

RESET SERIES

# FRIENDS

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*RESET SERIES: Friends*

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All Scripture quotations are taken from the Authorized King James Version of the Bible.

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*This series is dedicated to the Glad Tidings  
Tabernacle Family, Key West, Florida.*



## PREFACE

This series was developed to provide, in workbook form, concepts for personal and leadership success. It focuses on two groups: men and women who are in leadership positions globally, as a leadership and life-coaching tool, and believers who seek biblically-based personal-development study materials.

The concepts are taken from biblical characters reflecting part of their life's quest and challenges. I hope the series will be welcomed not only by leaders and believers for life-coaching/personal study, but also by Bible training institutes, mission organizations, Sunday school classes, cell groups, prison ministries, and all those who are involved in the maturing of the saints. The author is available, on a limited basis, to conduct RESET-related workshops and seminars.

### **Biblical Perspective**

Successful personal-ministry developmental concepts flow from the pages of the Bible, but are these concepts applicable to believers today? Yes, they are. What, then, are we to do with these biblical concepts to success? Perhaps the first step is the creation-maintenance of an environment in our ministries and organizations where they are recognized, taught, and encouraged.

Biblically-related success occurs when believers respond in obedience to God's call. They recognize the importance of total obedience, allowing the Holy Spirit to develop their gifts, skills, and character. They carry out their kingdom roles with a deep conviction of God's will and a heightened awareness of the contemporary issues they and their peers face. Above all, they minister as stewards and servants.

We do not stumble across success. Success is a result of deliberate acts. To truly be successful, we must fulfill the will of God for our lives!

The Bible teaches that we can be successful only when we are in the right relationship with God. This right relationship is made possible by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

# INTRODUCTION

Early Saturday, March 14th, 2020, during my personal prayer time, I felt impressed to jot down an outline for this book. As a pastor, I was prayerfully pondering the possible implications for the faith communities and what our response would be in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. What would ministry look like with the developing restrictions and heartache experienced by our community? After a while, my thoughts begin to shift from community ministry only to how can a believer in Jesus Christ reevaluate his or her walk with the Lord and, if necessary, hit one or more reset buttons. Reset echoed loudly in my spirit.

I believe this workbook focusing on friends as a possible reset button may become a guide in these unprecedented times, adding value to individuals and leadership teams as a life coaching tool during and after this season of global crisis. This workbook is the third of the five workbooks in the series. Friends reset can easily become an ongoing process for developing and maintaining healthy personal and ministry friendships.

My writing style is slightly different from my norm. I want to be more direct and personal with reset. The goal is to communicate from my heart to yours. I am convinced we have an opportunity to return to a more simplistic lifestyle and, as the Body of Christ, regain or enhance a Kingdom focus in this season. The friends reset personal audit in part two is intended to create a commitment for change while offering a tool for its fulfillment. I am hoping the five areas of the reset series will provide clarity of purpose and measurable expectations while reshaping the believer in the moment of crisis for the Glory of God.

Reset presents five areas of personal focus (*Faith, Family, Friends, Finances, and Fitness*). This workbook focuses on the area of Friends; study the five areas in their order because each one builds on the previous. If you step ahead, you will miss the intended impact.

The study format is consistent throughout. The method of study is derived from the acronym STEPS.



# S T E P S

State the Step

Teach the Step

Evaluate the Step

Practice the Step

See the Success



PART I

FRIENDS



## STATE THE STEP

Friends are sharpening tools in your life.

# TEACH THE STEP

## RESET MY FRIENDSHIPS

*Iron sharpeneth iron; so, a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.*

—Proverbs 27:17

Merriam Webster defines friend as one attached to another by affection or esteem. This definition points out two qualities that attract friends to each other. *Affection* and *esteem*, another word for esteem is *respect*. *Affection and respect* are two noble qualities for any type of relationship. The terms my friend or our friendship are often used lightly and frequently misapplied. For instance, on my Facebook account, I have more than a thousand friends, and often the notification section will display possible friends I may have in common with my friends. Their guidelines for friends are based on association.

Outside of Facebook's list of friends, I have few friends. To be quite honest, only a handful of those on my Facebook account even qualify as acquaintances, much less, friends. What attaches me to others in a general fashion may vary, as I am sure it is for those in your social media accounts. What attaches you to your friends and online acquaintances? Do you always distinguish between the two?

## A Lesson in Friendship

One night, my father asked if I would go with him at five in the morning for a swim. I was seventeen years old at the time and thought this was strange. Strange, because he and I never did things alone, and normally at that time, he would be asleep and I would be preparing to start my road work (running and shadow boxing), but I replied yes to my father's request. I was both curious and excited by his invitation. Was he sick or was he just trying to have quality time with me? Was he going to tell me of some parental decision affecting me? Were he and

mom having difficulties? That night, my mind raced, and sleep evaded me like a million-dollar bill.

