I. Friendship and Faith: 1 Samuel 18 ff.

 A. Jonathan and David’s friendship reverses the Cain and Abel story

 1. Proverbs 18:24, “… but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”

 B. They based their friendship on commitment to God, not just each other.

 C. They let nothing come between them, not even friends or family.

 D. They drew closer when their friendship was tested.

 E. They remained friends to the end. Jonathan realized that David, rather than he himself, would be king. Jonathan would rather lose the throne of Israel than lose his friend. (nb. B – E taken from footnotes of the Life Application Bible)

II. Three Marks of a True Friend (from Adrian Rogers)

 A. A true friend **sharpens**. Proverbs 27:17, “Iron sharpens iron …” A true friendship will put an edge on your life. False friends dull your life, blunt your influence and drag you down.

 B. A true friend **sticks**. A true friend is steadfast. We read in Proverbs 17:17: “A friend loveth at all times and a brother is born for adversity.” If you want to see who your real friends are, just make a mistake and see whether or not they leave you. Life is like a ship. Some people get on and off board very easily. Some will stay on board as long as everything is sailing smoothly; but let the rough weather come and they will abandon the ship. A true friend is the one who will stick with you.

 C. A true friend **stabs**. You say, “I don’t want to be stabbed.” Well, listen to Proverbs 27:6: “Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.” A true friend cares enough to confront. I’m so grateful that throughout my life I’ve had those who would put their arms around my shoulders and help me when I’ve done wrong.

III. How to Be a True Friend

 A. **Accept**. The Bible says in Ephesians 1:6 that God has “made us accepted in the beloved.” Jesus did not accept the disciples because they were perfect, but because they needed Him.

 B. **Acknowledge**. Recognize people. Give them your full heart and attention. When we acknowledge others, we’re saying, “You’re important to me. I acknowledge your presence and your importance.”

 C. **Appreciate**. I got an email from my son recently. It brought tears to my eyes because he said, “Dad, I’m just so grateful for the heritage that I have. Thank you.” I could live for six months on that. It didn’t take him but a few minutes to write that little message. Tell your husband, your wife, your children or your friends that they are appreciated.

 D. **Affirm**. Appreciation is for what people do; affirmation is for who people are. The Lord Jesus affirmed His disciples over and over again. It doesn’t mean you approve of everything a person does when you affirm them.

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 E. **Assure**. We all want empathy. The apostle Paul said in Romans 12:15: “Rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep.” Finding a true friend and being one in return is one of the best investments you can ever make.

IV. The Saga of Success: 1 Samuel 18 ff.

 A. Against the backdrop of Jonathan and David’s story is Saul and David’s story.

 B. The effect of Success upon relationships is portrayed in this comparison/contrast.

**John 15:13** - Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

**Proverbs 18:24** – A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

**Proverbs 17:17** – A friend loves at all times and a brother is born for adversity.

**Proverbs 27:9** – Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel.

**John 15:12** – This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

**Ecclesiastes 4:9-12** – Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!

**Proverbs 27:17** – Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.

**Proverbs 27:5-6** – Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.

**Proverbs 16:28** – A dishonest man spreads strife and a whisperer separates close friends.

**What a Friend We Have in Jesus**

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| **1.** What a friend we have in Jesus,All our sins and griefs to bear!What a privilege to carryEverything to God in prayer!Oh, what peace we often forfeit,Oh, what needless pain we bear,All because we do not carryEverything to God in prayer! | **2.** Are we weak and heavy-laden,Cumbered with a load of care?Precious Savior, still our refuge – Take it to the Lord in prayer.Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?Take it to the Lord in prayer!In His arms He’ll take and shield thee,Thou wilt find a solace there. |

**3.** Blessed Savior, Thou hast promised

Thou wilt all our burdens bear;

May we ever, Lord, be bringing

All to Thee in earnest prayer.

Soon in glory-bright unclouded,

There will be no need for prayer –

Rapture, praise, and endless worship

Shall be our sw-eet portion there.