



Choose friends wisely...
part 1.

The Foundry – Palmcroft Baptist Church, Phoenix, AZ

A true friend is the most precious of all possessions and the one we take the least thought about acquiring.
—Francois de La Rochefoucauld

Chat it up!

What is a friend?

What signals friendship status?

Why do guys play their cards close to the vest?

Why do some men seem to have meaningful relationships and others don't?

Three reasons for different levels of friendship:

1. Different perceptions
2. Different needs
3. Macho barrier

Friendship is more than liking someone. It is loving him, and wanting the best for him and helping him grow.

Proverbs 16:28 *A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends*

Proverbs 22:11 *One who loves a pure heart and who speaks with grace will have the king for a friend.*

Our template:

Christ's friendship behavior (e.g. with the disciples) We see in Him and His relationships with His men the standard and substance of what a friend can and should be. Once they figured out who He was, they were transformed themselves and their relationship impacted them in everything they did and everyone they met. They experienced "high performance" friendship.

High performance = High quality

How do you know when you have a high performance friendship? Take this test.

- ✓ Take the opportunity to provide selfless acts on behalf of the other
- ✓ Feel comfortable sharing inner-most thoughts, yet respect the others' private thoughts
- ✓ Trust the other with that which they hold dear
- ✓ Support each other when one falls short or fails, and readily grants forgiveness
- ✓ Appreciate and accept heartfelt constructive criticism
- ✓ Truly celebrate each other's successes without jealousy or envy
- ✓ Sustain the relationship in spite of distance or time
- ✓ Refrain from making or tolerating any disparaging remarks about the other, especially when he's not around.

"few friendships would survive if each one knew what his friend say of him behind his back"
- Blaise Pascal

We make a decision to choose someone as a friend. They don't just happen.

Proverbs 13:20 *He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will be destroyed.*

Friends can have both a positive and negative direction. Peer pressure is powerful, but it does not have to define who we are.

This is why we must know who we are, and what our values and standards are. We must know who those men are who would try to shape our thinking and modify our behavior into what they want us to do and think.

If we do not know who we are, we "cave in" and become someone we don't want to be.

Should we choose only friends who think like we do?

Having friends who believe and think differently than we do is instructive and helpful so our conclusions are better challenged, and probably more balanced and substantive

Should we choose friends who share our beliefs and values?

These can challenge our moral compass if we get off course. Ones who go off course don't have a trusting friend to challenge them or hold them accountable. "Power corrupts. Absolute power corrupts absolutely."

A good friendship litmus test is the ability to give caring, well-intentioned feedback and the ability to receive caring, well-intentioned feedback.

The issue is: Whether our friends are helping us grow, or leading us in an unhealthy direction.

The best friendships develop when both parties are humble enough to realize they have something to learn from each other. These deepen over time because we are willing to listen.

Achieving high performance friends means choosing well.

How did Christ live and act on earth? By grace and truth. One doesn't work without the other. They come as a package.

e.g. parable of the sower. Not all seed scattered grows. Some relationships never grow into friendships. But just as the farmer has to sow seed, so men have to extend themselves to make friends.

Chat it up!

How do you want to be treated by a friend? How does the golden rule apply to friendships?

Read **Philippians 2:6-8** How did Jesus feel about equality?

Read **Philippians 2:3** How should I be thinking about my friends?

Principles for choosing friends:

Are my friends helping me grow, or hindering my spiritual growth?

Sometimes this means I must be willing to cut my losses and "unchoose" some friends.

Do not make friends with a man who loses his temper easily or you might learn his bad habits and get in trouble; if sinners entice you, do not succumb to them...a perverse man stirs up dissension and a gossip turns friends against friends." Proverbs 22:24-25; 1:10 ; 13:20; 16:28

Chat it up!

Share a story about making a good or bad choice in choosing a friend that would be helpful with your group.

Evaluate how well you are doing at "stimulating" your friends to love and good deeds. What could you do differently this week?

Identify someone in your sphere of influence who you could sow a seed of friendship with this week. Share that name with your group and what you might do to initiate a relationship.



Humility and Honesty...
part 2.

