

NCMM Men's Study Bible

“Choose Your Friends Wisely”

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PRAY: Dear Father, please give me the courage to evaluate my friendships. Do they bring me closer to or farther away from You? In Jesus' name, Amen.

READ: Philippians 2: 1-4

Key Verse: "... by having the same thoughts, sharing the same love, and being one in soul and mind. ³ Don't do anything from selfish ambition or from a cheap desire to boast, but be humble toward one another, always considering others better than yourselves. ⁴ And look out for one another's interests, not just for your own. Philippians 2:2b-4

Although the Apostle Paul is writing to the church in these verses we can draw principles which will help us better understand male friendship. Paul is describing how Jesus treated people on earth. It is a simple question: do our friends move us closer to or further away from Christ? High performance friendships help us become more Christ-like not less. Such friendships are friendships where the other person is more important to us than we are to ourselves. In Christ-honoring friendships we treat one another with humility and concern. We serve one another.

REFLECT:

Do my friendships bring me closer to Christ? Why or why not?

Do I compete with or consider my friends as more important than myself? Do my friends consider me as more important than themselves? Do I genuinely celebrate achievements and good fortune for my friends or does jealousy contaminate my friendships?

RESPOND:

Jesus is the model for male friendships. But, Francis Schaeffer said the spirit of the age always finds its way into the church. This is true with male friendships. Some competitive, less than edifying, lacking intimacy and arrogant attitudes can and do slip into some of our friendships—both with Christians and non-Christians. Obviously, this is not the way Jesus lived on earth or the way He treated His followers or friends. So, it is imperative that we take the time to be courageous to evaluate how we interact with our friends...and ask the most important question...do my friendships move me closer to or further away from Christ. Am I more concerned in being interested in my friends or concerned they are impressed and interested with me?

Father, I want to be more like Christ. I do not want to be affected by our society's mores even though I know I am. Please help me see myself as You see me...and help me to become more like Christ.

Discipleship Study Questions

Jesus was “full of grace and truth” we are told in John 1:14. How do we apply this great truth to how we treat our friends and want to be treated?

In Matthew 13:3 Jesus gave us the parable of the sower. Does it not follow then that not everyone to whom we reach out will become a good friend? Should we see it as rejection or simply a fact of life?

Hebrews 10:24 tells us to “Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good”. Are our friendships relationships of liking someone or helping one another grow in Christ? How do we make sure they are the latter?

In John 13:27 Jesus did not beg Judas to stay, change or repent. He did not placate him in any way. We read, “As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, ‘Hurry and do what you must!’” What lesson in friendship do we learn from Jesus in how He treated Judas when we see our friends going off the deep end? Jesus discerned that unlike Judas, Peter’s betrayal was one of weakness and gave him space to redeem himself. Are we able to discern failure of our friends when it is just weakness rather than evil? Do we allow for friends who fall from weakness to be redeemed as Jesus did with Peter?

Additional Resources:

Achieving High Performance Friendship: A Book for Men, Mead Publishing
www.achievinghighperformancefriendship.com