

GOD'S WAY TO HEAVEN

NOTES

1. **GOD LOVES YOU** and wants you to have **eternal life with Him**.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

But most people aren't experiencing a meaningful life and aren't sure that they have eternal life because...

2. Man has a **SIN problem** which **SEPARATES** him from GOD. Every one has sinned.

Romans 3:23 "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"

3. The **good news** is that **JESUS CHRIST** is God's **solution** to your sin problem. He is the **ONLY way** to heaven.

1 Peter 3:18 "For Christ also died for sins once and for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God..."

4. Therefore you must **REPENT** of your sins and place your **FAITH** in **JESUS alone** to **save** you.

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the GIFT OF GOD; not as a result of works, that no one should boast."

5. Upon believing and receiving Jesus, you have a **NEW LIFE** with complete assurance of **SALVATION**.

1 John 5:13 "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."



The Grace of Godly Friendship when Faith Recedes

(1 Samuel 20)

In 1 Samuel 20, we see a momentary ebb in David's faith, like the waters pulling back to the ocean in low tide. But we will also see the grace of God towards him through Jonathan, David's godly friend, who encouraged David to stay the course – to keep his faith and never give up.

When trials PERSIST, stick to the principles of courageous faith: TRUST

When David met Jonathan, he opened up to him and shared his burden, as we would to a friend when we face severe trials. The gravity of his discouragement or desolation is captured in 20:3b - "Yet as surely as the Lord lives and as you live, there is only one step between me and death." (20:3b), in contrast to his words to Saul in chapter 17 when he volunteered to fight Goliath: "The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine." (17:27)

No wonder David hit rock bottom. David faced persistent challenges with Saul, all the time - not like the one-time challenges with the lion, the bear, and with Goliath. Saul treated David as his enemy for the rest of his life. Chapter 18:9: "And from that time on, Saul kept a close eye on David" and Chapter 18:29: "Saul became still much afraid of him (because the Lord was with David and his daughter Michal loved him), and he remained his enemy the rest of his days", show how difficult it must have been for David.

I believe that if we find that our trials are persistent and we find ourselves in such deep desolation like David who despaired of life, we must stick to the principles of courageous faith – the TRUE principles, T (Trust God), R (Remember God's acts of goodness in the past), U (Use sound judgement), and E (Engage your Goliath).

When faith momentarily diminishes, seek the godly friend who loves you.

As his faith momentarily wobbled or receded, we see how the Lord extended the grace of comfort to David through a godly friend, Jonathan. Jonathan's friendship with David gives us a glimpse of what Christian friendship should look like. There are three marks or characteristics of a godly friend that we should seek and develop friendship with. A "godly" person fears God, loves God and honors His word. Although he is heir to the throne, Jonathan knew that David was God's anointed and he honored that. If you seek the counsel of the ungodly person you may receive comfort, advice or thoughts that are not of God. Do you have a friend, other than your spouse, who truly loves you, like David was loved by Jonathan?

A. First, he/she is someone who accepts you in your vulnerability.

Verse 1 shows David's deep distress and desolation as he poured out his heart to Jonathan. All throughout this time, Saul was in hot pursuit, and we could feel David's anxiety and fear that his life was almost at its end "There is but a step between me and death," he said. David knew that Jonathan would not reject him even as he opens up to him with all of his fears and vulnerability.



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The Grace of Godly Friendship when Faith Recedes (cont'd)

Jonathan listened with empathy by assuring David that his fears of being killed will not happen. "Far from it! You shall not die" he said in v. 2a.

B. Second, he/she is someone who offers his/her service. (v.4)

In v. 4, Jonathan tells David this: "Whatever you say, I will do for you." Jonathan was not just a friend and a listener whom David can confide in and share his deepest fears and anxieties. He offered his service to David. This is true, authentic friendship!

C. Third, he is someone who comes to your defense. (vv.32-34)

David devised a plan to see if Saul still intended to get rid of him, but Jonathan was convinced that his father would not harm David. However, Saul became ballistic again when David's name was mentioned. He even threw a spear at his son Jonathan who defended David before his father.

Application/Reflection:

Heroes of faith have gone through moments when their faith wobbled and receded, like the tide waters that move away from the land. They are just like us. But despite these moments, the Lord extends his love and grace and He uses godly friends to encourage us when we are desolate.

We have seen God's grace demonstrated through Jonathan's friendship with David. We, too, should seek and develop godly friendships. Do you have a close, godly friend who loves you, someone other than your spouse who accepts you with all your frailty and brokenness? Someone who would remind you of your identity in Christ and affirm God's great love for you, someone who would pray with you and for you, and be there for you? Friend, seek and develop a godly friendship with someone preferably in your D group. If you do not have such a godly friend who loves the Lord, then pray that the Lord will lead you to a Jonathan in your life. At the same time, be a Jonathan to that friend as well, demonstrating love and radical generosity towards him. May the Lord lead us to a great friend who G (Gives us hope), R (Refreshes our weary souls), E (Encourages our hearts), A (Affirms God's Word and His promises), and T (Teaches us what real brotherhood looks like).

Aside from seeking godly friendship, if you find yourself in a time of darkness, go back to God's word and find your rest in his promises. Always remember that in your sufferings, you are never alone. The Lord is always with you! Remember His promise "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Heb.13:5) or His words in John 16:33: "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." In the midst of persistent trials, we are all called to walk in faith and not by sight. May the Lord grant us His grace through a godly friend and through the encouragement from His word.

TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Please use CCF tithe envelopes (available at usher's table) for ALL tithes, offerings and donations. Our tithe box is located at the usher's table.

If you're giving via cheque, please write it to CCF Vancouver.

You can now give ONLINE!! Just go to www.ccfvancouver.org/give/ to donate.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Call to worship ♦ Praise and worship ♦ Children dismissal ♦
Sermon ♦ Response song ♦ Benediction



ANNOUNCEMENTS

ALL CCF MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO THE **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON DEC 10th AFTER THE SERVICE.**

Please arrive early to avail of the parking around Douglas College.



Name _____ Phone/Email _____

Prayer Request/Answered Prayer

Please drop in tithe boxes