armor. They get up there and they start cleaning and house Bible says they killed 20 Philistines in the area about an acre. And then God sends panic through the Philistine army, and they take off and again the rout is on. Okay. And so now Jonathan looks at David and watches him kill Goliath and goes Oh, I like him. I relate to that. This guy is with Gods that's the only way a 14 year old kid or there abouts destroys Goliath. And I'm all in and they become very close.

Now the NIV kind of uses, you know, it says they became one in spirit. You know, sounds like a wedding, right? Most other verses, I'm going to read this out of the ESV. They use a different word here that says 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. So most other versions use this term knit. Have you ever seen anybody knit something together? It's pretty strong when they're done. Sometimes they use the word knotted, together, can't get it apart, became as one.

What do we learn about this? True fans love as they love themselves, Jonathan's soul became knit and he loved him like his own soul. That's kind of true love. Right? That's kind of the true love. That's, that's authentic love. This is the same word that the Bible uses. When nations came together in peace. And they come together, this is the same word that is used in Jesus's second commandment, love your neighbor as yourself. Okay? When someone loves you, as they love themselves, you are very close to loving as God loves. Want to say that again, because it's that important. When you love somebody as yourself, that's very close to loving as God loves. It's very important for us.

Now, in chapters 18, 19, and 20, kind of describe this covenant that Jonathan makes with David. Let's go to 1 Samuel 18. Let's look at verses three and four. 1 Samuel 18:3-4. And it says, And Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword and his bow and his belt. Now this is this is amazing, right? This is amazing. Because what is Jonathan? The son of the king, He's the prince. He is the next king. What do you get if you're king? Everything? The Big House the fancy cars. They're all like one and two horsepower, but you get the fancy cars. The cute women, the power, the wealth, the pristine age. And Jonathan gives it all up and gives it to David. I'll be honest with you, I don't know if I could do that. You know, David, I like you and all but I'm going to be king. Linda will tell you we have a saying around my house, It's good to be king. It's good to be king. Right? But Jonathan somehow figures out the David is going to be king. I don't know if God reveals it to him. I don't know if he just figures it out. I don't know over time if David tells him. You know what Samuel came over and anointed me to be the next king. Because nobody knows that yet. But somehow, Jonathan comes to the realization that David is going to be king and he's OK with that. Now, that's a deep friendship. That's a friendship that's difficult for me to comprehend. Right. King Saul tried to fit David and his armor and it didn't fit very good. But David keeps Jonathan's.

Now there's something important you should know here. In 1 Samuel 13. The Bible tells us that the only two people that had swords in the kingdom were Saul and Jonathan. The Philistines had outlawed being a blacksmith for fear that the Israelites would make weapons. So there were no blacksmiths, nobody was making weapons. If you had a hoe and you wanted to get it sharpened, you had to go over to Philistine country and pay one of their blacksmith to do it. Because they didn't have it. Until the only two people had swords, were Saul and Jonathan. Which makes me wonder when they were sitting there getting ready to have war, what are the Israelites holding? hoes and shovels and pitchforks? I don't know. But Jonathan gives this to David. And this is very, very, very symbolic.

And we learn that true friends sacrifice for one another. Now, maybe your sacrifice for your friend isn't going to be giving up the kingdom. I don't think we have any future kings or queens or princes in here,

right? Even though Disney loves to sell all the little princess dresses, I don't think we really have any princesses. So we're not going to have to face that. But we may have to sacrifice one way or another for our friends.

Okay, and sometimes we become friends, because we're thrown into a situation. When I was in second grade, we lived at Highland View Academy in Maryland. And we were going to move right in the middle of the school year to Blue Mountain Academy in Pennsylvania. Wasn't that far as far as moves go. Maryland is right next to Pennsylvania. But as a second grader, I was saying goodbye to all my friends. I'm going to have to get new friends. Now remember, these schools were always out in rural areas. And there was a little elementary school there that mostly the faculty members kids went to. And there was a little school there that I was gonna go to was a three room school. Okay, it was the biggest elementary school I ever went to and three rooms. And the good news was, in second grade, there was I think four second graders, I was going to be the fifth one. And they were all girls except there was one boy. And in first grade, they had been all girls and one boy. And in second grade, there was all girls and one boy, and this boy was super happy than another male was showing up. And then he would have a chance against the girls and the cooties. You know, I don't know, cooties are still a thing. But my day, you know, cooties were real. And so we became fast friends. For no other reason, then we were the two boys. Right. And we remained very close friends until I had to move away from there some years later, but sometimes you're just thrown into something maybe sometimes at work, it's friendship that you're thrown into. People that join the military become very close with other people in their unit that they didn't know before that, right they, you got signed up, and you're from California and guys from Missouri, but you become best friends because you're in this unit together. And so sometimes that happens, and I think that happens a little bit here with Jonathan and David, because Saul is descending into this homicidal rage against David. And Jonathan tries to protect David, and sometimes it works. And sometimes it doesn't.