The next morning, we visited Fort Montagu Beach, Nassau, Bahamas. When we exited our car, dad started to greet a few men already in the water. Dad had decided to reconnect with some of his childhood friends. He was about to hit a reset button. He and his friends over the years had worked together and endured the challenges associated with World War II. Some, like my father, were veterans. My father had served as a member of the Royal British Legions, which is a story for another time. They were all husbands and fathers and swam, laughed, talked, and prayed five mornings each week. They were childhood friends growing older together and gladly and cheerfully welcomed my father back into the fold. I was the only offspring in the group, and it felt awkward for a while, but proved to be the best stretch of experiences of my youthful days. This arrangement with my father lasted six months.

Each morning, I listened to real-life stories and observed grown men laughing and playing shark pranks. The highlight of each morning was at the close of our swim; we would hold hands in a circle, and one of the men would lead us in prayer. All of this took place in an hour or so, and when we left the ocean, it was still dark. I was amazed about what could occur among men at an early hour of a day.

Now, understand, my father only went to church services if it was a wedding or a funeral. But over those six months, there were times he volunteered to offer the friendship prayer. Over the course of a few months, Daddy stopped drinking alcohol and smoking his pipe, habits he had formed as a teenager. He had seemed to hit a reset button and captured a sought-after life balance. His reason for reconnecting with his friends was intentional. He wanted to recapture something that had escaped him. We all lose grip at times and need to reset ourselves in an area of our lives.

No one confronted him on any of his vices or had special prayers for him. There was absolutely no pressure applied, and I came to realize that some things are *caught* and not *taught* (see 2 Kings 2: 1-14). The influence of friends is phenomenal and often underappreciated. As a chaplain, I often utilize the *ministry of presence*. As a teen, I observed the *ministry of friendship*. Both are equally important in a season or time of crisis.

For many years, I thought about those moments together in the company of my father's friends and wondered why he chose to show me this area of his life. This season temporally changed my routine, but forever changed my life. A few years later, as a believer, I was reading my Bible when a scripture jumped off a page and hit me right in the heart. A part of Proverbs 27: 10 reads: "*Do not forsake your own friend or your father's friend.*" That scripture helped me gain a godly perspective on the value of friendship and my responsibility to it.

From the day of seeing that scripture, I have made it a goal to seek out those old-timers whenever in the city of Nassau. My father needed balance and regained it in the company of his childhood friends. I honor them for their collective expression of love and understanding and felt it was my responsibility to live out Proverbs 27:10. I know you can attest to the feeling when scripture comes alive to you.

One day, a gentleman delivered propane gas to our home, and when he introduced himself, my response was, “I know your father.” His response was, “I know. My father speaks of you from time to time.” His response warmed my heart. The responsibility of maintaining the bonds of friendships can be generational. We can and should build upon the positive aspects of our parents’ lives and encourage our children to build upon the godly relationships we enjoy.

Here, in Key West, Florida, where I live and pastor, there is an expression referred to as the “bubba system” This system simply means friends taking care of friends, or conchs taking care of conchs (conch is the local name for those born in Key West). The dynamics of small island living makes this bubba system possible. At times, I smile when someone from the outside complains of the unfairness of this system. I admit it can be and is, at times, misused, but it is one of the privileges of local familiarity. In what ways are you staying connected?

## **Why Iron?**

Our major reset scripture is Proverbs 27:17: “Iron sharpeneth iron; so, a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.”

This proverb highlights the influence one friend often has on another. There are two schools of thought or positions scholars take on this scripture. One is that friends anger friends, and it results in rage. This rage is visible on the countenance. This sharpening is negative. The thought is iron against iron produces sparks and fire for fights. The countenance then is one of anger. It is true there are sure to be sparks in any friendship, but hopefully, it never leads to fights and permanent separation. The other position is positive, in that one friend often brings out the best in another friend, and it is reciprocal. The countenance is then one of joy, hope, and peace. Let’s take a closer look at the positive.

- The iron that sharpens another is probably a file (see 1 Samuel 13:21) Iron is probably used here to denote the fact that one person is of the same nature as another. It is this sameness that makes mutual action possible. Because both are the same, then the results are mutually beneficial. The friendship over time is preserved as a win/win situation.



Shouldn't this be one of the benefits of godly friendships? A spirit of encouragement is a powerful tool. Who does not welcome encouragement?

- Countenance speaks of the condition of the soul and/or spirit. Being in the company of a friend adds value to your life and changes your countenance. The inner transformation is seen outwardly. Is this not an advantage of friendship? Friendship is meant to influence  
1. **Conversation** 2. **Countenance** 3. **Conduct** 4. **Character**. Abraham was the only person called God's friend in the Old Testament (see 2 Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 41:8). No wonder Abraham is called the father of the faith.

In part one of this workbook, my intention is to address friends from a biblical perspective taking a close look at faith, affection, and esteem/respect. Part two provides you with a Friends Reset Personal Audit. This audit will allow you to assess yourself in the areas presented and design a plan for personal and friendship growth. Let's get started.

## JONATHAN AND DAVID

*And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle. And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.*

—1 Samuel 18:1-5

The friendship of Jonathan and David is one of the most celebrated friendships of the Bible. Their friendship developed quickly and was birthed in an all-around difficult time for a kingdom nation. Their friendship models for us several genuine qualities of biblically-based relationships. In this workbook, we will look at three. I believe these three qualities are the top three (faith, affection, and respect) for sustaining godly friendships.

