

21 June 2026

Jonathan and David, Resolute Friends

Lesson Text: 1st Samuel 18:1-4

Supporting Text: 1st Samuel 20:16-17, 32-34; 42



Key Text: *“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 witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.’ ” Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town.—(1 Samuel 20:42 NIV)*

Lesson Aims

After participating in this lesson, we will be able to:

1. Identify the ways David and Jonathan show loyalty to one another.
2. Explain the significance of the covenant between David and Jonathan.
3. Plan a way to show love and loyalty to a friend or community member in the week ahead.

Lesson Text

1st Samuel 18:1-4

Supporting Text: 1st Samuel 19:1-7, 32-34; 42, 2nd Samuel 1:26-27, 21:7

1st Samuel 18:1-4

¹And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

² **And Saul took him that day and would let him go home no more to his father's house.**

³Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

⁴ **And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword and to his bow and to his girdle.**

1 Samuel 20:16–17, 32–34, 42

¹⁶ So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, “May the LORD call David’s enemies to account.”

¹⁷ **And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.**

³² “Why should he be put to death? What has he done?” Jonathan asked his father.

³³ **But Saul hurled his spear at him to kill him. Then Jonathan knew that his father intended to kill David.**

³⁴ Jonathan got up from the table in fierce anger; on that second day of the feast he did not eat, because he was grieved at his father’s shameful treatment of David.

⁴² And Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, ‘The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed forever.’” And he arose and departed; and Jonathan went into the city.

2nd Samuel 1:26-27

²⁶ I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been unto me. Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

²⁷ “How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!”

2nd Samuel 21:7

⁷ But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the Lord’s oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul.

Introduction

Rivals Turned Friends C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien's friendship is no secret to their readers. Each was an English professor at Merton College in Oxford during the 1920s, 30s, and 40s. They met during a faculty meeting in 1926 and went on to enjoy 40 years of mutual encouragement and support. Tolkien played a vital role in Lewis's Christian conversion, and Lewis pressed Tolkien to finish several important writing projects.

Although they each held literary aspirations, their initial impression of one another was sour. Their different interests and personalities—combined with initially contradictory religious beliefs—made conflict and rivalry seem inevitable. But over time, the two set aside their differences and recognized their shared passions for curriculum, language, and creative writing. The pair developed such a strong bond that Tolkien would later refer to Lewis's death as leaving a permanent wound in his heart.

Today's lesson considers another famous friendship. Their relationship shows loyalty to one another and God.

Lesson Context

Samuel helped lead Israel from the time of the judges to the monarchy by anointing Saul and later David as king. Although Jonathan, Saul's son and heir, had reason to oppose David, he remained faithful to God's choice. Jonathan's courage, humility, and trust in God demonstrate that God's plans and purposes are greater than human ambitions or family succession. A hopeless situation became the means by which God accomplished a larger purpose for His people.

In Saul's Household

The Hebrew word for love can describe many kinds of relationships, including family bonds, marriage, friendship, and loyalty to a leader. In this passage, Jonathan's love for David reflects deep friendship, loyalty, and covenant commitment.

Jonathan's devotion is remarkable because he is Saul's son and heir to the throne. His support shows that David was a compelling and respected leader who inspired trust and admiration.

Saul already knows God has rejected him as king and chosen another to lead Israel. By keeping David at court, Saul appears to honor him, but he may also be trying to monitor and control his growing popularity. As David's reputation increases, Saul's fear and jealousy grow, leading him to view David as a threat and eventually seek his downfall.

Saul's Heirs

Jonathan, heir to Saul's throne, initiates a covenant with David out of deep loyalty and recognition of God's hand on David's life. Instead of acting in self-interest, he treats David as an equal and friend, forming a bond based on love and faithfulness.

By giving David his royal robe and weapons, Jonathan symbolically acknowledges David's future as king and steps back from his own claim to the throne. The covenant shows humility, spiritual discernment, and a willingness to align with God's will over personal ambition.

