



**Sermon Series:** More Than a Sidekick: Serving Alongside Others

**To be used with Session 4:** Jonathan

**Sermon Title Possibilities:** “The Gift Called Support”; “The Arm of Support”; “Strength Through Support”

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 18:1-4, 19:1-4; 23:15-18

**Connection with Unit Theme:** To complement the Bible study, “More Than a Sidekick: Serving Alongside Others,” this sermon will help the congregation recognize the impact of supporting people, particularly during their most challenging moments. By examining the relationship between Jonathan and David, listeners will learn how Jonathan’s love was displayed sacrificially; Jonathan risked everything to support and defend David. Similarly, we are called to sacrifice time, energy, and popularity to support people in need. In this sermon, listeners will identify ways to support people in their homes, communities, and churches—empowering others to see God’s hand in their lives beyond their places of struggle. Ultimately, the congregation will be reminded that their support is necessary and has the power to be transformative.

**Introduction:** Legend has it that one afternoon during a baseball game, Jackie Robinson—a black man who had just integrated the MLB as a new member of the LA Dodgers bobbled an easy grounder that could have cost his team the inning. The entire stadium—including Dodger fans, without surprise, ridiculed Robinson mercilessly. Robinson stood there and listened to the non-stop jeering and booing of the stands as they shouted racial slurs endlessly. Suddenly, Robinson’s white teammate, Pee Wee Reese, came out of the dugout, stood next to Robinson, put his arm around him, and faced the crowd in solidarity with Robinson. Surprisingly, the jeers eventually ceased, and the game continued.<sup>1</sup> Pee Wee Reese sacrificed his image, career, and livelihood to support Jackie Robinson that day. We all have experienced extremely antagonistic and exhausting days that have brought us to low places. Fortunately, every now and then, we are blessed to have individuals like Pee Wee Reese who care enough about us and support us in sacrificial ways. In today’s sermon, we will explore another endearing relationship where Jonathan, just like Pee Wee Reese, made a significant sacrifice to support, protect, and defend his friend David, whom he loved dearly.

## **1. Esteem Others (1 Samuel 18:1-4)**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mlb.com/news/why-we-love-baseball-jackie-robinson-pee-wee-reese-moment>

1 Samuel 18 highlights the aftermath of the showdown between David and Goliath. David's leadership secured peace and safety for Israel with the slaying of Goliath. According to verse 1, Jonathan loved David. Regardless of whether we admit it, we all desire to be genuinely loved. Verse 2 reports that Saul took David from his father's house after his victory over Goliath. Although David had experienced great success, journeying to Saul's house, albeit a palace, would require great sacrifice. David, quite possibly, had to manage the emotions attached to transition and possible loneliness. Leadership—no matter how successful—can sometimes be a lonely place. Leaders sacrifice, support, and selflessly serve others; unfortunately, those actions are rarely reciprocated in many cases. Leaders are viewed and treated as superheroes who are very seldom covered and cared for. However, 1 Samuel 18:3 reports that Jonathan's love for David caused him to enter a covenant with David. Moreover, Jonathan sealed and validated his covenant with David by giving him his royal robe, armor, sword, bow, and belt directly off his body (1 Samuel 18:4). Jonathan's royal garment transferal not only confirmed his love and support but more importantly, it affirmed David as the heir apparent. We all need people who, through love, will courageously affirm what God has spoken, even when it is unpopular; the aforementioned are expectations for covenantal partners. Jonathan's covenantal care for David should be lauded and duplicated. Jonathan's love for David should cause us to ask ourselves, "Who do we have in our lives that support us in this way, and whose lives have we impacted in this way?"

## **2. Correct Unwarranted Accusations (1 Samuel 19:1-4)**

Saul's anger and fear towards David persisted to the point of action. According to 1 Samuel 19:1, Saul spoke with his son Jonathan and all his servants about killing David. Saul desired to kill David even though David was faithful and brought great success and prosperity to Saul's kingdom. Saul wanted to kill David solely because of the favor that God put on him. We must remember that the fruit of God's favor and anointing at work in us will disturb people. In fact, our alignment with God will cause antagonism and opposition. Jesus warned us, "You will be hated by all because of my name" (Matt. 10:22). This jealousy and subsequent hate occurred with Cain and Abel, Joseph and his brothers, Esau and Jacob, and Rachel and Leah. There is arguably nothing more empowering than to receive genuine protection, allyship, and advocacy during unwarranted attacks. According to 1 Samuel 19:2-4, Jonathan proved his love and support for David by covering him from his father Saul's attacks and correcting his father on the false allegations against David. Jonathan's actions remind us that true advocacy requires sacrifice, sometimes sacrificing image, privilege, and resources. We cannot claim to love someone if we have failed to sacrifice for them. We must ask ourselves, "To whom or to what have we truly sacrificed?" Jonathan's decision to protect and defend David could have cost him the throne and maybe even his life. Jesus taught us that true love sacrifices all for no greater love than a man who would lay down his life for a friend (John 15:13).

### **3. See God's Perspective (1 Samuel 23:15-18)**

1 Samuel 23 highlights the extensive 5-chapter long envy and subsequent hate-driven murder intended pursuit by Saul against David. Until this moment, David could dodge Saul's aggressive hunting. However, 1 Samuel 23:6-12 reveals that Saul gained significant traction in his pursuits. Consequently, David hid in the strongholds in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh (verses 14-15). Saul's relentless quest for David reveals that it is surprisingly daunting that many people are more faithful to evil pursuits than godly ones. 1 Samuel 23:14 reports that Saul committed himself to hunt for David every day, and the hunt ultimately took Saul's attention away from his responsibilities as king. You know, jealousy, envy, and hate are diseases that will blind and control us. Moreover, Saul's obsessive actions remind us that we will always fail to fulfill our assignments when we fixate our attention on the destruction of others. We must consider how our families, homes, communities, and churches would look if we redirected our errant attentions and invested our time and energy toward fulfilling God's plan. Fortunately, Jonathan met David in hiding, and there he strengthened David's hands through the Lord by encouraging David with a promised word of hope, protection, and elevation (1 Sam. 23:16-17). Jonathan's actions remind us that we are commanded to encourage and build up each other (Heb. 10:25, Rom. 15:2, 1 Thess. 4:18; 5:11). Jonathan's words of affirmation helped David to see the other side of the wilderness—God's perspective. Similarly, our affirming words can help people see God's perspective beyond their present wilderness.

**Conclusion:** Today, we have explored the exemplary characteristics that Jonathan exhibited in showing his love and support for his friend David. As we conclude today, perhaps we should take a few moments to thank God for the Jonathans that God sent us to support us on our journey. Additionally, may we pray that God will equip all of us with Jonathan's level of consideration, love, and sacrifice for all the people from which we already share community. Lastly, may we prayerfully discern God's voice concerning at least one person we have been called to serve as their Jonathan, and may we pledge to commit ourselves to that person for the entire year.

#### **Author Bio**

Dr. TERRENCE CHANDLER-HARRISON serves as the Lead Pastor of The Liberty Church—Clarksville, TN. He is a graduate of Morehouse College and Vanderbilt University Divinity School. Terrence earned a Doctorate of Education from The University of Southern California and his research was awarded the dissertation of distinction merit. He is a professor of Bible and Theology and Dean at The Historic American Baptist College—Nashville, TN. Terrence and his wife Anjelica are the proud parents of Ellie Grace and Timothy James. Check out Terrence's latest work, *Spiritual Cross Training: The Book of James* on Amazon and Barnes and Noble.