**The Facet of the Capacity to Love, No. 4 – BD15-02**

We’re looking at the capacity to love, one of the facets of the pentagon of the defense of our soul. This is the fourth one in this series on the capacity to love. Most expressions about love today are mere talk. Consequently they are expressions of a pseudo love in the form of “eros” or sensuality. The people who like to talk about love are also the people who are planting bombs and leading rebellion and riots. The people who like to talk about this pseudo love like to trample the rights of others and the freedoms of others while demanding great freedoms for themselves.

Love is viewed primarily as an emotional quality and it’s expressed in physical ways. It has permanent attachments. But love in the Bible, we have learned, is first a state of mind. It is free of bitterness, and it is filled with sacrificial concern. We call that the “agape” love.

Now we’re going to view the warm comradery that can exist between friends. A beautiful example of friends in the Bible and the love between two friends is that between David and Jonathan. Here are two patriotic virile men. David was in his teens when he killed the giant Goliath who none in Israel’s army had dared to face.

In 1 Samuel 17:11, here is the situation: “When Saul and all Israel had heard the words of the Philistine Goliath, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.” From the king down through his troops, through his officers and his men in the lines, there was nothing but fear when Goliath had spoken. Along comes this teenage boy and he has a totally different perspective. Why? Because in this teenage kid there existed a spiritual maturity structure. Therefore, as we have been learning, saw the same thing that the king and his troops saw, but his spiritual maturity gave him the right interpretation on what his eyes saw when the rest of them were being led to misinterpret what they were seeing with their eyes.

Jonathan, the other young man in this team, was the oldest son of King Saul. Therefore he was heir to the throne of Israel. The first reference that we have to Jonathan in the Bible is two years after his father Saul became king. It was during the war at a place called Mikmash. 1 Samuel 13 tells us about this. “Saul was ‘years old…’” (There’s a break here in the Hebrew text.) “… when he had reigned two years over Israel. Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel of which two thousand were with Saul in Mikmash and Bethel and one thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. And the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent. And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it, and Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land saying, ‘Let the Hebrews hear.’”

Our first contact with Jonathan is here at the campaign at Mikmash. His father is commanding two-thirds of the army, two thousand troops, and Jonathan is in charge of one thousand of the men, one-third of Israel’s army. Jonathan is camped at Gibeah. He attacks the Philistines at a place called Geba and he wins. But notice verse 4, “And all Israel heard it said that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel also was held in abomination by the Philistines (that is, the Philistines were indignant over this conquest), and the people were called together after Saul at Gilgal.” Jonathan wins the victory but his father takes the credit.

The Philistines amass for battle. Israel’s army, when faced with them, in the retaliatory move, the army of Israel melted away. They broke up and they took flight. 1 Samuel 13:5 says, “And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, 30,000 chariots and 6,000 horsemen. And the people of the sand on the seashore in multitude and they came up and camped in Mikmash eastward from Beth Aven. When the men of Israel that they were hedged in, for the people were distressed, then the people did hide themselves in caves and in thickets and among the rocks and in high places and it pits. And some of the Hebrews went over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was in Gilgal and all the people followed him trembling.”

Saul’s army just crumbled in the face of this attack by the Philistines. Now here comes Jonathan again in the picture. Jonathan takes his armor bearer and he secretly assaults the Philistine fortress at Mikmash, and of all things, he takes it. 1 Samuel 14:1 says, “And it came to pass that upon the day that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bore his armor, ‘Come and let us go over to the Philistine garrison that is on the other side,’ but he told not his father.” He made a secret move with his armor bearer.

Then verses 6 through 15 tell you of their plan of attack. Jonathan says, “We’ll approach the outpost and we’ll seek God’s guidance and we’ll make a decision according to how the outpost acts. If we approach, and they say, ‘Halt,’ we’ll act one way. But if we approach and they say, ‘Come on up here you Jews,’ that will be the signal that God has given them into our hands.” And sure enough when they reached the outpost, the guards were careless and they said, “Come on up here and we’ll teach you something, Hebrews.” So they climbed up the incline and Jonathan told his armor bear, “Stay behind me.” When they got to the top they slaughtered the garrison that was up there.

