**Three R's of Friendship: Responsibility, Responsiveness, Reciprocal** © 2021 WF Cobb Truthbase.net ***DailyTruthbase.blog***

Jn 15:1I told you these things so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends 14 You are My friends if you do...

Pr 17:17 A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. 12:26 The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray. 1Cor 15:33 Do not be deceived: Evil company/companions corrupt good habits.

1. Each takes **Responsibility** for the success of the rlshp and the growth of the other person,

 preparing themselves spiritually=God #1, self-worth/character, “one-another” vv, and socially (skills)

2. Each **Responds** (Receptivity) to the other in dvlping potential & commonality (humility & communication) and unity

3.Each **Reciprocates** so that the rlshp is just=mutually beneficial and edifying so that each grows in Christlikeness

YouGov: 30% Millennials (23-38) always or often feel lonely. 22% zero friends, 27% no close friends: 30%; no “best friend.” Cacioppo +20 yrs research loneliness=“perceived social isolation-discrepancy 'twn what you want from your social rlsps and your perception of those rlshps” People feel distress 'twn the number of friends they want versus how many they have. They also have a tendency to compare themselves with others, a process heavily exacerbated by the rise of social media. 30 years research: most common critical inner voice people experience: they are different from other people in some basic negative way. *Psychologytoday*

Harris Poll: 44% of millennials have been diagnosed with at least one chronic health condition. What’s really alarming is that 4/top 5 chronic conditions (6/top 10) fall into the mental or behavioral health category, Depression; Substance use; Alcohol disorder; Hypertension; Hyperactivity; Psychotic; Crohn’s disease/ulcerative colitis;; High cholesterol; Tobacco use disorder; Type II diabetes

And the rates for these conditions are rising dramatically (not even counting the increases experienced due to the pandemic. 92% saying COVID-19 had a negative impact on their mental health. Among millennials, the pandemic contributed to major increases in unhealthy behaviors, including: +34% alcohol consumption +20% smoking +17% vaping +16% in non-medical drug use *Amenclinics*

“Inside your brain, there is a constant dance between your prefrontal cortex (involved in focus, judgment, and impulse control), your amygdala (the part of your emotional brain that responds to threats), and your basal ganglia (where habits are shaped and stored). When the PFC is healthy/strong, it can help direct -supervise the addition of healthy habits. When PFC weak more easily influenced by untamed dragons, impulses can take over, causing many bad habits to form. Good or bad habits take the same amt of energy. *Amenclinics*

Ephesians 1 **"Friend or Foe"** © 10/93 6/03 2/13 2021 WF Cobb Truthbase.net ***DailyTruthbase.blog***

**I. The Nature of Friendship** One attached to another by affection or esteem. -Webster

**A. Friend** -One joined to another in intimacy and mutual benevolence independently of sexual or family love. -Concise Oxford;

Friendship is composed of a single soul inhabiting two bodies. - Aristotle BC 384-322

Liking seems to be an emotion, but friendship a disposition, liking may just as much be felt tor inanimate objects, but mutual affection is a matter of deliberate choice, and this springs from a fixed disposition. - Aristotle Oxford Bk Friendship 7

The rule of friendship means there should be mutual sympathy between them, each supplying what the other lacks and trying to benefit the other, always using friendly and sincere words. - Buddha BC 500 Life has no blessing like a prudent friend. - Euripides BC 480-406

A man cannot be said to succeed in this life who does not satisfy one friend. - Thoreau 1817-1862

**B. Unhealthy Counterfeit Friendships**

 **Masquerade Ball** needs externals (costumes, music, food, dance) to keep it going; always stays on the same level, in the same place (regardless of apparent activity-dance); focus and admiration is on the externals; people remain mysteries; is ruined when someone takes off their mask and becomes real; superficial and ultimately boring [**succumbers]**

 **Mountain Climb** requires self-denial and skill; is progressive, goal reaching (vs staying in the base camp); high commitment to each other's safety (yet survival is not the only goal; roped together but independent; each bears own burdens yet contributes to carrying the canon; hampered by unreality (masks); value and appreciate the internals; challenging and richly rewarding effort/teamwork (at times terrifying) [**overcomers]**

**C. TOYL** Relationships Objective: **Bad:** To get **my needs** for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(stimulation, fun, security, fulfillment, companionship, etc.)* **met** through/by others. To never be hurt or vulnerable. To be accepted and supported unconditionally. To please others so they'll like me.

