

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 12: God's People Live for Him

Unit 12 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"How Should God's People Live?

They Should Live Like Jesus!" *PFI ESV Songs 12, Tracks 3,4*

Unit 12 Bible Verse and Song: Ephesians 5:1-2

"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

**We're learning... Bible Truth 3:
God's People Love Others**

God calls His people to love Him with all their heart, mind, soul and strength-- and, oh, they want to do this! Why wouldn't they? Didn't God love them before they loved Him? Didn't He freely give His own Son as the sacrifice for their sins? And doesn't He promise to always love them and do what is best for them? Why wouldn't they want to love God most of all, in everything they do?

But loving God and living for Him is not something God's people will ever do perfectly here on earth. Yes, their sins have all been forgiven by God and they will be God's people forever, but they still struggle with sin. Their hearts are still tempted to love other things. Their lives show that they still want to live for themselves. It will be this way until they go to live with God in heaven. There, God will make them perfect; and at last, they will live and love perfectly.

Until then, God's Holy Spirit lives in their hearts and helps them love God more and more. He grows love in their hearts for God and His good ways. He works in their minds to understand God better and to delight in His ways. He gives them strength to act out their love for God and fulfill His good plans in all that they do.

God's people are grateful to God for helping them live for Him now, but they look forward to the day when they go to heaven and will truly love Him with all of themselves.

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 3 Bible Verse: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8,13

"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

CASE STORY

1 Samuel 17-20; 2 Samuel 9

Our story is: The Case of the Friend Who Didn't Fail.

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who was the Friend Who Didn't Fail? Who did he love so well?
2. What was so selfless about his love for his friend? Who helped him love this way?

This story takes place in Old Testament times in the days of the first kings of Israel, about 1000 years before Jesus lived on earth.

King Saul and the Israelite army looked in fear across the Valley of Elah. There on the other side stood the fierce Philistine army. Armed with iron swords and led by giant 9 1/2 foot Goliath, the Israelites knew their little swords of wood and stone were hardly a match. Only King Saul and his son, Jonathan had iron swords, yet they were too afraid to face the Philistines, too. Things looked hopeless, were it not for a young man named David. He trusted in the LORD to give them the victory. With a single stone, David struck Goliath in the head and killed him. The Philistines fled in terror. Israel was saved from its enemy once more.

General Abner presented David presented before King Saul. "For your bravery and skill in battle I am making you one of my soldiers," Saul told David.

Prince Jonathan stood to the side, as Saul honored David. It would be easy to be envious of David. The soldiers used to talk about Jonathan's great deeds in battle--or King Saul's--but now they only talked about David's. And here was his father was honoring him!

But Jonathan wasn't envious, he loved David for his faith in God and the great things God did through him.

"Let's make covenant of unfailing friendship," Jonathan said to David. "Let's promise to always love each other."

David agreed. To seal the covenant, Jonathan took off the special belt and tunic of his war uniform and gave them to David. He handed his very own bow and his priceless, Philistine-made, iron sword and to him, too. Then, he took off his exquisite robe--made only for the Crown Prince of Israel--and put it on David. David humbly received these priceless gifts and swore his friendship to Jonathan.

King Saul was quick to use his new soldier in battle. Whatever Saul sent him to do, David did it. David became famous. As the men marched back home from their battles with the Philistines, women came out from each

town to meet King Saul and his men with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines and lutes. As they danced, they sang: "Saul has killed his thousands, and David his tens of thousands."

Jonathan was happy to see how God blessed David, but not King Saul. He was envious and angry. He wanted the people think he was the greatest. "The people love David more than me. They think he's a better soldier, too," Saul thought angrily. "Before long they will want him to be king instead of me."

As the LORD gave David more victories over their enemies, King Saul's hate grew. He must get rid of David! Twice he threw his spear at David and barely missed him. Then he had soldiers sneak up on David in bed to kill him, but David found out about his plan and fled.

Later, David snuck back to King Saul's palace to see Prince Jonathan. "Jonathan, your father has tried to kill me four times now, and I don't even know what I've done to make him mad! I need your help!" he exclaimed.

"What are you talking about?" Jonathan answered in surprise. "My father tells me everything! He hasn't said anything about wanting to kill you."

"Your father saw us make our friendship covenant after the battle with Goliath and the Philistines. He knows not to tell you about his plans to kill me. He knows that you love me and would faithfully protect me from harm," David answered. "Jonathan, swear to me, as my covenant friend that you will find out if your father still plans to kill me."

"David, you know that I love you as much as I love myself. By the LORD, the God of Israel, I promise to find out my father's plans in the next two days! If he speaks favorably of you, I will let you know. If not, I promise to send you safely away," Jonathan promised "David, I know you will be the next king--not me--and I'm happy about that. May the LORD will be with you as He has been with my father. There will be a day when as king you will have the power to kill me and my family along with all your enemies," Jonathan told David. "Please renew your covenant with me again. Promise that you will never stop loving me or showing kindness to my family, even after you become king," he asked.

