

The Friendship Paradigm

To be or not to be!

(Ecclesiastes 4:9-12) “Two people are better than one because together they have a good reward for their hard work. If one falls, the other can help his friend get up. But how tragic it is for the one who is all alone when he falls. There is no one to help him get up. Again, if two people lie down together, they can keep warm, but how can one person keep warm? Though one person may be overpowered by another, two people can resist one opponent.
A triple-braided rope is not easily broken.”

If you ask most people in the world how many friends they have, I’m sure a large number will start including those who follow them on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. Then they might count their co-workers, people at the gym, etc. But, how many of them are just mere acquaintances masquerading as friends? They are shallow relationships that do not go any deeper than barely knowing their names. It also seems that as you get older and have a family, it’s even harder to make new friends- let alone devote time to keep them. Then the most important question of the real friends we have is: “how many are true Biblical friends?” If we can then point out the true God-centered friendships, we must then graduate to: “how exactly does God guide us to handle these divine fellowships?” That will be the focus of this study. We will cut away the fat and get down to the “friendship meat”. In doing so, we will build for ourselves a firm foundation for life and the days ahead.

Warnings

(James 4:4) “Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that the friendship of the world is enmity *with* God? Therefore whoever desires to be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

(2 Corinthians 6:14-18) “Do not be unequally yoked together *with* unbelievers; for what fellowship does righteousness *have* with lawlessness? And what partnership does light *have* with darkness? And what agreement does Christ *have* with Belial? Or what part does a believer *have* with an unbeliever? And what agreement does a temple of God *have* with idols? For you are the temple of *the* living God, as God has said, “I will dwell in them and walk among *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” Therefore come out from among them and be separated, says the Lord, and do not touch the unclean *thing*. And I will receive you and I will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says *the* Lord Almighty.”

(2 Chronicles 19:2) “Jehu asked King Jehoshaphat, “**Why do you help wicked people and love those who hate the LORD?**” The LORD'S anger is directed toward you because you have done this.”

How do you know if you are unequally yoked?

(John 15:14-15) “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master does. But I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.”

- Are they friends with Jesus? Do they obey the Lord?

(Amos 3:3) “Can two walk together unless they are agreed?”

- ✓ Do you both agree that the most important thing is to follow the Lord?
- ✓ Can you both accurately describe your relationship, the point of it, and what it is based upon?

Beware and flee from those who pervert the Gospel!

(Galatians 1:6-9) “I marvel that you so soon are being moved away from Him who called you into the grace of Christ, to another gospel, which is not another, but some are troubling you, and desiring to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from Heaven preach a gospel to you beside what we preached to you, **let him be accursed**. As we said before, and now I say again, If anyone preaches a gospel to you beside what you have received, **let him be accursed.**”

(Romans 16:17-19) “And I exhort you, brothers, to watch those making divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, **and avoid them**. For they who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches *they* deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience reached to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf, but I would have you truly wise *as to good*, and simple toward evil.”

(2 John 1:9-11) “Everyone transgressing and not abiding in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ, he has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, **do not receive him into your house, nor speak a greeting to him**. For he who speaks a greeting to him is partaker of his evil deeds.”

(2 Thessalonians 3:14-15) “If any man doesn’t obey our word in this letter, **note that man**, that you **have no company with him**, to the end that he may be ashamed. Don’t count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”

(1 Corinthians 5:1-13) “Your own members are aware that there is sexual sin going on among them. This kind of sin is not even heard of among unbelievers—a man is actually married to his father's wife. You're being arrogant when you should have been more upset about this. If you had been upset, the man who did this would have been removed from among you. Although I'm not physically present with you, I am with you in spirit. I have already judged the man who did this as though I were present with you. When you have gathered together, I am with you in spirit. Then, in the name of our Lord Jesus, and with his power, hand such a person over to Satan to destroy his corrupt nature so that his spiritual nature may be saved on the day of the Lord. It's not good for you to brag. Don't you know that a little yeast spreads through the whole batch of dough? Remove the old yeast of sin so that you may be a new batch of dough, since you don't actually have the yeast of sin. Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. So we must not celebrate our festival with the old yeast of sin or with the yeast of vice and wickedness. Instead, we must celebrate it with the bread of purity and truth that has no yeast. In my letter to you I told you not to associate with people who continue to commit sexual sins. I didn't tell you that you could not have any contact with unbelievers who commit sexual sins, are greedy, are dishonest, or worship false gods. If that were the case, you would have to leave this world. Now, what I meant was that **you should not associate with people** who call themselves brothers or sisters in the Christian faith but live in sexual sin, are greedy, worship false gods, use abusive language, get drunk, or are dishonest. **Don't even eat with such people**. After all, do I have any business judging those who are outside the Christian faith? Isn't it your business to judge those who are inside? God will judge those who are outside. **Remove that wicked man from among you.**”

The Conduct of Friendship

(Galatians 5:13-15) “For, brothers, you were called to liberty. Only do not use the liberty for an opening to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you are not consumed by one another.”

(Galatians 5:24-26) “But those belonging to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become glory-seeking, provoking one another, envying one another.”

(Ephesians 4:30-32) “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you are sealed until *the* day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and tumult and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.”

