



Men Reaching for Covenant Relationships

By Eric L. Harrison

Every man enjoys their time with friends. With responsibilities pulling on them from all sides, men seek opportunities to fellowship with their buddies. Although men get together, some long for deeper relationships. Relationships that challenge them to be all that God has called them to be. This type of camaraderie can only be found in strong covenant relationships.

Covenant relationships involve two people making an agreement to look out for each other's well being no matter what the circumstances or situations may be. This agreement is sealed by both parties exchanging something that is precious. The chiefs of some African tribes cut their wrists and rubbed them together to intermingle their blood. This symbolized that each chief believed that all that was in one man's life was shared by the other. These powerful relationships gave each person the right to speak into the life of their covenant brother, with no strings attached.

Men want this type of relationship, but will not do what it takes to initiate it. In order to truly enjoy the benefits of covenant relationships, you have to give up something that is precious to you. Things such as secrets, fears, and insecurities. By sharing these things with a covenant brother, a sense of trust is developed. An environment is created where men can be challenged to be great and healed from the pain and hurt that is experienced in life.

A great example of a covenant relationship is shown in the Bible with David and Jonathan. In 1 Samuel 18, Jonathan and David made a vow to be there for one another through thick and thin. Jonathan gave David his armor, his sword, his bow and his belt. This left Jonathan disrobed and vulnerable to David because he gave up things that meant something to him. Over the next several chapters in 1 Samuel, Jonathan and David's covenant was challenged. Saul, Jonathan's Father, sought to kill David because of jealousy and envy. Jonathan went against his own father to honor the vow he made to his brother David. Jonathan made sure that his friend was safe and sound no matter what the circumstances were. Without Jonathan's help, David would not have been able to sit on the throne as king of Israel.

David's opportunity to bless his brother Jonathan came years later. After Jonathan died, David searched high and low to find a descendant of his friend. When he found Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, David brought him to the castle and took care of him like he was his own son (2 Kings 9). Jonathan honoring his covenant vow years earlier brought generational blessings upon his offspring. As men we long for powerful relationships like this.

This is not something that just happens overnight. It takes time to develop strong covenant relationships. Bishop T. D. Jakes, in his book HE-MOTIONS suggests five steps to develop powerful friendships:

1. Begin slowly - test the waters before diving into the deep end.
2. Cultivate reciprocity - exchange secrets on both sides.
3. Enjoy the differences - seek out men who are distinct from you.
4. Strip gradually - become vulnerable and loyal over time.
5. Rely on each other - honor your commitment to each other.

Remember, the power of covenant between brothers is awesome - experience and appreciate it.