

Give This to Your Friends

Written by Bill Perkins

Prompted by the Spirit of God and a desire to talk, I pick up the phone and call a close friend. The moment he answers the tone of his voice tells me he's discouraged. "What's up?" I ask. And then he tells me about his wife's failing health, or job problems, or a struggle with one of his kids or . . . you name it. At moments like that I sometimes remember the night Jonathan encouraged his downcast friend, David.

The Desert of Ziph

Exhausted and depressed, David had found refuge in the desert of Ziph. Somehow, Jonathan found his friend. In this final encounter between the two men, Jonathan gave David what he needed the most—words that enabled him to find strength in God (1 Samuel 23:15-18).

First — He Reminded Him

First, he reminded David of God's plan. The Lord had previously made it clear to David that one day he would be king (1 Samuel 16:12-13). The young shepherd may have thought he would quickly be ushered into a position of power. Or perhaps he hoped that he and King Saul would be close friends. David's life followed neither of those paths. Instead, filled with jealousy, the king relentlessly pursued David hoping to take his life. In the desert David had forgotten God's promise. Or, he had lost faith in it.

Jonathan sensed David's despair, and reminded him of God's plan: David would be the king and Jonathan would be second to him.

Next — He Renewed the Covenant

Next, he renewed his commitment to David in the form of a covenant. Early in their friendship the two had made another covenant. On that day, after David killed Goliath, the hearts of the two men were knit together (1 Samuel 18:1-4). Jonathan reminded David that adversity had not changed any of that. Nor had his father's hatred of David. The two were friends and nothing would change that. God had not given up on David and neither had his best friend.

As Jonathan slipped away from his friend, into the darkness, David's faith in God was renewed. Jonathan proved himself a close friend with encouraging words.