

The Role Of Friendship In Character Development: Lessons From The Biblical Story Of David And Jonathan

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ABSTRACT

Amidst the complexities of modern life, the role of friendship in character development is becoming increasingly important. The presence of true friends not only provides emotional support, but also serves as a mirror for self-knowledge. This study aims to explore the role of friendship in character development based on the story of David and Jonathan in the Bible. A qualitative approach with case studies is used to analyze narratives that are relevant to the friendship between the two characters. The results of the study show that deep friendship has a major positive influence in shaping individual character. Loyalty, emotional support, and inspiration from true friends lay a solid foundation for the development of strong and meaningful character. The story of Daud and Jonathan emphasizes the importance of friendship values in facing life's challenges, forming self-identities, and achieving full potential. This research also underscores the relevance of friendship values in modern life, inviting us to build supportive and inspiring friendships in order to build quality and integrity characters. The findings in this study provide insight into how friendship can be a crucial aspect in shaping human character and provide inspiration for individuals to develop meaningful social relationships in everyday society.

1. INTRODUCTION

Humans are social creatures who live in relationships. That is, humans always need the presence of other humans. The word "friendship" becomes interesting when we try to look at it in the context of today's world. Rapid technological advances, not only cause the rapid flow of information, but also the emergence of various social media that connect humans with each other. Humans who live today have felt the impact of technological advances with the existence of social media. Social media is a place for many people to make friends with other people they already know even with people from other parts of the world. (Susanta, 2018) Friendship has been an integral part of human life from ancient times to the present. Friendships reflect the social bonds that underlie the sense of affection, trust, and support between the individuals involved. Friendly relationships are not just social interactions, but also have a profound impact in shaping a person's character and personality.

The development of technology from time to time has a negative impact on the association so that it does not heed positive solidarity. Solidarity affairs are indeed more dominant in men than women. The sense of one's fate makes them do anything. There is nothing wrong with friendship, as long as it does not cause evil. A person's character can be seen from who his best friends are. Because basically their habits are not much different. But in friendship must choose exactly the right person who is good and does not plunge into dangerous things. (Palinoan, 2020)

Friendship is a relationship that describes the behavior of cooperation and mutual support between two or more social entities. In Greek, Friendship is *Philos* which means beloved friend. Friends are people who exhibit reciprocating and reflective behavior. Yet for many people, friendship is often nothing more than the belief that someone or something will not harm or hurt them. Their tastes are usually similar and may meet each other, and they enjoy the activities they enjoy. They will also engage in mutually helpful behaviors, such as exchanging advice and helping each other in difficulties. Friendship is a personal relationship, and not just any contact between two people as in an employment relationship (although friendship may arise because of mutual work) or in a trade relationship (to obtain material benefits together or individually). (Barus, 2020)

The Bible also gives the same picture of man as a social creature in living his life, gaining meaning, and living God's desired purpose (Gen. 1:26). This means that the need for friends is an absolute necessity and cannot be avoided from the consequences of humans as social beings. The most obvious and easily legible sign of the nature of man as a social creature is the demand from within man himself to always communicate and relate with other humans. (Manurung, 2021)

Amidst the complexities of modern life, the role of friendship in character development is becoming increasingly important. The presence of true friends not only provides emotional support, but also becomes a mirror to recognize yourself. One inspiring example of friendship found in biblical scripture is the story of David and Jonathan. The story of David and Jonathan's friendship offers a valuable lesson about how powerful the positive influence of friendship can be in individual character development. Jonathan's sincerity, loyalty, and support played an important role in shaping David's remarkable character as a leader and hero. Their friendship became a symbol of togetherness that overcame all obstacles and tests.

Through this research, we intend to explore more deeply the role of friendship in character development based on the biblical story of David and Jonathan. Researchers will unearth valuable lessons from their relationships that can be applied in everyday life. The main objective of this research is to provide a deeper understanding of how friendships can shape a person's character, inspire, and empower individuals to reach their full potential.

This research will use a qualitative approach by analyzing the narrative about David and Jonathan in the Bible. The resulting data will be analyzed thematically to identify the friendship values underlying the development of characters in the story. The results of this study are expected to contribute to our understanding of the power of friendship in shaping character and personality, as well as inspiring individuals in forging positive and meaningful social relationships. Through an in-depth exploration of the role of friendship in character development by taking examples from the story of David and Jonathan in the Bible, it is hoped that this research can provide new insights into how valuable friendship relationships are in forming people with noble character.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Friendly relations are ideally one of the places to meet human needs as dynamic social creatures. In essence, humans need interaction among humans to meet practical needs in their daily lives, moving from these needs create a variety of interaction relationships that are bound in a community group, and one of them is friendly relations. Man realizes himself as a separate individual, and at the same time also realizes that his happiness depends on being with others, such as in his family, partner, and friends. This is a form of naturalness because basically the need to relate or live together is one of the five basic human needs (the need to relate; transcendence; recognized identity; interconnected; framework of orientation and devotion) that must be fulfilled. (Firdaus, Riyadh Ma'arif, et al., 2022)