Verse 14 says, “And that first slaughter which Jonathan and his armor bearer made was about twenty men within, as it were, about a half-acre of land which a yoke of oxen might plow, and there was trembling in the hosts, in the field, and among all the people; the garrison and the spoilers they also trembled and the earth quaked, so it was a very great trembling.” So that Jonathan with his armor bearer caused the enemy such turmoil that they literally began fighting each other, and literally began in the confusion to kill each other.

Now this evidences in Jonathan a spiritual maturity structure. This was the source of his bold action. Here was a man’s soul who was in phase with God. Here was a man who had a mind. His mind was on divine viewpoint. Here was a man that had self-awareness, and his self-awareness was preoccupied with God. Here was a mind who had a conscience, and his conscience was on absolute truth—absolute standards of truth. Here was a mind that had a will, and it was on positive volition. Here was emotions in this man. And his emotions were a relaxed mental attitude expressing itself in love toward God, and the confidence of what God could do.

Now this is spiritual maturity. That’s a spiritual maturity structure. And we have a lot of talk about getting to be spiritual and getting to be mature, but nobody knows really how to go about it because nobody has really been taught what God has put into our souls that needs to be made mature, and how you go about making it mature. Now this was Jonathan to a “T.” Consequently, he made a good soldier.

One of the discussions I had in Chicago was over this questions of “How about the war?” And it’s always an amazing thing to point out to people that there are several words in Hebrew (like maybe eleven words) for “kill,” but there’s only one word in Hebrew that means “murder,” and that’s the one that’s used in the Decalogue. That’s when it actually says, “Thou shalt not murder,” and not “Thou shalt not kill.” That’s different than defending your national entity under the authority of the state. A Christian who has a spiritual maturity structure is the finest soldier in the world because he gets on the field of battle and he defeats the enemy.

Now Jonathan evidenced that he had a spiritual maturity structure. For example, we have the fact that he was grace-oriented. In 1 Samuel 14:6, Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, “Come and let us go over unto the garrison of those uncircumcised (these unbelievers). It may be that the Lord will work for us for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few.” And that’s a great verse of Scripture. There’s no restraint from the Lord to work through many people or through few.

Now from a military point of view this was insanity, for two men to be going up right into the enemy’s stronghold and standing up there and saying, “We’ll fight them.” But they did, because this man was grace-oriented, and it was no problem to him that God will do for man. That’s grace—what God does for man. Legalism is what man is trying to do for God.

Scripture indicates that there were no mental attitude sins that we’re aware of on the part of Jonathan, so he had a relaxed mental attitude. And he had plenty of reason to be bitter because he could see that David was going to be king. David was going to get the throne that rightfully should have gone to Jonathan, but we have not one single evidence in the Scripture that he resented that decision of God. His father resented it but he didn’t.

The details of life were obviously under his mastery. Along with his relaxed mental attitude, he had a mastery of the details of life which is another part of being spiritually mature, part of that pentagon of defense in your soul. He didn’t stop at the odds of the enemy which were against him. Nor did he stop because his father got the credit for what he had done. His physical eyes were oriented to see things in the right way.

Well the result was that the Philistines at Mikmash were panicked. Fighting broke out among themselves. 1 Samuel 14:16-23 describes to us how Saul’s troops saw what was happening and gradually their courage returned. They left their hiding places and they got out there pursuing their enemy. Verse 23 says, “So the Lord saved Israel that day and the battle passed over unto Beth Aven.” The battle is always the Lord’s. That’s faith rest. When you get hold of the fact that the battle is the Lord’s, that’s faith rest.

I had to try to point that out to pastors I’ve talked to—that they have to learn that the battle is the Lord’s. You’re always going to have pushy church members. But you don’t fight back. You just declare the facts and you let it lie there, and God goes from there.

