

Relationships -Part Three: The Need For Friends

Genesis 2:18 - ¹⁸The Lord God said, “It isn't good for the man to live alone. I will make a suitable partner for him.”

Our first couple of weeks have been spent talking about **our relationship with ourselves...**

All relationships begin with love and respect for ourselves

Today, I want to move into ***our need for friendship.***

From the very beginning we were created for the purpose of relationship.

- **God did not create us to be alone.**

I don't know if you are the type of person **that can do a lot of things alone** or not,

- **It is not fun to go out to eat alone** - can't tell them how good the steak is.
- **It is not fun to play golf alone**, nobody can say nice shot.
- **It is not even fun to go to a concert or a conference alone.**
- And you would **never go on vacation alone.**
- **We were created as social beings.**
- **God created us with this unbelievable ability to affect one another.**
- **We depend upon one another for survival, sustenance and wellbeing.**

We need to have friends. We need the interaction of friendship.

- **God said** it is a good thing **to have friends.**
- It is **not good to be alone.**

*I would like to say it this way... the person who has a lot of friends and a lot of relationships - is **the building block of God's church.***

God had two purposes in creating man...man was to affect and to be affected.

- We affect **God**, and **God affects us.**
- We affect **others**, and **others affect us.**
- **That is all there is.**

You can't affect others by being alone, and vice versa.

- Our need for friendship is as deep as our need for food.
- We can only survive so long without food,
- And ultimately, we can only survive so long without friends.

We need our friends...and our friends need us!

People are lonely today...

- People are looking for true friends...
- This world needs real friends.

Even in the church we need friends.

- Did you know that **we the Church** are one of the greatest groups at showing ourselves friendly,
- But **when it comes to true friendship, we are falling short**.
- We **see one another at church** for an hour or two a week, but for the most part it doesn't go much beyond that.

That should never be.... We need to have close friends in the church!

Jesus was somebody who not only showed Himself friendly, but he had several very close friends.

At least six in my count...

John 11:5 - ⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

- **Mary, Martha, Lazarus** were all very close friends of Jesus.

When Jesus came to the city of Jerusalem,

- He would often stay at the home of this family.
- **They lived in Bethany**, which is only a couple of miles from Jerusalem.
- When Jesus wanted to escape the crowds...
- He would sneak out of town -
- And go to Mary and Martha's house in Bethany.

This was His retreat

- Where **He relaxed** and **renewed Himself** from *the pressures of life*.
- This family ***grew very close to Jesus...***
- It was Lazarus their brother who **Jesus raised from the dead**.

On one occasion, **Jesus stopped by**, and **Mary** chose to sit at Jesus feet, while **Martha** tended to the things of the house.

Martha was upset at Mary *because she was not helping...*

Luke 10:41-42 - ⁴¹ And Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. ⁴² But ***one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part***, which will not be taken away from her.”

Jesus **rebuked** Martha *because* she was *interfering with* what ***the Bible called a needful thing***.

Jesus called it a good part. What was He referring to?

- Jesus was referring to their close friendship with another.
- Mary needed it and Jesus needed it! We need friends!

Jesus had ***three other very close friends...***

Peter, James, and John were **Jesus' disciples**, but *they were also His best friends*.

It was ***these three*** that **Jesus pulled close to himself** when *the going got tough*.

It was ***these three*** that went to **the mount of transfiguration** with Jesus.

- On the mountain, ***they saw the cloud*** that overshadowed Jesus.
- ***They saw His face*** shining bright as the sun.
- ***They saw Him talking*** with Moses and Elijah.

This was a special time for Jesus, and ***He chose to share this time*** with His three closest friends.

In fact, it was **a secret between them...**

Matthew 17:9 - ⁹ On their way down from the mountain, Jesus warned his disciples *not to tell anyone what they had seen until after the Son of Man had been raised from death.*

There are *special times and places* in every person's life *that need to be shared with special people....it is a needed thing!* **AMEN!!!!!!**

Not only do we *need friends*, but *we must be friendly.*

Proverbs 18:24 - ²⁴ A man *who has* friends must himself be friendly, But there is a friend *who* sticks closer than a brother.

We all have close friends, yet beyond these friends *we must show ourselves friendly to everybody!*

Jesus was also *a great example* in this...

- He ate with **publicans**.... remember Zaccheus?
- He ate with **sinners**.
- He communed with **Gentiles**.
- He fellowshipped with **harlots**.
- He befriended **lepers**.

...anybody that ***society would have looked down on***...Jesus befriended.

It wasn't just the down and out...

Jesus also befriended Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, who were both very wealthy, and members of *the prestigious Sanhedrin Council.*

- These men were the elite of the very elite of Israel.
- In fact, **Jesus was buried in** *the Sepulcher of Joseph of Arimathea.*
- **Jesus also befriended** a Centurion of the Roman Army.

These were **not** close friends, yet Jesus was a friend to all!

Because of His friendship, He was able to affect all these men and women, for the sake of the Gospel.

You might call this **networking in today's lingo**, yet Jesus **loved** each one of them.

- **Wherever Jesus went** He showed Himself friendly.
- **Wherever you go...whoever you talk to.** -
 - Grocery store - Gas station - Dry cleaners - Mail man - Garbage man - Co-workers – Neighbors - **You need to show yourself friendly!**
 - That is **the only way** that we are going to **win this city for Jesus**.

I want to **be like Jesus**, don't you?

We need friendship for assistance and strength.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 - The Value of a Friend

⁹Two *are* better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor.