The Foundry – Palmcroft Baptist Church, Phoenix, AZ

Humility is the solid foundation of all the virtues—Confucius
Honest is the first chapter in the book of wisdom. —Thomas Jefferson

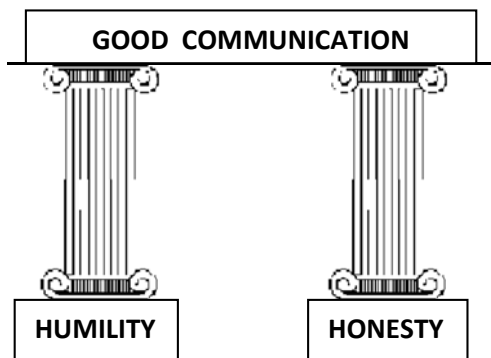
High performance friendships are based on **good communication**.
Good communication is built on a foundation of **humility** and **honesty**.

John 13:1-17; Proverbs 6:16-19; Hebrews 13:18; Col 3:9; Proverbs 11:1; James 4:11-12; Ephesians 4:25; Proverbs 24:28

James 4:6; Phil 2:3-11; Ephesians 4:2; John 3:30

Chat it up!

Why would humility be considered a foundation for all virtues?
How would you say humility and honesty are tied to each other?
What role do you think our strengths and abilities play in communication?
What are the obstacles to honesty you have found in a friendship?



Two key elements of being a good friend are knowing ourselves and growing in Christ-likeness. We each have blind spots. (These can be positive or negative.) This requires friends to be honest with us so we know ourselves in order to respond in a Christ-like manner.

Chat it up!

Self-understanding is necessary to be a good friend. We need to know who we are and what we are about.

Jesus...

He knew who He was.

He wasn't trying to impress anyone.

He was an exemplary friend, and showed us how to be one, too.

He has something to contribute to us.

He does not expect perfection.

High performance friendship does not involve **ulterior motives**. Our motivations must come from a heart to **facilitate growth**, not to gain from, or show up another.

Genuine humility doesn't worry about the other person until we have taken an **honest inventory** of ourselves first. When we know truly who we are, it has an **outward** effect.

Vulnerability is attractive. It's good to be honest about our strengths and weaknesses.

High performance friendships do not **posture** or **brag**. They are not motivated to stomp out the **competition**.

High performance friends do not bring **attention** to themselves.

Chat it up!

Where do men look for affirmation today?

Why do you think many men need to bring attention to themselves?

How could having an honest and humble friend change that?

Do you find it easier to be critically honest about a friend to a third person?

Are there ways we could humble ourselves to "wash the feet" of our friends this week?

"Humility is not thinking less of yourself; it's thinking of yourself less."—Rick Warren



Respect part 3.

The Foundry – Palmcroft Baptist Church, Phoenix, AZ

“Respect is something everyone expects, but few have the willingness to show.”

Romans 13:7 *“Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.”*

Mathew 7:12 *“Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” i.e. the Golden Rule!*

Re-spect (ri-spekt) defined:

Noun. A feeling of deep admiration for someone or something elicited by their abilities, qualities, or achievements.

Verb. Admire (someone or something) deeply, as a result of their abilities, qualities, or achievements.

Synonyms

noun. Regard – esteem- reverence- deference- consideration

verb. Honor – esteem – regard- venerate - revere

High performance friendships **celebrate** when esteem is bestowed on their friends.

Romans 12:15 *“rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another.”*

It means valuing each other’s **point of view**.

James 1:19 *“...let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”*

It means being open to being **wrong**.

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

It means being willing to **coach** a friend’s behavior that is not in his best interest.

Proverbs 27:17 *“As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.”*

Proverbs 28:23 *“He who rebukes a man will find more favor afterward than he who flatters with the tongue.”*

It means **accepting** friends as they are.

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

It means not **'dumping'** on someone just because you're having a bad day.

Proverbs 18:2 *"A fool has no delight in understanding, but in expressing his own heart."*

It means being **polite and kind** always because being kind to a friend is not negotiable.

Ephesians 4:32 *"And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."*

It means not **criticizing** the other, just because they may be different.

Ephesians 5:31 *"Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice."*

It means not **gossiping** about our friends or spreading **lies**.

