

October 4  
Lesson 5 (NIV)

## LOVE THAT INTERCEDES

DEVOTIONAL READING: [Matthew 5:43–48](#)

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: [1 Samuel 19:1–7](#);  
[23:1–18](#); [2 Samuel 9](#)

### 1 SAMUEL 19:1–7

<sup>1</sup> Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David. But Jonathan had taken a great liking to David <sup>2</sup> and warned him, “My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. Be on your guard tomorrow morning; go into hiding and stay there. <sup>3</sup> I will go out and stand with my father in the field where you are. I’ll speak to him about you and will tell you what I find out.”

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, “Let not the king do wrong to his servant David; he has not wronged you, and what he has done has benefited you greatly. <sup>5</sup> He took his life in his hands when he killed the Philistine. The LORD won a great victory for all Israel, and you saw it and were glad. Why then would you do wrong to an innocent man like David by killing him for no reason?”

<sup>6</sup> Saul listened to Jonathan and took this oath: “As surely as the LORD lives, David will not be put to death.”

<sup>7</sup> So Jonathan called David and told him the whole conversation. He brought him

to Saul, and David was with Saul as before.



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### KEY VERSE

*Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, “Let not the king do wrong to his servant David; he has not wronged you, and what he has done has benefited you greatly.”—1 Samuel 19:4*

## LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER

### Unit 2: Inclusive Love

LESSONS 5–8

### LESSON AIMS

After participating in this lesson, each learner will be able to:

1. Summarize Jonathan’s defense of David and Saul’s reaction.

2. Explain the risks Jonathan faced in the reconciliation process.
3. Identify opportunities to counsel reconciliation and do so.

## LESSON OUTLINE

### Introduction

- A. Targeting Peacemakers
- B. Lesson Context
  - I. The Plot (1 Samuel 19:1–3)
    - A. Execution Order (vv. 1–2)
    - B. Clemency Plan (v. 3)
  - II. The Intercession (1 Samuel 19:4–5)
    - A. Exemplary Record (vv. 4–5b)
    - B. Rhetorical Question (v. 5c)  
*Unlikely Friendship*
  - III. The Aftermath (1 Samuel 19:6–7)
    - A. Vow (v. 6)  
*The Unbreakable Vow*
    - B. Reconciliation (v. 7)

### Conclusion

- A. Roles People Play
- B. Prayer
- C. Thought to Remember

## HOW TO SAY IT

Goliath	Go-lye-uth.
Philistine	Fuh-liss-teen or Fill-us-teen.

### Introduction

#### A. Targeting Peacemakers

What risks do peacemakers face in areas of conflict? A study, begun in 2010 by the

Uppsala Conflict Data Program, seeks to answer that question. The fact that such a study exists confirms the sad truth that we all know: peacemakers sometimes come to very violent ends.

A government that doesn't want outside influence can forcefully remove peaceful humanitarian efforts. One side or another of a military conflict might attack the peacemakers, hoping that the aid they would have given to their opponents will result in victory. Or one individual who stands opposed to a specific peacemaker can kill that one, hoping the movement will end with his or her death. We need only recall conflicts in Syria or Sudan, or assassinations like those of Martin Luther King Jr. or Oscar Romero, to realize that peacemaking can be a very dangerous business.

There is no guarantee that efforts for reconciliation will work. But Jonathan, son of King Saul, believed the risk was worth taking. His actions are an example to all of us about the potential power of peacemaking.

#### B. Lesson Context

Two of the Old Testament's books of history are 1 and 2 Samuel. They take their name from Samuel, the last judge of Israel. He was instrumental in the transition from the period of the judges to the time of kings. As such, the two books record the transition from the theocracy (when the Lord reigned as sole king of Israel, with human leaders in the roles of judges) to the monarchy of human kings.

