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COMMUNITY BIBLE STUDY

Thursday, July 28, 2011

7:00PM

STUDY OUTLINE #054

Theme: COVENANT RELATIONSHIP: The Price, The Purpose & The Power

Text: Genesis 9:11-12, Gen.15:18-21, Psalm 133, John 13:34-35, Romans 13:9-14, 1John 3:14-17

Words in Marble: "...the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. 2 Saul took him that day, and would not let him go home to his father's house anymore. 3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. 4 And Jonathan took off the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt." 1 Samuel 18:1b-4

Today marks the beginning of our journey into a new series on Covenant Relationship. Going down memory lane on previous topics, it is very clear that relationship has been instrumental and pivotal to the successes and impact recorded by key actors in God's move. Nehemiah's success is predicated on the strength of his relationship- vertically with God and horizontally with men. Covenant relationships as expressed in Genesis 9:11-12, Genesis 15:18-21, 1 Samuel 18:3, Psalm 133, Romans 12:10, Hebrews 13:1 and other related scriptures remain God's conduit for executing His kingdom agenda on planet earth.

The strength and power support of any nation, community, family or ministry is directly proportional to the strength of its relational base. Communal life is a complex profile of inter-relationships that are either bonding or falling apart. If one shall chase a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight (Deut. 32:30) then our strength lies in our unity. Lev 26:8 also affirms this stand: "Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you."

Our unity is our strength! Remember "...Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falls." Luke 11:17-18. How can 2 walk together outside of agreement? (Amos 3:3) Surely "...if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven." (Matthew 18:19)

Before we delve into further details on covenant relationship it is important to mention that **there are four types of relationships in life**: casual, corporate, commitment and covenant. **Casual relationships** are simply sitting next to someone on a bus or waiting in line at the store. No depth, no commitment! **Corporate relationships** are exactly that...it's the people you work with, your neighbors, etc. **Commitment level relationships** are those that express a higher degree of friendship, affinity and community. **Covenant relationships** are much different.

WHAT IS COVENANT RELATIONSHIP?

Firstly, it is important to note that a covenant is a solemn agreement that is binding on all parties involved. It could also be defined as an interpersonal framework of trust, responsibilities, and benefits with broad application to almost every human relationship from personal friendship to international trade agreements.

In Scriptures, covenant is also the most comprehensive concept covering an individual's relationship to God.

Thus, **a covenant relationship is one in which there is unconditional acceptance, loyalty and**

COVENANT RELATIONSHIP: The Price, The Purpose & The Power *(Continued)*

commitment to one another. It is a mutually consented union between either God and man (vertically) or man with man (horizontally). It is the fulfillment of Jesus' words in John 13:35, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." In the book of Acts, it was the quality of life and fellowship that caused the world to look in and say, "Behold, how they love one another." (Acts 1:14, Acts 2:1)

A covenant relationship is on a more intimate level than an ordinary friendship. This relationship implies that whatever we have is available to our covenant brothers and sisters. This is a promise we can only make to a limited number of people. While we can only make this covenant commitment to a few people, through it we receive strength to minister to the world.

There are also four types of covenant relationships in life that can be classified into two:

- 1. Vertical:** The relationship between God and His people.
- 2. Horizontal:** i) The relationship between a husband and a wife,
ii) The relationship between a parent and a child. and iii) The relationship between the closest of friends like David and Jonathan. A person will only have a few of this last covenant relationship in a lifetime...it's your bosom friend, the person you think to call in a time of need.

In the next study we shall proceed to look at the ingredients and subsequently the price of developing covenant relationships.

Prayer: Lord make us one as you are one. Give us grace to appreciate we are one in you and walk in same understanding.