Proverbs 17:9 *"He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates friends."*

Proverbs 20:19 *"He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with one who flatters with his lips."*

Chat it up!

It's been said "keep your friends close and your enemies closer." What does this mean?

What does it say about our enemies' words and opinions of us?

How are we better served—by a friend or enemy?

Would you rather have people *respect* you or *like* you? How do you demonstrate this?

How do you respond when someone does not agree with you?

Discuss (and list) some key behaviors you feel earn respect in a friendship:

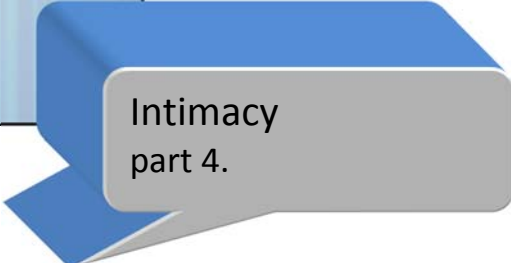
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What would cause you to lose respect for a friend?

How can you do a better job of showing respect to your friends?

This week:

- ✓ Ask a close and honest friend, "Do I show respect to others? How? When? Where and when have you seen me not show respect?"
- ✓ Look for a way to genuinely compliment a friend on a "job well done" this week.



The Foundry – Palmcroft Baptist Church, Phoenix, AZ

Friendship Intimacy- To be close to someone or others; opposite of isolation, or separation from someone or others. An interpersonal relationship that involves emotional intimacy and bonding. Intimate relationships play a central role in the overall human experience and fulfill our universal need of belonging and the need to be cared for.

Why do you think men have trouble achieving intimate friendships with other men?

Intimacy requires **transparency, vulnerability, confidence** and **humility**. Romans 7:15-25

Intimacy requires immense **trust**, and brings a **protective** spirit over things spoken in private. Proverbs 17:9

Intimacy does not hide **fears, dreams** and **weaknesses** 2 Timothy 1:7

Openly admitting our struggles with **temptations** allows us to be more accessible and, ironically, more credible with our friends. If we pretend to be better than we are, it makes it more difficult for our friends to come to us when they have challenges and weaknesses. James 5:16; I Corinthians 10:13; Phil 4:8;

When we are **open**, friends feel safe. I John 1:8-10

Intimacy **uplifts**, not harms. I Cor. 1:4; Proverbs 10:11;

Intimacy is not **static**—it **grows**. Philippians 1:6

Intimacy necessitates **honesty**, regardless of the issue. If we are lying to God, we will lie to ourselves and lose intimacy with Him. If we lie to ourselves, we will lie to others, refusing to let friends 'in' and ultimately not experience intimacy with anyone. Proverbs 11:1; Hebrews 10:24

“No man, for any considerable period, can wear one face to himself, and another to the multitude, without finally getting bewildered as to which may be true.” --Nathaniel Hawthorne

Intimacy provides a **close connection** in a high performance friendship. Ecclesiastes 4:12

Chat it up!

Is emotional intimacy unmasculine? Why or why not?

Read John 11:28-44 and discuss how Jesus interacted with people close to Him

Intimate friendship is deep level friendship.

Read Matthew 26:36-46 and discuss what emotions Peter and two sons of Zebedee may have experienced.

Rate the following hindrances to achieving intimate friendship based on your experiences from the least to most prevalent. Discuss your answers. (1=most, 4=least)

- [] Having a belligerent or argumentative attitude
- [] Always has to be right/subtle (or not) arrogance
- [] Passive aggressive personality
- [] Only comfortable with 'shop talk'

Who do you find you would rather spend time with?

Someone who takes advice or one who is usually giving advice?

Someone open to criticism or usually the 'critic'?

Someone ready to hear another perspective, or 'my mind is made up and I'm not changing!' dude?

Do you naturally 'draw' friends closer to you?

Why do you think this happens?

With how many men would you say you have an intimate friendship based on our discussion today?

If you lack intimate male friendships and want to remedy the situation, what steps could you take this week?

Do you have 'unattended business' to take care of in a broken relationship? What will you do this week?



Support
part 5

The Foundry –

A friend is one who knows you as you are, understand where you have been, accepts who you have become and still gently invites you to grow—William Shakespeare

Support is one of the great gifts of and essentials for high performance friendship.

