

ALLEY Rundown – September 9-11, 2023

Today's Bible Story: Friends Forever (David and Mephibosheth) • 1 Samuel 19–20; 2 Samuel 9

Today's Key Question: Who is a friend you can trust?

Today's Bottom Line: Friends keep their promises.

Monthly Memory Verse: *A friend loves at all times. They are there to help when trouble comes.*

Proverbs 17:17 (NIRV)

SLIDE: Theme

Good morning, friends! There is something I'm wondering about . . . have you ever had someone make a promise to you—like a really big promise? Did they keep it? Maybe a coach promised to help you with your free-throws after basketball practice . . . but he ended up having to run home and couldn't help you. Or how about a teacher who makes a promise on Monday to have an ice cream sundae party on Friday, but Thursday they tell you that the party is postponed. But then maybe someone promised they'd invite you to their birthday party and when the invites came out . . . sure enough, you got one! When it comes to promises, making them, keeping them, or breaking them can make you feel great one moment and completely awful the next. I remember this one time . . .

Share a personal story of an important promise that was made to you or that you made to another person and kept. Use the following as an example or share it as a hypothetical situation.

When I was in third grade, our teacher made a BIG promise to us. When the whole class had good behavior—like going a whole week without anyone getting in trouble or staying quiet while other kids finished their math tests, she'd give us a certificate and post it on the wall above the whiteboard. And if we got 10 of these certificates, she promised to treat us to a pizza party.

Let's be honest, it takes a long time for a WHOLE room of third graders to do anything, much less stay well-behaved. But we finally received enough certificates for our first pizza party! When our teacher posted the tenth and final certificate, she announced that the pizza party would be the NEXT DAY at lunch time! We were SO excited. It was the only thing we talked about the rest of the day. When we showed up to school the next day, we were ready. And by ready, I mean, not a single one of us brought in a lunch from home and pizza was the only thing on our mind the whole morning.

Lunch time came, and the teacher made an announcement. The pizza delivery person hit some traffic and would be late . . . really late. We were SO hungry. We wanted pizza NOW. She promised it'd be there for lunch. It wasn't her fault, of course, but it was hard not to think that she had broken a promise to us. But then, one of the room parents walked into the room with . . . a whole cart full of ice cream and sundae toppings. Because the pizza was late, she decided to serve us dessert first! The pizza eventually came. And that teacher became our pizza hero!

Okay, so in that particular moment, our teacher kept her promise. But unfortunately, that's not always the case, is it? All of us have experienced moments in our lives when someone has made a promise to us that they didn't keep. Maybe we've even made a promise that we haven't kept. But, I don't know, is it really that big of deal to skip out on keeping a promise? What's the big deal about promises anyway?

Most people tend to forget about them anyway. Maybe we just shouldn't even make them if we tend not to keep them from time to time?

All great questions—ones that I've thought about from time to time and ones that are actually talked about in the Bible—which, by the way, is one of the best places to start when you have a question! In fact, the writers of the Bible talk A LOT about promises: promises that God makes to us, we make to God, and people make to each other. And you might be surprised at some of the promises that people actually kept! Including one we'll talk about today. Let's jump into the story....

VIDEO: The So and So Show (15:11)

One of the most amazing things about this story is something that can be easy to miss. Why did David do what he did? Why did he want to show kindness rather than getting rid of a possible rival, like so many other kings would have done? Well, he did all of this because of a promise. David and Jonathan had made a covenant with one another. But at this point in the story, Jonathan was gone. David knew that no one was around who witnessed the covenant he made with his good friend. No one would know if he kept that promise or not.

But you know what? David knew about the promise. And David knew that God knew, too. And that was enough for David to still keep his word and honor his promise to Jonathan. I think THAT's truly amazing. I'm guessing that we don't make a lot of covenants, but chances are that we do make promises—promises to invite friends over for a hang out, promises to help siblings with their homework, or promises to a parent to clean up our mess.

When you keep a promise—when you do what you say you'll do—it builds trust between you and the person on the other side of the promise. We want our friends, family, teachers, coaches—anyone really—to know that they can count on us to do what we say we'll do!

Of course, this is exactly what God does for us. God is always faithful. God's promises will always come true! God promised to send a Savior to rescue us . . . and when the time was right, God sent Jesus. We can trust God no matter what!

And guess what! When we keep our promises to others, we actually reflect who God is to others. By keeping our promises, we get the chance to show others how awesome God is in keeping promises to us. Think about the promises you've made recently. How can you make sure that you keep your word? This is what we'd want people to do for us. In short, it all comes down to this: friends keep their promises."

Today as you go to groups, think about this:

SLIDE: Key Question

Who is a friend you can trust? When is a time they really came through? What makes them so trustworthy? Hopefully you have a friend like that, but if you're not sure how you'd answer those questions, talk to your Small Group Leader. They'd love to help you think about how you can find friends who keep their promises.

And let's review our verse this month about friendship...

SLIDE: Memory Verse

"A friend loves at all times. They are there to help when trouble comes". Proverbs 17:17

Before you head to small groups, let's pray and ask God to help us be the kind of friend that Jonathan was to David! Let's pray!"

Host leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard.

OFFERING:

Until the end of 2023, our offering money will go to families in Kenya. They are experiencing a drought and food is not easy to get there. And the food that is available costs a LOT of money! As you can see in these pictures, this is an area in Kenya called Turkana that is very rural and the people who live there do not have much money for food.

SLIDES: Kenya 1-4

Our friends all the way in Kenya work with an organization called Missions of Hope. Our money helps them make food baskets for the families who live in Turkana. The food baskets will be such a blessing to the children and families in this community! If you have any offering, you can bring it up now.