

Fellowship: Enjoying Your Forever Family

Lauren Scruggs was living her dream at the age of 23 having recently launched the online fashion journal *Lolo Magazine*. She was also praising God that her parents remarried after being divorced for seven years. On December 3, 2011, Lauren's life was upended after stepping off a plane and walking into the propeller.

Lauren lost an eye and her left hand, telling her story in *Still Lolo*. Her mom, dad, and sister all write chapters, focusing on how her church family and other believers came alongside Lauren as she healed from this tragedy. Thank God for our "forever family"!

True Fellowship Is Built On Four Unusual Pillars:

1. A _____ (Father), Not A _____ (Fad)
 - a. *"After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself...And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God."* (I Samuel 18:1; 23:16).
 - b. When we share a common Father, there is a bond that enables us to be "one in spirit". David and Jonathan had such a bond. *"I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women."* II Samuel 1:26.

2. _____ (Faithful), Not _____ (Fickle)
 - a. *"Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow, and his belt."* I Samuel 18:4. Prince Jonathan was symbolically handing his robe of succession to David. He relinquished his crown, a decision he repeatedly reaffirmed to David.
 - b. In any other kingdom, David, the rising star, and Jonathan, the crown prince, would have been rivals. But Jonathan knew that his father, King Saul, had been rejected by God and David had been anointed as the next king (I Samuel 15-16). Jonathan accepted the reality of his father's rejection and the Lord's choice of a new dynasty. He was faithful on every level.

3. _____ (Fire-tested), Not _____ (Flighty)
 - a. *"Don't be afraid. My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father Saul knows this."* I Samuel 23:17. Bible scholars estimate that King Saul chased David in the wilderness for eight years. He commanded Jonathan to kill David, but Jonathan refused, obeying God rather than man (I Samuel 19:1; Acts 5:29).
 - b. Being "flighty" is to be "lacking in stability of steadiness". Jonathan was firm and resolute in his support for David even though this was constantly tested.

4. _____(Forever), Not _____(Fleeting)
- a. Three covenants are made between Jonathan and David (I Samuel 18:3, 20:16, and 23:18). Each time their commitment to each other is strengthened. The first covenant is made after David's battle with Goliath, the second after Saul tries to kill David, and the third after Saul's obsession to kill David consumes him.
 - b. Through each covenant, God spoke to David through Jonathan, assuring him that God was with him, and that God's promises would be fulfilled to David in due course.

Have you ever had a friend like Jonathan? Lauren Scruggs and her family experienced the blessings of true fellowship repeatedly. Her dad's best friend is a dermatologist who brought encouragement at key moments. Bethany Hamilton, who also lost an arm (story told in *Soul Surfer*), brought assurance to Lauren as she shared her experiences of recovering from a shark attack.

We all experience trials where we wrestle with feelings of regret, self-pity, and anger toward God. During these dark days, no one can cheer you on like another follower of Christ! Invest in your fellow believers – cheer them on, build them up, and encourage them. Be the friend that you will need during your times of trial!