This transition began about the year 1050 BC. It began with the Israelites' demand that Samuel give them an earthly king "such as all the other nations have" (1 Samuel 8:5). This demand was not primarily a rejection of Samuel or his sons but of the Lord as their king (8:7). God had called Israel to be his special nation (Exodus 19:5–6), and their desire for a king expressed a wish to be not quite so special. Samuel proclaimed the Lord's warning of the negative consequences of a human king (1 Samuel 8:11–18). But the people persisted, and the Lord granted their request (8:19–22).

The Lord selected Saul as the first king of Israel (1 Samuel 9:17; 10:17–24). Saul started well, but when he failed to carry out faithfully the Lord's commands, the Lord selected a different king (15:16–26). Samuel informed Saul of his being rejected by God, and Samuel anointed David as the next king (16:1–13). That signified that Saul's royal line would end when David took the throne.

When the Philistines challenged Israel, it was young David who slew Goliath, which in turn led to a routing of the Philistines (1 Samuel 17:1–54). After this great victory, David became a member of Saul's royal household in two important ways. First, David and Jonathan, Saul's son and heir to the throne, became fast friends (18:3). Second, David married Michal, daughter of Saul (18:27).

When military victories were celebrated, however, people esteemed David's accomplishments more highly than Saul's (1 Samuel 18:6–8). This made Saul angry, jeal-

ous, and suspicious of David to the point that Saul attempted to kill him (18:10–11; 19:9–10).

## I. The Plot (1 SAMUEL 19:1–3)

### A. Execution Order (vv. 1–2)

**1a. Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David.**

This verse continues the story of 1 Samuel 18, giving the consequences of Saul's jealous rage. We may wonder why *Saul* would charge his *attendants* to implement the deadly deed of killing *David*. The word translated *attendants* occurs about 800 times in the Old Testament, with a broad range of applications. It applies to various levels of service to the king, not just what we might term butlers and maids. Faithful subjects of a king were considered to be servants (1 Kings 12:7).

Notice the progression: Saul had tried to *kill* David by his own hand (see [Lesson Context](#)), then by stealth by putting David in peril (1 Samuel 18:17, 25). The text before us represents a new attempt. It involved not Saul himself or the Philistines but instead his son and his court.



Visual for Lesson 5. Use the visual as a backdrop to a discussion on how love speaks up. Use [1 Corinthians 13](#) as a reference, as well as the lesson text.

**1b. But Jonathan had taken a great liking to David**

The author interjects this important detail to remind us of Jonathan’s potentially split allegiance. Emphasizing Jonathan’s relationship to his father, Saul, ratchets up the tension. Would Jonathan’s loyalty to his father (and potentially his own future place on the throne) determine his path? Or would his *great liking* for *David* decide Jonathan’s course of action?

The situation was made more problematic by the covenant between Jonathan and David ([1 Samuel 18:3–4](#)). It should prevent Jonathan from obeying his father’s orders to kill David. In order to save his friend and honor their covenant, Jonathan would have to disobey his father. And the king could certainly punish his son any way he saw fit for such an act of rebellion.

**2a. and warned him, “My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you.**

The reader doesn’t wait long in suspense. Jonathan clearly chose his love for David over his devotion to his *father*, the king. The role of a son was to honor his father ([Exodus 20:12](#)), which included obeying him ([Proverbs 23:22](#); compare [Ephesians 6:1–3](#)). Jonathan’s informing David of Saul’s pronouncement undermined his father’s will.

Since the Lord had rejected Saul in favor of David ([1 Samuel 15:28](#)), the contrast highlights for the reader Saul’s opposition to the will of God. It may also show Jonathan’s acceptance of David’s place as the future king rather than himself (which becomes clearer later; see [23:16–17](#)) and thus as a man who followed God’s will.

No doubt there was a full conversation between Jonathan and David, but only Jonathan’s revelation of Saul’s plot is reported. Jonathan’s warning consisted of (1) the report, (2) three commands (see commentary on [1 Samuel 19:2c–d](#), below), and (3) four actions Jonathan will take (see commentary on [19:3](#), below).