The troops were panicked. Saul’s army came out and a great victory was won because the glory of God was reflected in the spiritual maturity structure of Jonathan.

Now between David and Jonathan there developed a very dramatic and a very tender friendship. It began on the day that David killed Goliath. It so happened that Jonathan was present at the time when Saul was interviewing David. 1 Samuel 18:1 says, “And it came to pass when he (David) had ceased speaking unto Saul after he had slain the giant that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.” Now here you have two men—each of them with a mind, each of them with a will and emotions. And you have David on one side and Jonathan on the other side. And it was as if they both shared the same soul. When Jonathan looked at David, he said, “Now I think like that fellow.”

You may have had the experience of having a comradery with a friend that you could even say, “I know that if my friend had to make a decision for me, he would make the same decision, he would come to the same conclusion that I would. I wouldn’t even have to tell him what I think. He would come (to the same conclusion) because we think alike. Their wills had a comradery. Jonathan discovered that when David makes a choice, Jonathan says, “Amen, brother, that’s the choice I’d make. I would do the same.” Their emotions were the same. The things that they were hot for, they were both hot for. And what David was cool toward, Jonathan said, “I’m cool toward that too.”

And here was a soul-to-soul attachment. Remember (that) the soul is the real you. The only contact you and I have with one another is soul-to-soul. That’s the point of our relationships to each other on this human plane. What was the relationship? The soul of Jonathan was “knit” with the soul of David and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And the Hebrew word is “ahab.” This (love) is the equivalent of the New Testament Greek word “agapao.” The relationship they had between them was exactly what we’ve been talking about, of a mental attitude love, and that’s why these two men were drawn soul-to-soul to one another. They were knit. They were intertwined. They were interrelated. Here you have the basis of a genuine lasting friendship between two people.

Now the people that you have a close ground of comradery with, as a Christian, a really close ground of comradery, and I’m not talking about this surface civility that you interrelate with people, like people that you buy something from in the store and they say, “Come back,” because they’re just dying to have you visit them again because you’re such a nice person. We’re talking about that soul-to-soul relationship, that tenderness of experience that you share with somebody. As a Christian it is because you love him, because your souls are intertwined, because you have minds that are compatible, emotions that are compatible, and wills that are compatible. And the people you will become the closest to on this earth are those that have a spiritual maturity structure that matches your spiritual maturity structure.

Now you can have this and you can destroy it too as we shall see in a moment. You can have this comradery and it can cool off, and there’s a reason for that. Now David was drawn to Jonathan as much as Jonathan was drawn to him because of the spiritual maturity that they both shared. It was evident that this teenager David has a spiritual maturity structure. He had grace orientation. Look at 1 Samuel 17:37 where David said, “Moreover the Lord who delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear. He will deliver me out of the hand of the Philistines. And Saul said unto David, ‘Go, and the Lord be with thee.’” Verse 46 says, “This day will the Lord deliver thee into my hand (speaking to Goliath), and I will smite thee and take thine head from thee, and I will give the carcass of the host the Philistine this day unto the fowls of the air and unto the wild beasts of the earth, and all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear. For the battle is the Lord’s, and He will give you into our hand.”

Now that’s a fantastic verse. You and I, from human viewpoint, say if we’re going to go and have combat, it’s the guns we use. It’s the weaponry. That’s what we win with. No. It is the Lord’s battle, and it is the Lord who gives us the victory. The battle is the Lord’s and he will give you into our hand. And what brought the victory from Jonathan? Now follow this through. Why could Jonathan take himself and his armor bearer and go up that hill and conquer that outpost and turn the whole enemy into such furor that Saul’s army could come out and bring victory? Because there lay in Jonathan a spiritual maturity structure.

And as General George Patton said, “You do not defeat an enemy on the basis of your weapons, but you defeat his soul.” Very perceptive. It is the soul at the point of combat. And here was David who, because he had a maturity structure already, learned what it was like to depend on God because he was grace oriented and he could meet that lion and that bear and defeat them, let alone to stand up against this giant.

