

How Should We Develop Biblical Friendships (2) (2022.02. 06 Sabbath school Class)

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Q&A through the rest of "How Should We Develop Biblical Friendships," in the RHB series, "Cultivating Biblical Godliness."

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Okay. So Last week, you remember, we were talking about what? What constitutes a biblical friendship or how to develop those and does anybody.

Remember just quickly what we said was The main example or really the example that we are to follow when it comes to biblical friendships, What was the picture? That was his Mr. Remy The Trinity. Okay, that is correct. So The what the persons of the Trinity. So this week in my, my devotions I've been reading through for some reason.

I know I'm in Luke right now but for some reason I was reading through John, I know it was in my devotions it cross-reference, John. And I found a verse in John chapter 17 verses 21 through 26. Let's see here, 26, which really summarizes what we talked about the relationship that the Trinity has and then it carries it farther, it talks about the relationship that those members of the Godhead and then their relationship to those that are believers.

So let me read this through real quick. Just to start John chapter 17, verse 21, starting with 21 that they may all be one. Just as you Father are in me and I and you that they also may be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me The glory that you have given me.

I have given to them that they may be even one. As we are one, I'm them and you and me that they may become perfectly one so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you love me. Father, I desire that they also whom you have given me.

Maybe with me where I am to see my glory. That you have given me before giving me because you love me before the foundation of the world. Oh righteous Father even though the world does not know you, I know you and those know you who have who have sent me?

I made known to them your name and I will continue to make it known for the know that the love with which you have loved me. May be in them and I and them. So the love of the Father for the Son, the Lord is praying there that that love the Father for the Son.

May also be demonstrated in his love for us. So that is our picture of the basis. Of when we talk about biblical friendships, where that should go for, how that what that should look like now where we stopped last week. Was we stopped the portion in this book where we talked about the relationship of Paul.

And Timothy, Paul being the senior, Timothy Bingus jr. And something, you know, in conversation, we were talking with someone last week. We should never think that necessarily in friendships that. Just because there is a greater and a lesser that they're not equal, you know, a lot of times we we view things that way that that the lesser is the inferior.

I think that's, I don't want to go down this trail, but I think that's where, when I look at those that are in some of the Colts, like the seventh-day Adventist, where they believe that Jesus was not God, They view, because he was humble, He submitted himself to his father that therefore, he was inferior.

It had nothing to do with inferiority. So, anyway, in relationships, there will be times when there's one. That is the greater lesser but that doesn't mean inferiority. Now, Remember when we talked about this with Paul and Timothy that that Timothy was pulls student in Paul taught him. He grounded him in the faith.

He saw how Paul lived and he taught Timmy Timothy to mirror his example. So What type of impact did Paul's life have upon Timothy. What type what type of minimum. Hmm, right? So great that, what That when Paul couldn't go to certain places, who did he send? Timothy, because he was a faithful follower.

Now, the Bible also gives us instructions, we've talked about a lot of positive things as far as with a relationship between Paul and Timothy but who it's got a Bible, that will look up first Corinthians 15:33, 1st Corinthians for 15:33 because this will tell us something of what we should not be involved in in a friendship and they have their Bible there.

Okay. Go ahead do not deceive evil company corrupts good habits, right? So one of the things that shouldn't it not be involved when we're looking to develop biblical relationships. Are those that have evil habits? Because generally what happens in those situations decentralized, common. That's right. You go to the

lowest common denominator, what did we say in last week that the purpose of our relationships while our biblical relationship should be?

What was the primary purpose of that? It was to have what type of effect on us. It's word that starts with an S sanctify. That's right. Our relationships should be such that they have a sanctifying relationship honest. Now, when the other things that it talks about, as we go through the book here is the dearness of a biblical friendship who can read for me, Philippians chapter 2 verses 19 and 20 19 through 22.

So Philippians. Go ahead. Jordan But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly. So that I also may be a good spirit when I learned of your circumstances. Or I have no one else of Kindred Spirit will. And they all see after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.

But you know, his proven word that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father. Okay, so we see the relationship here again reiterated with Paul and Timothy. And we see that the relationship is a relationship. That is based on the harmony of heart and mind, without such harmony.

There can be no intimate friendship which is one reason I'm just going to make this statement. Someone came at me last week and said, can you have these close relationships with an unbeliever? You can have a friendship with an unbeliever but you'll never have the level of friendship and a friendship that is sanctifying to you unless it is with the believer.