Defined: To promote the interest or cause of another; to give aid or encouragement; to bear the weight of, especially from below; to uphold or defend as valid or right; to hold into position so as to keep from falling, sinking, yielding, or slipping; to keep from losing courage; to be capable of bearing.

To support a friend is to serve as his **foundation**.

It likely requires **patience** and **tolerance** in a time of trial or affliction. It's not **convenient**.

Galatians 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, **patience**, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*

Ephesians 4:2 Be completely humble and gentle; be **patient, bearing with one another** in love.

To be the one **needing support** is much more difficult. It's hard to **ask** for help.

1 Corinthians 8:2 If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know.

Proverbs 15:32 Whoever ignores instruction despises himself, but he who listens to reproof gains intelligence.

Chat it up!

Support is a two-way street. What would it take in my relationship with another guy to say, "lean on me"? What would it take to cause you to ask for help?

90% of helping is just **showing up**! A true friend walks in when the rest of the world walks out.

Supportive friends have a **goal** in mind. (to get you healthy, to help you not 'go-it-alone', etc.)

Support does *not* mean **giving advice**, **interrupting** when your friend wants to talk, or **judging**.

Support understands and communicates that none of us are **perfect**, but encourages taking next steps in growth.

High performance friends do not give a 'pass' on these statements:

- "That's just the way I am—I can't help myself."
- "I'm not as bad as I used to be. You should have known me before"
- "I can't ever seem to get a break. It's futile. Why even try?"

High performance friends love friends too much to let them get away with destructive **mindsets** and **behaviors**.

They help their friends be more **responsible** and more **truthful**. They are **supportive**, wanting only the best for them.

Examples: Jesus was *looking for support* in the garden, pleading for some human sympathy while facing the biggest trial of his life. Jesus *showed support* for his mother even while hanging on the cross, assigning her care to his high performance friend, John.

Supportive friends:

love us
never compromise the truth
useful for edification and growth
rebuke us, hold us accountable

Friends of 'convenience': (*they like us when it's convenient for them*)

love themselves
always seek to please
useless for edification and growth
give us a pass, rationalize utilizing clichés

KEY: When we truly understand that we live under God's grace as a result of Christ giving His life for us, a fundamental and wonderful shift occurs in our Christian experience. We become inspired to live and share our lives in a manner worthy of Christ.

Christ-like friends, the high performance variety, understand our weaknesses, and challenge us to grow and forgive us when we fail because they understand what Christ has done for them. This provides the motivation necessary for us to be better friends, living up to the quality of friendship we've benefited from by their example.

Chat it up!

Discuss a time when a friend was a "supportive friend" to you. What did they do that exceeded your expectations?

Do you think your friends perceive you as a "supportive friend"? Why?

High performance friends want the best in others and are committed to helping them grow. How do you rank yourself in this area?

- (a) **Awesome, I'm all over it.**
- (b) **Decent. Haven't probably invested the energy/time I could**
- (c) **Low performance. I'm more of a "news, weather and sports" guy.**

If you were to list the top three friends YOU would call if you needed help, would you also make THEIR top three list?



Five LEVELS of
FRIENDSHIP
part 6

The Foundry – Palmcroft Baptist Church, Phoenix, AZ

JESUS IS THE MODEL FOR FRIENDSHIPS

RESPECTFUL TREATMENT DOES NOT EQUAL FRIENDSHIP

“...so He got up from the meal, took off His outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around His waist. ⁵ After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around Him”. John 13:4-5

“As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. ‘What you are about to do, do quickly’ Jesus said to him....” John 13:27

Authentic manhood makes decisions

Authentic manhood does not placate people

Making tough decisions does not justify disrespectful behavior

THE ISSUE OF INTIMACY

“You are My friends (philos) if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends (philos), for everything that I learned from My Father I have made known to you”. John 15:14-15

Friend (philos)—loved or dear; a common commitment of life

Intimacy—no secrets

FIVE LEVELS OF FRIENDSHIP

Level 5—Acquaintance. This is a person whom we really do not know beyond a shallow “Hello, how are you?” But we say the words so often, we actually refer to the person as a friend.

