

NCMM Men's Study Bible

“Jesus Is the Model For Friendships”

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PRAY: Dear God, teach me and empower me to be the kind of friend Jesus was when He walked on the earth. I pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

READ: John 15:13-15

Key Verse: *I do not call you servants any longer, because servants do not know what their master is doing. Instead, I call you friends, because I have told you everything I heard from my Father.* John 15:15

In the upper room Jesus makes a major transition in the relationship with the disciples as He says He is going to call them friends. He also says everything He learned from His Father He would reveal to them. This is intimacy. Intimacy is to be close to someone and to be able to trust them with our dreams, thoughts, fears and shortcomings. Intimacy provides a protective spirit over the things spoken in private. Jesus modeled this trust and intimacy when He allowed three of His closest friends to be close enough to hear what He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. He allowed them to hear His anguish, worry and fear as He prayed to the Father. He was modeling that we need other men in our lives as we endeavor to become more conformed to the image of Christ.

REFLECT:

How would I assess the quality of friendships that I have? Who helps me grow in my faith in Christ? Whom do I help grow in their faith?

RESPOND:

This week think about your friendships. Are there a few men who you trust as much as Jesus trusted the three disciples when He was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane?

Lord, this friendship thing is not easy. Please give me the courage to be honest as I assess the quality of friendships that I have.

Discipleship Study Questions

In the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:26-45) Jesus had no trouble being honest with Himself, with His Father and with three of His disciples who were close by. Why was this so?

What does this whole issue of intimacy teach us about Jesus?

Often times we are told to “suck it up”, “play with pain” or show no emotion or weakness. Compare this to how Jesus responded when He was told that Lazarus had died. (John 11:35) Jesus was transparent at this time of sorrow in His life. We must learn from His response otherwise we will not be able to comfort one another in our times of sorrow.

Both Judas and Peter betrayed Jesus—although in different ways. Peter was allowed opportunity and space to be restored; Judas did not ask for forgiveness or restoration. What do we learn

about forgiveness and restoration from the way Jesus treated Peter? Should we discern if friends fail or disappoint us out of human weakness or evil?

Further Study:

Intimacy in friendship requires a. being open and vulnerable, b. not hiding dreams, fears, failures and weaknesses and, c. having immense trust that a friend keeps private the things we share with him. The undertone of this definition connotes growing, maturing and becoming more like Christ. If part of friendship at the deepest level is to help one another grow in Christ, there has to be a level of intimacy to let others make comments on our lives as well as let us make comments on theirs. As followers of Christ we all should endeavor to become like Christ. Someone has said, "We all have blind-spots. Everyone sees our blind-spots but us". Therefore, we need people in our lives who will tell us the truth constructively and encourage us to do the same for them. With whom do we have this quality and depth of relationship?

Additional Resources:

Smith, David, **The Friendless American Male**, Regal Books, 1983

Tournier, Paul, **Secrets**, John Knox Press, 1985

Vawter, John and James Wetherbe, **Achieving High Performance Friendship: A Book for Men**, Mead Publishing, 2012