

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 Problem Solving"

*1 Samuel 20:1-17*

### Getting Started

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

In some ways, cultivating only a few superficial friendships is easy. It does not take any extraordinary effort. It does not demand transparency. And it does not run the risk of relational conflict. Consider the following example:

Rick and Ted meet in church. They have a few conversations and begin to get comfortable with each other. Rick invites Ted to meet him at a Subway for lunch. Ted arrives and waits for Rick, who does not show. After 20 minutes, he leaves. Rick apologizes the next Sunday, informing Ted that he had to take his daughter to a dental appointment and it ran longer than he expected. Ted understands, but the relationship doesn't feel the same.

Q: What are some of the unvoiced expectations Rick and Ted may have brought to their relationship? What kind of expectations do you tend to bring to a new friendship? How do these ideas complicate friendships?

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### Thinking about Friendship

Possible quote here.

1. 1 Samuel 19:9-24 describes several ways in which Saul sought to remove the threat he felt because of David's success and popularity. Survey these verses and describe the tactics Saul used.

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2. How did God protect David from Saul's plan to capture or kill him?

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NOTE: When we think of someone prophesying, we often think of them predicting the future. But that is not accurate. The Old Testament prophets who prophesied mostly reminded the people of revelation they already had about God's character, his judgment on sin, his promises, his holiness, his covenant, his faithfulness, and his expectations for the nation that belonged to him. Only occasional statements from the prophets were predictive in nature.



3. How could the Spirit have used Saul's prophesying in the king's own heart to change his attitude toward David?
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4. In the conversation between David and Jonathan in 1 Samuel 20:1-2, it seems as if Jonathan is unaware of his father's desire for David's destruction. Why do you think Saul's actions and motives were not clear to Jonathan, though they are clear to us as readers?
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5. David asks Jonathan two serious questions in verse 1. What issue does he hope Jonathan can help him solve?
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6. Instead of talking about the reason behind his father's actions, Jonathan objects to David's assessment of his father. Why is the notion that Saul might seek to kill David a threat to Jonathan? (Notice the exclamation marks in Jonathan's words in verse 2.)
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7. David gives Jonathan a possible reason in verse 3 why Saul is not forthright with his son. Do you think that explanation was satisfying to him.
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8. This dialogue reflects the kind of serious disagreements that surface in normal friendships. What are some of the places where you and people you consider to be your friends differ? (I've started the list with some possibilities.)
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|----------------------------|--|
| Young earth / old earth    | Democrat / Republican/ Independent     |
| Iowa State / Univ. of Iowa | Balance of missions and local ministry |
| Church borrowing policy    | Public schooling vs. home schooling    |
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9. David and Jonathan did not simply differ over tastes. It was not as if one like Coke, another Pepsi; or one preferred Ford to Toyota. For David, the issue was about his survival. For Jonathan, it related to the presence or absence of trust in his relationship with his father. Why are these kinds of conflicts more risky to relationships than mere preferences?
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10. Verse 4 opens the door to problem solving. What does it show about Jonathan's spirit?
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## Problem Solving

11. What has to be part of the dynamics between two individuals in order to make an offer like the one Jonathan does?

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12. Neither Jonathan nor David fully know Saul's heart. But David suggests a way to find out Saul's true feelings about him. Describe David's suggestion.

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13. Why do you think David didn't suggest Jonathan address Saul directly like he did in 1 Samuel 19:4-5? What do you think would have happened if they had tried the same approach twice?

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14. What does this imply about being creative in solving problems?

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Sometimes we approach relational problems in frustration. We find ourselves dealing with the same kind of issue over and over, annoyed that our last solution did not work. We can even label the problem as unsolvable because our efforts have not brought resolution.

15. What was there in the thinking of Jonathan and David that freed them from this cycle of persistent problems without solutions?

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There was no guarantee that Saul's reaction to David's absence at the New Moon festival would have caused Saul to disclose his true feelings about David. He might have masked his animosity for Jonathan's sake.

16. If you had to think of another way for Jonathan and David to understand Saul's heart, what might be an alternative solution? Brainstorm about other ways to approach the same challenge.

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17. Count at the number of times in verses 1-42 that Jonathan and David refer to the LORD. This is the covenant name of God (Jehovah or Yahweh).

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18. As David and Jonathan make promises to each other to fully engage in doing their part to solve this dilemma, they refer to the LORD often. What role does God play in their thinking? How does their solemn commitment to God impact their decision making? Their hope of a solution?

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Reaching Up and Reaching Out

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When God gets involved in problem solving, all kinds of unexpected things happen.

19. List some of the creative solutions God brings about or initiates when people involve Him in their problem solving:

Exodus 16:3 ff. \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 15:32 \_\_\_\_\_

2 Kings 5:9 \_\_\_\_\_

2 Kings 18:35 ff \_\_\_\_\_

20. David and Jonathan do more than slip into religious language. They truly depend on God to help them resolve this issue. What are some ways you can authentically bring God into the resolution of issues with others?

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Not all the conflicts in scripture resulted in story book endings. Paul and Barnabas did not travel together in the second missionary journey. Euodia and Syntyche apparently had some trouble living in harmony. (See Philippians 4:2.) Abraham and Lot physically separated. The Grecian Jews complained against the Hebraic Jews about the fairness of the funds given to widows in a time of distress. (See Acts 6:1.)

21. What are some of the attitudes you believe God wants us to adopt even in those situations where resolution has not yet occurred or may never occur? How are we to respond to the messy realities of conflict differently than those who do not live in obedience to Jesus Christ?

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22. Is there a relational issue in your life that you need to look at differently in light of the principles we see in the interaction between David and Jonathan? Where do you need to have more confidence in God? How can you be more creative, more hopeful, or less self-reliant in problem solving?

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