Level 4—Pals. These are people we know and with whom we do things but we do not share; there is no great love or intimacy.

Level 3—Companion. This level is “Shared Activity”. But there is little vulnerability or sharing of fears. Conflict and challenge are avoided. Character growth is not an issue.

Level 2—Genuine friendships. There is a deep affection for and a deep commitment to each other. These friendships can be Christian, but they do not have to be. Men at this level are not afraid to say that they love one another. They strive to help each other grow.

Level 1—High Performance friendships. Becoming conformed to the image of Christ is life’s highest motivation. This is friendship on a Spiritual plane. Friends who help us grow spiritually and into closer conformity to Christ are the most intimate and important friends. At this level we share most deeply, most

intimately and in a way that challenges both sides of the friendship. Jesus is our example as this is how He lived:

- * To Peter...“Get behind Me, Satan” Matthew 16:23
- * Of Lazarus...“Jesus wept” John 11:35
- * To Peter, James and John...“I am overwhelmed with sorrow to ...death. Stay here and keep watch with Me.” Matthew 26:38
- * To Thomas...“Put your hands in Mine” John 20:27

WRAP-UP---Courage

Chat it up!



Trust & Teach
part 7

The Foundry – Palmcroft Baptist Church, Phoenix, AZ

True friends stab you in the front.--unknown

TRUST and **TEACHING** are inseparable constructs to high performance friendships.

Trust pertains to having confidence in the **integrity**, inner **strength** and **ability** of a friend.

“There can be no friendship without confidence, and no confidence without integrity” –Samuel Johnson

Teaching pertains to imparting **wisdom**, **knowledge**, or **skill**.

Proverbs 2:6-8 For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity, guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints.

When trust and teaching are mixed, learning takes place.

Proverbs 9:9 Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.

On a team, it requires the willingness of members to collaboratively teach and learn from each other. There must be a two-way trust to have sustaining value.

Chat it up!

What specific things do you think can stand in the way of learning from each other? Teaching?

We must possess a **“What’s a web page?”** mindset, not afraid to **admit** what we don’t know.

Not all learning experiences are **positives**, but they are **valuable**.

Our **attitude**, **motivation** and **words** should model Jesus’, helping people **improve**.

Considering how our words are **given** and **received** (not just heard) is a mark of a high performance friendship. It’s a two-way street.

Colossians 4:6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer each person.

Avoid **triangulation** at all cost. When we listen to, or participate as a third party, the description of a problem or teaching perspective often gets painted differently. (Genuine friends do not triangulate. It is gossip and does not one any good. It soils the listener, and does not help the one who needs to hear; by repetition, it reinforces a bad habit, and serves no positive purpose.)

Avoid **avoiding**. Don’t spare any **punches**.

Luke 7:36 Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. 7:40 ... “Simon, I have something to say to you.”

Avoid **double-meaning**.

Matthew 5:37 Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

High performance friends are willing to risk **rejection**.

John 1:11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

High performance friends work hard at knowing their **audience**. Timing is everything.

“Empty bellies have no ears” –World Relief Organization

Men learn from men who are **consistent**, **respectable** and show **love**.

High performance friends are honest within themselves to check their own **motives** first.

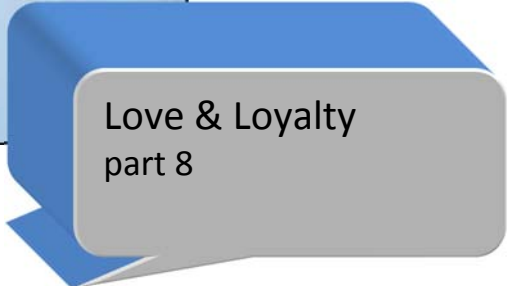
Chat it up!

Why do we often times not trust our friends that they have our ‘best interest’ at heart?

Would you resist a ‘poke’, or welcome it? Why?

Have you ever been guilty of 'triangulating'? What happened? Was the problem taken care of to your satisfaction?

**What action/behavior would it take in your life right now to trust on friends to teach you?
To teach another?**



The Foundry – *Palmcroft Baptist Church, Phoenix, AZ*

Love and **loyalty** are two of the greatest human expressions and experiences.

