

**12 Then Jonathan said to David: “By the LORD, the God of Israel, I will surely sound out my father by this time the day after tomorrow! If he is favorably disposed toward you, will I not send you word and let you know? 13 But if my father is inclined to harm you, may the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if I do not let you know and send you away safely. May the LORD be with you as he has been with my father. 14 But show me unfailing kindness like that of the LORD as long as I live, so that I may not be killed, 15 and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family—not even when the LORD has cut off every one of David’s enemies from the face of the earth.” 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.**

Have you ever been in a dangerous relationship? I recall shut in elderly lady telling me about how she had to sneak out of her window in order to date a Catholic boy because her parents and his parents would have disapproved of it. It’s usually not a good thing if you have to sneak around your parents backs in order to date someone. And you have to think about that - if this relationship is going to cost me my relationship with my family, then maybe I shouldn’t get into it. They say that love is blind, but sometimes it can be dangerous.

#### Love Can Be Dangerous

Jonathan and David were in a dangerous relationship, but it wasn’t in a sexual or a sinful way. Jonathan was one of Saul’s three sons. He was a great warrior in Saul’s army and the LORD had worked through him to win a mighty victory over the Philistines on the outskirts of Gibeah. (1 Samuel 14) By all legal rights he would have been the next in line to receive the kingship. But after Saul had sinned and was rejected by the LORD, Samuel was told to anoint David as the next king. David was a greater warrior than Saul or Jonathan. People sang songs about how David had killed his tens of thousands. So you have the firstborn son of the king, and a mighty and popular warrior of the king, who had also been anointed to be the next king (although I’m not sure how many people actually knew this) as close friends.

Saul was jealous of David’s success and fame and very leery of him. He also wanted his son Jonathan to be the next king. According to Old Testament history, when one king took over after another one, many times the sons of the old king would all be slaughtered so that they couldn’t claim a right to the throne. Over time, the devil seemed to goad Saul towards being all the more paranoid of David, to the point that he wanted him dead.

But Jonathan didn’t think about the politics in it. He just liked David. You ever have someone that you just click with really well? It doesn’t have to be a sexual relationship. It can just be a tight bond with someone that you really get along with. Maybe they have a great sense of humor, similar interests, or even a laid back personality. When you find someone like that you just love talking to them and hanging out with them. That’s the way that Jonathan and David seemed to click.

But it was deeper than that because they both shared a strong faith in the LORD. Usually we think of David’s strong faith from all of the Psalms that he wrote. Yet six times within six verses it is JONATHAN who talks

about the LORD with David. He calls on the LORD as a witness between the two of them refers to the unfailing kindness of the LORD. It was their faith in the LORD and their dedication to the LORD that cemented the bond between them.

Jonathan didn't even seem to care about the fact that David was going to take over as the next king. Listen again to what he said,

**May the LORD be with you as he has been with my father. But show me unfailing kindness like that of the LORD as long as I live, so that I may not be killed, and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family—not even when the LORD has cut off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth.**

He prayed that the LORD would be with David AS HE WAS with his father. He wanted the LORD to cut off all of David's enemies, knowing that he wasn't one of them. He also asked that David would show unfailing kindness (like that of the LORD) to Jonathan and his family, since Jonathan was not trying to take his rule from him. Jonathan put his friendship with David over the politics of the matter, even when he realized that his father didn't approve of their friendship. He tried to help his father see the good in David, and Saul even tried to kill him because of it. David knew that Jonathan was loyal to him and wanted the best for him, so they were friends.

Was this a God pleasing thing to dangerously defy his own father in being such close friends with David? Why not? David was faithful to Saul. Even though he was anointed to be the next king, he never tried to hurt Saul in any way. David was always faithful in everything Saul told him to do. David was a fellow believer and also the LORD's anointed. The problem was with Saul's jealousy, and how Saul hated David for no good reason. Jonathan had no reason to hate him.

Jonathan's love for David was a bold love. He risked his relationship with his family and his own father. It was submissive. He was fine with David being the next king. It was trusting. He entrusted that David would not use his future power to kill him or his family. He wanted David to rule because the LORD wanted David to rule, even though it meant he would not get the promotion.

These are all aspects of love. It is what love does and what love is. It is willing to make sacrifices out of love for God and for others. Today's story has a father not wanting his son to love one of his most reliant and faithful warriors. Saul wanted Jonathan to hate David for no good reason, and Jonathan wouldn't do it. So his love was dangerous too.

Think about how God's love is so much greater than this. He had GOOD reason to hate us for our own sins and rebellion. He had every right to damn us. But in love, He chose to do something else. He chose to re-establish a relationship with us, even though it meant that He would have to face His own justice as a result. His love didn't just cause him to RISK his life. His love cost Him to SACRIFICE his life and suffer a terrible death on the cross. Jonathan loved David as himself. But God's love went beyond this. He loved us MORE THAN Himself. This is the most powerful love, as Paul wrote in Romans 5:6–8,

**6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to**

**die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

When we see the danger that Jesus faced in order to love us, it inspires us to be bold as well in our love for Him. Jesus becomes our first love, and that also changes what we love and who we love. Love isn't just about how someone makes me feel or what someone can give me or do for me. Love is already found in what God gave me in Jesus. I am loved. I am forgiven. When other people love Jesus too, then I feel a greater love towards them as well. We have a mutual love. If someone doesn't like that I love Jesus, then I have to ask if they are worth my time or relationship. If someone is going to get angry at me for loving someone in a Christ like way, then that shouldn't bother me as long as I know that there is nothing wrong with this relationship.