Friendship comes from the word friend which according to the Big Dictionary Indonesian has several meanings, namely intimate, close, and thick. (Arti Kata Sahabat - Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) Online, n.d.) Friends are people who can be looked up to and trusted. Sometimes one cannot share secrets with one's parents, so one can share one's secrets with a best friend. Friendship is a good and necessary thing. Human beings need someone to share joys and sorrows. Humans need friends or companions to get support and share with each other. Friends are people who exhibit reciprocating and reflective behavior. While the definition of true friendship according to the Bible is faithfulness or faithfulness of friends, in other words solidarity. Proverbs 17:17 says that a friend is not only a friend but one who loves at all times and is a brother in trouble.

We can be faithful friends and we should have faithful friends too. True friendship is a friendship that cannot be separated from anything. Many of us find friendship just because of a state of joy, but when we are grieving that friend leaves us. (Palinoan, 2020) Friends are also the ones who save you from loneliness. Getting a true friend who can understand your every situation, both happy and sad is a gift. (Padang & Agustina, 2020)

Forms of friendship have different motivations. *First*, the motivation of friendship at the level of enjoyment and pleasure. People are friendly because they are attracted to the value of pleasure and beauty. The person explores and explores the halls of his life just for the sake of momentary pleasure and happiness. The relationship with his best friend is not constant and tends to change. *Second*, the motivation for friendship at the level of benefit lies in the aspect of usefulness (utility). People are friendly because friendship is beneficial and useful to themselves. This means that friendships are built only on benefit or usefulness. Once a person feels that he or she has nothing more to benefit from the bond, the friendship ends. This happens because this type of friendship lies in the value of usefulness and benefit. Such friendships become very vulnerable and fragile. *Third*, the last and highest motivation of friendship is ethical kindness as a sign of perfection in life. (Susanta, 2018)

3. METHODOLOGY

This research will use a qualitative approach with a case study approach, (Sugiyono, 2005, p. 1) as the primary method of exploring the role of friendship in character development based on the biblical account of David and Jonathan. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to understand the phenomenon of friendship and character development in depth, as well as explore the values and meanings contained in the story. Participants will focus on the narrative of David and Jonathan found in the Bible. Analysis will be conducted of stories that tell of the friendship and interaction between David and Jonathan.

The main source of data in this study is the biblical text which includes narratives about David and Jonathan. Secondary sources such as books, articles, or theological sources will also be used to provide additional context and interpretation. Data will be collected through analysis of Bible texts relevant to the story of David and Jonathan. Data collection will be carried out using literature study methods that include reading, understanding, and identifying quotes and narratives relevant to the research topic. The collected data will be analysed thematically. Researchers will identify the friendship values underlying character development in the story of David and Jonathan. Analysis will involve the process of organizing, grouping, and interpreting data to unearth relevant patterns and findings. Qualitative research methods with a case study approach will be used to explore the role of friendship in character development based on the biblical story of David and Jonathan. Through thematic analysis, this research is expected to provide new insights into how valuable friendly relationships are in forming noble and inspiring characters.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Friendship

A friendship with high quality is characterized by high levels of helpful, intimate and other positive behaviors, as well as low levels of conflict, competition and other negative behaviors. A study shows that the quality of friendships affects success in social interactions with peers. The quality of friendship also has a direct influence in influencing attitudes and behavior because with high quality friendship can reduce shyness and self-isolation. (Rahmat, 2014) People who have a higher quality of friendship tend to have high subjective vitality as well. (Sandjojo, 2017)

The Bible provides valuable lessons on character development, this is because the power of God's Word is tremendous, transforming and strengthening a person's life. The instructions for life in the Bible have always been relevant to human life from the past to the present. (Sinaga, Sagala, et al., 2021a) Here are some of the roles friendship plays in character development that can be learned from the story of David and Jonathan:

Support and Trust

Friendship is a relationship where two people spend time together, interact in various situations, and also provide emotional support. (Sovitriana et al., 2021) In their friendship, David and Jonathan supported and trusted each other. They provide each other with moral and emotional support, and trust each other's abilities and potential. In character development, having supportive and trusting friends can provide strength and

motivation. David and Jonathan's friendship shows how these two friends strengthened and edified each other. When David was weak, Jonathan would come and encourage David to trust God's promise in his life (1 Sam. 23:16). Vice versa, when David became king, He remembered the friendly relationship David had established with Jonathan and treated (strengthened) Jonathan's son Mephibosheth as his son and brought Mephibosheth to the king's court.(Manurung, 2021)

