

## NCMM Men's Study Bible

### "Treating a Friend as Gold"

**BY: Dr. John Vawter and Dr. Jim Wetherbe**

**PRAY:** Lord, open my eyes to how Jesus treated His friends and empower me to do the same

**READ:** Matthew 7:1-5

Key verse: "How dare you say to your brother, 'Please, let me take that speck out of your eye,' when you have a log in your own eye?" Matthew 7:4

Men are often competitive, "braggadocios" and verbally combative with their friends instead of honoring, elevating and being complimentary of them. In this regard we are victims of our own culture and selfish jealousy.

Honoring and complimenting others require self-assured confidence; competition and bragging are like bullying in that they come from insecurity. But, honoring and complimenting are right, necessary and Christ-like.

Often, men are quick to point out someone else's fault without ever looking at themselves. We think of the man who prided himself on saying he lived the Golden Rule but was slow to acknowledge he loved to point out others' faults in a loud, public and embarrassing manner. The goal of high performance friendship is reciprocity of mutual edification and encouragement. But if we are creating a competitive environment rather than a collaborative mutually beneficial one then edification probably will not happen. Or, if it does, it will happen in spite of us.

#### **REFLECT:**

How have I been influenced by our culture to be competitive rather than edifying?  
Do I take joy and celebrate with friends when they achieve and are successful?  
Are my friends collaborating with me to help me become more Christ-like?

**RESPOND:** A difficult but telling exercise for the next week will be to evaluate as many of my interactions with friends as I possibly can. What do I see? Competition or collaboration? Edification or bragging? Christ-like behavior and interaction or self-glorification behavior and interaction? How can I improve my interaction, be more influenced by how Christ lived when He was on earth and less influenced by our culture?

Lord, I know I am not all I should be as it relates to being Christ-like with my friends. I give you the permission to expose me, break me and remake me. Amen.

#### **Discipleship Study Questions**

Jesus said of Himself in Matthew 11:29, ".,, learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit; and you will find rest." In this autobiographical sketch Jesus tells us that not only was He

most concerned about being submissive to the will of the Father in how He treats people but He also does not have a super-inflated view of Himself. This self-attitude is contradictory to how our culture affects and “trains” men. Thus, we men have a choice to make: are we going to follow the example of Jesus or the influence of our culture.

The Apostle Paul asks some penetrating and challenging questions when he writes in 1 Corinthians 4:7, “Who made you superior to others? Didn't God give you everything you have? Well, then, how can you boast, as if what you have were not a gift?” Paul reminds us we have nothing except God has given it to us or allowed us to have it. Thus, we should be quick to give Him the glory and credit and slow to credit ourselves. How do we take a look at ourselves to see if we are giving Him or ourselves the glory? What friends will be brutally honest with us if we ask them to evaluate how we are doing in this regard?

Solomon challenges so much of how men live today when he says, “Let other people praise you—even strangers; never do it yourself” in Proverbs 27:2. It seems self-glorification is so rampant we do not even know when we are doing it. But, there is an eternal purpose in what Solomon writes and that purpose is that God does not share His glory with anyone. And, when we praise and compliment ourselves then we are bringing credit to ourselves rather than Him. A healthy and challenging exercise this week will be to list as many our interactions and statements as we possibly can and log whether we bring credit to ourselves or to God.