But let's look at 1 Samuel 19. Let's go to verses 1-3 in 1 Samuel 19. Saul told his son, Jonathan, and all the attendants to kill David. Wow. Wow. But Jonathan had taken a great liking to David and warned him. My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. Be on your guard tomorrow morning, go into hiding and stay there. And I will go out and stand with my father in the field where you are. I will speak to him about you and tell him and tell you what I find out. Jonathan is interceding on his friend's behalf against the king, against his father, right. And this goes on, a couple times this happens. And like I said, sometimes Saul is satisfied for a few days, but eventually that rage returns. And at one point, Jonathan even kind of says I don't think my dad's really going to kill you. You know, I mean, he's mad but he's not going to kill you. And David's like, Man, I think he is. So they come up with a plan to try and figure it out. David's going to go into hiding for a few days, and then they're going to do this test. When Saul asks about him, Jonathan will say, Well, he's come on home to worship. And if Saul says that's okay, then Jonathan is right. And if saw gets upset, then David is right. So they go through all this as the plan unfolds, Saul blows a head gasket, and throws a spear at his own son trying to pin him to the wall. He was not happy. Okay, so they come to the realization that Saul really is going to try and kill David.

Let's go to 1 Samuel chapter 20. And that's 41 to 42. David got up from the south side of the stone and bowed down before Jonathan three times with his face to the ground. They kissed each other and wept together. But David wept the most. And Jonathan said to David Go in peace, for we have sworn

friendship with each other in the name of the Lord saying, The Lord is a witness between you and me, between your descendants and my descendants forever. Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town. What do we learn? Real friends protect each other. Now you may not have a king throwing spears at you. But maybe you have a friend that needs protection. Maybe somebody's picking on him at school. Maybe things are going rough at work. Maybe your friend needs protection from things they did to themselves, they made bad financial decisions. Maybe you can help them and protect them. So you know, whatever that may be. Okay. Friends, protect each other.

David and Jonathan only see each other one more time according to what we know in the Bible. In 1 Samuel 23:17 records the words when Jonathan is talking to David and Jonathan goes out to encourage him and he says, Don't be afraid my father saw will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel. And I will be second to you. And even my father Saul knows this. Shortly thereafter, Saul and Jonathan die on the battlefield. And David does become the king. And Jonathan was a great friend, because he loved he sacrificed and he protected. And those are all things that we can do to our friends. Maybe it's not over a kingdom. Maybe there's not somebody throwing spears at us. But we can all love, sacrifice and protect our friends.

You know, we've tried to list three people to pray for that were our friends. For me, that was the hardest section to fill out. It was the hardest one. Which friends do you put? Which friends do you leave off? You guys know me, I have a very active imagination. If you ever see me, smirking, don't assume the worst something just happened in my head. But in this case, I see a story of Judgment Day. And maybe we're going to heaven. And your friend isn't. And they look at you and say why didn't you tell me? Why didn't you make me believe? Why were you silent? That's not the last thing I want to remember if my friends. So we put our friends on this list to pray for them. We're not just praying for them for some magic miracle from God. Strike them with lightning and make them believe. It's to make us involved in their lives, so that we can love and sacrifice and protect them. So we can be involved in their lives. And we can have a little bit of authority to speak into their lives. Because you can't speak into somebody's lives that you don't know very well. Right? There's that guy at work that you've known for 30 years he's been there. Hey, that's Joe. Is Joe married? I don't know Does Joe have kids? I don't know. Have you ever said more than hi to Joe? Nope. You don't have any authority to speak into his life. But if your friends, maybe you can say Joe, I noticed, you're hitting the bottle a little bit too hard man. And you have authority to speak into their lives about things, whatever it may be. We want to have that. So when we're praying for our friends, we're not just praying for them. We're praying for us, that we will be the ones that will be brave enough to speak into their lives, that we will be the ones that are like Jonathan, that are willing to stand up against his father, against the king and say, not today. I'm here to love and sacrifice and protect my friends. I'm here to make sure they know the good news and have a fair shot of getting into heaven. Amen.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, Lord help us to be bold. To go out and speak to our friends, Lord about this there is nothing more important than this Lord. Help us to be bold enough to pray for the opportunity. That you will let us know when it's the right time to say something. That our friend is going to come up to us and say, Hey, I have a question. And we will have the opportunity to say something to them about you. That we will have the opportunity to witness to them about you. Lord it is so sad that so many people in our world don't know you are have vast misconceptions about you, because of

mistakes that have been made in the past. Help us to be enablers that enable our friends to get over those things that they may know you to Lord. Because one thing I know for sure that you don't want anyone to be lost and that we can't invite too many friends. Heavens not going to fill up. Lord so will help us bring along as many people as we can. Give us the courage to speak to them to be a light for you. In Jesus name, and everyone said amen.