Trust in friendship is related to interpersonal trust. This means that the quality of friendships is determined by the trust formed in long-term interactions between individuals. In other words, perceived trust reflects the frequency and quality of one's current relationships with others.(Arafah et al., 2019) Trust is a dynamic phenomenon that occurs intrinsically in a natural state, where trust is a matter of mental problems based on a person's situation and social context, for example when a person makes a decision, he will prefer decisions based on the choices of people he can trust more than those he trusts less. To be able to believe, one would expect a sense of responsibility, believing that they would behave in trustworthy ways. A person will expect that the person he wants to trust will understand his expectations and know how to overcome his limitations, therefore the most essential thing about trust is openness.(Rahmat, 2014)

Willingness to Help

In their friendship, David and Jonathan were ready to help each other. They give each other support and assistance in difficult situations. Mutual help and care for friends are important values in character development. The values of friendship are mutual understanding between individuals, understanding everything that is liked, hated, needed (understanding), elements that form a sense of friendship that requires each individual to trust each other and entrust anything between friends (belief), the sense of each individual willing to help each other in doing something to achieve the same goal.(Julia et al., 2021) The challenge of life today is a lack of love, not caring for others only thinking about one's own interests. For this reason, it is important to cultivate a character of loving others that encourages mutual care and help.(Sinaga, Sagala, et al., 2021b)

Willing to Sacrifice

The story of David and Jonathan's friendship illustrates a true friendship that involved sacrifice, even life (1 Sam. 20:30-34).(Barus, 2020) What Jonathan did for his friendship with David is a very clear example of this principle of self-sacrifice, how Jonathan made sacrifices because his friendship with David had to be willingly hated by his father, king Saul was even thrown with a spear at one point by his father. It was not enough to stop there, even Jonathan's sacrifice was also in terms of providing political support to David to become the next king even though Jonathan himself was the crown prince who according to the custom of the time should be king.(Manurung, 2021)

Many people are willing to do good, but not many people are willing to do it to sacrifice, especially at the risk of losing their lives.(Sinaga, Lusiana Sinambela, et al., 2022) The principle that must be present in building friendship relationships is an attitude of self-sacrifice which should also be the lifestyle of believers. This self-sacrificing attitude cannot be possessed by a person if the person does not dare to deny himself. Denying in this sense is eroding selfishness and the willingness to bear the burden of losing something maybe even something very valuable, because it is inevitable that sacrifice means we lose something that perhaps we want most.(Manurung, 2021)

Loyalty

People who are loyal in character, are always trustworthy and reliable, but finding and being loyal people is very difficult. (Janes Sinaga et al., 2021) David and Jonathan's friendship was marked by strong loyalty. (Primardi, 2021). They are committed to supporting and protecting each other. Loyalty is an important value in character development, as it indicates the integrity and reliability of a person. David and Jonathan's friendship was based on strong faithfulness. They are committed to supporting and protecting each other. This affects their character to become more loyal and reliable.

One of the factors that support the achievement of the goals of life together is loyalty. Be faithful to what has become a mutual agreement. Stick to what is said. that loyalty is a person who is firm, obedient to the covenant or decision of the result of mutual deliberation, obedient to parents, family, tribe and nation, and not easily persuaded by other people or property. (Sulastri, 2019) Loyalty is the element forming the combination of humans who maintain and strengthen community members in achieving goals.(Reynalt Junior Laoh, 2019)

Positive Influence

Good friendships can have a positive influence on character development. (*Apa Yang Dapat Kita Pelajari Dari Kehidupan Daud?*, n.d.) In the story of David and Jonathan, they influence each other to be better. They inspire and encourage each other to reach their full potential. Healthy and positive friendships can help a person grow and develop into a better person.

Equality

In David and Jonathan's friendship, they respected and respected each other despite their different backgrounds. (Primardi, 2021) Strong friendships are based on equality and mutual respect. Appreciating differences and treating friends fairly are important aspects of character development.