### **The Foundation of Their Friendship**

A brief background study reveals Jonathan (King Saul's son) was trying to make the best of a bad situation. We all have had times like this and waited and prayed for some sort of breakthrough. I have discovered that my breakthroughs are often preceded by new relationships coming into my life. Some of these relationships are temporary, and some become long-lasting friendships and ministry partnerships. Keep an eye out for how the Lord is attempting to bring the right people into your life.

Jonathan's father was the King of Israel for some time and was changing before his eyes. Jonathan was watching his father, whom he loved, shift from a humble and obedient man of faith

into a self-centered and arrogant leader (see 1 Samuel 15: 17-19, 26). Jonathan was doing his best to pick up the slack and help keep the kingdom nation together. He was, in a sense, staying afloat in the water until support arrived. Both he and the kingdom nation needed moral support.

Saul, the first king of Israel and the people's choice, was displaying ungodly characteristics. He was quickly losing control of his personal discipline. There were widening cracks in Saul's spiritual armor. A higher standard is held for leaders and without submission to the Lord and empowerment of the Spirit, that higher standard will never be obtained much less retained (see Ephesians 6:11-13).

The anointing should always flow from the head (see Psalm 133:3). Dwelling together in unity is likened to anointing. The king neglected his role as priest of the home, and the anointing was no longer flowing as intended. The complete story of Saul's life provides all godly leaders a word of caution. There are roles that only the leader can do; you cannot delegate all things. When we read of the requirements of leaders, we see how important leading one's home is (see 1 Timothy 3:5).

It is always difficult to witness those you love and admire change for the worse. When this happens, it seems to take on a domino effect resulting in disrupting the lives of others in one's circles of influence. King Saul had deteriorated to the point of becoming jealous over young David's victories in battle and growing admiration among the people. He wanted to destroy David. The young man he once brought into the king's court in celebration and respect was soon to become the target of the king's anger. Anger fueled by jealousy is difficult to uproot. Saul, a king losing his faith in God and falling from grace, is out of balance and represents authority unchecked.

Jonathan was experiencing a crisis regarding his father and yet was holding faith. I am sure he was contemplating not only his future but also the future of the kingdom nation. He was troubled in spirit but soon to find relief and considerable support in genuine friendship. Friends lift us in sinking seasons and steady us in waving times.

It had to be difficult for a faithful son to watch his father turn from the faith and consequently damage his legacy. I think we all have witnessed someone we admired turn their back on the faith and never recover their walk with the Lord. Jonathan was experiencing this pain. These were indeed troubling times.

In the pages ahead, we will look at three areas or qualities of God-honoring friendships—namely, *faith*, *affection*, and *respect*.

# FAITH

What Jonathan recognized in David was genuine faith in God. Faith would be the foundational piece of their relationship. I once heard that the most valuable part of a building is its foundation, and what is built on the foundation will never be more valuable than it. This can also be true of friendships. Often, what attracts us to others is the glue that keeps us *attached*. For Jonathan and David, it was their mutual faith in God.

Jonathan was a mighty warrior prince with rock-solid faith in God (see 1 Samuel 14:6), and David was a humble shepherd boy with an equally rock-solid faith (see 1 Samuel 17:45-47). Their faith in God was rooted in a deep love for God and was displayed by courage in the face of conflicts. On the surface, they were quite different, but we know God does not look at the outer appearance but the heart, and so should we (see 1 Samuel 17: 7). Notice the following:

- A prince and a shepherd. Two different worlds, assignments, and expectations. Do you have any friends from a different culture or upbringing than yours? What allows you to look beyond those differences and see the foundation of faith?
- David was considered too young to go into battle at the time of fighting Goliath (see 1 Samuel 17:33), and Jonathan already had victories under his belt. So, there was an age and skillset difference in their friendship.
- One loved by the king and the other soon to be hated by the same king. For Jonathan and David, friendship was about faith and truth. They approached friendship from a godly perspective. One of the ingredients in the glue that held the friendship together was love for God.

Here are ten characteristics of faith, as seen in Hebrews chapter eleven. They are characteristics observed in men and women of faith. They lived and died keeping the faith. Hopefully, these characteristics are visible in our lives:

