

Chad Hester

Session 2 | Friendship Portrayed in Scripture

“A friend loves at all times,
and a brother is born for adversity. (Proverbs 17:17)

“The dearest friend on earth is a mere shadow compared to Jesus Christ.”
-- *Oswald Chambers*

I. Our Gift in Friendship

- a. God-given new reality for us
 - Our discussion of friendship is different because our reality is different.
 - “Few things could be more unnatural and incomprehensible to the pagan imagination than the willingness of the God who created the universe out of nothing to become a friend of mortals whose lives are a mere breath.” Leland Ryken, et al, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 308.
- b. We're not left to our own wisdom in friendship - the Bible comes to our aid!
 - “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” -- Proverbs 17:17

II. Our Examples of Friendship in the Bible

David & Jonathan (1 Samuel 18 - 2 Samuel 1)

- a. The story of their friendship

- 1 Samuel 18 - 2 Samuel 1
- “Is any pleasure on earth as great as a circle of Christian friends by a good fire?” – C.S Lewis

b. Characteristics of friendship on display

- Depth of friendship
- Loyalty over personal gain
- Staying close in the face of wrongful accusation

Ruth & Naomi (Ruth)

a. The story of their friendship

- Book of Ruth
- “The next best thing to being wise oneself is to live in a circle of those who are.” – C.S Lewis

b. Characteristics of friendship on display

- An inconvenient friendship
- Cross-generational friendship
 - Example of father/son in Proverbs
- Wisdom and guidance for relationships

Daniel & his Friends

a. The story of their friendship

- Daniel 1-3
- “He is your friend who pushes you nearer to God.” – Abraham Kuyper

c. Characteristics of friendship on display

- Mutual care through suffering
- Strengthening each others resolve
 - “Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.” -- Proverbs 27:17
- Praying with and for your friends
 - “Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, *his companions*, and *told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven* concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.” --Daniel 2:17–19

Paul & the Churches

a. The story of their friendship

- Timothy
- Barnabus as a mentor who took a chance on him

- Philemon/Onesimus
 - Paul's longing for the churches
- b. Characteristics of friendship on display
- Genuine care + doctrinal precision
 - "We seek a church culture where it is normal for people to have deep and honest conversations about their spiritual lives. Where people are willing to ask that one last question that, while awkward, saves a brother from a difficult dynamic in his marriage. And where the gospel of grace is an everyday answer to struggle with sin." - Compelling Community, p.171
 - Mentorships are critical for gospel ministry

Jesus & the Disciples

- a. The story of their friendship
- "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." --Mark 10:45
 - "He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything." --Mark 4:34
- b. Characteristics of friendship on display
- Deep friendship isn't always your spiritual equal
 - Friendship looks to serve

Jesus & Sinners

a. The story of our friendship

- “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another.” -- John 15:13–17

b. Characteristics of friendship on display

- Friendship is sacrificial
- Befriending the unlovely
- Friendship is grounded in God’s character
 - “Never were friends so generously provided for, or so signally honoured. ‘There is nobody so rich, so strong, so independent, so well off, so thoroughly provided for, as the person of whom Christ says, ‘This is my friend.’” Bruce Milne, *The Message of John*, 223.

III. Application

- a. Be inspired to cultivate friendships that lead to mutual upbringing and growth.
- b. Be confident that God has a purpose for your role in other people’s lives and in other people’s roles in your own life.