And mind you what he’s seeing. His physical eyes are seeing this 13-foot tall creature. What a frightening sight. Armor rattling, spear, sword so heavy that this poor kid had to use both hands to pick it up to chop the giant’s head off a little later. And he’s looking at this fellow and says, “You know what? I’m going to come out there. I’m going to knock you down. I’m going to kill you right on the spot on the field of battle. And you see all those troops lined up behind you? I’m going to make a big banquet out of your troops for the vultures. The fowl are going to have a big feast day on Philistine hides today, because the battle is the Lord’s.”

Now that’s true Christian warrior talk, friends. And some of you don’t like it, but it happens to be biblical orientation to the defense of the nation against the enemy. David has grace orientation. The battle is the Lord’s. David had a mastery of the details of life which was evidenced in 1 Samuel 17:38-39 which says, “And Saul armed David with his armor. He put on a helmet of bronze upon his head. Also he armed him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his armor and he attempted to go.”

Now you can imagine this teenage boy. He’s not fully as strong as he’s going to be. And the king puts all this armor on him, and this kid is walking around, staggering around here with all this armor on. And the king is trying to help him to fight this giant. And it says he hadn’t tested it. “And David said unto Saul, ‘I cannot go with these for I have not tested them.’ And he put them off.” He said, “Just a minute. These are details of life. I know that by human viewpoint I should put on all this defense mechanism, but that isn’t the way the Lord wants me to do it. Just let me take my slingshot, and let me pick out five aerodynamically sound stones, and I’ll take care of the giant. That’s all I need.” And so he did.

He had a relaxed mental attitude. 1 Samuel 17:26 says, “And David spoke to the men who stood by him saying, ‘What shall be done for the man who killeth this Philistine and taketh away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?’” David viewed this as an insult against God. He wasn’t frightened. No, fear is a sin. Anytime you’re afraid your relaxed mental attitude is broken down. David says, “What are we all afraid of here?”

And in verse 32, David said to Saul, “Let no man’s heart fail because of him (the giant). Thy servant will go out and fight with this Philistine.” And then David’s oldest brother was there—the one who wore the officer’s uniform. The guy with the epaulets up here, and all the braid. The fellow who was the pride of the family because he was in the officer corps. And he looked at his kid brother her, the teenager who was doing all this talking and working on the morale of the troops, and David’s relaxed mental attitude gets a real testing here.

Notice verse 28. “Eliab, his eldest brother, brother heard when he spoke unto the men, and Eliab’s anger was kindled against David. Why camest thou down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness?” He says, “What are you doing here, you little no-good kid?” And you might want to use something stronger. “What did you do with those few sheep? You know we’re not a rich family. We don’t have too many sheep. You went off and left them in the wilderness didn’t you? You no good little irresponsible brat. “I know thy pride and thy naughtiness of heart.” (“I know how ugly you are,” is what it means.) “And thou art come down to see the battle.” (You’re just coming down here just to see the fighting.”)

And David said, “What have I now done? Isn’t there a cause here?” Is there not a cause here that we should apply ourselves to? Why do you berate me when I am applying myself to a cause? We Christians have a habit of doing that when somebody who’s really applying themselves to a cause gets berated, as if there were no cause to apply to.

“And he turned from him toward another and spoke after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner.” That is, David turned and he kept inquiring, “What’s the situation? What’s the situation?”

But you notice he didn’t do anything more than say, “Brother there’s a cause here. That’s why I’m doing this. And I’m not trying to be smart-alec or ugly or irresponsible. And it took a relaxed mental attitude not to turn back and bark at his brother or get into a fist fight with him.

He also had the capacity to love. 1 Samuel 13:14, Samuel says to Saul concerning David, “But now thy kingdom shall continue. The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over His people because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee.” Samuel is telling Saul that David, who was a man after God’s own heart, which is a way of saying, “Here’s a man who really loves God.” And that’s what God wants, a man who will love him. Not a man who will give to him, but God wants a man who will love him. Samuel is saying, “God has found that man, and that man is going to be king.”

