

# The Cloak of Companionship

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Tears continued to flow from his eyes, the drops dully descending over the tired lines of his face onto the papyrus paper that lay before him. David dipped the quill into the ink, then watched as the dark liquid trickled off its tip.

Jonathan was dead. His best friend was gone. Pain shot through David's chest as if part of him had been ripped away. He was utterly overwhelmed as he sat writing a tribute to the great man whom he had loved as a brother. How could he describe the pain he felt over the loss of his best friend? What words existed to honor Jonathan adequately?

How the mighty have fallen in battle! Jonathan lies slain on your heights. That was Jonathan—defending the nation of Israel to the end. Yet David knew Jonathan's heart was not in the battle, but in protecting the people he cherished.

David remembered the day Jonathan gave him his sword. Jonathan recounted the battle at Gibeah when there had been no swords in the hands of the Israelites—only himself and Saul carried one. With all of his loving-kindness, Jonathan placed his sword in David's hand, vowing to love David as himself. At that moment David knew that Jonathan would do anything to protect him—even give away his weapon. Even die for him.

I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Jonathan was a better brother to him than his own blood. David knew nothing so sure or so strong as the love Jonathan had lavishly bestowed upon him. Even when Saul wanted to destroy David, or David was unsure of his calling, Jonathan never wavered. Jonathan unyieldingly respected and believed in him.

David would never forget when Jonathan placed the coarse, battle-worn fabric of his robe on David's shoulders. As Jonathan covered David with the cloak, he told him that the kingly garb rightly belonged to the anointed of God. Jonathan trusted the Lord, and Israel loved him because he treated others with kindness and honor. When he adorned David with his mantle, he symbolically covered David with the love of the nation and his own blessing.

Jonathan encouraged David to embrace the calling Samuel had bestowed and covered him with the strength he needed to do so. David knew he could not have come so far without the support of his cherished friend. It gave David the courage to go on, knowing that Jonathan's confidence in him would never cease.

Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women. Nothing so comforted David like Jonathan's presence. No walled fortress could compare to the security he felt from Jonathan's covenant and prayers.

What would David do now that the one who knew him so well was gone? Jonathan had been able to tell by the look on his face or the tone of his voice what issues consumed him. How he longed to see Jonathan once more, to hear his stories and laughter.

Yet even in his death, Jonathan was still knit to David. The memory of his faithfulness would be David's lifelong companion and guardian. Jonathan clothed David with his camaraderie, and David was able to act in confidence and strength because he was robed with Jonathan's regard. David was able to endure all his trials because he was covered with Jonathan's protection and confidence.

Jonathan means, "God has given." The rare and beautiful friends in our lives are those that God has given. Jonathan was mighty in spirit because he was a true, steadfast friend. You are called to great friendships like that of Jonathan and David. Jonathan laid his protection, cloak, and confidence upon the boy who was knit to his heart.

You may also make an astounding difference in someone's life by treating him or her with the affection, kindness, and respect of a true friend. Of course, it takes courage to love people that deeply. As people around you face trials and difficulties, you have the unique privilege of spurring them on to become all God has called them to be. You will have the blessed opportunity of covering someone with your camaraderie and being their Jonathan. Will your friendship be their comfort as they face the unknown? Will you remove your mantle and clothe others with your companionship? Will you be a friend that God has given?