

# How to Encourage a Discouraged Friend

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Leaders typically manipulate others to acquire power. That's why you'd expect a king's son to use his push and pull to acquire his father's throne. And that's what makes Jonathan so unusual. He was the ancient prince who wanted somebody else to be the next king. Why? Because he knew that a man other than himself had been chosen by God to occupy his father's throne.

Nothing tests a man's commitment to God and others more than a sure belief that God intends to move him down so someone else can move up. And nothing tests a man's loyalty like the knowledge that his best friend will soon sit on a throne that could have been his. Jonathan's devotion to both God and David took center stage during Jonathan's visit to the future king's place of hiding.

## The Desert of Ziph

Exhausted and depressed, David found refuge in the desert of Ziph. Somehow, Jonathan located him there and in their final encounter, he gave David what he needed the most. And his example shows us how we too can encourage a discouraged friend.

## First — He Went to Him

First, Jonathan went to David. He didn't wait for an invitation or a map. He knew David was down and so he searched until he located his discouraged friend.

Once at David's side, Jonathan spoke words that gave him strength in God.

If you've got a discouraged friend--go to him.

## Second — He Reminded Him

Second, 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, or lost faith in God's plan.

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

If you've got a discouraged friend remind him of God's love and purpose for his life. Your friend needs hope and his surest hope rests on the goodness of God.

## **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.

If you've got a discouraged friend assure him you'll remain at his side.

As Jonathan slipped away from his friend, into the darkness, David's faith in God was renewed. Jonathan had accomplished what true friends do--he demonstrated his love by going to David and speaking words that renewed his hope in God and dispelled his discouragement.

Maybe you've got a friend who needs you to be a Jonathan for him today.