Co-dependent vs Interdependent

Comfortable vs Stretching

Constant Commonalty vs Growing

Changeless vs Conforming to Christlikeness

Concerned about Getting vs Giving (or one way)

Need oriented vs Need solving (give another fish)

Shallow, specific, short term, vs deep, wide, long

Fragile vs Unbreakable

Enjoyment oriented vs Edification oriented

Exhausting vs Enriching

Selfish vs selfless (What's thine is mine, and what's mine is mine

**BETTER:** To develop intimate, transparent, and accountable relationships which stimulate Christlikeness

**II. Commonality** reduces threat, increasing security, worth validation, sense of belonging, and being accepted and understood.

*Gen 4:7 If you do well, will you not be* ***accepted****? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.*

Ac 10:35 in every nation whoever fears Him & works righteousness is **accepted** by Him. Rm 14:18 Eph 5:10 finding out what’s **acceptable** to the Lord

*Rm 15:7 Therefore receive/****accept*** *(NIV) one another, just as Christ also received/accepted us, to the glory of God/in order to bring praise to God.*

**III. Christlikeness** is developed by purposeful interaction sometimes stretching us beyond our comfort zone in conforming us to Christ.

*Rm 8:28 we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

***2Cor 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.***

**IV. Difficulties in Friendships** (usually caused by self-centeredness which is ultimately disloyalty and disobedience to God)

A. The holy passion of Friendship is of so sweet and steady and loyal and enduring a nature that it will last through a whole lifetime, if not asked to lend money. - Mark Twain 1900 He hasn't an enemy in the world, and none of his friends like him. - Oscar Wilde 1900

Never contract friendship with a man that is not better than thyself. - Confucius BC 500 He who hath many friends, hath none. - Aristotle

Be slow to fall into friendship; but when you art in, continue firm and constant. - Socrates BC 469-399

Nothing more dangerous than a friend without discretion; even a prudent enemy is preferable. - La Fontaine 1621-1695

If all men knew what each said of the other, there would not be four friends in the world. - Pascal 1623-1662

Be cautious in friendship *Pr 22:24 Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man you shall not go:*

*1Co 15:33 Be not deceived: evil company corrupts good habits. 1Co 5:9...not to associate with immoral people:*

*2Th 3:14 if any man obeys not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.*

False friends are like our shadow, keeping close to us while we walk in the sunshine, but leaving us the instant we cross into the shade. -Bovee *Job 19:19 All my close friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me.*

*Ps 88:18 Lover and friend hast you put far from me, and my acquaintance into darkness.*

*Lu 21:16 And you shall be betrayed both by...friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.*

**B. Ten OOPS! Seven Commandments for Bad Friendships:**

1. You are your own best friend, you shalt put no friends before thee.

2. You shalt: use thy friends for thy own purposes, in all things you shalt seek thine own good.

3. You shalt care more about what thy friends think about than what God thinks about.

4. You shalt make sacrifices and compromises to keep thy friends liking thee for the false security that someone cares.

5. You shalt use thy friends to bolster thy sagging self esteem (whenever you turnest from following closely after God).

6. You shalt use the friends to insulate thee from facing and solving the needs of thy life.

7. As you wert comfortably common in the beginning so shalt you evermore be so, world without end. Amen.

**C. Top Five Places/Ways to Keep a Dead Friend:** In a closet (use only when needed); On ice (on a cool, non-controversial, trivial level)

In small pieces scattered around the house (only relating or accepting those areas with which you are comfortable)

In a lead lined box (never being vulnerable or transparent);In an attic (stored away for possible future use if you can find them)

**V. In Order to be Friends with Each Other We Must:**

**A. First be a Friend of God**

**1. Obedience** sets hearts in same direction *Jn 15:14 You are my friends, if you do whatever I command you.*

**2. Needs met** on the infinite level. The condition which high friendship demands is ability to do without it. - Emerson 1803-1882