Love is an emotion of strong affection and personal attachment. Love is a virtue representing all human kindness, compassion and affection.

Loyalty is a duty or allegiance to a person, country, group or cause.



Is it manly to be loyal or loving?

Would you rather have another man express love to you or demonstrate loyalty to you?

Loyalty without **love** is duty.

There are 3 kinds of love:

Eros: physical, selfish

Phileo: brotherly, conditional

Agape: godly, unconditional

In John 15:13 Christ merges love and loyalty

"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down his life for his friend."

There are 3 kinds of loyalty:

Eros loyalty: loyal if you meet my needs, selfish

Phileo loyalty: loyal as long as it's comfortable, conditional

Agape loyalty: loyal no matter the cost, unconditional

"Peter, do you love me" John 21:11-17

Christ moves Peter's love and so moves Peter's loyalty.



Chat it up!

Is your loyalty based on duty or love?

What do you think makes a man worthy of your loyalty?

What makes a man worthy of your love?

How can you express a masculine love in today's society, with today's culture, that discourages deep male relationships?

Why is the topic of deep personal relationships with another man such a difficult subject?

Who are you comfortable demonstrating love to? Wife, family friends...



The Foundry – Palmcroft Baptist Church

Independence & Inner
Compass
part 9

If one is estranged from oneself, then one is estranged from others too. If one is out of touch with oneself, then one cannot touch others. - Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Independence pertains to freedom from the control and influence of others.

Inner pertains to the mind or spirit. **Compass** is a reliable reference for determining directions.

High performance friendships encourage us in both our independence and keeping our 'inner compass' pointed to true north. Psalms. 119:24, 92, 101, 104, 128, 133, 165

“A person’s standards might not be carefully thought out, well-defined or altruistic in nature, and they might not even be aligned with any specific truth. They might be humanitarian and kind, or they might be patently self-serving and self-centered. They might be based on nothing more than the selfish pursuit of pleasure or material goods. A person’s standards might be centered on God and the Bible as the never-changing north setting on their inner compass- or they might reject His ultimate truth. Even those who lack any sort of moral values or ethical standards- those whose lives are built around self-gratification or the accumulation of wealth—organize their lives around some set of standards and values on foundations are, at best, faulty.”

Chat it up!

What would you say is the relationship between independent influences and our inner compass?

List some tangible influences men face today that could lead to destructive behaviors/decisions.

What hardships could these impose?

How do we decide what our inner compass is going to be?

We have wireless access to God, and can download His wisdom and guidance anytime we need it. However, sometimes we log off and ‘take care of business’ the way we think it should be done. This behavior reveals **VALUES** we hold, and **TRUTH** we believe.

How do high performance friends respond when there is a difference between values and absolute truth?

Matthew 7:4; John 8:7; Ephesians 4:25-32 I don’t project **values**. I always advance **truth**.

A high performance ‘inner compass’ is marked by integrity, consistency, righteousness, and honesty. A high performance friend **invites** this standard to be inspected. A high performance friend **expects** this standard.

We must have friends who are willing to **evaluate** us and tell us our blind spots. Who is in your life?

We must assess ourselves honestly and admit where we fall short of walking to His compass, admitting **imperfections**, and asking God to change us.

Consistency is key to becoming more Christ-like.

High Performance Friendships guided by Jesus’ inner compass are tougher and more edifying, and require **mutual commitment**, allowing for mid-course corrections for improvement.

Three dynamics must be present:

1. Do you care about me?
2. Do you trust me?
3. Do we share the same values?
 - a. (If the value of wanting to become conformed to the image of Jesus Christ is not a shared value, there will be something seriously lacking in the friendship.)

Chat it up!

How do I determine what is a value and what is an absolute truth?

What values do you presently hold that do not ‘square’ with truth? What will you do to elevate those?

How do we move truth from being ‘academic’ (what we know) to relying on it (what we do) as part of our ‘inner compass’?



