



Welcome

SERIES: IT'S PERSONAL

Message: Character

Dr. Lance Watson, Senior Pastor

PRAYER: Gracious God, we thank You that You do not look at our outward appearance, but You look straight at our hearts. Forgive us for the times we have prioritized our image over our integrity. Give us the courage of Jonathan to stand up for what is right, even when it costs us our comfort. Build in us a character that is resilient, a love that is steady, and a spirit that reflects Your truth to a broken world. In Jesus' name, Amen.

ICEBREAKER: If your current life or relationship status were a phone app, would it be running smoothly, frozen on a loading screen, or desperately in need of an update?

INTRODUCTION: True relationship success isn't about maintaining a polished reputation, but about cultivating deep, internal character—the kind that remains rock-solid when life hits a crisis. Through the biblical example of Jonathan, who chose integrity and covenant loyalty over royal ambition and family dysfunction, we see that character is ultimately a personal responsibility that cannot be blamed on our environment or our past. When we choose the harder *right* over the easier *wrong* in the dark, we build the "eulogy virtues" that offer true emotional safety and resilience to the people we love. It's your choice—it's personal.

BIBLE STUDY: Read 1 Samuel 20:1-4 (NIV): Then David fled from Naioth at Ramah and went to Jonathan and asked, "What have I done? What is my crime? How have I wronged your father, that he is trying to kill me?"² "Never!" Jonathan replied. "You are not going to die! Look, my father doesn't do anything, great or small, without letting me know. Why would he hide this from me? It isn't so!"³ But David took an oath and said, "Your father knows very well that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said to himself, 'Jonathan must not know this or he will be grieved.' Yet as surely as the Lord lives and as you live, there is only a step between me and death."⁴ Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you want me to do, I'll do for you."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. **What was your biggest takeaway from the message?** What's one thing you learned? What questions came to mind as you listened to the message? What points did you find most insightful?
2. In the sermon, we talked about how society is obsessed with our "user interface"—the pristine, filtered image we present to the world. In what areas of your life (work, social media, family) do you feel the greatest pressure to manage your *reputation* rather than work on your *character*? What is one practical step you can take this week to drop the filter and be more authentic in your closest relationship?
3. The nineteenth-century evangelist Dwight L. Moody famously said, "*Character is what a man is in the dark.*" Think about your regular routines. What is a "small" or mundane choice you face when no one else is watching (e.g., how you speak about others who aren't in the room, keeping extra change, shortcuts at work) that actually acts as a building block for your character? How can this group help keep you accountable in those hidden moments?

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4. Jonathan grew up in a highly toxic palace under King Saul, yet he made a personal choice not to let his father's dysfunction dictate his own integrity. It is incredibly easy to blame our relational shortcomings on our upbringing, our stressful environments, or the behavior of our partners. Where are you currently tempted to play the "blame game" instead of taking personal responsibility for your character? How does realizing that character is an "inside job" change your perspective on that situation?
5. The sermon emphasized that people of character bring emotional safety into a room. When David was fleeing for his life, he was anchored by the knowledge that Jonathan's word was solid gold. Who is someone in your life who has been a "Jonathan" for you—a rock of reliability when you were going through a storm? More importantly, who in your current circle needs you to be that safe, reliable anchor right now, and how can you demonstrate that commitment to them this week?

CHALLENGE: Looking at your own life right now, in which of your closest relationships are you currently prioritizing looking good over actually doing the hard, hidden work of being good?

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Take this time to share group announcements. Announcements can be found at www.myspbc.org. You can also “find, follow and like” our Facebook page at facebook.com/myspbc. Turn on your notifications. Remember to subscribe to our YouTube channel!

CELEBRATIONS: Take this time to share praise reports (e.g. answered prayers, birthdays, anniversaries, promotions).

PRAYER REQUESTS & PRAYER: Take this time to share prayer requests. Close with prayer.

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We Care!

NOTICE: As a small group leader, we depend on you to show members that we care. Here's a list of resources to help you.

FOR PRAYER:

CALL: 804.463.2472

EMAIL: prayer@myspbc.org.

FOR COUNSELING:

CALL: 804.643.6177

EMAIL: care@myspbc.org

TO REQUEST A HOSPITAL VISIT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (For Emergencies)

EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST FUNERAL SUPPORT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (Pastor On Call)

EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO FIND A SUPPORT GROUP:

CALL: 804.643.6177

EMAIL: care@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE:

CALL: 804.643.4000

EMAIL: emergencyassistance@myspbc.org.

TO CONTACT MY LIFE STAGE PASTOR: CALL: 804.643.4000 and Press 1 for the Dial by Name Directory

EMAIL:

- Imagination (0-10): Vernita Williams: Vernita.Williams@myspbc.org
- SMB (11-19): Martina Jones-Smith: Martina.Jones-Smith@myspbc.org
- Dreamchasers (20-29): Juan Shackelford: juan.shackelford@myspbc.org
- Aspire (30-39): Lance Watson, Jr.: lance.watsonjr@myspbc.org
- Fusion (40-49): Michelle Townsend: michelle.townsend@myspbc.org
- Encore (50-59): Lisa Johnson: lisa.johnson@myspbc.org.
- Prime Time (60-69): Maceo Freeman: maceo.freeman@myspbc.org
- Refiners (70+): Roscoe Jones: roscoe.jones@myspbc.org

*GPS is a study guide based on the weekend message. The purpose of this guide is to assist small groups in study.
Previous GPS Guides are available online at www.myspbc.org.*



Small Group Leader Guide

Would you like to START or JOIN a Small Group at Saint Paul's?

Most existing groups are open to new group members, and new groups begin on a regular basis. If you have friends in a small group, ask about joining their group. If you are new to Saint Paul's and are looking for a place to connect, please feel free to contact us and we will do our best to help you find the right group.

Leader Tips:

The GPS document is a guide for discussion. Don't feel like you must use every question. Some questions will take a while to work through while others will be over in a few seconds!

1. Don't teach the lesson. The lesson was taught on the weekend. Just ask questions and let everyone else talk.
2. Let other people ask questions. It's OK to go "off topic" for a while. Sometimes those conversations are more interesting anyway!
3. Have fun. Relationships, not curriculum, are the heartbeat of our small groups. So, have fun with the people in your group.

Agenda for a Small Group Gathering

Gathering Time

Take 5-10 minutes to welcome everyone, catch up and if planned, share some food!

Discussion Time

Here's a suggested format:

1. **Ice Breaker** – Lighthearted icebreaker question (5-10 min.)
2. **Discussion** - Discussion time, Bible study, application challenge (30-40 min.)
3. **Prayer** – Prayer requests and praying for one another (10-20 min.)
4. **Planning** – Remind the group of how we serve together (e.g. usher, sing, greet, pray, etc.)