



FRIENDSHIP: JOHN 15:12-17

Community Group Study Guide Week of November 10, 2019

We continued our series “Tough & Tender” this week by looking at how to Lion and Lamb our friendships. We live in a culture that is both more connected and more lonely than ever. People are finding it increasingly difficult to make and keep close friends. Some may be tempted to give up on the concept of friendship as unnecessary, or an optional luxury. Scripture, however, shows that we were created for friendship, and need community to survive and thrive as God’s creation.

Our need for community begins with God, but it doesn’t end there. In the beginning, Adam was with God in paradise. Even before sin had entered the world, however, God proclaimed that it was “not good” for Adam to be alone. God created Eve to be a being both distinct from Adam, but also equal to him in dignity, value, and worth as an image-bearer of God. Adam and Eve had more than a perfect marriage, they had a perfect friendship. All of that fell apart, however, when sin entered the world. Apart from sin, Adam and Eve were satisfied in God, and therefore free to love, serve, and trust one another without restraint. In a sin torn world our relationships are now plagued them with fear, rivalry, and distrust.

One of the difficulties we have with making great friends is that friendship is a byproduct of two people’s shared values and purpose. In the beginning, that bond was a shared enjoyment of God and His glory. When we make friendship itself the value and purpose, we smother one another with unrealistic expectation and find it difficult to form the bonds we’re looking for. A certain degree of friendship can be formed over things as trivial as a shared enthusiasm for a sports team, hobby, or genre of music. The more significant the shared value, however, the deeper and more powerful the friendship will grow. We see this in the intense bonds that are held by soldiers who’ve fought together in a noble battle for justice.

As Christians, we have an unmatched bond and potential for friendship. The key to developing these bonds is not to focus primarily on our friendships with one another, however, but on our friendship with Christ. Through Christ, our deepest longings for human and divine friendship are met. As a man, Jesus became the perfect friend that Adam was missing, and as God, he is able to reconcile us to our creator so that we are no longer enemies, but friends of God as well. As our desires for friendship are met in Christ, we experience the power and freedom to be better friends to one another. Instead of smothering one another with expectations that can only be met in Christ, we are free to selflessly love and serve one another out of the overflow of Christ’s friendship toward us. The Gospel gives us a solid foundation to build on, and the truth of Scripture equips us with practical wisdom for becoming better friends.

DISCUSSION GOALS

Head

To understand how God has befriended us through Christ, and how we can be Christ-like friends to others.

Heart

To find our deepest longings for friendship satisfied in Christ, so that we can love and serve our friends as givers and not takers.

Hands

To befriend and invest in specific people to bless them and stoke their affections and friendship with Jesus.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Membership or Baptism:

Contact

admin@mosaicboston.com to sign up for our next membership class or learn more about baptism.

Mosaic JP:

Please keep Mosaic JP and other faithful Boston church plants in your prayers. If your CG would like to serve Mosaic JP together on a Sunday please contact Andy Hoot at andy@mosaicboston.com.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Read John 15:12-17

1. We live in a culture that is both more connected than ever, and seemingly more lonely than ever. What might be some of the causes contributing to the growing sense of loneliness in our culture?
2. Friendships are most naturally formed when two people spend time together around a shared value, purpose, or mission. What are some of the shared values that friendships commonly form around in our culture, or that you see among your neighbors, coworkers, etc.?
3. How do we see this idea playing out in John 15? What is Jesus sharing with his disciples that causes him to say you are no longer just servants, but actually my friends?
4. If friendship with Jesus grows out of a shared interest in enjoying God, His glory, and His mission, then how does that help us think about how we should invest in our friendship with Jesus?
5. How does a deeply satisfying friendship with Christ empower and free us to be better friends to one another? How might we potentially harm our friendships if we're not finding that satisfaction in Jesus?

On the foundation of our friendship with Jesus, Pastor Jan gave us 7 practical application from Scripture for growing as better friends. 1) Treasure Friendship. 2) Form Concentric Circles of Friends. 3) Choose Friends Intentionally. 4) Be a Giving Friend. 5) Be a Wise Friend. 6) Be a Loyal Friend. 7) Be a Fun Friend.

6. Which of these 7 applications stood out to you the most? Did you find any particularly helpful or challenging?

Read Proverbs 13:20; 22:24-25, & James 4:4-5

7. How do we harmonize these warnings and prohibitions with Scriptures teachings that Jesus was a "friend of sinners," that we should love our neighbor as ourselves, and even love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us? Can Christians be friends with non-Christians? If so, how might those relationships look similar or different than our friendships with other Christians?