*Is looking for* emphasizes Saul’s very active desire to have David put to death. He was not just daydreaming. The king was coming up with plans *to kill* David.

*What Do You Think?*

Under what circumstances should a Christian violate confidential communication to prevent a wrong?

*Digging Deeper*

How does [Proverbs 11:13](#) speak to this issue, if at all?

**2c. “Be on your guard tomorrow morning;**

Grammatically, a request and a command appear the same. Determining whether Jonathan commanded David (so that David needed to obey him) or requested of David (so that David could make up his own mind) is a matter of context. Considering each man’s status relative to the other’s leads to an impasse. At the moment, Jonathan is of higher status because he is the king’s son and heir apparent to the throne. However, he and David both knew that David had been chosen by God to be the next king (compare [1 Samuel 16:1–13](#); [20:31](#)).

Furthermore, a warning, though it comes as a command, can be softened by the concern of the one who issues it. One can imagine that Jonathan, though apparently ordering David to do what he said, would have been open to other suggestions as long as they were intended to keep David safe from harm.

The fact that the warning *be on your guard* is followed by *tomorrow morning* indicated that the threat was an immediate danger. This was not the kind of general “take care” advisory with which we end casual conversations today!

**2d. “go into hiding and stay there.**

These two imperatives reveal Jonathan’s intention to give David an active-yet-passive part in the plan. The active part was for David to hide himself; the passive part is to *stay there* after he did so. Jonathan did not know if his attempt to convince his father not to kill David would succeed; thus this

precautionary measure.

**B. Clemency Plan (v. 3)**

**3a. “I will go out and stand with my father in the field where you are.**

*I will* points out a shift of focus from David’s tasks to Jonathan’s. The first pair, seen here, describes where Jonathan would be: standing with David’s sworn enemy in the same *field* near David. Apparently the secret place where David was to hide (see [1 Samuel 19:2e](#), above) would be secret only from Saul, not from Jonathan. Therefore David would be completely vulnerable in trusting Jonathan not to betray him.

**3b. “I’ll speak to him about you and will tell you what I find out.”**

Jonathan’s second pair of actions describes what he planned to say, first to Saul, then to David. Once again, David would have to trust that Jonathan planned to *tell* him everything that he needed to know to survive.

*What Do You Think?*

Were you to attempt to mediate a reconciliation, what tactics would you consider to be off-limits? Why?

*Digging Deeper*

What Scripture passages can you cite to support your answer?

**II. The Intercession**

**(1 SAMUEL 19:4–5)**

**A. Exemplary Record (vv. 4–5b)**

**4a. Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, “Let not the king do wrong to his servant David;**

Jonathan’s intercession with *Saul* leaves the reader to assume that *David* had already done what *Jonathan* required. Once again, Saul’s position as Jonathan’s *father* is emphasized. This brings to mind the complicated responsibilities Jonathan had toward him. The expression *let not the king*, in third person, is more polite than a bald command, “Do not!” Jonathan’s address of his father as king may be designed to calm Saul’s insecurity over his kingship.

We also recall that resisting kings was dangerous. In the Law of Moses, before the existence of kings in Israel, disobeying priests and judges was punishable by death ([Deuteronomy 17:12–13](#)). This practice extended to kings in Israel in that they had power over life and death of their subjects (example: [1 Kings 2:23–25](#)), as did kings in the surrounding nations ([Daniel 3:13–15](#)).

However, Jonathan’s address also reminded the king that he had a duty to God not to *do wrong* against others. Although “might makes right” seems to have been the rule throughout history, God’s people are to be different. We live by standards given by the Lord, not rules determined by people. For this reason, Saul did not have the moral authority to have David killed. That would go against God’s injunctions about killing innocent people, which even the king is meant to obey and uphold.

David is identified as Saul’s *servant*. By the use of this term, Jonathan describes

David as a faithful member of Saul’s court just like the attendants of verse 1.

