Christian Friends

Covered thus far:

1. Paul’s relationships with the Thessalonians.

2. Love is an action, not a feeling.

3. Christian dating.

4. (guys only) Iron sharpens iron. Helping one another to become mature.

Today: Friendship.

Friendship is not particular to Christianity, obviously.

But… Friendship is vital to healthy Christianity.

David and Jonathan

1 Sam 19:1-6 Jonathan defends David against Saul.

1 Sam 20: 1-42 Jonathan saves David

2 Sam 1:24-27 David loves Jonathan

David and Jonathan had very different backgrounds. But something drew them together.

What makes for a great friendship?

1. A common bond based on a relationship with God.

2. Something in common. For them it was the military.

3. Shared adventures. We need to do memorable things together.

Hikes, games, road trips, shopping, serving the community, just plain talking.

Prov 27:9 Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart.

Cookies and icecream bring joy to the heart,

And the pleasantness of a friend springs from their heartfelt advice.

Prov 17:17 A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

But what if you do not have any truly close friends? And such abiding friendships are only developed over time.

Proverbs 18:24 One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Do you have such a friend in Christ?

Family relationships are central and important.

But… friendships are at least important.

You are stuck with family.

You choose your friends.

In Christianity we have many “forced” relationships.

We try to love everyone.

But… we do not like everyone.

Do not try to substitute those somewhat shallow and temporary Christian relationships for true, deep, abiding friendship.

Don’t be fooled by the large number of pretty good friends in the church to tell you that you do not need one or two really GREAT friends.

A friend is someone you like…. A lot!

Friendships are super valuable in our Christian life.

It is the antidote to loneliness. There is just something about a chosen relationship, not a blood one.

For me: I am not super good at forming close friendships. In Wisconsin, I formed zero lasting friendships in 7 years! Not good. I repented.

Boulder: Gary Bishop and James Fung-a-Fat

San Diego: Carlos Vedovato, David Jones, Mark Wilkinson, Fisayo Osibodu

Bakersfield: Mike Mackey, Josh Fatheree

Also, Arturo Elizarraras, Gilbert Kimeng, Rolan Monje, Robert Carrillo, David Simmons. Dan Conder, Kedron Jones

I share many adventures in common with each of these guys.

Just this week, I asked Malcom who his friends were. Do you talk to them?

If you struggle to come up with an answer, that is not good.

It is not bad or wrong to have close friends in the world. But… we need to cultivate close friendships in the church. Yes?

Friendship is based on

Being in Christ together.

A common interest.

A matching personality type.

Great experiences.

Time and consistency.

More examples:

Ruth and Naomi:

Ruth 1:11-18 Ruth was devoted to her mother-in-law Naomi and Naomi was devoted to Ruth.

Jesus: Lazarus, Mary and Martha. Martha, Martha… Always spent time at their house.

Paul:

Paul had many ministry partners, but he was truly friends with

Timothy Philippians 2:19-24 1 Timothy 1:1-5.

Seek deep, lasting friendships, and cultivate them.

Don’t settle for semi-close friendships. In a church of 25, there is probably only one or two you will have a GREAT friendship with.

Spend physical time together. Do not apologize. Road trips, hunting, fishing, crafts, cooking, sports, shopping.

Talk on the phone!!!!! (and also text, but the texting does NOT grow a friendship, it can only maintain, at best).

Have a healthy balance of spiritual and fun talk.

Me and Carlos d-times…