**3. Insights can be garnered** from and compared against His Truth

**4. You become a person of worth** *2Ch 20:7...give it to the seed of Abraham your friend for ever? Isa 41:8; Jas 2:23 scripture was fulfilled which says, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.*

**5. Character becomes more loveable** The only way to have a friend is to be one. - Emerson 1803-1882

*Pr 22:11 He that loves pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.*

**6. Resources** for rocky times in the relationship

**7. We learn to love** from a Master

**B. Develop the Character/Skill Set Necessary for Developing Good Friendships:**

self denial; fidelity, loyalty; passion, purpose; confidence, bravery, courage; selfless; industrious; serve; resourcefulness; inquisitiveness; communicate; empathy; patience, forgiveness; freedom from jealousy, envy, greed; self-controlled (tongue control); nothing to hide, nothing to prove, no one to impress; tact; truthspeaking in love;

Scout Oath: On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law\*;

to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

\*Scout is: Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind, bedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean, and Reverent.

**C. Practice the Activities/Skills of Friendship**

**Free exchange of thoughts and lives (and time)**

**1. Friends freely share and communicate** *Jn 15:15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knows not what his lord does: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.*

...almost always the union of a part of one mind with the part of another; people are friends in spots. - Santayana 1863-1952

**2. Friends share time** *Mt 11:19 Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.* Go often to the house of your friend, weeds choke the unused path. - Emerson 1803-1882

Friendship is no plant of hasty growth; Tho' planted in esteem's deep fixed soil, The gradual culture of kind intercourse Must bring it to perfection. - Joanna Baillie 1762-1851 Friends are thieves of time. - Bacon 1561-1626

**3. Friends sacrificially love** *Jn 15:13 Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

**4. Friends are other-centered friendly** *Pr 18:24 A man that has friends must show himself friendly:*

**5. Friends speak of God's goodness to them** *Mr 5:19 ...Go home to your friends, tell them what great things the Lord has done...*

**Repair, Maintenance and Cultivation**

**1. Instead of loving your enemies,** treat your friends better. - Edgar W. Howe 1853-1937

Our most intimate friend is not he to whom we show the worst, but the best of our nature. - Nathaniel Hawthorne 1804-1864

**2. Friends require maintenance** *Pr 17:9 He that covers a transgression seeks love; but he that repeats a matter separates very friends. Pr 16:28 A perverse man sows strife: and a whisperer separates chief friends.*

Friends can be misunderstood *Pr 27:14 He that blesses his friend with a loud voice, rising early...be counted a curse to him.*

Two persons cannot long be friends if they cannot forgive each other's little failings. - La Bruyere 1645-1696

The most fatal disease of friendship is gradual decay, or dislike hourly increased by causes too slender for complaint, and too numerous for removal. - Johnson 1709-1784

It should be a part of our private ritual to devote a quarter of an hour every day to the enumeration of the good qualities of our friends. When we are not active, we fall back idly upon defects, even of those whom we most love. - M. Rutherford 1831-1913

**3. Friends require testing.** True friendship is a plant of slow growth, and must undergo and withstand the shocks of adversity, before it is entitled to the appellation. - George Washington 1732-1799

As the yellow gold is tried in fire, so the faith of friendship must be seen in adversity. - Ovid B.C. 43-18 A.D.

**4. Friends forgive and pray for each other** *Job 42:10 And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.*

**Investment in Each other and in a Common Cause**

**1. Hence we picture lovers face to face, but friends side by side;** their eyes look ahead. That is why those pathetic people who simply "want friends" can never make any. The very condition of having Friends is that we should want something else beside Friends. Were the truthful answer to the question Do you see the same truth? would be "I see nothing and I don't care about the truth; I only want a friend," no Friendship can arise--though Affection of course may. There would be nothing for the Friendship to be about; and Friendship must be about something, even if it were only an enthusiasm for dominoes or white mice. Those who have nothing can share nothing; those who are going nowhere can have no fellow-travelers. CS Lewis "The Four Loves" 98

**2. Friends can be bought** *Lu 16:9 And I say to you, Make to yourselves friends by the riches of unrighteousness; that, when you fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. Pr 14:20 poor is hated by his neighbor: but the rich has many friends.*

**3. Common objectives make friends** *Lu 23:12 Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity*

*Ps 119:63 I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep your precepts.*