The Foundry – *Palmcroft Baptist Church, Phoenix, AZ*

Kindness: the quality of being friendly, generous, considerate

Chesed (חֶסֶד) pronounced *kheh-sed*): loving kindness, show favor, undeserved good deed, merciful

There is nothing we like to see so much as the gleam of pleasure in a person's eye when he feels that we have sympathized with him, understood him. At these moments something fine and spiritual passes between two friends. Those are the moments worth loving. –Don Marquis

Exodus 34:5-6 Moses asks God to reveal to him who He is. God answers *“The Lord, the Lord God is merciful, gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in kindness and truth.”*

In the Old Testament we see this description of God used over and over. Jonah uses this as a reason he didn't want to go to Nineveh for he knew God would live up to who he was.



How does abounding in kindness and truth go together?

1 Samuel 20:8 Here we start the story of David on the run from Saul, and Jonathan's kindness.

1 Samuel 20:8, 20:30, 2 Samuel 9:1

1 Samuel 24 David is hiding in a cave when Saul comes to relieve himself. David shows kindness, and speaks truth.

John 13:37-38 Christ shows kindness to reveal what's *really* in His heart. He spoke truth in kindness.

John 21:15-17 Christ shows kindness to Peter. He spoke truth in love.

Kindness is the outward expression of a heart filled with goodness that wants others to grow and improve.

In Christ's life we see His commitment to the truth and challenging people to live by His inner compass.

In kindness we are truthful, helpful, full of service, inspiring others to improve.

Kindness does not seek revenge.

Kindness does not engage in put downs or one-upmanship.



Chat it up!

Can we honestly love a person if we are unwilling to show truth in kindness?

We all have been hurt or cheated in life. How do we apply this to those situations?

Can we be sarcastic and kind at the same time?

**Think of a time when you needed correction and someone did it in a kind manner.
How did you respond?**

**In spite of very difficult circumstances we have seen how others have been kind.
How should you manifest kindness?**



The Foundry – Palmcroft Baptist Church, Phoenix, AZ

Encouragement &
Eternal Values
part 11

The glory of friendship is not the outstretched hand, nor the kindly smile, nor the joy of companionship; it is the spiritual inspiration that comes to one when you discover that someone else believes in you and is willing to trust you with a friendship. (adapted)-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Chat it up!

Do men struggle with admitting their need to be encouraged?

Why?

Encouragement from another often brings a fresh perspective.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 *So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.*

To encourage a friend is to inspire with courage, spirit or confidence, and is a **primary benefit** of a high performance friendship.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 *Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.*

Encouragement involves the thoughtfulness to say the right thing at the right time.

Ephesians 4:29 *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*

Encouragement lets people know we care and believe in them.

II Corinthians 12:14b-15 ...I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.

II Corinthians 12:19 Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you? We have been speaking in the sight of God as those in Christ; and everything we do, dear friends, is for your strengthening.

We can't encourage when we are focused on **ourselves**.

90% of helping (encouraging) is just **showing up**.

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

What I'm not **naturally** inclined to do, is usually when God is asking me to engage in another's life.

The lack of ability to consistently be an encourager demonstrates a need for **growth**.

It's the **thought** that counts. A simple 2-minute call, note, text or email can carry the day!

Encouragement must be **real**. "Phonagna-balogna" has no place in high performance friendship.

Those best-equipped to encourage are those who have "**been there, done that**".

Holding stuff '**close to the vest**' hinders encouragement. It's what we fail to share than cannot be helped through high performance friendship. It's what remains 'hidden' that keeps us sick and prevents Christ from healing that need.

James 5:16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

Possess a '**cup-bearer**' mentality and you will be an encourager.

Mark 9:41 For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose reward.

Chat it up!

Can you think of a time recently when someone encouraged you? What did they say or do?

What was the benefit of you being encouraged?

Is there someone in your life who needs you to give them encouragement this week?

ACHIEVING HIGH PERFORMANCE FRIENDSHIP

occurs when we...

CHOOSE FRIENDS WISELY

ACT IN HUMILITY AND HONESTY

SHOW RESPECT

SHARE INTIMATELY

SUPPORT UNCONDITIONALLY

TEACH AND TRUST

LOVE WITH LOYALTY

LIVE INTERDEPENDENTLY WITH AN EYE ON OUR INNER COMPASS

DISPLAY KINDNESS

GIVE ENCOURAGEMENT BALANCED WITH ETERNITY IN MIND

This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are **My friends** if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you **friends**, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you...these things I command you, that you

love one another.