So we see that a true biblical. Friendship has a harmony of heart and mind. Okay. If we also here, We have some examples of friendship in the early church, the spirit of the church throughout wrote, the Roman Empire in the centuries, immediately after the death and resurrection of Christ did not negate.

The appreciation of friendship in the biblical model Alongside the crimp Christian emphasis on showing to love to all men and women family, friends, acquaintances and enemies friendship continued to be highly valued. In fact, the emphasis placed on the unity in Christ of all Christians encouraged to high degree of spiritual intimacy, that resemble an even surpass, the intimacy of the Greco-Roman society.

Remember we talked about in the last week, how the Greeks placed, a very high emphasis on friendship, but that was not a friendship that was a biblically based friendship. Then we were given a couple examples of Christian friendship. One is from a gentleman by the name of Gregory Nazareth Nazanians us yet.

Naz Xianas. He lived from 329 to 389, and he was a leading poor century theologian, and he says this about one of his friends In studies in lodgings and discussions. I had him as a companion. We had all things in common but above all it was God. Of course in a mutual desire for higher things that drew us to each other.

As a result. We reach such a such a pitch of confidence that we revealed. The depths of our heart becoming more united in our yearning. Another Another comment about friendship was given by Elred Reeves 110 or 11/10 to 1167. And what he says about friendship is this or biblical friendship is it must begin in Christ continuing Christ and be perfected in Christ So that helps us with our understanding.

Now, moving forward a little bit, we are taking some examples of others that had although what they had to say about friendships from the Word of God and we're moving forward to John Calvin. Sure that's a name. That is familiar to all of you here and he had a friendship with Galami.

Feral is that house pronounced Gil Gilami? Sit closer. Ghulam Farrell, okay? With feral and Pierre Veret over our A They were in the 1500s. And so Calvin talks about his relationship with these men because these were close associates in the beginning of a commentary that Calvin wrote on the book of Titus Calvin says this about the importance of friendship for ministry.

I do not believe that there's ever been such friends who have lived together in such a deep friendship in their everyday style of life in this world. As we have in our ministry, I have served here in my office of pastor with you too. There was never any appearance of evil.

It seems to me that you two. And I were as one person and we have shown through visible witnesses and good authority before men that we have among us. No other understanding of friendship and that which has been dedicated to the name of Christ and has been to this present time of profit to his church, and has no other purpose, but that we may be one in him with us, which goes back to our passage.

We talked about in John, just a little while ago. And so we see, even with John Calvin, the importance of biblical, friendships and then moving more to the modern times. We go to the 19th or the 18th century. We look at a friendship with an ester. S Esther, Edwards Burr.

She was the wife of Aaron Burst senior, not the Aaron Burr, who had the duel with Alexander Hamilton? That was his son, I believe, but it was Aaron, Burr's, senior. He was the president of the College of New Jersey. Anybody know what the College of New Jersey is now called Princeton.

Okay? Just checking out there. And in her diary she has several things to say about friendship. It says, Esther's earnestly sought to know the presence of God in the hustle and bustle of daily life and she did. So she came to appreciate that friends or a divine gift Biblical friendship is a divine gift writing in her diary on January 23rd 1756.

She says that she was convinced that is a great mercy that we have friends. What would this world be without them? Not without them without them. A person who looks upon himself to be friendless must of all creatures. Be miserable in this life 'tis, the life of life and that's true.

If you've ever known any, I'm gonna say loan, Ranger Christians, They're not always very happy people. In fact, just as an aside, I think we have to be careful, especially those of us that are in the home schooling movement. I think it's not here so much, but I've observed, because I have interaction with a lot of homeschoolers around the state that homeschoolers because they wanted to be separate from the public school that sometimes that carries over into other parts of their life and they become very much, very much separatist and no group or anything as good enough for them to be a part of and so it can even creep into biblical the biblical arena.

So, it's very careful that we watch that, but that's one thing I've observed over the years. Also another comment from Another individual Nathaniel Edmonds In referring, to conversations with friends, as one of the best helps to keep up the religion of the soul. Esther Burr, be Judaism means of grace, one of the ways that God, the Holy Spirit, keeps Christians and fellowship with the Savior.

