

# “Character: It’s Personal”

It’s Personal Sermon Series | Week One | Newbreak Church

October 17th, 2022

Newbreak’s Sermon Study Guide is an in-house resource that serves sermon-based Life Groups and/or individuals who want to reflect further on how the message contributes to our spiritual formation.

In this week’s study, we talk about how our character influences the quality of our relationships. Instead of blaming it on those around us, we are willing to say, “It starts with me,” as we look at how our personal character plays a vital role in the health of our relationships.

## Icebreakers for Life Groups

- Who do you think will be in the World Series this year? What was the last great game you saw or attended?
- Did you play sports growing up? If so, which ones? If not, what did you like to do?

## Going Deeper Into the Message

*How do I develop Christlike character that impacts my relationships?*

**Read 1 Samuel 18:1–3; Galatians 5:22–23**

**Point 1 – Show the kind of love to others that I want to be shown to me.**

1 Samuel 18:3 (reiterated in 1 Sam 20:17) is remarkably similar to what is instructed in Leviticus 19:18 and then reaffirmed by Jesus in Matthew 22:39. Throughout the whole Bible, this kind of love is considered noble, virtuous, and authentic. It demonstrates what it means to be in a covenant relationship with someone (which is not just for married persons!). Covenant relationships are God-centered, kingdom-minded, and loyal. Jonathan models this.

The text says that he had an “immediate bond” (verse 1) with David.

In Hebrew, it means to “knit your souls together.” This is a super tight friendship! The kind of friendships that elevate the quality of life.

It makes us think... what are the kinds of things that improve relationships?

- When you think of something good to say, **say it**.
- When you think of something special to do, **do it**.
- When you want something different, **be it**.

We are, after all, talking about letting our godly character lead the way in relationships.

The kind of character we see God wanting to develop in us can be seen many places in Scripture, but one of the best to continually return to and meditate on is the “fruit of the Spirit.”

Galatians 5:22-23a (NLT) But the Holy Spirit produces **this kind of fruit** in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

When “the fruit of the Spirit” is manifest in our lives, our relationships are elevated because our character is improved!

### Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- Reading the narrative of Jonathan and David, how do we see Jonathan as a great example of Christian love?
- Why is it important to lead the way in showing the kind of love we want shown to us? What happens when we wait for someone else to go first?
- How does the “fruit of the Spirit” describe the character we need to love others? Which of the fruit sticks out to you with regards to the relationships you have?

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**Read 1 Samuel 19:1–5**

**Point 2 – Build the foundations of my relationships when no one is looking.**

King Saul's anger was birthed out of jealousy and fear. He did not want David to take his place. As Saul's son, Jonathan has seen his dad's anger and rage first hand and saw the destructive trajectory it was heading toward. Jonathan's character was clearly not from his dad and so even we can't use our parent's failures' as an excuse for our character. We don't have to repeat the patterns of how relationships were modeled for us. If you had a good example growing up, imitate it! If you had a bad example, learn from it! These are important principles, especially since our family of origin can end up being our excuse for why we act the way we do.

When thinking about Jonathan's love for David we see that it was grounded in a loyalty that was not going to waver through hardship. Love is more than a feeling; it is an active commitment to another. The integrity of a relationship is cultivated by the activity of love. And for Jonathan, all of this came from "his strong affection for David" (verse 1). It is an awesome thing to see such palpable, godly love between two friends. These are two dudes who are confident with their masculinity who genuinely love each other! "Love you, bro!"

Love is an action (as reflected in 1 Corinthians 13). 1 Corinthians 13 was not originally written as a passage for weddings—it actually was about the kind of love that should exist within the church with ALL the relational dynamics: between spouses, friends, family members, etc.

Why was Jonathan saying good things about David? Because he saw it lived out. He recognized that David had a heart for God and wanted to do what was right in God's eyes.

This Godly character was built in David long before this moment:

- He stayed in God's Word.
- He honored God in all of his positions (from shepherd to king).
- Even when he had made poor character decisions he came back to God in repentance. (Psalm 51)
- He remained open and vulnerable to God. (Psalm 19:12)

So, what are you doing to develop these godly character practices right now, whether you're single or in a relationship? Just as we said in the beginning, we don't just look for the one, we start being the one.

Thomas Paine famously said it this way: ***"Reputation is what men and women think of us; character is what God and angels know of us."***

## Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- Read Thomas Paine’s quote again. How does this challenge or inspire you?
- What does it look like to “love someone” even when the feelings associated with love aren’t present? When was a recent example of when you had to live this out?
- Jonathan’s godly character was built long before the moments he had to exemplify it. What are some key habits or spiritual disciplines you have in place to build on the foundation of your character?

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**Read 1 Samuel 20:1–9; Proverbs 17:17; Romans 12:15**

### **Point 3 – Stay loyal through the highs and the lows.**

When things are hard, and someone you care about is walking through the mud and muck of life, one of the best questions you can ask is found in this passage.

**1 Samuel 20:4 (NLT) “Tell me what I can do to help you,” Jonathan exclaimed.**

Do you know why this is such a great question? Because it shows that you are there, you care, and you don’t even presume to know the best way to support them. **Loyalty does not mean having all the right answers, it often means learning to ask the right questions and then to follow through on those.**

Jonathan was loyal when it was hard. Jonathan was loyal when it was costly. Jonathan could have conspired to help his father, Saul, kill David, and thus, secure his heirship to the throne! But here Jonathan is, helping the very person who was going to take the crown that would be his and submit himself underneath his kingship. All of those details are incredible to the context of how we learn about character from Jonathan’s life and relationship with David.

This is about the importance of not abandoning relationships because things get hard. Jonathan could have exited the scenario and the conflict between David and Saul, but he had the discernment to see what God was doing in it and he also had the loyalty and love for David as a friend to stay even when it was hard—even hard on him!

It caused tension between himself and his father (Saul), but it was still the right thing to do.

**Character isn't about what is easy, it's about what is right.** Our relationships reveal the fortitude of our character and how far we will go to love others with the love of Jesus.

We usually talk about having career goals, education goals, financial goals. What are your character goals for who you want to be in your relationships (as a parent, a spouse, a friend, a co-worker)? Remember the fruit of the Spirit. Is it your goal to grow in each of these? Pick one each week/month to focus on.

### Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- What are the character traits you most value in a relationship? Do you yourself have these character traits? Why are they important to you?
- When do you find it most difficult to be the kind of person you want to be in your relationships? What can you do to set yourself up for success in your relationships? Do you have to eat before you have a hard conversation? Do you have to get more sleep, to have more patience with people? Do you need to leave more time available in your schedule for the people in your life?
- What would the people in your life say about your character? What do you think God would say about your character?

**Memory Verse:** Proverbs 17:17 (NLT) A friend is always loyal, and a brother is born to help in time of need.

### —FINAL CHALLENGE QUESTIONS—

How are you going to think or live differently in light of what you have read, heard, and discussed this week?

How does this week's message shape or nurture your relationship with God?

BONUS: For those of you with kids or around kids: What is one truth from this message that you can share with your kids in a way that they would relate to or understand?