Expanded Covenant

In exchange for helping David, Jonathan requests future kindness for his own family (1st Samuel 20:15). To solidify the commitment between the two men, Jonathan expands the scope of their initial bond.

This time, the covenant is between Jonathan and the house of David. The Hebrew word translated as “house” can mean more than just the physical structure; it also refers to the people who inhabit a home—residents of the entire household, including immediate and extended family (example: Joshua 24:15). Additionally, in the context of royal dynasties, a “house” includes future descendants and those who will rule as king (examples: 1st Kings 12:26; Isaiah 7:2). Jonathan’s request acknowledges the significance of David’s lineage, as it was common practice to eliminate the family of rivals after defeating or removing them (example: 2nd Kings 10:11; compare Matthew 2:16–18).

To signify the seriousness of his commitment, Jonathan invokes the Lord’s authority and oversight. For other oaths that anticipate God’s intervention, see Genesis 24:3; 50:25; 1st Samuel 14:28; and Nehemiah 5:12.

Honorable Defense

Saul worries David could take the throne and end his family’s rule. Jonathan responds to Saul’s desperate claim that Jonathan cannot become king while David is alive (1st Samuel 20:31). Saul throws his spear at Jonathan, trying to kill him. Jonathan realizes his father truly wants to kill David.

Saul’s attack on Jonathan is similar to when he tried to kill David earlier (1st Samuel 19:10). Until now, Jonathan still hoped his father would not harm David and did not believe Saul had evil intentions (20:2). This attack shows how angry and paranoid Saul has become since Samuel said Saul would lose his kingdom (13:14; 15:26). Jonathan got up from the table, angry. On the second day of the feast, he refused to eat because he was upset by how shamefully his father treated David.

When Jonathan realizes his father might kill someone, he chooses to grieve instead of joining the New Moon feast (1 Samuel 20:5, 18, 24; compare Numbers 28:11–15). Saul’s actions have brought lasting shame to their family.

Permanent Peace

Jonathan puts a plan in place to communicate secretly with David (1st Samuel 20:5–8, 18–23). Once he realizes Saul is determined to kill David, Jonathan acts to help his friend escape. He says goodbye with a greeting of peace, using the Hebrew word *shalom*, and reminds David of their promises. The phrase between your descendants and my descendants forever repeats their agreement to protect each other's families (compare Genesis 9:12; 17:7–10). After this meeting, David and Jonathan would not see each other again before Jonathan’s death

Unbroken Promise

The remaining chapters of 1st Samuel record Saul's pursuit of David, David's sparing of Saul's life (twice), the death of Samuel, David's hiding among the Philistines, and the eventual death of Saul and his sons in battle—including Jonathan (1st Samuel 31:1–2). The book of 2nd Samuel covers David's forty-year reign, but it begins with a time of mourning.

Lament for the Dead

“I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women.” After Jonathan's death, David wrote a lament for both Jonathan and his father, Saul (2nd Samuel 1:19–27). A lament is a song that shares feelings of pain, loss, and uncertainty (compare Psalm 6). David's response shows his respect for God's chosen king, even though Saul had tried to kill him (1st Samuel 24:6; 26:11). The way David expresses his love here can be misunderstood.

Close relationships are often not sexual. While this verse compares David's love for Jonathan to romantic love, the main point is that their bond was different from, or even stronger than, romantic relationships. The English phrase “thick as thieves” shows a similar idea. It does not mean the friends are thieves, but that they are very close. When David calls Jonathan his brother, it is more than just a poetic phrase. Their families were joined when David married Saul's daughter Michal (1st Samuel 18:20–27).

“How the mighty have fallen! The weapons of war have perished!” With these words, David ends his lament. The phrase weapons of war refer to Saul and Jonathan, who died in battle. This is a powerful image, especially since Saul died by falling on his own sword (1 Samuel 31:4–6). After this, David is anointed a second time (2nd Samuel 2:1–7; compare 1st Samuel 16:13; 1 Chronicles 11:1–3), but there is little cause for celebration.

