

Join us in being on mission with God!

**OUR VISION**

To continually mature and grow as a united body of Jesus-imitators who live out God's greatest commandment to "Love" by exalting God and serving one another, and His greatest commission to "Go" by reaching into and shaping our local, regional, and global communities.

## "Door to Success"

*1 Samuel 18:1-4*

### Getting Started

*After an introductory time, discuss the following questions in your group or class.*

Q: We all want to make good first impressions. Sometimes, however, we meet people in circumstances where we are in the middle of something and are not at our best. We feel less than presentable. We may have mud, flour, or paint on our hands. We may be chasing after kids. We may be dressed in work clothes or night clothes. Describe a situation where you met someone for the first time when you didn't feel "presentable."

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David and Jonathan first met somewhat by accident. But this 'chance' encounter was part of the plan of God to build into both of their lives and to further His agenda for the nation of Israel. Before we look at our main text, let's see what we can learn about the background to their encounter.

Q: Look at 1 Samuel 17:57. What circumstances brought David into contact with Saul (and his son Jonathan)?

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Q: If you had seen David as he is described in this verse, what would you have thought of him? What might have been positive and negative about the scene described here as David makes his first impression on you?

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### Experiencing Success as Friends

You and your friends are probably very different in some ways. You may have different tastes in music, food, or favorite sports. You may look quite different. There may be many differences in your family background. But despite the differences, there are some values or pursuits you most likely share. This was the case with David and Jonathan. This is what can happen for Christians in particular as we take the risk to grow in friendship.

1. Jonathan met David immediately after David's encounter with Goliath. What convictions brought David to fight Goliath in the first place? How would you describe David's attitude toward Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:26?

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2. How was David's attitude different than that of his brother? (See 1 Samuel 17:28.)  


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3. Jonathan's father King Saul expresses his assessment of David's odds against Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:33. What is his opinion?  


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4. If we did not know the end of the story, we might agree with Saul in thinking that David was a bit optimistic and unrealistic. Perhaps he was just expressing the idealism of his youthful age. He had not tasted enough life to understand what real warfare was like and that success was not always as simple as it looks to the young. Do you think there was anything wise in Saul's comments to David?  


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5. It is possible that Saul had a similar attitude toward his son Jonathan and his capabilities as a young man. What kinds of attitudes about success and overcoming obstacles do you think Saul imparted to Jonathan?  


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6. Earlier Jonathan had demonstrated great initiative as well. What was his attitude toward the challenge he faced in 1 Samuel 14:1-6?  


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7. As you compare the attitude of David and the attitude of Jonathan, you discover that they shared a similar conviction about God. In your own words, describe what they had in common when it came to God.  


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8. Sometimes the links we have with Christians in our church are built around circumstances. Circle the common factors below that make you feel linked to one or two close Christians around you:

Similar Location	Similar Age	My kids and their kids
Similar Jobs	Relatives in Common	Similar Political View
Similar Education	Similar Income	Similar Hobbies
Similar Personalities	Similar Religious Background	Similar Dress
9. Which of these factors are the strongest in holding people together? Which are the weakest?  


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## Redemptive Friendships

10. We don't know which items in this list David and Jonathan had in common. We're not told who was younger, who was taller, or what the interests and preferences were between the two. Given their different social status, what do you think some of the differences might have been between them?

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11. Both David and Jonathan were willing to act boldly for God when the odds of success were slim (from a human perspective.) Describe a situation in a relationship where that shared conviction helped you grow closer to another adult.

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12. How does shared boldness in God change the nature of friendships you may have with others? How might a growing boldness for Christ contribute toward a stronger friendship?

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Most of us are repulsed by proud people. We don't like those who boast about themselves and believe that their experience or their natural abilities make them better than other people. Arrogance damages relationships.

13. What is the difference between arrogance and confidence?

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Both David and Jonathan had confidence in what God would do with their initiative. Consider the following two verses:

**1 Samuel 17:37** "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."

**1 Samuel 14:6** Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, "Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. Perhaps the LORD will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the LORD from saving, whether by many or by few."

14. Look at the verses above and describe in your own words the attitude they had toward the Lord's activity in their lives. How did they see God differently from the common man? What contributed to their confidence?

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15. People enjoy being friends with others who are confident in God, who believe that He is active and engaged in their lives. Name two or three people who model that in your life. Describe how they model that in a way you can see.

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**Reaching Up and Reaching Out**

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16. If you were to deliberately build your confidence in God, what would be some of the ways you might go about strengthening that part of your Christian walk?

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17. How might you build up others by expressing confidence to your mate, family, or friends in God in the following scenarios:

- You face an unexpected car repair bill.
- You are given more responsibilities at work.
- You are asked to make a presentation at church and are not experienced in standing before others.
- You are offered a position of responsibility that will stretch your skills or abilities.
- You receive unjust and unfair criticism.

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18. Jonathan and David shared a confidence in God that overcame the differences between them. As you look at 1 Samuel 18:3-4, what did Jonathan do to break down the barriers between himself and David?

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19. How do you think David felt about Jonathan’s generosity?

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20. In what ways can you remove any perceived barriers between yourself and others because of education, income, background, skills, status, or church seniority?

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Jesus was much more generous than any person could be. He does not simply give us a tunic, bow and belt. He took the filthy rags of our failure on himself and exchanged that for the robe of righteousness.

22. How does Jesus’ unselfish model help us bring a rich love into our friendships? Who needs to see that quality of love from your life this week? How could you creatively display it to someone else?

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