And then a New England, Christian man, by the name of the Nathaniel Edmonds said put it in one of his, he put this in one of his favorite maxims. A man is made by his friends So we see the value in the importance of biblical friendship. Now the art of building biblical friendships, How do we build biblical friendships?

Well, a quote from Jonathan Holmes says, rather than serving the friendship as an Indian itself. Biblical friendship serves to primarily to bring glory to Christ, who brought us into the friendship with the Father. So again what's the purpose of the biblical friendship? What's it supposed to have? What type of effect is it supposed to have in our life sanctifying effect?

Therefore, use a means of grace such as Bible, reading meditation prayer to grow in the knowing your covenant befriending. God and to grow, and to walk with Him, Use a public means of grace, which we're going to do today in the gatherings of the church. Listen learn to see your sins against God in your need for a Savior who died to pay the ransom price for sense and was again to give them eternal life, see grace from God to be experially acquainted with the life of conversion so that may grow in grace from the inside out because the things that are in the heart proceedeth out of the mouth Live for the glory of God, Christ taught us that loving our neighbors is the second greatest commandment, right?

The first is loving the Lord. Our God with all our heart. Who can read for me? Matthew chapter 22 verses 37, through 39. Matthew. 22:37 through 39. Two verses.

Let me have it here.

And we need to have Pastor James. I think we need to have some Bible drills here. Okay, Matthew chapter. 22 verses 37 through 39. Okay. Elizabeth. Go ahead and he said to him, 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 first commandment.

Okay? So what was number one, love. The Lord your God with all your heart. So it's only when we love the Lord with all our heart that we can be prepared to have biblical relationships with our fellow man and have authentic friendship with them. All right. We also, as we went through the book here, we learned that God is sovereign just like, God is sovereign in all things.

God is sovereign in our friendships as well. Now, one of the things that talks in the book here and I'm not going to spend a lot of time with this, you can go back and look. But in the book it talks about there are levels of of friendship that there are four levels starting with what we'd call an acquaintance and ally a companion is a competent and so as we go through we talk about these what a couple things he says here is that one that as you seek to find biblical friendships Again, God is sovereign in those.

But those are not things that just happen overnight. Those are things that God develops in your life and then very few people will ever get into that confident level. You know that one of the comments made in the book was if at the end of your life, you have three to five people and that would probably be hot.

But if you have three to five people that you can say, you have this true, intimate biblical friendship with you are of all men. Those fortunate in that regards. So, also, For many of you in this room, there's one area of biblical friendship that we all have that God has given us in his sovereignty and that we should be working on that.

And sometimes I would say this friendship biblical friendship is sometimes one that gets, maybe not the attention that it should who can tell me what that what particular friendship that is. I'm just guessing. Spouse your spouse, right? Yes. Yes. That should be one. And like I said, that's one of the ones that I think at times we we don't put as much emphasis on or like we should.

So and then, where in in the book here, he talks about. Where do we find these biblical friendships? Where, you know, if you say, okay, I'd like to have a biblical friendship. Where do we go? For those things and Pastor James made a comment last week. He thought the book was a little weak on this, but it does make some mission to of it.

The bottom of page 25, it says contrary to the individualism that is glorified in Western culture which what is Western culture? Western culture is very much of a individualistic. I did it on my own, I pulled up my bootstraps, I used to say, master my own fate, you know, what a lie I believe.

But it says that we realized the Christian life is not designed to be lived in solitude. Real Christianity is not a solitary life but it is one lived in community, In friendships are a part of the communities of the experience of community. And so where does that community? Take place the church, right?

As in the church, we have a lot of individuals. And I think that Again, Mr. Phil was reading a book that I had loaned him a while ago, tile never before in history. And it talks about how the United States involved. But a big part of that was the community of the church and out of that came many, many things that we have lost those things today.

And so, I think one of the things we should be thinking about is as we seek to develop biblical friendships, that are friendship, should really should come from our community in which we live community, being our church community, not necessarily the civil community. So then in conclusion here, as we get into the end, let's see.

Wow. Okay up. They give 10 things that should be practice as you seek to develop a biblical friendship with others and I'm just going to go through those quickly and then I'd like to have just a couple minutes if anybody has any comments or things they'd like to say The one if you want to develop a biblical friendship.

One of the things is you must talk together. In other words you got to have conversation, right? We talked about this last week that texting can be a mode to have conversation but nothing. Nothing surpasses or replaces conversation sitting down with someone? And one of the things as you seek biblical friendships, Not all of them just happen simultaneously.