Compassion for the Living

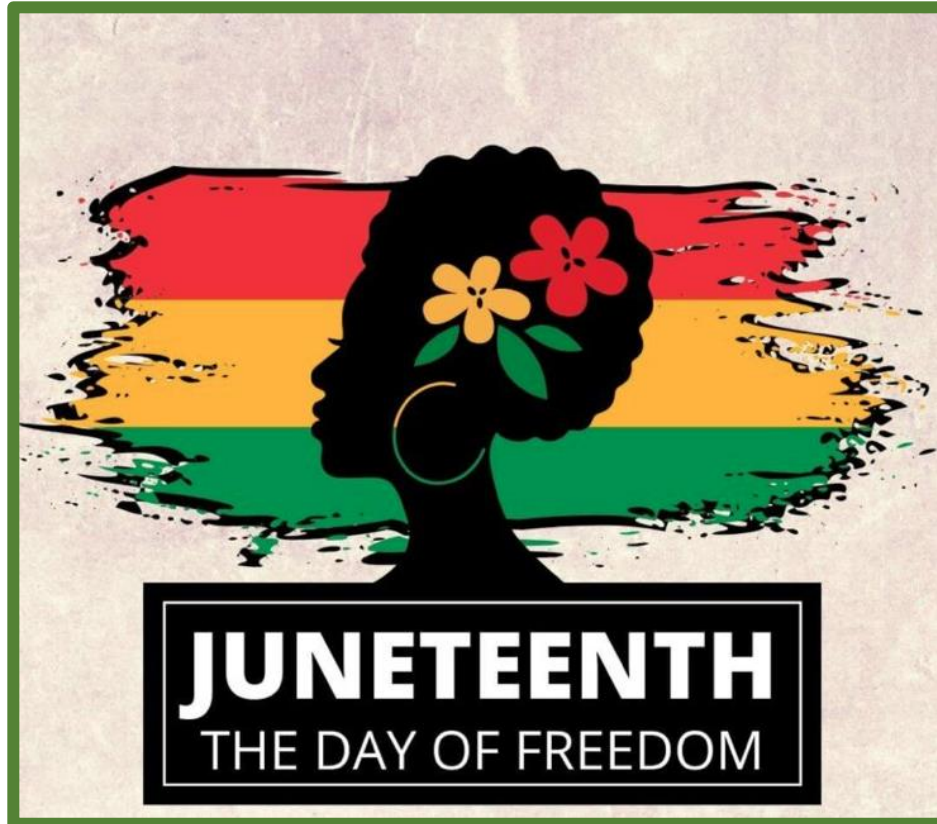
Once crowned king, David keeps his promise to his late friend by seeking out Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son. The story of David's compassion unfolds in 2 Samuel 9, where he extends kindness to Mephibosheth despite the ongoing conflict with Saul's family. David's loyalty shines as he honors his word, even after Jonathan is gone.

Conclusion

Friendships like David and Jonathan's don't just happen; they need effort and care. Our world often encourages people to focus on themselves, making it harder to connect or to show the kind of loyalty Jonathan showed, even when it costs them. Still, the church can be a place where people serve each other with real sacrifice. It starts when we look beyond our own needs. Small acts of friendship—like inviting someone for coffee, checking in, sharing a meal, or keeping a confidence—can make a real difference. These simple gestures can lead to deeper relationships, where both people see each other's worth and serve together in Christ. Of course, this isn't a guarantee that everyone will respond in kind. But Christians are called to show hospitality (Romans 12:13; 1 Timothy 5:10; Hebrews 13:2; 3 John 8), and even to be generous and love their enemies (Proverbs 25:21; Matthew 5:43–44). If your kindness isn't returned, it's still kindness well-spent.

Take Aways

Closing Prayer



Daily Bible Readings*

(**Liturgical Color: Green (Life, growth, and hope)*)

Monday: Proverbs 17:17 and Proverbs 18:24.

Tuesday: Ecclesiastes 4:9–12.

