

Group Resource

Sermon Notes – Sunday, March 23, 2014

Love, Sex + Godly Relationships

Message: Godly Friendships

Scripture: Exodus 33:7-23

- I. In this series, we have examined the questions: (1) **What is real love?** (2) **How do we accept and live in God’s perfect and real love?** (3) **How do we reflect God’s love in our actions towards others?** (4) **How intimacy and relationships are intended to be built on the foundation of Godly love.** This week, we examine a core inter-personal relationship – friendships. We answer the question, **“What do healthy friendships look like in the kingdom of God?”**
- II. A friendship is a “close trusting relationship between two people.” Friends are a source of encouragement, sympathy, comfort and support in time of need. While our ultimate dependence is on God, we are still created with a need to connect with other people in our lives.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 12:18¹⁸ But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it.²⁷ All of you together are Christ’s body, and each of you is a part of it.
- III. To understand what healthy friendships look like in the kingdom of God, we must examine:
 - a. How is God a friend to us?
 - b. What kind of friend are we to others?
 - c. What kind of friends do we have around us?
 - d. What people have we considered as friends, that we shouldn’t and what people have we not built relationships with that we should?
- IV. God provides a model for healthy friendships through His relationship with Moses
 - a. Exodus 33 describes how Moses would go to the tent of meeting to commune with God. When we consider that Moses was going before the creator of the universe, it is shocking that the Lord took time to speak with Moses in such a personal way.
 - i. Exodus 33:11 records that **“The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend.”**
 - b. If God calls Moses His friend, what are the alternatives?
 - i. In the New Testament, Jesus shared with the disciples that believers are not considered servants or acquaintances but friends of God.
 - ii. **JOHN 15:15** *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.*
 - c. One of the key distinctions of friendship is that a friend takes time to turn ‘face to face’. In Hebrew, the root word means ‘to turn toward, or approach.’ When we turn towards someone, we honestly share the truth in a loving manner.
- V. From the example of friendship between God and Moses, we can learn **5 Characteristics of Healthy Friendships**
- VI. **1 - Friendships must be cultivated**
 - a. Moses prayed to God: **“¹³If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you.”** Even though Moses was God’s friend, Moses still desired to know God more each day.
 - b. Friends want to know their friends. Knowing someone doesn’t happen overnight – it is cultivated through time spent with each other. As time goes by, each people is learning more about the other.
- VII. **2 - Friends turn toward each other rather than away**
 - a. **GENESIS 33:15** *Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.¹⁶ How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?”¹⁷ And the LORD said to Moses, “I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name.”*
 - b. **Proverbs 17:17** **17** A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.
 - c. When an opportunity to turn away from someone presents itself, a friend turns toward them.

- i. Like first responders who run TOWARDS difficult situations, friends see challenging situations as opportunities.
 - 1. When difficulties arise, friends turn toward others and bring encouragement.
 - 2. When we encounter sadness, friends turn towards each other and bring joy
 - 3. When pain is present, friends turn toward each other and bring healing!
 - 4. When we feel overwhelmed, friends turn towards each other and offer support
 - 5. When we are thinking about the trivial matters of life, friends turn toward each other and empathize with the other's feelings.
- d. One of the most important areas in which friends demonstrate the process of turning towards each other is when we have fallen short or messed up.
 - i. **Proverbs 17:9** He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends. Covering up doesn't mean that we ignore the offense. Rather, covering up seeks restoration rather than shaming our friends.

VIII. 3 - Friends practice mutual sacrifice

- a. *18 Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory." 19 And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 20 But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."*
- b. **John 15:13** ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.
- c. Friendship means that we are investing a part of our life towards another life. We cannot have friendship without a willingness to engage in mutual sacrifice.
- d. Even in the friendship between God and Moses, God was willing to show Moses his goodness because Moses was God's friend.
- e. The Lord also demonstrated that mutual sacrifice doesn't mean that our responsibility in friendship is unlimited. The Lord told Moses that he could not see the Lord's face and live. God did not design friendships as a way of eliminating personal responsibility.

IX. 4 - Friends sharpen and spur each other towards good

- a. Moses asked the Lord, *"13 If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you."*
- b. All of us have areas in which we can grow. A friend helps to sharpen us so that as we grow, we accomplish our goals. **Proverbs 27:17** reminds us, that "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another."
 - i. There is always a risk in the process of sharpening, but a true friend is willing to undertake the relational risk for the sake of seeing God's best accomplished.
- c. To be sharpened by our friends, we need to pay attention to their counsel.
 - i. **Proverbs 27:9** Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel.
 - ii. **Proverbs 27:6** Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.
- d. We must also pay attention to the types of friends that we have, because our friends have the possibility of spurring us towards either good or bad.
 - i. **Proverbs 22:24-25** Do not make friends with a hot-tempered person, do not associate with one easily angered, ²⁵ or you may learn their ways and get yourself ensnared.
 - ii. **1 Corinthians 15:33** Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."
 - iii. We are more likely to grow in the direction of those who are around us.

X. 5 - Friends are reliable

- a. The Lord's reply to Moses was that, *"14 My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."* Because Moses was the Lord's friend, the Lord gave Moses exactly what he asked for and needed. The Lord promised to be with Moses as he journeyed to the promised land.
- b. **Proverbs 20:6** (NLT) - *Many will say they are loyal friends, but who can find one who is truly reliable?*
- c. Reliable friends are steadfast. They are with us in the victories and in the struggles. They help us to accomplish God's best!

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Let's Talk Notes – Sunday, March 23, 2014

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- 1) Who is your best friend? Take a moment to journal the qualities and characteristics of that person. Share with the group some of the most impactful aspects of your relationship with your best friend.
- 2) As you reflect back on last weekend's sermon, what one principle or insight stands out as being particularly helpful, insightful or difficult to grasp? Were you challenged in any area of your personal walk with God?
- 3) God called both Abraham and Moses friends. In the NT, Jesus says that we are friends of God rather than slaves. Often times, we can develop an image of God as an authoritarian ruler rather than a benevolent friend. What does it mean to be a friend of God and how does that impact how you relate to Him on a daily basis? How have you cultivated your friendship with God in the last 5 years?
- 4) **Read** 1 Corinthians 12:12-31. Why should we pursue healthy friendships in our lives? Do you have any past hurts or failures that hinder you from seeking healthy relationships?
- 5) When you evaluate the type of friend that you are to others, choose one characteristic of healthy friendship would you like to improve on? Have you ever misjudged someone or wrote someone off but later found out that you actually get along well with them? Share about that experience.
- 6) **Read** Proverbs 27:17. What does it mean to be sharpened by a friend? What are some of the risks of allowing ourselves to be sharpened? What are some of the benefits of allowing ourselves to be sharpened? Give an example of how someone has helped sharpen you in the last year.
- 7) **Read** Proverbs 22:24-2. What 'ways' have you picked up from your friends.
- 8) Can you identify a healthy friendship at Mars Hill Fellowship that you have begun to cultivate? What do you hope to gain out of the relationship? How can you be a better friend to that person? Commit to one action that you can do in the next 3 weeks to continue to cultivate that relationship.