So between Jonathan and David, these men with two strong spiritual maturity structures, there was a knitting of souls. In 1 Samuel 18, we’re told how a friendship pact developed between them. And Jonathan sealed this pact by giving David several gifts. Verse 2 says, “And Saul took him that day and would let him go no more to his father’s house. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant because he loved him as his own soul.”

Now David’s fame made Saul jealous, and it made Saul determined, consequently, to kill David. 1 Samuel 18:7 says, “And the women spoke to one another as they played and said, ‘Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.’” This became the song that was number one on the hit parade. The women were all going around singing this song, “Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.” And it just carried on, and everywhere that Saul went the juke boxes were just playing out, “Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.” He just got sick of listening to the women singing and praising David.

Verse 8 says, “Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him. And he said, ‘They have ascribed unto David ten thousands and to me they have ascribed but thousands. And what can he have more but the kingdom?’” Now, mind you. Saul says, “There’s only one thing this kid doesn’t have. He’s got the praise and the adulation of the population. He just doesn’t have my kingdom.”

Now I want to remind you that there was in Saul a spirit of comradery friendship love toward David. Look back in 1 Samuel 16. 1 Samuel 16:21 says, “And David came to Saul and stood before him and he loved him greatly.” And this is the Hebrew that is used. And Saul “ahab” David greatly. He “agapao’d” David greatly, so that there was on the part of Saul a mental attitude love and good will toward David upon his initial meeting with him in the incident with Goliath. “And David came to Saul and stood before him and he loved him greatly and became his armor bearer.” Now armor bearer is an official position of honor. It didn’t mean that he had to go around carrying the heavy armor around. Somebody else did that. But he was an executive in charge, a sort of a military aid to Saul. “And Saul sent to Jesse saying, ‘Let David I pray thee stand before me for he has found favor in my sight.” Saul sends back word to David’s father Jesse and says, “I want to keep the boy with me.”

“And it came to pass when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul that David took a harp and played with his hands so Saul was refreshed and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.” Yes, he loved David, but he loved David because David had therapeutic value. Saul had an affliction of depression, perhaps manic depression. And he would come into these moods of depression, and David, who was a musician, would get on his harp. Little David would start playing on his harp, and Saul’s mental attitude would be soothed. His emotions would be resolved, and it served to heal Saul’s internal tension. It was a relief to Saul. David served him in a very specific directly beneficial way, and that was part of the reason that Saul had this attitude of receptivity toward him. It was motivated by benefits from David.

The time came that the friendship that Saul had for David was wiped out. Why was it wiped out? It was wiped out because a mental attitude sin entered between them. Saul said, “They’re singing about my conquering my thousands and he conquers his ten thousands. What more can he have now than my kingdom? First he was angry with David over the song, then he became jealous because he was more popular with the people. And from hatred he went to vindictiveness. (“I’m going to get even.”)

And we’re told that he became fearful. Verse 9 says, “Saul watched enviously David from that day onward.” Now he has moved into mental attitude jealousy and vindictiveness. And it came to pass on the next day that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul and he prophesied in the midst of the house and David played with his hand, as at other times: there was a javelin in Saul’s hand. And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, ‘I’ll smite David even to the wall with it. (I’ll pin him to the wall with the javelin.) And David escaped from his presence twice. And Saul was afraid of David because the Lord was with him and was departed from Saul.”

Saul recognized that his sin, his willful sinning again and again had removed the hand of blessing from him and that the king kingdom had been transferred to David. Now Saul, instead of accepting this as the plan of God (which then discipline would have become blessing to Saul at it did to Jonathan). Jonathan accepted it and it became blessing to him because Jonathan had spiritual maturity but Saul did not. Saul went all the way from hatred to fear. He feared this man. He feared everything he was doing. He was envious. He was jealous. He was contentious. And he began to be sneaky. And he began to lay plans in order to bring about the death of David.