#### *What Do You Think?*

Under what circumstances should one wait to be asked to mediate a reconciliation rather than taking personal initiative in doing so?

#### *Digging Deeper*

How does God’s taking the initiative to reconcile us to himself (described in [2 Corinthians 5:18–20](#)) help shape your answer?

**4b. “he has not wronged you, and what he has done has benefited you greatly.**

Again, *has not wronged you* means David had done nothing to bring harm to Saul. In fact, David was committed to supporting the king as the anointed of the Lord, even though Saul was seeking David’s life (compare [1 Samuel 26:9–11](#); [2 Samuel 1:14](#)). What David *has done* that *has benefited* Saul *greatly* refers to all the noble acts David had done in service to King Saul. These included not just military service (see commentary on [1 Samuel 19:5a](#), next) but also playing the harp to soothe Saul in his times of distress ([16:16–23](#)).

**5a. “He took his life in his hands when he killed the Philistine. The LORD won a great victory for all Israel,**

David had risked his own life for Saul in killing *the Philistine* Goliath ([1 Samuel 17](#)). Though everyone else in the army had been too afraid to confront the giant, David had

trusted in the Lord's protection and his intention to defeat the Philistines. Because of his faith in God, David was able to brave Goliath's threats and use the skills learned as a shepherd to defeat and kill Israel's fearsome enemy.

The result *the Lord* had granted *Israel* through David was nothing less than *a great victory* over an oppressive foe, the Philistines (1 Samuel 17:52–53). Jonathan mentioned only the military deeds of David. Those and other victories were the cause of David's popularity (18:5–7), which in turn was the cause of Saul's deadly jealousy and plan to execute David. For that reason, reminding Saul that David's popularity was a result of his service to the king could soothe the king's feeling that he had been usurped.

**5b. “and you saw it and were glad.**

Then Jonathan pointed out Saul's eyewitness status and reaction at the defeat of Goliath. Saul had appreciated David's service not only at that time (1 Samuel 17:50–58), but also when David played the harp to comfort him in his affliction (16:14–23).

### B. Rhetorical Question (v. 5c)

**5c. “Why then would you do wrong to an innocent man like David by killing him for no reason?”**

Jonathan concluded his argument by returning to his beginning exhortation (1 Samuel 19:4a, above), couching it as a rhetorical question. Such a question is designed to make a point rather than seek information. The answer here was obvious to the king: he

should not kill *David* because then the king himself would become guilty and deserving of death (Deuteronomy 19:10–13).

Calling David *an innocent man* refers specifically to David's manner of living: David had acted faithfully as a servant in the court of Saul. David had never given Saul a *reason* for Saul's anger and retribution.

### UNLIKELY FRIENDSHIP

My youngest son always struggled with his need to be popular, often getting in trouble at school for related issues. One day when he was in eighth grade, he came home from school with a note. This time he had been suspended for fighting. I felt deflated. We had just moved to a new town, and I was really hoping for a fresh start.

However, when he told me more, a glimmer of parental pride crept in. He had come across a crowd of people surrounding two students who were fighting, and the one who was substantially bigger had the other in a headlock. As the bigger boy pummeled the smaller one, my son had jumped in and (admittedly roughly) pulled the bigger kid off the smaller one.

Despite the suspension, I was proud of my son. Months later, he came home with an invitation to the rescued student's birthday party. To this day, they are fast friends. That is something of a reverse, mirror-image of 1 Samuel 19. There the friendship came first and the rescue followed. God rescued us while we were his enemies (Romans 5:10). Realizing that, under what conditions would

you be willing to stand up for him at the risk of losing relationships, job, or even life?

—P. L. M.

### III. The Aftermath

(1 SAMUEL 19:6–7)

#### A. Vow (v. 6)

**6. Saul listened to Jonathan and took this oath: “As surely as the LORD lives, David will not be put to death.”**

Jonathan’s argument had the desired effect. *Listened to* means to heed; that is, both to hear and to act in accordance with what was said (example: [Genesis 21:12](#)). Similarly, the exodus from Egypt was initiated because God not only listened to but acted on the groaning of the children of Israel ([Exodus 2:24–25](#)).