It's kind of strange though, because the problem usually doesn't occur the way it did with Jonathan. It would be an odd thing if the parent didn't want you to be in a relationship with a God pleasing person. Usually the parent has your best interest in mind. The same rings true of your pastor or your grandparent too.

Here's the problem that more often occurs. Young Lutheran - let's call her Jane - meets young man at school or at work - we'll call him Jim. They are attracted to each other. They have fun talking with each other. They like drinking beer together. After a few nights or weeks, they end up sleeping together. But instead of being sorrowful for what she's done, she feels good about it. This goes on for months, but Jane takes a long time to introduce Jim to her parents, because Jim has never been much of a church goer. As a matter of fact, religion kind of bores him. He didn't like going as a kid and he hasn't tried since. Now they are talking about moving in together, and she knows her parents won't approve. But she loves him. Sound familiar?

Jane has entered into a dangerous relationship, because she has completely left Jesus out of the equation. In the Bible story, Jonathan risked everything to be in a godly relationship with David as his friend. Jane didn't really risk anything when it came to her faith. She didn't wait to try and find a God fearing man. She didn't wait for sexual relations. She let Jim have everything he wanted, and she gave in to her desires as well. So Jim, essentially, became her god. Yet in her mind she told herself that she still had a good relationship with God, because she still prayed to Him. Forget the fact that she has ignored everything He told her. She is in more danger than she could ever imagine. She's in the danger of hell. Unfortunately, this is happening far too often.

But it does happen the other way too. Aaron marries Hope at a Christian church. But Hope turns out to have some health problems. She's a bit lazy too and kind of a nag. She doesn't get along with Aaron's family very well because they like to party a lot. She doesn't really like Aaron's friends much either because they're kind of vulgar. So what do Aaron's friends and family do? They start being mean to Hope. They talk about all of her faults. They mention how Aaron isn't the same anymore since he got married. Hope doesn't like how they're talking about her. She's a Christian. They go to church together and want to raise Christian children. But his parents and friends are making things difficult. They don't want it to work out. They tell him to just get rid of her. So what kind of sacrifices is Aaron willing to make for Hope in the name of love? Is he willing to sever ties with old friends in order to stay faithful to Hope. Is he brave enough to defend his wife and tell his parents to stay out of it, just as Jonathan was faithful to David as a friend?

Love takes sacrifice. But if Jesus and God's Word isn't at the center of that love and isn't the focus of the sacrifice, then the sacrifices all end up being selfish in the end. You usually shouldn't have to lose contact with your Christian parents or friends in order to have a relationship with another Christian. If Christ and His love and His patience and mercy are permeating through the relationship, then parents will be willing to share their love with their son with his future spouse. Spouses will want to work things out with the parents and in laws. Instead of living in competition, they can live together.

David and Jonathan's love was strengthened because it was a LORD-like love. They could trust each other's words. They could trust each other's actions. It had a solid foundation where they wouldn't let rumor or innuendo come between them. They trusted in each other because they both trusted in the LORD. It is what so many relationships are lacking in today's world. There is no basis for love besides feeling or emotion or attraction, which comes and goes with time.

Think about how wonderful it would have been if Saul had just welcomed David and his victories. If Saul loved David with a LORD-like love, he would have had a great warrior on his side, and he would have had a great relationship with his son as well.

How about you? Have you left the LORD out of a relationship? Are you making life miserable for someone who you should be encouraging to love? Are you going out of your way to be kind to your in-laws or the friends of your spouse? How much better could it be? Think about what Jesus said in our Gospel lesson of John 13, **"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."** It is a tremendous testimony in a world of hate, when people see husbands and wives getting along with one another, making sacrifices together. If parents and inlaws can learn to take time for each other and help one another, people see this. This is how Jesus wanted us to make His mark on the world: to stand out in a world of darkness: in the way we love one another.

They say that love is blind. LORD-like love is not blind. Jonathan's love was not blind. It was clear thinking. He saw David to be a good and God-pleasing man and leader. He knew that God wanted him to be the next king. He didn't let pride or jealousy or his father get in the way of that love. And David didn't let Saul's attitude get in the way of his love towards Jonathan. They were brothers in the faith. They would stay that way. That wasn't a blind kind of love. It was an enlightened love, a living love, an honest love, motivated by their love for the LORD. God grant us all such a dangerous type of love, motivated by the greatest love of all, the selfless sacrifice of Christ on the cross for us sinners who so often fail to practice a dangerous type of love.

Blessed be the tie that binds, our hearts in Christian love.

The fellowship of kindred minds, is like to that above. Amen.