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Shaped by Covenant Friendship

[1] "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. [2] And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house. [3] Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. [4] And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt." **1 Samuel 18:1-4 ESV**

Covenant: a sacred, binding agreement based on loyalty, sacrificial love, and commitment.

Following Jonathan's Example:

1) "...because he loved him as his **own soul**."
*"You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor **as yourself**: I am the Lord."* Leviticus 19:18 (Mark 12:29-31)

2) "And Jonathan **stripped** himself…"
*'Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him **deny himself** and take up his cross and follow me."'*

God Leads Us to Covenant Friendships to:

A. **Preserve Life** - Jonathan directly saved David from multiple assassination attempts.
B. **Provide Spiritual and Emotional Encouragement** - Jonathan sought him out specifically to "strengthen his hand in God" (1 Samuel 23:16) (Iron Sharpens Iron Proverbs 27:17)
C. **Affirm Divine Purpose** - Jonathan's submission to David's future kingship provided crucial affirmation. By stating, "You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you". (1 Samuel 23:17)

Why We Struggle to Become or Accept Covenant Friends

Fear of vulnerability | Desire for convenience | Self-protection | Personal ambition | Fear of sacrifice or cost | Insecurity or jealousy | Desire to maintain control | Avoidance of accountability | Past wounds | Unforgiveness | Conditional love

The Nature of Christ:

- *"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves."* (Philippians 2:3 ESV)
- *"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."* (John 15:13 ESV)
- *"Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed."* (James 5:16 ESV)
- *"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."* (Ephesians 4:32 ESV)
- *[4] "Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, [5] so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other."* (Romans 12:4-5 NLT)

Covenant Friendship With Jesus:

- *"You are my friends if you do what I command."* John 15:14 NLT
- *"This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you."* John 15:12 NLT