"Go and hide, David. Meet me in the field by the stone Ezel in two days. I will shoot three arrows to the side of it, then I will send my servant boy and say, 'Go, find the arrows.' If I say to him, 'Look, the arrows are beyond you,'

that is my signal to you that you must go, because the LORD has sent you away."

Two days later, David waited in the field by the stone Ezel. Jonathan and his servant boy came out to the field, carrying his bow and a quiver full of arrows. Jonathan skillfully strung the bow with one, two, three arrows and sent each of them zinging into the air towards Ezel. "Run and find the arrows, my boy," he told his little servant. When the boy came to the place where Jonathan's arrow had fallen, Jonathan called out after him, "Isn't the arrow beyond you?" Then he shouted the secret signal words, "Hurry! Go quickly! Don't stop!"

After the arrows were found, Prince Jonathan dismissed the boy and waited for David. David came and bowed before him three times, with his face to the ground.

"It is all true," Jonathan told David. "When I spoke to my father about you he got furious and said, 'I know you have sided with David against us. Don't you understand that as long as he lives you will never be king? Bring him to me! He must die!' But I refused. Then when I asked why you should be put to death, he threw a spear and tried to kill me! David, you must go!"

Then they kissed each other on each cheek (common in the Middle Eastern cultures, even today) and wept together—but David wept most of all. How grateful he was for his friend, Prince Jonathan! His friend truly loved him. He had been unfailingly faithful to him. He even stood up to his father, the King.

"Go in peace, David," Jonathan said, "for we have promised in God's name, that our families will be friends forever." Then the two friends parted.

David and Jonathan were to see each other only one more time in the rest of their lives. For about ten years, King Saul kept chasing David, trying to kill him. One time Jonathan snuck out to Desert of Ziph where David was hiding. Once more they promised each other to be unfailingly faithful friends.

One day, King Saul and his sons (including Prince Jonathan) were killed in a great battle with the Philistines. The people chose David to be the next king of Israel. Now David had the power to get rid of all his enemies. Saul's family feared David would hunt them down and kill them.

But all through those years, David never forgot his promises to love Jonathan and his family. "Is there anyone still left of Saul's family I can be kind to, for Jonathan's

sake?" David asked Ziba, an old servant of Saul's.

"Yes, there is still a son of Jonathan who is alive. His name is Mephibosheth. He is crippled in both feet," Ziba replied.

"Bring him to me," David ordered.

So Mephibosheth, son of Jonathan, came to David and bowed down to pay him honor. He was trembling with fear. Would the new king have him killed?

"Don't be afraid," David said to him, "I will be kind to for the sake of your father, Jonathan. I will give you back all King Saul's lands and I want you to be like my own son, eating with me and my family at the king's table the rest of your life," David promised. And that is what he did.

Our Bible Truth is: God's People Love Others

Our Bible Verse is: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, 13

"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

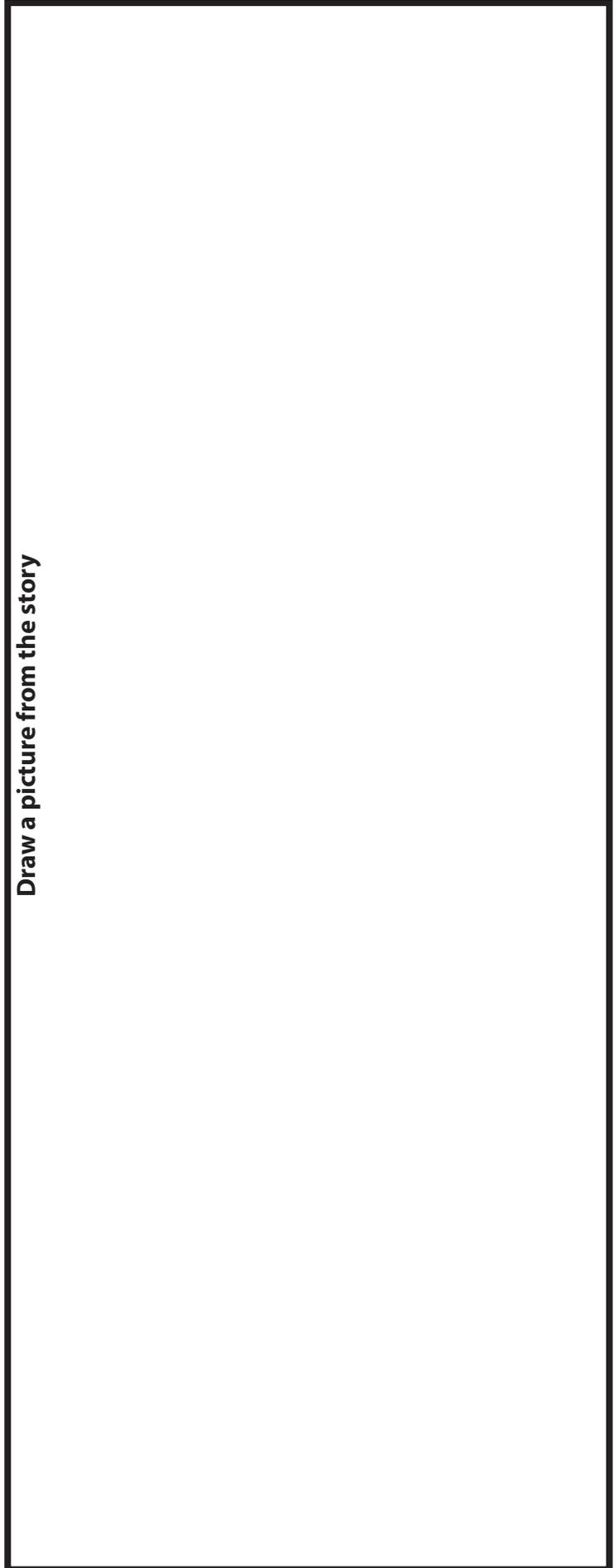
What new things about loving others did you learn from Jonathan and David? Jonathan and David loved each other by not being proud or envying others, but rejoicing in the good that the Lord did in their lives. They persevered with an unfailingly faithful, even in the hardest times.

