

Love Community Baptist Church

Wednesday Night Virtual Bible Study

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Part 3 - Building Relationships (Friends)

Are relationships important? I am not just focusing on Marriage or Dating but every relationship you have with others. Should relationships be healthy? Should relationships be cultivated? Should we work to mend, restore and rebuild broken relationships? Let's look at what God says in scripture concerning our relationships with one another:

The Bible ranks healthy relationships as the most important thing in life. A Jewish religious expert asked Jesus (Matt. 22:36), "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied (Matt. 22:37-40):

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

RELATIONSHIPS: FRIEND

Friend: a person whom one knows and with whom one has a bond of mutual affection, typically exclusive of sexual or family relations.

In 1984 the group Whodini released a song entitled "Friends" The chorus goes like this: Friends...How many of us have them? Friends...ones we can depend on. Let's be friends!

The Lord Jesus Christ gave us the definition of a true friend: "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you" (John 15:13-15). Jesus is the pure example of a true friend, for He laid down His life for His "friends." What is more, anyone may become His friend by trusting in Him as his personal savior, being born again and receiving new life in Him.

There is an example of true friendship between David and Saul's son Jonathan, who, in spite of his father Saul's pursuit of David and attempts to kill him, stood by his friend. You will find that story in 1 Samuel chapter 18 through chapter 20. Some pertinent passages are 1 Samuel 18:1-4; 19: 4-7; 20:11-17, 41-42.

Proverbs is another good source of wisdom regarding friends. "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity" (Proverbs 17:17). "A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24). **The issue here is that in order to have a friend, one must be a friend.** "Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses" (Proverbs 27:6). "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17).

The principle of friendship is also found in Amos. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3 KJV). Friends are of like mind. The truth that comes from all of this friendship is a relationship that is entered into by individuals, and it is only as good or as close as those individuals choose to make it. Someone said that if you can count your true friends on the fingers of one hand, you are blessed. A friend is one whom you can be yourself with and never fear that he or she will judge you. A friend is someone that you can confide in with complete trust. A friend is someone you respect and that respects you, not based upon worthiness but based upon a likeness of mind.

Finally, the real definition of a true friend comes from the Apostle Paul: "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:7-8). "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:13). Now, that is true friendship!

WHAT CHARACTERISTICS DOES THE BIBLE GIVE REGARDING FRIENDSHIP?

SACRIFICE

1 Samuel 18 - 1. When he finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan became attached to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. 3. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul.

Jonathan gave his robe and armor to David, essentially honoring David above himself and stripping himself of his kingly position (Jonathan's father was King Saul). Later Jonathan stood up for David to his father (1 Samuel 19:1-7). Jonathan risked his life for his friend (1 Samuel 20). God used the friendship to preserve David for the throne.

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

ACCOUNTABILITY

"A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity" (Proverbs 17:17).

"A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24).

"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17).

To Find a Friend, Be a Friend

One thing that separates friends is gossip because he or she "who repeats a matter separates close friends" (Prov 17:9b) but "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity" (Prov 17:17). Clearly friends love us "at all times" which means through the good times and the bad, through success and defeat and brother or sisters (friends) are born for our times of adversity. They celebrate with us in our successes, but they also mourn with us during our losses. It has been said that a sorrow that is shared is halved, but a joy that is shared is doubled. We find it true that a "man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (Prov 18:24).

MUTUALITY

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3 KJV).

Not Friends with the World

James asks us, “Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (James 4:4)? The Apostle John tells us “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:15-17). How can we love the world and claim to love God? If you have close friends who are not saved, then there is the risk that you will be dragged into sin by running with those who are quick to run to evil. It is absolutely true that “Bad company ruins good morals” (1 Cor 15:33). I am not saying that you cannot have friends that are not saved. What I am saying is that your best friends should be those who are believers in Christ.

FORGIVENESS

No friendship can last without forgiveness. “Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends” (Prov. 17:9). This teaches us to be generous in extending the gift of forgiveness to our friends, by covering their offenses.

Let’s examine “covering their offenses” – Friendship does not mean agreeing to things when our friends are wrong.

Friends will not condemn but will not condone.

Types of Relationships that we will be discussing:

Introduction

Family: Mother, Father, Sister, Brother, Children

Spousal: Husband and Wife

Friend

Work: Colleagues

Church: Pastor (Clergy)

Church: Member