¹⁰For if they fall, **one will lift up his companion. But woe to him *who is alone* when he falls, For *he has* no one to help him up.**

Who is going to be there when you fall?

Who is going to be there when you are sick?

Who is going to be there when you are broke?

We need friendship for counsel

Proverbs 27:9 - ⁹Ointment and perfume delight the heart, And the sweetness of a man's friend *gives delight* by hearty counsel.

How many have found that to be true? Hearty counsel...***from the heart***.

It is **only your closest friends** that will tell you **what they really think**.

- It may not always be wise counsel.
- It may not be what you want to hear.
- But it will be **from the heart**, with love.

We need friendship for both personal and spiritual growth.

Proverbs 27:17 - ¹⁷Just as iron sharpens iron, friends sharpen the minds of each other.

You have also heard this... "***Guilty by association.***"

If you happen to be with somebody who is committing a crime, **chances are you will be charged as well**, even if you feel like you were not involved.

Whether you believe it is right or not, **people judge you according to who you associate with.**

- ***This works both ways***, it works in a negative manner, and it works in a positive manner.
- That is why you want to **choose your friends wisely.**

Solomon said, as iron sharpens iron, so does a man sharpen the countenance of his friend.

Our thinking and our attitude leading into our actions.

Is also known as **the Universal law of attraction.**

This law states that **we attract what we think about...**

- If we focus on the failures and problems that life brings, then **that is what we attract.**
- If we focus on prosperity and health, then **that is what we attract.**

It stands to reason then, **if we attract situations based on our thinking**, then we also **attract people who think like us.**

This works **both ways...**

- If we maintain unhealthy and toxic relationships... **we will start suffering from low self-esteem.**
- **This leads into** destructive thoughts and then actions.
- Until finally **that person's ability to succeed is gone.**

If you start surrounding yourself with people who are loving, positive, and successful... then **your ability to succeed** is dramatically increased.

1 Corinthians 15:33 - ³³ Don't fool yourselves. Bad friends will destroy you.

Be careful of **who your friends are**,

- be careful of **what you talk about**
- And **who you talk about**, and **how you talk about them!**

Are you going to **fly with the eagles**, or are you going to scurry through the brush with the chickens?

Iron sharpens iron. We become who our friends are.

We need to surround ourselves with people that help us succeed both on a personal level and a spiritual level.

Can I get a witness in the house today?

A little earlier I stated that **We Christians** have a hard time **making close friends**.

I want to close by talking about this today...

As Christians we must differentiate between being a friend to the world, and a friend of the world.

First, we need to understand that **we are not of this world...**

1 John 4:4-6 - ⁴You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. ⁵**They are of the world**.

Therefore, they speak *as* of the world, and the world hears them.

⁶**We are of God**. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

- This **doesn't mean** that **we cannot be friends to this world!**

We are not of this world, yet **we are the light** of the world....

Matthew 5:14-16 - ¹⁴**You are the light of the world**. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. ¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

To let our light shine, and for men to see our good works, we must **show ourselves friendly to the world**.

We are called and chosen to be a friend to the world and yet not of the world!

- Being a friend to the world **does not mean we go and party with them.**
- It **doesn't mean** that **we go and sin with them.**

But ***like Jesus*** did, it **does mean** that **we sit down in their house** and **eat dinner with them.** We need to be their friends. That means ***we cannot*** **offend them.**

They might not be your closest and most intimate friends, but you can have close friends, who are sinners, that trust and respect you.

How else will you win them?

CLOSE:

We have to stop being so scared of this world; The Bible says Greater is He that is in you than He that is in the world!

- **Jesus** threw the entire religious community into an uproar **when he sat down and ate with publicans and sinners.**
- Yet, **His only motivation** **was to call them to repentance.**

Mark 2:16-17 - ¹⁶ And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, ***“How is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?”***

¹⁷ When Jesus heard *it*, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ***I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.***”

How can we win our world unless we go out into the world and pull the sinners off the streets?

- **Jesus was never timid** about these things, and ***we should act the same way*** that He acted.

On one occasion ***Paul had to correct himself on this subject....***

Listen, this is important...

1 Corinthians 5:9-11 - ⁹ In my other letter I told you not to have anything to do with immoral people. ¹⁰ But I wasn't talking about the people **of this world.** You would have to leave this world to get away from everyone who is immoral or greedy or who cheats or worships idols. ¹¹ **I was talking about your own people** who are immoral or greedy or worship idols or curse others or get drunk or cheat. Don't even eat with them!

Paul was saying,

I know I wrote to you before about not associating with fornicators....

but I wasn't talking about the fornicators of this world...

look at it, that is what it says...of this world.

Paul was not addressing the unbelievers in this writing.

Paul said, I need to clear this up, so you don't misunderstand me.

- Paul said it is fine to eat with an unbeliever who is a fornicator, or an idolater, or a drunkard, or an extortioner.

We would have to leave this world if we couldn't eat with them.

Paul was not talking about the unbelievers!

Then in verse eleven Paul said, I know that I have already wrote to you on this....

But what I meant was that –

You are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer,

- Yet still fornicates and still cheats, and still gets drunk, and ***still*** worships idols...do not even eat with such people.

In other words, don't associate with hypocrites!

What Paul was saying in this writing was,

- ***if you want to affect a sinner***,
- if you want to ***change the heart of a fornicator***,
- if you want to ***change the thinking of a cheater***,
- if you want to ***see souls added to the Kingdom...***
- Then ***you need to be their friends***.

Praise Team:

Help us God!!!!

If we want to win somebody to Christ....we must be their friend!

If we want to affect people...we must be friendly!