The friendship of Jonathan and David, you can see, under these conditions, was bound to face a severe testing. Saul made repeated attempts on the life of David. Furthermore, he hadn’t kept his promise to David. David had been told that whoever conquers the giant Goliath would receive Saul’s daughter in marriage. And he did not give the girl to him in marriage. But Saul thought, “Now this is how I’ll get David.” He offered to give David the choice of another daughter, Michal. And he said, “I’ll give her to you if you go out and kill 100 Philistines.” And we’re told that what Saul had in mind was that the odds were so great that David were not personally be able to slay 100 Philistines and survive.

1 Samuel 18:25b (the latter part of the verse) says, “But Saul thought to make David fall by the hands of the Philistines.” But the thing that Saul did not recognize again was the spiritual maturity structure. And the result was again that David was able to go out and perform. He not only brought in 100 Philistines, he brought the evidence back of 200 dead. He doubled the ante. The result was that he became Saul’s son-in-law.

Saul recognized spiritual maturity in David. What was the result? He hated the more for it. 1 Samuel 18:28 says, “And Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David, and that Michal, Saul’s daughter, loved him, and Saul was yet the more afraid of David, and Saul became David’s enemy continually. Then the princes of the Philistines went forth and it came to pass after they went forth that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul so that his name was much esteemed.”

Saul, who once could say, “I love you David,” now became gradually envious, suspicious, contentious, and competitive. That’s the miserable word, “competitive.” Saul looked at David and he saw that this man had qualities, he had maturity, he had gifts, he had ability, and he had the hand of blessing upon him, and he says, “I’ve got to compete with this guy, and I’ve got to equal him.” And competition set in, and one of the worst mental sins you can have, I think, is competition with another believer. And the result was he started to equate and out-do, and there was no end to this but hatred. And the result was that the friendship broke up.

He went to the point, 1 Samuel 19:1 tells us, that Saul ordered Jonathan and the servants to personally kill David—to assassinate him. He resorted to assassins. 1 Samuel 19:1 says, “And Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and to all his servants that they should kill David.” Well, Jonathan didn’t fear David, nor was he jealous of his reputation, though he was a threat to Jonathan’s throne. Instead, Jonathan recognized that David was God’s choice. 1 Samuel 23:17 says, “And he said unto him, ‘Fear not, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee. Thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee. And that also Saul my father knoweth.’” Now that’s a beautiful statement.

Now this is the love between friends. Jonathan says, “David, I know that God has said that you will be king after my father, not me. But I’ll tell you this, David, you will not only be king, but I’ll be at your side as you’re aid.” Now that’s mental attitude love. That’s what the Scripture says, “referring one another,” pushing each other ahead—not muscling around trying to prove that you’re the equal or you’re just as good as somebody else, or going around sounding off that you’re as good as anybody else, within the congregation or outside of it.

Look over in chapter 20, verse 14, just to compare that verse. Jonathan is saying to David, “And thou shalt not only while yet I live show me the kindness of the Lord that I die not: But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house forever: no, not when the Lord hat cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth. So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the Lord even require it at the hand of David’s enemies.” Jonathan says, “Not only will you and I not come to blows; not only will you and I not come to a conflict; but, you’ll take care of and be kind to my family after you become king.”

Friendship can be marred between two because “agape” love, which is based on positive response to the revelation of God is violated. Now their mutual affection was proven on many occasions. Jonathan told David of a plot that Saul had on his life in 1 Samuel 19:2-3. Jonathan finally went and he talked to his father, and David was restored to the court in 1 Samuel 19:4-17. But as David’s fame increased, Saul’s hatred returned and rose again, so he sought again to have David killed (1 Samuel 19:8-10). And Saul resorted to assassins. He sent an assassin to David’s house to kill him in his sleep. But he was warned and his wife put a dummy in the bed and covered it up. And when the assassin came, they said, “You can’t see him he’s sick. You can’t disturb him. He’s got the flu.” The fellow looked and sure enough there he’s lying in the bed. But David’s off heading for the boon docks.