Jonathan’s intervention thus culminated in Saul’s taking an *oath* that *David would not be put to death*. Taking an oath or making a vow is equivalent to making a covenant ([Deuteronomy 4:31](#)). It is quite to Saul’s credit that he relented from his own call for David’s execution. Although Saul had a history of rebellion against the Lord (example: [1 Samuel 15:17–23](#)), in this case he honored God by heeding wise counsel and choosing not to sin against David.

The Lord expected the king to keep his vow ([Numbers 30:2](#); see also [Matthew 5:33–37](#)). [Deuteronomy 23:21–23](#) declares that vows must be kept, while [Ecclesiastes 5:4–6](#) reminds the reader that breaking a vow angers the Lord. By swearing that David

will live, Saul bound himself to do all in his power to protect David.

#### *What Do You Think?*

In what situations should one discontinue mediation attempts should those attempts be met with hostility and rejection?

#### *Digging Deeper*

How do [1 Samuel 20:18–33](#) and [Acts 7:23–29](#) help frame your response?

### THE UNBREAKABLE VOW

I had a friend who had been married a long time. Her husband was a God-loving man who took care of her and their family. But for various reasons my friend had spent years building up resentment against him.

One day she said she intended to leave him. How could I tell her I wouldn’t support this decision because it was *wrong*? I prayed silently as she poured out her heart. And then I blurted out, “What if it were cancer?”

She looked at me blankly. I asked, “Would you leave him then?” Of course she wouldn’t, she said. “Why not?” I pressed her. She broke down as it dawned on her: she had vowed to be with him not just in sickness and health but in bad times as well as good. Breaking this vow would mean sinning against her husband *and* God.

Jonathan cautioned the same to Saul. Thankfully, just like my friend, Saul saw reason and realized his mistake. The choice is for us too: Will we honor our vows to honor God?



## B. Reconciliation (v. 7)

**7. So Jonathan called David and told him the whole conversation. He brought him to Saul, and David was with Saul as before.**

*David* emerged from his prearranged hiding place after hearing Jonathan's call. As promised (see [1 Samuel 19:3](#)), *Jonathan* reported to David everything that had happened. This would have included especially Saul's change of heart and his vow not to put David to death.

For David to return to Saul's *presence* indicates that David believed Jonathan completely and no longer had any fear that Saul would try to kill him. The result of all of Jonathan's efforts was that David resumed his place in Saul's court *as before*. This phrase calls back to mind how well David and Saul had worked together initially. The reader is left to wonder, in view of Saul's past behavior toward David, how long this peace will be observed.

### *What Do You Think?*

In what situations should estranged parties be left to work out reconciliation on their own rather than be encouraged to use a mediator?

### *Digging Deeper*

How is Christ's service as a mediator ([Hebrews 8:6](#); etc.) helpful in answering this question, if at all? Why?

## Conclusion

### A. Roles People Play

The three characters in this story illustrate positions people find themselves in today. Saul was a person in power who was abusing his position in doing wrong toward another. David, of lower status, was the innocent victim of that wrath. Jonathan was the one who risked sharing that wrath by standing up for the victim. He cared for both the wrongdoer and the wronged as he sought to end the conflict by reconciling them.

Doing wrong and suffering wrong can lead to conflict. Hurt feelings can break relationships and end communication. Differences in status, such as employer-employee or parent-child, can make restoring relationships difficult. The one in power finds it difficult to admit wrong. The one of lower status does not feel safe to confront the enraged offender. At these times, restoration is practically impossible without an intermediary.

At various times of conflict, we may find ourselves in any of the three roles. The boss who is rankled by the exceptional skill of an employee may feel threatened, becoming bitterly jealous in the process. Perhaps such a boss will belittle the employee or make sure that promotions or raises are not offered. The boss's subordinate might be puzzled and feel wronged for trying to give the best effort. Someone who genuinely cares for both the boss and employee, and whom both parties trust, may be in a position to reconcile those in conflict.