*1Jo 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another...blood of Jesus cleanses us from sin.*

**Empathy & Encouragement**

**1. Friends are as companions on a journey**, who ought to aid each other to persevere in the road to a happier life. - Pythagoras

We can treat our friends shabbily *2Sa 19:6 In that you love your enemies, and hate your friends.*

**2. Friends share joys and halve sorrows** *Lu 15:6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.*

Friendship improves happiness and abates misery, by the doubling of our joy and the dividing of our grief. - Cicero B.C. 106-43

*Job 2:11 when Job's friends heard of this evil...made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.*

*Job 6:14 To him that is afflicted pity should be shown from his friend...*

**3. Friends rejoice in each other's success** *Jn 3:29 ...the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.*

**Need Solving**

**1. A true friend** is somebody who can make us do what we can. - Emerson 1803-1882

It is not so much our friends' help that helps as the confidence of their help. - Epicurus B.C. 341-270

**2. Friends vocally watch out for each other's soul***Pr 27:9 Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty (soul) counsel. Pr 27:6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.*

One of the surest evidences of friendship that one individual can display to another is telling him gently of a fault. If any other can excel it, it is listening to such a disclosure with gratitude, and amending the error. - Bulwer-Lytton 1803-1873

Do not use a hatchet to remove a fly from your friend's forehead. - Chinese Proverb

The more we love our friends, the less we flatter them; it is by excusing nothing that pure love shows itself. - Moliere 1622-1673

A good friend who points out mistakes and imperfections and rebukes evil is to be respected as if he reveals a secret of hidden treasure. - Buddha B.C. 568-488 *Pr 27:5 Open rebuke is better than secret love.*

*Pr 28:23 He that rebukes a man afterward shall find more favor than he that flatters with the tongue.*

*Ps 141:5 Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.*

**3. Friends make us sharp and effective** *Pr 27:17 Iron sharpens iron; so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.*

To give counsel as well as to take it is a feature of true friendship. - Cicero B.C. 106-43

Reprove your friends in secret, praise them openly. - Publilius Syrus fl. B.C. 42

Friends can pull out thorns *Pr 27:6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend* {Why Am I Afraid to Love p. 68}

Give me the avowed, the erect, and manly foe, Bold I can meet, perhaps may turn the blow; But of all plagues, good Heaven, your wrath can send, Save, save, oh save me from the candid friend! - George Canning 1770-1827

**4. Friends help meet needs** *Lu 11:5 Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves; 8 Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend...importunity he will rise and give...*

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

Friends warn each other *Ac 19:31 chief of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him, beseeching him that he would not venture*

Friends refresh each other *Ac 27:3 Julius courteously treated Paul, and gave him liberty to go to his friends to refresh himself.*

If a friend is in trouble, don't annoy him by asking if there is anything you can do. Think up something appropriate and do it. - Edgar W. Howe b1853

**Defend Life and Reputation**

**1. Loyalty is commanded** *Pr 27:10 Your own friend & your father's friend, forsake not...better is a neighbor that is near than...*

Friends are loyal to another's reputation *Jn 19:12 And from then on Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If you let this man go, you art not Caesar's friend: Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar.*

**2. Friendship demands discriminatory allegiance** *Jas 4:4 You adulterers and adulteresses, know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

*Ecc 4:9 Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. 10 For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falls; for he hath not another to help him to rise.*

**3. Friends make soul sweaters** *1Sa 18:1...soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, & Jonathan loved him as his own soul.*

Rely on your own Self, your own inner spiritual strength. Stand on your own feet. Do not depend on money, friends or any one. When the friends are put to test, they will desert you. - Sivananda born 1887

**Questions for Reflection/Discussion/Response:**

1. You know someone is your friend when... How do your answers look under the light of Scripture? What values are revealed?

2. Is there any downside to just hanging out with "comfortable acquaintances"? How does Biblical fellowship contrast with socializing?

3. How well do you have to know someone to call them a friend? How important is transparency? Discretion? Why?

4. Which "Practices" (II. C. above) is most important to you? Least? Would God call you His friend?

5. Do you view friendship more from a worldly or Biblical perspective? In what way? How are you going to change?