1. *Assurance* (vs 1) live in light of God's promises. It is wise and rewarding to have spiritually minded friends. Friends who can walk by faith and not by what they see are an invaluable source of encouragement. Friends who walk considering God's Word and His promises radiate godly confidence in times of crisis. This reassurance often encourages others to place their faith in the Lord. What a powerful witnessing tool of evangelism. Our inner assurance points others heavenward.
2. *Sacrifice* (vs 4) live a sacrificial lifestyle. Men and women who live with a deep-seated faith are individuals who know how to sacrifice. There will always be seasons in our lives where God will require something of us that demands a sacrifice to fulfill. You are wise to walk in the company of others who are willing to sacrifice *time, talent, and treasure* for the glory of God. Sacrifice is the decision to surrender something precious and significant to God. We sacrifice whatever He requests of us.
3. *Seeking* (vs 6) live a continuous walk with God. Friends who seek after God are friends with a vibrant prayer life. I have always felt attracted to those who not only know how to pray but commit to prayer. We have received a promise that, if we seek Him, we will find Him. David once encouraged his son Solomon to seek after the Lord with the assurance that he would find the Lord (see 1 Chronicles 28:9). Great advice from father to son.
4. *Obedience* (vs 7) live submissively in difficult times. A great faith quality is the capacity to not only obey the Lord when our understanding of His request is clear but also the aptitude to obey in difficult times and moments of uncertainty. Obedience toward God observed in a friend is a special thing. The display of obedience, among other things, encourages us to be obedient. This, again, is one application of iron sharpening or improving iron. Our actions influence others. Our godly actions strengthen the resolve of our friends.
5. *Trusting* (vs 8,17) live relying on God in the unknown. I admire men and women who not only have faith in God and His promises but trust the Lord. I understand trust as *unequivocally* accepting God's process for our lives. It is tempting to complain of events and heartaches in our life's journey. Job understood this truth and shared with his friends his trust in God (see Job 1:21). Bad things do happen to good people. Can you trust and not blame God in the heart of a crisis?
6. *Keeping* (vs 10,13) live with an eternal focus. I have some friends who are extremely focused. They do not look back often but seem to be always looking forward with an

eternal focus. What I mean by an eternal focus is that they focus on God's *plan* and *promises* for their lives and the responsibilities entrusted to them. It is as if they visited the God-ordained future for their lives and now are on a journey back to that future. They are walking toward God's vision for their lives with unwavering focus. Do you have any friends or are you a friend who fits this description?

7. *Believing* (vs 11,19) live expecting the impossible. A great part of our faith in the Lord is expecting the impossible to become possible. Everything is possible with God, especially if He gives us a promise. I have come to realize that God can create anything from little or nothing and can even bring *dead* things back to life. You want to be and be there with persons of unwavering faith in God's ability to deliver on His promises. This *mindset* or should I say *heartset*, allows you to see and experience life from heaven's perspective (see Mark 9:23).
8. *Reverence* (vs 23, 27) live fearing God rather than others. Here, fear is meant to be respect or reverence. It does not mean we do not have respect for others, but our guiding reverence is for the Lord. There are many voices and influences in our lives, but the *greatest voice* and influence must be the Lord's. You never want to allow the sound of someone else to drown out the sound of the Lord in your life. Having friends faithful in revering the Lord will assist you in fulfilling purpose because you will receive the encouragement needed by word and example.
9. *Perspective* (vs 25, 26) live for heaven's riches. We have various views on different aspects of life. Some say you only live once, so enjoy it. As believers, we are to embrace a biblical perspective and live it out. Jesus encouraged His disciples, and by extension us, when He said, "*But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*" Matthew 6:20-21. Wow, what a perspective.
10. *Suffering* (vs 35-38) live faithfully in the face of persecution. I never really experienced suffering or persecution for my faith until I migrated to North America. At first, it was extremely unnerving, but eventually, I adjusted. Recently, twelve of us chaplains served during the aftermath of riots in a major city, and among acceptance by some, we were ridiculed by others. On one occasion, someone said to me, "Faith is not needed here, so why are you here?" What an honor to represent God in a crisis even if persecution is attached (see Matthew 5: 11-12).

In 2015, I was invited by the president of Compassion in Action International to accompany him and another pastor on a vision trip to the Dominican Republic. The objective was to visit mission projects and possibly commit to sending a short-term mission team in the future.

The trip was highly informative, and the Lord spoke to my heart concerning planting a church and medical clinic in a mountain community of about 4,000 residents. This rather isolated group of small communities had no medical facilities or church. Today, we enjoy a successful relationship with the Ministry of Health in a modern clinic and have witnessed the community develop around it. We also have a growing church and outreach with the area schools. I am extremely thankful and appreciative for the amazing team God has assembled.

Between 2015 and 2018, the president and I traveled to the Dominican Republic a total of eight times. We became quite close because of our faith and love for missions. We visited each other's homes and shared meals together with our wives. It was my honor and privilege to take this godly man to the nation of my birth and upbringing for a mission's conference. In The Bahamas, at the conference, it was an anointed time of worship and teaching. I was overwhelmed with how the Lord had taken an island boy and exposed him to the incredible world of missions. I was equally grateful for how a seasoned missionary was placed in my life.

On our next trip to the Dominican Republic, when we were settling in our hotel room, I said, "Do you realize your name is David and mine Jonathan?" David Reyes lightheartedly responded, "*I don't know when you realized your name, but I knew mine from a toddler.*" A friend of faith with a sense of humor.

What attracted you to your friends, and what sustains your friendships?

### **Possible Faith Reset Areas**

1. Faith as a foundational element of godly friendships.
2. Considering faith element when building a friendship.
3. Sacrificing for the glory of God.
4. A vibrant prayer life.
5. Great communication with friends.

## AFFECTION

*And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of **Jonathan** was knit with the soul of **David**, and **Jonathan** loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle. And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.*

—1 Samuel 18:1-5

The faith of David was different in kind from that of Jonathan. Both had conquered the Philistines in their own battles, but David had conquered the giant face to face. He conquered the one everyone was afraid of and fled from. This was remarkable in that David was not even of the legal age to enter the military and had no formal training. He refused the armor of Saul. He trusted the skillset he acquired in the field. He saw it as his responsibility to defend the name of his God. We all display and live out our faith in the roles in which we find ourselves. Often, those roles are compatible with our skillsets, but at times, faith and passion are the leading ingredients.