Friendship in character development

Our character is the result of all our thoughts. (Sinaga et al., 2023) If the character is well formed, then the results of future life will be better. (Sinaga, Lucky tinenti, et al., 2022) In this case, moral or religious formation is very important. (Sinaga, 2023) Testimonies of truth are acted out by characters in the Bible, and these can be stories that build Christian faith and character throughout the ages. (Lusiana Sinambela et al., 2022) David and Jonathan's friendship had a great influence on their character development. Here are some of the ways their friendship affects their character:

Boosts Self-Confidence

David and Jonathan's friendship provided moral and emotional support for each other. In the Bible story, David often felt insecure and fearful because he was being pursued by Saul. However, the friendship with Jonathan gives confidence and motivation to keep going. Self-esteem is one of the fundamental needs for humans, self-esteem contributes significantly to the process of life, especially for mental health so that it has the power to live life. One factor that affects self-esteem is the quality of friendship, individuals who have friendship qualities or can establish good friendships will gain life experience, success and increased self-esteem, (Putra, 2022, p. 19)

Self-confidence is also seen from how a person can further develop his abilities, can interact socially well with the surrounding environment, and how a person has a positive view of himself. A confident person always balances between how to get along, tolerate, be positive and personal abilities. (Daulay, 2019) Trust plays an important role in a relationship. Trust grows when there is an associative relationship, mutual trust will give birth to a good and maintained relationship and provide positive benefits. (Taherong et al., 2022)

Increase Empathy

David and Jonathan's friendship taught them to understand and feel each other's feelings. They respect and respect each other's differences, and help each other in difficult situations. This affects their character to become more empathetic and caring towards others. The word empathy is used to express a wide range of experiences. Researchers generally define empathy as the ability to sense the abilities of others, as well as the ability to imagine what others might feel or think. (Sovitriana et al., 2021) Empathy is a psychological process that allows individuals to understand the intentions of others, predict their behavior and experience emotions triggered by their emotions, individuals as if entering within others so as to understand situations and emotional conditions from the perspective of others. (Fauziah, 2014)

Increase Independence

David and Jonathan's friendship taught them to be self-reliant and responsible for their actions. They support each other and give advice, but at the end of the day, they have to make their own decisions. This affects their character to become more independent and responsible. Self-reliance in character education refers to an individual's ability to think and act freely. Here are some things that can be done to build the character of independence: develop decision-making skills, create situations that build independence, utilize assignment strategies, teach self-reflection, encourage the desire to compete. (Sinaga, Woran, et al., 2021)

Friendship Influencing Decisions

David and Jonathan's friendship influenced David's decision to face Saul in the following ways:

Honoring the Agreement

In their friendship, David and Jonathan made a covenant to protect each other.(Asali, n.d.) This influenced David's decision not to kill Saul, even though he had the opportunity to do so. This decision was influenced by David and Jonathan's friendship, as they had made a pact to protect each other. David honored the covenant and did not want to break it.

Respecting Family

David and Jonathan's friendship also influenced David's decision not to kill Saul's former king line.(*Daud Dan Yonatan - Profilbaru.Com*, n.d.) David valued Jonathan's family and did not want to kill Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, who became Saul's heir. Valuing each other is more about being people themselves than the benefits of friendship. Although indeed from this friendship obtained various secondary benefits, but actually the emergence of friendship originates and likes each other and maintains each other's relationships. It is not to whether the person is profitable or not, so in friendship if one has an element of exploitation, then usually dissolve the friendship.(Fauziah, 2014)

Avoiding Conflict

David and Jonathan's friendship also influenced David's decision to avoid conflict with Saul. David knew that Jonathan loved his father and did not want to upset him. Therefore, David chose to avoid conflict with Saul and his family. From the story of David and Jonathan, we can learn that good friendships can influence a person's decisions in life. Friendships based on loyalty, respect, and appreciation can help a person make wise and responsible decisions. Most friendships have the potential for conflict, caused by a mismatch between personal expectations and reality in their best friend. Friendship shows togetherness, in this case there will be mutual support so that each other judges positively. This will change the way something bad looks at friends, so it tends to avoid conflict. (Firdaus, Ma'arif, et al., 2022)

5. CONCLUSION

From research on the role of friendship in character development based on the story of David and Jonathan in the Bible, it can be concluded that deep friendship has a great positive impact on the formation of individual character. The story of David and Jonathan underscores the importance of sincerity, faithfulness, and emotional support in friendly relationships that can inspire and shape good personalities. Friendships like these also help individuals understand their identity and increase their sense of confidence to reach their full potential. Although the story takes place in a different historical context, the values of friendship contained in it remain relevant in modern life, becoming an important pillar in shaping human character with integrity and inspiring others.

The research also shows that positive and inspiring friendships can provide important emotional support in dealing with life's challenges. Deep friendship, as exemplified by David and Jonathan, can exert a positive influence that motivates and encourages individuals to achieve their life goals. In addition, the study confirms that friendships can provide individuals with a strong identity and values, helping them understand their values and life goals more clearly. The results of this study are relevant in the context of modern life, considering the importance of establishing good friendly relations and mutual support in forming quality human characters and beneficial to the surrounding community.

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