In other words, both parties may not immediately jump to that conclusion. Sometimes it requires that you initiate that you may have to go and begin to proactively, trying to develop a friendship with someone Our relationships when we do, our talking should be built around godly conversation, doesn't mean that everything we say has to be biblical nature, but our conversation should reflect the things that are in in the Bible.

It says sprinkle your conversation with the salty, truth of God. Malachi 3:16 says, Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another and the Lord hearken and heard it. And the book of remembrance was written before him for them that fared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.

So, as we talk together, we're to think and have conversation and dialogue together. So that's number one. It says in the book too. And we talked about this last week as well. That one of the greatest hindrances to godly conversation. Today is electronic media. I said this last week, I'll say this for our visitors today.

This shocked me. I had to go to a meeting last week and they said that the availability of digital media from the year, 2008 or seven to 2017 increased almost a hundred thousand percent, okay? Which is astonishing, but what was more astonishing was, they said the availability of digital media.

These are things that can touch our lives from 2017 to today. So, what's that? Five years has increased 6.4 million percent. So while this can be a really good thing, It can also be a very bad thing, right? I mean, have you noticed? I don't know. Jim probably sees it.

Some of you might see this but I'll go into manufacturing plants or different businesses now and you can't have a conversation with someone where they're, you know, doing this. It's very distracting Now. Because what do you feel when when somebody's doing this, when they like, you're really not engage with them, are you?

It's really not a priority. Yeah, right. Or you can be right in the middle of the sentence and all of a sudden, the phone goes and they just whip that phone out in front of me So that can be a detriment to our having a biblical relationships. The other thing that's very important and I used to tell my children this all the time because it was true of me.

The second thing is we need to listen together. In other words, developing biblical friendship. It's not just one person talking. And the other person. Listening. It's a mutual listening. Listening is not passive. It has to be active with our eyes ears. And our mind, I used to say, to my sons that God has given you two holes in your head to here, and one hole to speak.

So you should be listening twice as much as you're speaking. I didn't find that new in Bible, but I do think there's biblical precedence for that. So And our listening should be more than just for knowledge are listening. Should be so that we would we might know the person that we're developing the friendship with In Romans 12:15, it says rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep.

So in our friendships, it's not just about all I'm doing this because it's fun but there are times when we will cry and will weep with those that are friends. The other thing it says is we're to serve together. So in other words, we should find ways with our biblical friends to work side by side and it uses the example, just as the heat of battle, fuses individual soldiers until a band of brothers.

I confess to you, I've told my wife is many times, but when I was in the service, the friendships I had even though some of them were not, you know, biblical friendships, but That was very hard to ever find the level those friendships and Charlie might say the same thing.

You just have a bonding. So how much more should that bonding be as brothers in Christ? So we need to serve together again. The gentleman name, Holmes, I figured his first name said, biblical friendship exists when two or more people bound together by common faith in Jesus Christ. Pursue him and his kingdom with intentionality and vulnerability.

All right. And it says a true friend, is someone that you can be playful and serious with it. The same time, The Bible teaches in Ezekiel. There is a time to weep and a time to laugh. Time to cry. No so on and so forth. All right. The other thing it says that we should be doing.

The fifth thing is that we should be thinking together. What do we say last week about when we think together? What sharpened chefs do it? They take two knives and they do Iron sharpens, iron. All right. There must be fellowship in the deepest things of the soul community in the highest thoughts.

Talk about God God's Word and how God appears in glory who can read Proverbs 27:17 for me. 27:17 go. Now, we're not having a Bible drill.

Raise your hand when you get it. All right, Oscar iron sharpened his friend. Okay. All right. So iron sharpens iron. Okay. Another way the sixth thing is being together, you can't have a friendship. If you don't spend time and be with that person, it's because friendship is a personal bond.

It's a shared life. If we want biblical friendship, we must be willing to invest a resource and especially in our world today with all the things that are going on because we're an instant world, I want it now. You know, we have to be willing to take the time to invest a limited resource because we only have 24 hours in a day, which is limited in irreplaceable.

True friendship takes time. It's time to build and into each other's lives that transparency and trust essential to true friendship. When someone is your friend, you don't just get together for the sake of an activity that you enjoy. Your joy is actively. Actively largely comes from doing it with that particular person because he's your friend.