I believe our roles are best served when they add value to others. We are to complement and complete each other as much as possible. As leaders, we understand that ministry is God's work, and we are privileged to be workers in His vineyard (see Matthew 20: 1-16). Jonathan was drawn to David because he was faithful in his assignment and had the anointing upon his life. At an early age, he was adding value to the kingdom. This drawing was affectionate.

Merriam Webster defines *affection* as a feeling of liking and caring for someone or something: tender attachment: fondness. Jonathan and David made a covenant as brothers for life. We will explore the process of covenant-making in the next chapter. Here, we will examine affection.



The Bible contains a great deal of insight on affection. It would be impossible to cover all aspects of affection in this workbook. We will focus on affection from the perspective of brotherly love. The New Testament teaching on brotherly love is connected to the story of Jonathan and David because of its faith aspect.

### **Three Aspects of Brotherly Love**

Brotherly love is important for several reasons. First, it is a witness to the unbeliever. In John 13: 34, Jesus is recorded giving the disciples a new commandment. He gave this commandment on the heels of being betrayed by Judas and just prior to departing from His disciples. This new commandment was that the disciples love each other the same way He loved them. One of the ways He displayed His love was giving His life to them and for them.

Now, this new commandment was not really a new one. It was first embedded in the law as reflected in Leviticus 19:18 and was observed in the life of Jonathan and David as our key scripture shows. So, why did Jesus imply it was new? It was new because it had not been observed as a distinguishing characteristic of any group of people up to that point. It was not to simply be an isolated case here and there, but reflective of the community of believers. Jesus wanted them to have distinguishing marks of brotherly love. He was introducing them to another facet of the Kingdom of Heaven culture. Brotherly love was to become a common trait of the church. Among those distinguishing marks we find:

*Impartiality* – The disciples were commanded to love each other as Christ loved them. We know that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the whole world, not a selected group. Even though He came to the Jew first, it was always and still is God's intent to reach all (see 2 Peter 3:9). We are to love those within the faith the same way, and extend that love outward as we mature. Jesus' love was on display every day and everywhere He was with them. It was seen in how He acted and reacted to situations that affected their lives. We are to follow His example and know this commandment is possible because He thinks it is. We must commit to obeying Him in all matters of the heart. We must maintain a commitment to this command and willingly learn from and depend on the person of the Holy Spirit. In our own strength, this is not possible. Jesus was impartial, and so must we be.

I believe in this season of national and global crisis, the church must not only model brotherly love but also teach it within its ranks and from its media platforms. We must correct any internal errors in this area. We are salt and light and must understand that our role is vital to the overall health of our communities. We are to lead by example.

Our brotherly love is to be extended regardless of a believer's *ethnicity, economic status, or political persuasion*. We have differing virtues and preferences, but brotherly love is deeper and wider than these. (see Deuteronomy 10:19). Apostle Paul writes in Galatians 3:28 that our faith in Christ is where equality is displayed for all to see. The church is the only group that can unequivocally live out brotherly love. The foot of the cross is level and must be reflected in our policies and interpersonal relationships.

*Willingness* – We must be willing to assist other believers when they are pressed with issues. A person exercising brotherly love not only helps lift the *emotional, physical, financial, and spiritual* burdens of others but also is transparent with his or her burdens. Exercising brotherly love is meant to be a community effort and expression. The stanza of the song, “*They will know we are Christians by our love*,” rings clear here. Apostle Paul in Galatians 6:2 speaks of carrying the excessive burdens of others. This, he points out, helps fulfill the law of Christ. We see, in at least two exchanges, this commandment receiving a focus. The first is recorded in Acts 4:32-35. This portion of scripture states:

1. They lived in unity of heart and mind
2. They individually claimed nothing and shared everything
3. They continued to share the truth of the resurrection
4. They witnessed the grace of God
5. They experienced no lasting needs
6. They were blessed with godly leadership

Obviously, this did not continue and has, to some extent, been attempted by religious groups throughout the ages. The second reference is recorded in Ephesians 4. This chapter addresses living in unity, and verse 28 addresses money. The believers were to:

1. Not gain money through illegal means
2. Work to supply for one's need
3. Secure employment or business that is successful
4. Have an overflow of finances above needs
5. Use overflow to assist others

The church of that era attempted to put in place ways to meet the obligations of brotherly love. They discovered that the command stands, but the carrying out of it may easily become multi-faceted. The challenges and circumstances of our lives do not excuse us from obeying God's commands. What are your thoughts on this subject? Do you think the church of today needs to hit a reset button in willingness?

*Reflective* – By reflective, I am proposing our brotherly love should be a mirror of the love we have for ourselves. Matthew 22:39 mentions Jesus saying we are to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. A while back, I had taken my grandchildren and one of their friends to Sonics for lunch. I try to have an outing with them each week. I am convinced life will provide negative experiences for us all, so I endeavor to engineer for them good and pleasant experiences with the hope good experiences will outweigh the bad ones in the long run. This is an approach I not only use with family but also with leadership endeavors.