Wednesday: Proverbs 27:1–27

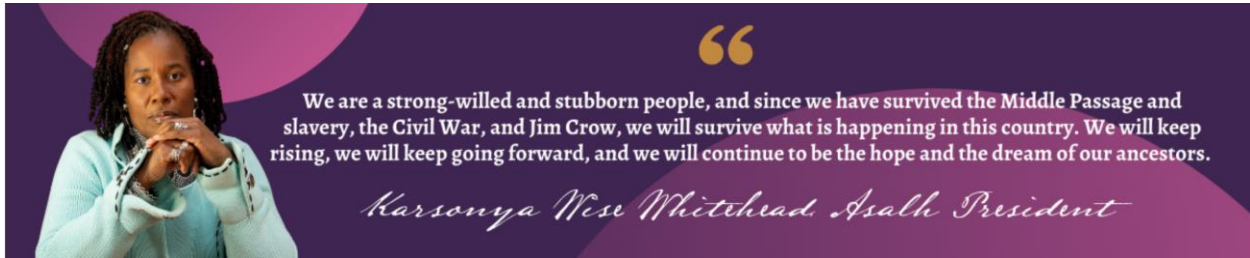
Thursday: Proverbs 22:24–25, and 1 Corinthians 15:33

Friday: John 15:12–15

Saturday: Galatians 6:2 and Colossians 3:12–14

Sunday: 1 Samuel 18:1–4 and 1 Samuel 20; **Reflection:** What elements of David and Jonathan’s loyalty do you want to intentionally build into your own relationships.

BLACK HISTORY



Juneteenth! Friday, Jun 19, 2026

Juneteenth, short for “June Nineteenth,” marks the day when federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas, in 1865 to take control of the state and ensure that all enslaved people be freed. The troops’ arrival came a full two and a half years after [the signing](#) of the [Emancipation Proclamation](#).

Juneteenth honors the end to slavery in the United States and is considered the longest-running African American holiday. A federal holiday since 2021, Juneteenth occurs on Friday, June 19, in 2026.

Although Confederate General Robert E. Lee had surrendered at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, in April 1865, slavery had remained relatively intact in Texas. That is until U.S. General Gordon Granger stood on Texas soil and read General Orders No. 3: “The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free.” In Texas, slavery had continued as the state experienced no large-scale fighting or significant presence of Union troops. Many enslavers from outside the Lone Star State had moved there, as they viewed it as a haven for slavery.

After the war ended in the spring of 1865, General Granger’s arrival in Galveston that June signaled freedom for Texas’s 250,000 enslaved people. Celebrations broke out among newly freed Black people, but emancipation didn’t happen overnight for everyone. In some cases, enslavers withheld the information until after harvest season. That December, slavery in America was formally abolished with the adoption of the [13th Amendment](#). In 1866, freedmen in Texas organized the first of what became the annual celebration of “Jubilee Day” on June 19. In the ensuing decades, Juneteenth commemorations featured music, barbecues, prayer services and other activities. As Black people migrated from Texas to other parts of the country, the Juneteenth tradition spread.

Association for the Study of African American Life and History

The mission of the ASALH® is to promote, research, preserve, interpret and disseminate information about Black life, history and culture to the global community. Established on September 9, 1915, by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, we are the Founders of Black History Month and carry forth the work of our founder, the Father of Black History. We continue his legacy of speaking a fundamental truth to the world—that Africans and peoples of African descent are makers of history and co-workers in what W. E. B. Du Bois called, “The Kingdom of Culture.” ASALH is in short, the nexus between the Ivory Tower and the global public.



The Negro Historical Association with Carter Woodson (with bow tie) seated next to Mary Church Terrell (in white) in front row, center, of this portrait (1925).

Source: Courtesy of the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University Archives, Howard University, Washington DC

We are in the final stages of organizing the Northern Virginia Branch. Interested, contact: *Deac Joe Boutte, Bro Harvey Woodson, or Rev Gillis M. Taylor.*

Come Join The ASALH NOVA Branch!!