

# Loyal Friendship

## "The Kite Runner" - Leader's Guide

### **Supplies:**

- "The Kite Runner" on DVD
- Paper and Pens for each attendee (for closing activity)
- Afghan or Indian Instrumental Music (optional)
- Closing Song (see below for suggestions)
- Copies of Supplemental Resources
- Bibles

### **Lesson Introduction:**

Loyal friendships are vital in the body of Christ. How do we maintain deep friendships when we feel betrayed, hurt, neglected, or discouraged by others? Let's discuss what the bible has to say about developing and maintaining deep and loyal friendships with one another. We will use the film, *"The Kite Runner,"* as a backdrop for our discussion.

### **Opening Activity:**

Go around the room and have everyone introduce themselves and answer:

1. What makes you a good friend?
2. What does the word "loyalty" mean?

### **Movie Introduction:**

In *"The Kite Runner"* two childhood best friends are forever torn apart as their country is ravaged by endless war and bitter strife. As children, Amir and Hassan were inseparable; their long days under azure Kabul skies often spent getting into innocent mischief or preparing for the highly anticipated kite-fighting tournament. When the day of the tournament arrives, however, a glorious victory is quickly offset by a timorous act of betrayal that ultimately serves as the catalyst for catastrophe. Not long after that fateful day, Amir moves away to America, leaving his old friend behind just as the ominous specter of war turns tragically tangible. Two decades later, Amir returns to Afghanistan to find his beloved homeland has now fallen under the iron-fisted rule of the Taliban. Still, all hope for redemption hasn't been lost just yet, because now that Amir stands face to face with the irrepressible secrets that he struggled so vigilantly to bury, he will receive one last chance to make peace with the past, and lay the groundwork for a brighter future.

### **David & Jonathan:**

Refer to Supplemental Resources and read through the recap of the story of David and Jonathan. This story comes begins in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 15 and continues through the rest of the book.

*Read:* 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 20:16-17

So Jonathan made a solemn pact with David, saying, "May the Lord destroy all your enemies!" And Jonathan made David reaffirm his vow of friendship again, for Jonathan loved David as he loved himself.

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## **First Movie Clip:**

Amir & Hassan waiting for the kite to fall [5:19-7:30] *2mins 11 secs*

## **Friendship Defined:**

Refer to Supplemental Resources and read the definitions of friendship.

*Ask:* What is wrong with these definitions/with this word?

-anything can be considered a friendship; without context friendship is empty

## **Second Movie Clip:**

Amir & Hassan at the movies; Bumping into Assef [12:24-15:17] *2mins 58 secs*

## **Loyalty Defined:**

Refer to Supplemental Resources and read the definitions of loyal.

*Ask:* Do you think David & Jonathan’s relationship was a loyal friendship? Why?

What about Amir & Hassan?

*Ask:* What does a loyal friendship look like?

-commitment and striving to love unconditionally

*Ask:* What challenges our loyal friendships?

-*inequality* (in the case of the film with Amir being born into the Pashtun/elite class and Hassan born into the Hazara/servant class or in the case of the GLBT vs. Straight church)

-*drama* (i.e. difficult situations, frustrating circumstances as in the case of David & Jonathan or in the case of breakups, family problems, financial strife)

-*betrayal* (in the case of the film with the following scene)

-*the influence of others* (in the case of the film with the following scene and in the case of our lives with peer pressure and the interactions/relationships of others)

## **Third Movie Clip:**

The kite competition and the rape scene [22:08-33:08] *10mins*

(Please warn the attendees that the next scenes can be disturbing and is definitely a plot spoiler for the rest of the film)

*Ask:* How much truth is there in Assef’s accusatory speech?

*Ask:* Amir knew his father would be doubly proud if he brought home the loser’s blue kite in addition to winning the contest. How does Amir’s relationship with his father influence his behavior?

## **Jesus Speaks About Loyal Friendship:**

In John 13-15, Jesus is speaking with the 12 disciples the same night he is to be betrayed. He

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washes their feet, speaks about the Holy Spirit, and so much other great stuff. In chapter 15 he shares with them how much he loves them

*Read:* John 15:9-15 (MSG)

I've loved you the way my Father has loved me. Make yourselves at home in my love. If you keep my commands, you'll remain intimately at home in my love. That's what I've done—kept my Father's commands and made myself at home in his love. I've told you these things for a purpose: that my joy might be your joy, and your joy wholly mature. This is my command: Love one another the way I loved you. This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends. You are my friends when you do the things I command you. I'm no longer calling you servants because servants don't understand what their master is thinking and planning. No, I've named you friends because I've let you in on everything I've heard from the Father.