The grands are given the freedom to choose our weekly activity. At times, it is necessary for me to check my wallet twice because of one or two activity selections. At Sonics, orders were placed, and when their friend attempted to offer the money for her meal, our six-year-old granddaughter said, *“When you’re with Papi, you are family. He will not take your money.”* Children seem to get this brotherly love principle of Kingdom culture.

One of Merriam Webster's definitions for mirror is something that gives a true representation. Apostle James in James 1:23-25 shares how some look into a mirror or glass and see their reflection, but upon turning away, forget what they have seen. They forget the true representation. When we look in the mirror, we are reintroduced to the original self, with all of its flaws both natural and spiritual. We are also reminded of two things. First, others are also flawed. We all have sinned, and as believers, are recipients of God's love and forgiveness. Based upon this, we are to treat others as God has treated us. We are to extend brotherly love.

Second, when we look in the mirror, we must also see the word of God and, upon turning, be not just hearers but also doers of what it teaches. James states that the person who does this will be blessed in what he or she does. Proverbs 27:19 states: *As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.* Water reflects the outward appearance, and one's life reflects the heart. Both are important mirrors. May our lives, among other godly traits, always reflect brotherly love.

## **Possible Affection Reset Areas**

1. Impartially loving believers as Christ loved me.
2. Willingness to assist believers in my circle with their heavy loads.
3. Committed to striving for unity among the body of Christ.
4. Seeing my godly qualities mirrored in the lives of those I have influence with.
5. Seen as a doer of the word of God.

# RESPECT

*And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. **Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle. And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.***

—1 Samuel 18:1-5

Jonathan and King Saul gained great respect for young David even though it may have been for different reasons. Respect normally leads to opportunities for advancement and promotion. Respect is also a major factor in sustaining a friendship. In a friendship, I believe love is a combination of affection and respect. You cannot have one without the other and maintain a healthy friendship. I have witnessed many friendships end because of repeated instances of disrespect. Disrespect may occur in several areas. Here are a few signs that a friendship may be in trouble: *inconsistency, betrayal, and negativity*. These are my top three warning signs.

## Saul's Respect

King Saul gained respect for David because of his defeat of the giant. He saw this victory as a military accomplishment because of courage and adaptability. The king's respect for David was rewarded with a top position in his leadership ranks. Courage and victory are normally rewarded. With the king's respect, David enjoyed the token respect of those under the king. Young David's behavior proved to those he received token respect from that he was indeed worthy of the respect received from the king. The scripture says he behaved himself wisely.

I believe he acted in wisdom beyond his age because of the anointing upon his life and his commitment to God. After all, he was God's choice for king. Remember, David had no formal military training and was undoubtedly the youngest military leader in the nation's history, and yet acted wisely. But God!

His acting wisely, among other things, would imply he did not dismantle the structure he found in place but rather regrouped the troops and boosted morale among his leadership team. He might have received the token respect of the people because of the king's appointment but obtained and retained the true respect of the people because of his administrative success. This is a great example for emerging leaders. You may be given a role that demands instant respect attached to it, but you will still need to gain the ongoing respect of those you serve and lead by how you lead. As we climb the ladder of leadership or take on new assignments, respect must be repeatedly gained.

David did not have the skillset or experience for the given command of military leader but had the anointing and capacity to grow into this role and, eventually, the role of a king. Capacity is a key ingredient in fulfilling purpose. We have the capacity required for the assignment. Capacity and assignments are determined by the Lord (see Matthew 25:15). We are given responsibility not only according to our potential but our capacity. Potential here is ability, and capacity is the size of the container that holds potential. David had a large container full of potential.

There are times when we are underprepared in some key areas, nevertheless, still receive a promotion because of some unmeasurable or resume-confirming qualities. Could it be someone saw capacity in us? Anointing and capacity filled with potential are great assets. I believe King Saul recognized these qualities in David, and even though they would trouble him later, it initially drew David toward him.

## **Jonathan's Respect**

Jonathan gained respect for David because of his faith in God and how he walked out that faith with honor and obedience. He witnessed a mirror of his personal faith. I travel a lot and always say a prayer when the announcement is made for those in the military to board first. This is a prayer because of the respect I have for those risking their lives for the safety of others. Equally, I say a prayer when I meet other ministers of the Gospel—a prayer for appreciation, but also identification. Jonathan identified with David from a faith level, and it resonated respect.

I have the privilege to work with Christian leaders in many nations, and at times, enjoy lengthy conversations with their children. Recently, one expressed how he purposely guarded his life because of the expectations placed on a preacher's kid (PK). He clearly understands his role and responsibility and willingly sacrifices so as not to hinder the influence of his father or the gospel message in his community. I admire this level of maturity and godly commitment. At the conclusion of our conversation and meal, I simply looked at him, hit my heart with my fist, and said, "*much respect*." This is an expression we use in some nations, which means I respect you and what you said. I have thought a great deal about that interaction and the commitment level of this young man. In his own way, he has killed a giant.