And what about you and me? What is our love like? Do we envy others when something good happens to them that doesn't happen to us; or when they are good at something that we are not? Do we have a love for others that is unfailingly faithful, even through very hard times?

God knows how hard it is to love others as He wants us to. He knows that it is impossible for us to do this without His help. And help of the most powerful kind is what God promises to all who turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their own Savior. To all who do this, He will save from their sins and send the Holy Spirit to work in their hearts, helping them even to love others as He wants them to.

Let's praise God for giving His people the Holy Spirit to work love in their hearts. Let's ask Him to help us turn from our sins and trust in Jesus. Let's ask Him to fill our hearts with His Holy Spirit so that we might love unfailingly faithfully, without envy, rejoicing in the good the Lord does in their lives, like Jonathan and David. He is the only one who can give us this kind of love for others.

Draw a picture from the story



SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:

God's people have to love all by themselves. There is no one who helps them.

Answer: False! God's Holy Spirit lives in their hearts. He will help them love like God wants them to. He can help them love in ways they could never love on their own.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was the Friend Who Didn't Fail? Who did he love so well?

Answer: Jonathan was the friend who didn't fail David.

b. What was so selfless about his love for his friend? Who helped him love this way?

Answer: Jonathan was the king's son. If David became king, it would be instead of him. Most men would not want to help someone else become king instead of themselves. The LORD helped Jonathan His good plan to make David king. He helped Jonathan love David and protect his life.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:

1 Corinthians 13:4-8,13

"Love is patient and kind; love does not ___ or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not ___ at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love ___ all things, believes all things, ___ all things, endures all things. Love never ends. So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

Answers: envy; rejoice; bears; hopes.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication

A God, we praise You for being the Giver of Faithful Love to His People, helping them to love, even when it is very hard.

C God, we confess that we are not like David and Jonathan. We choose not to faithfully love others. We are sinners! We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for sustaining the love of His people for each other, just like He did with Jonathan and David.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from them and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Fill our hearts with Your Holy Spirit that we might faithfully love each other, just as David and Jonathan did.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Blest Be the Tie that Binds

PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 11

Verse 1

Blest be the tie that binds,
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds,
Is like to that above.

Verse 3

We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear;
And often for each other flows,
The sympathizing tear.

Verse 2

Before our Father's throne,
We pour our ardent pray'rs;
Our fears, our hopes,
our aims are one,
Our comforts and our cares.

Verse 4

When we asunder part,
It gives us inward pain;
But we shall still be
joined in heart,
And hope to meet again.

Refrain:

Blest be the tie, Blest be the tie,
Blest be the tie that binds,
Blest be the tie, Blest be the tie,
Blest be the tie that binds.

Words: John Fawcett. Refrain & Music: Constance Dever

Just like a tie (string) tied around a bundle of things hold them together, there is a special fellowship that binds God's people together. They know who God is and love Him. They love sharing about Him together. In their hearts they each have His Spirit at work, helping them to love Him and each other more. God's people are to love everyone, but they have a special love for each other, since they are like brothers and sisters in God's family. They show this love by praying for each other, listening and caring about each others problems, and looking forward to meeting together again when they part This is a fellowship of love and each other that holds them together as part of God's family here on earth. It is a little taste of the perfect fellowship and love they will know up above in heaven one day.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

Love Is Patient

PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 12

Love is patient, love is kind, love does not envy or boast,
It is not arrogant or rude, Does not insist on its own way,
It is not irritable, It is not rude,
Does not rejoice in wrong-doing, but with the truth.
Love bears all things, believes all things,
Hopes and endures all things,
Faith, hope and love abide these three,
but the greatest is love.
Love never ends, love never ends, love never ends.
Faith, hope and love abide these three, but the greatest is love.
First Corinthians Thirteen, four through eight, and thirteen.

Words: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8,13 ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2011

These verses tell us how God wants His people to love others. This is how He has treated them through Jesus. He wants them to be like Him and go and love others this way, too. God's Holy Spirit helps them love in these ways. He helps them love even when it is very hard.