We’re told that Jonathan’s love for David, as a friend, was as his love for himself. So Jonathan and David met secretly after all this, and they pledged their loyalty once more to each other and to care for each other’s family. You have that beautiful passage in 1 Samuel 20:11-17. Verse 17 says, “And Jonathan caused David to swear again because he loved him, for he loved him as his own soul.” You constantly have this repeated declaration. Here are two men that have souls that are compatible with each other, and there are no conflicts between them even though one is being pushed ahead of the other. This is exactly what Ephesians 5:29 says that we will do. “For no man has ever hated his own flesh, but nurture it and cherish it even as the Lord the church.”

David had to flee again, and the two friends met for the last time in the forest of Ziph. 1 Samuel 23, beginning at verse 15 says, “And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David was in the wilderness of Ziph in a forest. And Jonathan Saul’s son arose, and went to David into the forest, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said unto him, ‘Fear no: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee: and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee: and that also my father knoweth.’ The two made a covenant before the Lord, and David abode in the forest, and Jonathan went to his house.” The two friends were never to see each other again. This was the last time.

About six years later, David heard that Jonathan and his three sons had been killed in a battle against the Philistines. They had severed the heads and taken the bodies and hung them on the wall until some of their friends came and took them down and gave them a burial. But David’s mental attitude love continued even after the sorrow of seeing his friend slaughtered as the result of his father’s hatred. His love continued. He bore no grudge. And he wrote this poem of grief, mourning, of all things, not only Jonathan, but mourning Saul.

You’ll find it in 2 Samuel chapter 1 “How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle. Oh, Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan. Very pleasant hast thou been unto me. Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen and the weapons of war perish!” Now you can see the tears flowing in the heart if not in the eyes of David as he penned this eulogy to a man who had really become his friend.

Well, how did such friendship come between these two? It begins with that “agape” mental attitude love. The spiritual maturity structure enabled them to have a friendship of soul-to-soul which they would not have had had they not both grown spiritually.

This is sometimes what happens: Two friends start off and they’re both at a certain spiritual maturity level. And then one begins to flake off. One begins to get attracted off into attitudes of the world and into human viewpoint concepts—human viewpoint concepts absorbed from other Christians who are disoriented. And pretty soon two who were bound together begin to discover that they’re pulling apart because one is moving on in spiritual maturity and the other has gotten himself bogged down with other Christians. And what was a beautiful friendship becomes an empty hollow thing.

John 15:12-13 says, “This is my commandment: that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this: that a man lay down his life for his friend.” The expression of a friend with “agape” love will have this capacity. He will have the loyalty not to shrink from danger, to protect you. He’ll be one who stands by you who will be neither ashamed nor embarrassed by the opinions of people about you. The pushy crowd who tries to improve the Lord’s work will not dissuade him. He’ll stand up and sound off to them, like Caleb and Joshua did to their ten compatriots. It’s nice to have people who stand around and sound off to the pushy ones.

He gives up his own ambitions to assure your success. He’s no operator himself. He reaches out to the other as soul reaches to soul. A Christian comradery which is based on spiritual maturity structure in the soul. A friendship with the warm glow of Christian fellowship will be cooled off by mental attitude sins which destroy “agape” love because bitterness sets in. You start rationalizing, defending yourself, and opposing your friends.

The loss of the capacity to love toward a friend will impoverish your life. It makes you poor when it happens. The capacity to love, when it’s kept within bounds of propriety between friends, may be misconstrued by the disoriented. As you know, derogatory implications are made toward David and Jonathan. But to those who have a spiritual maturity insight, that kind of comradery is not misconstrued. The human viewpoint can’t grasp this, and it puts insulting implications upon it.

But takes all into account. So stand with love. Fear no man. Commit yourself to God. And don’t destroy your capacity to love because of ignorant people around you who can’t get to first base in the quality of loving. It’s nice to know people who can love. It’s sad to know people who are beggarly when it comes to the capacity to love.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971