Finally, it must be emphasized that Jonathan, the peacemaker, was not the offender's peer; Jonathan was subordinate to Saul both as a son and as a subject of the king. Jonathan's brave and respectful challenge of his own father and king serves as a model for us in handling conflict.

### B. Prayer

Heavenly Father, show us opportunities to reconcile strife. Grant us courage to act and wisdom in speech. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

### C. Thought to Remember

Peacemakers seek to turn others away from sinning.

## INVOLVEMENT LEARNING

*Enhance your lesson with NIV Bible Student (from your curriculum supplier) and the reproducible activity page (at [www.standardlesson.com](http://www.standardlesson.com) or in the back of the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary Deluxe Edition).*

### Into the Lesson

Have the following quote, from an internet blog, written on the board as learners arrive:

One of the most profound lessons I learned long ago was the difference between a peace-lover and a peace-

maker.... Peace-lovers stand idly by while evil is doing its perfect work.... [They] want everything to just be OK without their input.

Pose the following questions for discussion: 1—Why is it harder to be a peacemaker than a peace lover? 2—What risks do peacemakers take?

*Alternative.* Distribute to pairs of learners handouts (you prepare) on which are written the following: "Discuss the circumstances of a time you tried to help resolve a serious conflict between two people (no names!) and how it turned out."

After several minutes ask who has a story that ended well. After one or two such stories, call for stories that did not end well.

After either activity say, "Being able to mediate a dispute successfully is something we can all learn. Let's see how."

### Into the Word

Ask for three volunteers to share in reading **1 Samuel 19:1–7** aloud. One person will be the narrator, another will read all words spoken by Jonathan, and the third will read the one line spoken by Saul.

Next, divide the class into three groups. Give each group a handout (you prepare) on which is listed the group's name and task as follows. Advise your learners that most questions will require their "sanctified imaginations" to answer, using the text as a foundation, rather than finding the answer directly in the text.

**Better-Action Group:** 1—What would

have been a more fitting action on the part of Saul toward David instead of plotting to kill him? Why? 2—If Saul had followed through and killed David, in what ways would it have damaged his own reputation and moral authority to be king?

**Worse-Action Group:** 1—In what ways (note the plural) might Jonathan have benefited from David’s death? 2—What risks (again, note the plural) did Jonathan take by interceding on David’s behalf?

**God-Pleasing Action Group:** In what ways (note the plural) are Jonathan’s actions similar to those in [Acts 4:18–20](#) and [5:29](#)?

Allow time for groups to share their conclusions in whole-class discussion. As each group does so, encourage the other two groups to challenge and improve on the conclusions being presented.

*Alternative.* Distribute to small groups copies of the “What Could Go Wrong?” exercise from the activity page, which you can download, for learners to complete as indicated. This poses similar questions to the above, but with all groups having identical assignments.

## Into Life

Distribute on handouts (you prepare) the following scenarios to the groups formed above. Include these instructions: “Select one scenario and propose either a way to mediate or why not to get involved, considering [Proverbs 26:17](#).”

A—Two of your siblings are angry with each

other and haven’t spoken in years. You want to invite both to your daughter’s wedding.

B—Two coworkers have expressed different ideas for the future of your department, becoming antagonists in the process. You are friends with both, but you think one proposal is better.

C—Your child has had a falling out with a friend. You consider approaching the other child’s parents about the situation.

*Alternative.* Distribute copies of the “Loyalty and Intercession” exercise from the activity page for learners to complete individually as indicated. Since this will take more than a minute, it is best used as a take-home activity.

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To print the reproducible activity page, simply click the highlighted text below to create a pdf file on your hard drive. Then open the pdf file in Acrobat Reader and print.

[Activity Page \(October 4: Love that Intercedes\)](#)

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