*Ask:* Judas was in the room listening to this speech and even speaks to Jesus in the previous chapter. Was Jesus speaking to Judas? Was he willing to lay down his life for Judas fully knowing that Judas would betray him?

*Ask:* We don't often have to lay down our life for our friends in 2009. What do we have to "lay down"? What does our sacrifice look like?

### **Fourth Movie Clip:**

Amir & Baba discussing Hassan and Amir, Hassan, at pomegranate tree [35:40-37:35] 1min 55secs

*Ask:* Remember that we determined that loyalty is measured by commitment and striving to love unconditionally. With that in mind why do you think Hassan did not throw a pomegranate at Amir? Why did he insist on hitting himself with one?

*Ask:* What does "commitment and striving to love unconditionally" look like in our daily lives? In our church?

### **Paul's Teaching on Loyal Friendship:**

Refer to Supplemental Resources and read Philippians 2:1-11. Paul uses Christ as an example to define loyal friendship as:

1. Agreeing with each other
2. Helping others get ahead
3. Fostering unity

*Real-world Scenario 1:* You are having dinner with someone and they begin to blast a mutual friend. How do you remain loyal to both friends (the one at the table and the one being blasted) using Paul's instructions?

*Real-world Scenario 2:* You confided in your friend and shared something very personal that was supposed to stay between the two of you. Next week someone else confronts

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you with this personal information (that they were not supposed to know). How do you remain loyal to your friend (who shared your secrets) using Paul's teaching?

### **Fifth Movie Clip:**

Advance the story in the movie by briefly explaining what takes place between our last clip and the next clip that is about to be shown.

Amir reads Hassan's Letter [123:56-125:53] *1min 57secs*

*Ask:* What role does forgiveness play in maintaining loyal friendships? Forgiving those who have broken the loyalty? Forgiving yourself for breaking loyalty?

-it is the catalyst for starting a fresh; it is what makes the principles we have discussed from Philippians work

### **Jesus Teaches About Forgiveness:**

Refer to Supplemental Resources and read Matthew 6:14-15.

*Ask:* Why do these verses compel us to forgive, even when it means forgiving those who have wounded us deeply?

-while some may see this as purely saying "God will not forgive you if you don't forgive others/yourself" there is some depth behind that. Forgiveness isn't effective if you do not understand it. Forgiveness is far more than saying "I am sorry." It is that clean slate that we spoke about earlier. The power of forgiveness (of a fresh chance to be loyal and to strive to love unconditionally) is the understanding and acceptance of it. God's forgiveness in your life means nothing if you don't forgive others.

### **Ruth - Timeless Example of Loyal Friendship:**

Refer to Supplemental Resources and read the section entitled "Ruth – In a Nutshell" to provide background and context for the discussion. Ruth's loyalty to Naomi was not required of her nor was it demanded. It was the perfect example of what we have been speaking about throughout this study. According to Paul's teachings, Ruth wanted to be in agreement with Naomi, genuinely wanted to see Naomi be cared for, and fostered unity with her mother-in-law.

Refer to Supplemental Resources and read Ruth 1:16-18.

### **Closing Thought:**

To maintain loyal friendships it must be our commitment to the other person that nothing "but death can separate us." And when something attempts to separate us, be it inequality, drama, sin, misunderstandings, etc we must continue striving towards loving unconditionally by allowing forgiveness to give us the fresh start and renewed commitment we need.

### **Closing Activity:**

Pass out paper and pens to each attendee.

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*Say:* In closing, we are going to listen to song that speaks about the importance of loyal friendships in our lives and in our church. As you listen to the song spend some time in prayer and reflection as we let what we have discussed tonight. Use the paper to write down any thoughts you have that you want to keep with you after you leave this place today. While the song plays, please keep the room as quiet and focused as possible.

*Play:* (song suggestions)

I Need You To Survive – Hezekiah Walker

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pjr5CjhyddA>

I'll Be Your Friend – Michael W. Smith

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWFt\\_64\\_jOO](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWFt_64_jOO)

## **Closing Prayer:**

Have someone close in prayer.

*After the study please encourage anyone who can to stay  
and view "The Kite Runner" in its entirety.*