(Colossians 3:14-16) “And above all these things *put on* love, which is *the* bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which you also are called in one body, and be thankful. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

Relationships that appear wrong should be avoided!

(1 Thessalonians 5:17-22) “Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this *is* the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophesying. Prove all things, hold fast to the good. **Abstain from every appearance of evil.**”

(Ephesians 5:11) “And **have no fellowship with the unfruitful** works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*.”

(1 Timothy 5:22) “**Do not lay hands quickly on anyone**, neither be partaker of *the* sins of others. Keep yourself pure.” **Don't pray for those in rebellion or promote them to an office in the church.**”

The Benefits of Friends

(Proverbs 27:17) “Iron sharpens iron; so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.”

(Proverbs 17:17) “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for the time of trouble.”

(Proverbs 27:9) “Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.”

(Proverbs 27:5-6) “Open rebuke *is* better than secret love. Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy *are* deceitful.”

(Ecclesiastes 4:9-12) “Two people are better than one because together they have a good reward for their hard work. If one falls, the other can help his friend get up. But how tragic it is for the one who is all alone when he falls. There is no one to help him get up. Again, if two people lie down together, they can keep warm, but how can one person keep warm? Though one person may be overpowered by another, two people can resist one opponent. A triple-braided rope is not easily broken.”

Your Responsibility towards your Friends

(Mark 5:19) “However Jesus did not allow him, but said to him, **Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and has had mercy on you.**”

(3 John 1:14) “But I trust I shall shortly see you, and we shall speak face to face. Peace *be* to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.”

(John 15:12-13) “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

(Hebrews 10:24-25) “And let us consider one another to provoke to love and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”
You are meant to call them near to God.

(1 Thessalonians 5:11) “Therefore comfort one another, and edify one another, even as you also do.” “**Edify**” means- **to build up as you do a house.**

(Colossians 3:12-14) “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender feelings of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another and forgiving yourselves, if anyone has a complaint against any. As Christ forgave you, so also you *do*. And above all these things *put on* love, which is *the* bond of perfectness.” “**Forbear**” means- **to ‘put up with’.** 😊

(Romans 12:9-10) “Be sincere in your love for others. Hate everything that is evil and hold tight to everything that is good. Love each other as brothers and sisters and honor others more than you do yourself.” **We are to prefer each other over ourselves.**

(John 13:34-35) “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. As I have loved you, you should also love one another. By this all shall know that you are My disciples, if you have love toward one another.”

How is this accomplished?

- **(Galatians 6:2)** Bear one another’s burdens, and so you will fulfill the Law of Christ.
- **(1 John 5:2-3)** By this we know that we love the children of God, whenever we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not burdensome.

How To Keep Your Friends

(Hebrews 12:14) “Try to live peacefully with everyone, and try to live holy lives, because if you don't, you will not see the Lord.”

(Romans 12:18) “If it is possible, as much as it is up to you, be at peace with all men.”

(Ephesians 4:26-27) “Be angry, and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the Devil.”

(Proverbs 6:1-3) “My son, *if* you are surety for your friend, *if* you struck your palms with a stranger, you are snared with the words of your mouth, you are taken with the words of your mouth. My son, do this now, and deliver yourself when you have come into the hand of your friend; go, humble yourself and make your friend sure.”

(Proverbs 17:9) “You will keep your friends if you forgive them, but you will lose your friends if you keep talking about what they did wrong.”

Or, said in another way:

(Proverbs 17:9) “He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates friends.”

(Proverbs 27:10) “Never abandon your friend or your father's friend, and don't go to your brother's house in times of trouble. A neighbor who is near is better than a brother who lives far away.”

(Proverbs 27:14) “A friend's loud blessing early in the morning will be thought of as a curse.” *Don't go to a friend's house when it's early.* 😊

(Matthew 5:38-42) “You have heard that it was said, “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” But I say to you, Do not resist evil. But whoever shall strike you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. And to him desiring to sue you, and to take away your tunic, let him have your coat also. And whoever shall compel you to go a mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you, and you shall not turn away from him who would borrow from you.”

(1 Peter 3:9-11) “Don't pay people back with evil for the evil they do to you, or ridicule those who ridicule you. Instead, bless them, because you were called to inherit a blessing. “People who want to live a full life and enjoy good days must keep their tongues from saying evil things, and their lips from speaking deceitful things. They must turn away from evil and do good.” They must seek peace and pursue it.”

-Recap: We have covered that to try to be friends with the world will make **God** our enemy. We have learned that in order to be true friends in **God's** will, those we call friends must be obedient believers in Jesus. In order to be a faithful friend, we must be doing the same. If one side has failed, then you will be unequally yoked. We also covered how to be a friend, how to love your friends, and how to act like Jesus in our friendships. I would say that to have a few Bible-based friends doing it **God's** way is 1000 times better than 100 friends that barely know you or care about **God**. If we have these **God**-centered, faith-filled friendships in our lives, we should count our blessings and give **God** praise. Then, protect and invest into them. Good friends are very hard to find. Treat them like the precious gift they are. Be the friend you want others to be to you. Set the example and be the change you desire in your relationships. Never expect your friends to do for you what you are not willing to do for them. Lastly, your primary responsibility as a friend is to encourage your friends to **LOVE GOD!**