Jonathan was attempting to live as this young man was. He wanted to enhance the cause of God on the earth, especially in his area of influence. This is what it means to be salt and light (see Matthew 5: 13-16). Jesus never said act like salt and light, but rather, you are salt and light. As believers, we are to live out our spiritual DNA. Jonathan and David were doing just this. It has been said that "*Birds of a feather flock together*." Jonathan and David were in the same flock.

## **Covenant**

Jonathan and David formed a covenant. A covenant in society is an agreement between two persons or between two groups. In biblical terms, with respect to God, a covenant is granted by God to bring to pass works or blessings to those He enters a covenant relationship with. In Hebrew, the word covenant means to "*cut*" or "*covenant*." While in Greek, the word means "*contact*," "*covenant*," or "*testament*."

Jonathan and David entered the covenant relationship, and Jonathan sealed it with gifts. The giving of something to seal a covenant was customary in those times. Another example was the "shoe covenant" recorded in Ruth 4:1-8. Jonathan and David entered a covenant relationship as friends and conducted themselves as brothers. There is always significance attached to the gifts we give and receive. So it was with Jonathan's gifts to David.

## **Gifts of Respect and Honor**

Jonathan probably did not know that David was anointed by the prophet Samuel to be the next king (1 Samuel 16:1-13), a position which would have been his as the eldest son of Saul. We will never know what his response might have been if he had that knowledge before entering the covenant. It is a safe assumption that he would have still entered a covenant relationship with David because of what attracted them to each other. Some enemies entered a covenant to

prevent further conflicts. With Jonathan and David, it was love from the perspective of their faith in God. They made their covenant to always be friends. They were never enemies.

The gifts of respect given were extraordinary and sent a clear message to David and others. Jonathan, as the eldest son of the king and next in line to the throne, wore elegant and pricy clothing. This was customary, so anyone not recognizing him by face would still know of his importance by his clothing. Jonathan removed the coat and clothing off his body and robed David in the presence of others. This willing act, among other things, constituted a high level of respect. Jonathan wanted all to know the value he placed on his covenant brother. What do you share with your friends?

Jonathan also gave David his sword and bow. He was a skillful (see 2 Samuel 1:22) and successful warrior and wanted David to enjoy the same military rank as himself. He was giving David the nod over himself to become the next king. Two scenarios are presented here (1) God was in that moment, God revealed His plans as Jonathan obediently responded, or (2) Jonathan was following his heart and would discover the reason afterward (see John 12:16).

### **Possible Respect Reset Areas**

1. Honoring the respect given with godly behavior.
2. Viewing mutual respect as a crucial part of friendships.
3. Finding tangible ways to show respect for my friends.
4. Fully understanding what respect represents.
5. Always be a respectful friend.

Remember, this step is “*Friends are sharpening tools in your life.*” As you commence the evaluation and assessment sections, keep this in mind. May God bless you as you ready yourself for a RESET in this step.



## EVALUATE THE STEP

To evaluate means to look over or inspect and see the good and bad in something. When you evaluate here, you will briefly review friends and set some goals for improvement in areas of concern.

### *Personal Discovery*

What concerns you the most about your friends?

Which aspect of friends reset is most difficult for you, and why?

Name three persons who you believe would give you godly advice regarding a possible friends reset. Make an appointment to see at least one and seek advice or steps to overcome that which most hinders your friends reset.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## PRACTICE THE STEP

As we learn and develop steps to success, it is important for us to walk in these steps. By practicing, they become a part of our everyday life and ministry. The step we have just studied is friends reset. How can we practice this step? We practice it daily by evaluating our thoughts and actions. Conduct a daily personal inventory, allowing the Holy Spirit to search the inward parts, revealing what is in your heart. We also practice this step by dialogue with our friends. Do not be afraid of constructive criticism.

As revelation comes, write down your personal adjustments. This will be accomplished over a period of time. The quality of one's friends is an important part of life. Some will outgrow you and others you will outgrow. When this happens, keep confidentiality. Never betray the code of godly friendship.

Proverbs 18:24 gives a great piece of advice on how to practice this step. It states that a person desiring friends must show himself friendly. Simply practice the qualities embodied in friendship.

### ***YOUR PERSONAL ADJUSTMENTS***

List ten adjustments that you will make to ensure you always abide by the friends principles presented. Be specific.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

**Practice. Practice. Practice.** It is important to practice this exercise often and continually make the necessary adjustments to ensure you continue developing in this area. God is interested in us having longevity in our personal and professional lives and endeavors. Practice this step, maximize opportunities, and manage challenges that flow into your life and ministry. Practice still makes perfect.

## SEE THE SUCCESS

Success may be instant and progressive. True success is derived from facing the seasons of our lives God's way. Friends reset may very well set the stage for a productive and meaningful journey. A friends reset will most assuredly strengthen your relationship, both personal and ministry.

I encourage you to observe others in life and ministry, as they model the principles and concepts presented in friends reset. Don't be afraid to glean from other believers and successful leaders. I believe God has ordained for us to have meaningful friendships as we navigate through life and ministry. Remember, no person is an isolated island. We are fashioned to walk through life in the company of others. I encourage you to follow through on further developing this step in your personal life and ministry roles.

