

Friends & The Ultimate Journey

Intro

- Common experiences (both good and bad) with friendships
- How do we set out to enjoy friendships as God has designed them?

Christian friends share the ultimate common pursuit

- Friendship vs. romance
- Christians have the opportunity to form friendships that are rooted in the most significant dimension of human existence – the pursuit of and the enjoyment of God.

“We want to participate in the quest for the ultimate in the context of the intimate. We want to know deeply and to be deeply known. If what you want is friendship—deep, satisfying, purposeful, long-lasting friendship—I believe the only way to find it is to pursue God. If what you want is God ... I believe that desire will bring you into contact and deeper relationship with a community of friends shaped by the same pursuit.”—Richard Lamb, The Pursuit of God In the Company of Friends, p. 13

“In fact, even cursory glances though the Gospels confirm that the work Jesus did in the lives of his disciples occurred because the disciples were in relationship, not simply with him, but with one another. That manner of growth in spiritual depth—in the context of community—is not accidental. It is part of how people are built. We were created to seek God, and we were created to find him with others. Not only does this reflect the strategy of Jesus, but just as crucially, it reflects the design of God.”—Richard Lamb, The Pursuit of God In the Company of Friends, p. 17

David and Jonathan – common pursuits & journey through hardships

- 1 Sam 18:1
- 1 Sam 20:32-41
- 2 Sam 1:1-11

Tangible grace: friends in times of trial

→ What is it that people seem to need most in trying times?

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

Matt 26:36 – Jesus' hour of grief

→ The fear of future suffering ... without companions.

- Ps 102:3-7
- Eccl 4:8-12
- Ps 142:4 "Look on my right hand and see, for there is no one who acknowledges me; Refuge has failed me; no one cares for my soul."

God's plan to gather a people

"... the human story is often a story of the accomplishments of a few against all odds—and the few are usually allied as friends around a common experience or context.... The account of the founding of the Christian church is just such a story, having at its center Jesus Christ, the Son of God, unique in history. Nevertheless, the only structure he left in place for the propagation of a faith that would come to embrace a billion living people was a small group, a dozen people whose friendships would enable, embolden and empower them to live lives that "turned the world upside down."—Richard Lamb, The Pursuit of God In the Company of Friends, p. 23

→ New Testament – preparations for the party, gathering the friends, and the biggest reunion in history. (Rev 19:6-9, 17)

→ The circle widens: barriers to friendship removed by the cross (Eph 2:14-16)