In other words you get together with someone that is a true biblical friend. It's not just for the activity. That's secondary. It's because you want to be with that person. Ah, the other thing, the seventh thing. It talks about is our trust. Trust is the first wreck first requisite for making a friend.

Proverbs 3:11 says, of a virtuous woman that the heart of her husband does trustly safe the safely trust in her. We see this exemplified in the sun's trust in his godly father who appeals to him. My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes. Observe my way. Okay.

And then One of the comments you may remember President Reagan said trust but verify. Well, you got that from the Bible, it's not original. Anyway, when we have a true biblical friendship, There's also something inherent to that friendship, which is called risk. Because when we have a friendship of that nature, we make ourselves vulnerable, we say things, and so every relationship will have risk.

And in order to have a true godly friendship, we must be willing to take that risk because if we're not we can never allow that relationship to develop to the level. That would be pleasing to God. And that would bring us to the highest highest level of intimacy with that friend.

The number eight thing is that we should pray together. And in here, my wife put a little note above above, pray together and she said worship as well. So our worship and prayer together in Christ, we experience the oneness of the Holy Spirit. Remember what we talked about the unity of the Father, the Son, Holy Spirit, and how that translates, we see their unity.

And how that translates to between the believer and and Christ. So we see that example as well. The other thing, this is probably tougher. For those of us that Well consciously, I'd say we know this but many times we don't want to be vulnerable in this regard but it says that we should be willing to repent together.

Proverbs 27, verses 5 through 6 says open. Rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. So the developing and biblical friendship. We have to be willing to repent when we are confronted and also going the other way.

If you're in a, a biblical friendship with someone and there's something that you feel that biblically has been done wrong, we have a duty to confront them lovingly into telling those things. And those things are very very difficult at times, especially in our, in our society. When I'm sure, I mean, throughout the history of the world because of nature of men, but when we have this society, where we put, so in much emphasis on our abilities and then, the last thing is,

That we should hope together and that is the the last thing it talks about from John Bunyan's allegory of the Christian life. Those of you read the Pilgrim's Progress, it says, one of the blessings of Christian friendship is to encourage each other to keep our eyes, fixed on Jesus, and is coming.

And if you've read Pilgrim's progress, you know, as they're going through that journey, that different things happen and at times pilgrim is discouraged, and he's encouraged by the others, and at times, they're discouraging, So that friendship, hopes helps to unify and to strengthen the other Christians. So, I want to read just in conclusion here.

So why is friendship important? And I'm just going to read this last part here. Remember to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lust thereof of Romans 13:14, even in the best of friendships. Christians remain pilgrims. On the way to heaven, We must pass through the night of this world waiting for the coming dawn of the day of glory.

Then we will experience a greater number of death intensity and purity of friendships than we have ever dreamed in this fallen world. So what that's saying is when we when we are with the Lord, any great friendships we had here will be considered tried relative to the friendships. We will have when we're perfectly united with our Lord and Savior and they're in heaven.

Jesus Christ will be our best friend and perfection. Our friendship with him will be rich and full and sin-free and utopia forever. Can't have Utopia here on earth. But in heaven, we can, We cannot expect too much of friendship in that glorious day when he will wish her Usher us into his eternal, our eternal home to be with him forever.

Not only will he continue to treat us perfectly but also we will finally treat him perfectly which is what we have always wanted to be able to do from the time. We were brought into the saving relationship with him owe into bass forever in his smile, feast in his presence and commune with him, heart to heart, no longer having to know him only as through a glass darkly, but at last face to face Hasten the day, Lord Jesus, when this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruption incorruption and we shall ever be with our elder brother.

Our glorious and perfect friend who truly sticks closer to us than any brother here on earth. Amen. All right, we have concluded. Are we? I went three minutes over any comments.

Right. Jim, would you close this in prayer, please?

Probably do. Thank you. Drawing us here and explored today for your mercy. Upon us. My church. That you have one day in seven. We got each other believe, in a bigger lives than consider you consider what you have done for us cars. We contemplate to friends and friendship being good.

Thank you for this lesson, just kind of consider these things right? As you would help us to develop on the this lesson two outcome of days. We may drop in this community seek to serve you hours and others. Sanctification through our creation. We thank you for those who come before you an SD things in Jesus, right? Amen.