You may wish to develop the habit of keeping a journal. Document your steps, pausing at times to *reflect*, *readjust*, and *ready* yourself for future success. Practice the step; see the success.

The second part of this workbook contains your friends reset personal audit. This audit is designed as a personal development tool. It will allow you to further evaluate your life with respect to the concepts presented and design an improvement plan. I highly recommend you take the audit.

PART II

FRIENDS RESET PERSONAL AUDIT

## FRIENDS RESET PERSONAL AUDIT

Please read each of the following statements. Circle the number that best describes how true each statement is of you.

### *Faith*

1. I fully understand the concept of faith as a foundational element of godly friendships.

1. True
2. More true than false
3. More false than true
4. False

2. I always look for the faith element when considering building a friendship.

1. True
2. More true than false
3. More false than true
4. False

3. I am always willing to sacrifice for the glory of God.

1. True
2. More true than false
3. More false than true
4. False

4. I have a vibrant prayer life, and this is common knowledge with my friends.

1. True
2. More true than false
3. More false than true
4. False

5. I am always working on improving communication with my friends.

1. True
2. More true than false
3. More false than true
4. False

### *Affection*

1. I always love other believers as Christ loved me.

1. True
2. More true than false
3. More false than true
4. False

2. I am always willing to assist believers in my circle with their heavy loads.

1. True
2. More true than false
3. More false than true
4. False

3. I am fully committed to striving for unity among the body of Christ.

1. True
2. More true than false
3. More false than true
4. False

4. I see my godly qualities mirrored in the lives of those I have influence with.

1. True
2. More true than false
3. More false than true
4. False

5. I am always a doer of the word of God.

1. True
2. More true than false
3. More false than true
4. False

### ***Respect***

1. I always honor the respect given with godly behavior.

1. True
2. More true than false
3. More false than true
4. False



2. I view mutual respect as an essential part of friendships.

1. True
2. More true than false
3. More false than true
4. False

3. I often find tangible ways to show respect for my friends.

1. True
2. More true than false
3. More false than true
4. False

4. I fully understand what respect represents.

1. True
2. More true than false
3. More false than true
4. False

5. I am always a respectful friend.

1. True
2. More true than false
3. More false than true
4. False

### ***Total Your Score***

Total the numbers and place them in the spaces provided, then multiply them by the given number.

	True	More true than false	More false than true	False
# of Questions	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Score:	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Total:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Add the numbers together and read the results of your audit.

### ***If Your Total Score Is***

- 15-25** The three friends areas are engrained in your personal life and leadership role.
- 26-35** You are practicing the three areas. If your total score is closer to 35, you need to pay more attention to one or more of the areas.
- 36-45** You need to continue to work on developing all three areas.
- 46-60** Others probably do not view you as a sincere friend. You may want to take some time to rethink and reset in one or more of the areas.

### ***Personal Improvement Steps***

The purpose of this exercise is to focus on identifying areas that need improvement and developing a plan for the same.

**Step One:** List an area where your score is a 3 or 4.

***Faith***

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My score is:

**Step Two:** Develop a plan for personal improvement. Refer to your personal adjustments list of ten to draw your information for developing the plan.

## *Personal Development Plan*

1.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]



### ***Personal Improvement Steps***

The purpose of this exercise is to focus on identifying areas that need improvement and develop a plan for the same.

**Step One:** List an area where your score is a 3 or 4.

#### ***Affection***

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My score is:

**Step Two:** Develop a plan for personal improvement. Refer to your personal adjustments list of ten to draw your information for developing the plan.

## *Personal Development Plan*

1.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

### ***Personal Improvement Steps***

The purpose of this exercise is to focus on identifying areas that need improvement and develop a plan for the same.

**Step One:** List an area where your score is a 3 or 4.

***Respect***

---

---

---

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---

---

My score is:

**Step Two:** Develop a plan for personal improvement. Refer to your personal adjustments list of ten to draw your information for developing the plan.

## *Personal Development Plan*

1.

[illegible]



[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

You have now completed your personal development plan. As you begin to implement your plan, it will be wise to continually review and seek guidance from the Holy Spirit. Your plan will assist you in moving forward in your walk in the Spirit. It is important to strengthen your weak areas and build upon your strengths. This process may be repeated as necessary.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jonathan is the lead pastor of Glad Tidings Tabernacle, Key West, Florida, chief visionary of the CTC Network, and a metropolitan bishop with Global United Fellowship overseeing the Caribbean. Jonathan also serves as the Dominican Republic representative for the *Caribbean Israel Leadership Coalition*.

Jonathan and his wife, Shena, have three adult children: Jonathan, Stephen, and Joyanne, two daughters-in-law, Sherry and Violet, and four grandchildren.

**Jonathan's personal strategic philanthropy policy:** I feel strongly about helping causes related to faith and education that specifically address the needs of clergy and people of other countries who need help with the fulfillment of purpose and personal empowerment to change. I envision fulfilling my strategic philanthropic goals with faith-based ministries that are multidisciplinary-oriented, are visionary in nature, and whose areas of influence are regional in scope.

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**How to support** Jonathan and Shena Carey, founders of the CTC Network, serve throughout the Caribbean focusing on:

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