

Biblical Friendships

Daniel 1:11-17

PW Emerson – 11/18/2018 – Ten:27 Ministries

INTRODUCTION

We are going to take a look at a biblical friendship, today.

ASK

- Why is a friendship so valuable?

ASK

- What is an important characteristic of a friendship?

I'm sure there is much more we could add to that list.

A British publication once offered a prize for the best definition of a friend.

Among the thousands of answers received were the following:

- "One who multiplies joys, divides grief, and whose honesty is inviolable."
- "One who understands our silence."
- "A volume of sympathy bound in cloth."
- "A watch that beats true for all time and never runs down."

The winning definition read:

- "A friend is the one who comes in when the whole world has gone out."

Friends are important

Everyone here has a friend.

There are a number of wonderful friendships we see in both the old and new testament.

- Moses and Aaron
- David & Jonathan
- Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego
- Peter, James, John

Today we're going to look at Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego and Daniel – 4 friends.

- I looked for a place in the bible where it said “Abednego did” Nothing. We see these 3 always together, close friends.
- When I hear the name Shadrach, 2 things come to mind:
 - Meshach & Abednego
 - A fiery furnace

Daniel 1:11-17

¹¹ Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, ¹² “Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. ¹³ Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food,

and treat your servants in accordance with what you see.”¹⁴ So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

¹⁵ At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. ¹⁶ So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

¹⁷ To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds

I found a few friendship characteristics in this piece that are important in any solid friendship AND in our relationship with God

These are especially important in godly friendships

1) A FRIEND ... STICKS BY YOU

If I have done something wrong, a true friend will still be there.

If I am doing something hard, a true friend will still be there.

You’ve heard the saying that a dog is man’s best friend – that’s because a dog sticks by you.

- Doesn't care that you've just lost your job
- Doesn't care that you crashed your car

A friend sticks by you.

Daniel 1:8

⁸ But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.

Daniel wasn't alone; his 3 friends joined him!

Daniel 1:11-12

¹¹ Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, ¹² "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink.

There is great comfort in having a friend by us.

Illustration – friend sticks by us

Jackie Robinson was the first black to play major league baseball. Breaking baseball's color barrier, he faced jeering crowds in every stadium. While playing one day in his home stadium in Brooklyn, he committed an error. The fans began to ridicule him. He stood at second base, humiliated, while the fans jeered. Then, shortstop Pee Wee Reese came over and stood next to

him. He put his arm around Jackie Robinson and faced the crowd. The fans grew quiet. Robinson later said that arm around his shoulder saved his career.

In Exodus 4, God was telling Moses how he would free the Israelites.

- One of Moses' objections was that he was not an eloquent speaker
- Exodus 4:14

“What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and he will be glad to see you.

- Moses & Aaron were tight – yes, they were brothers
- They were also great friends

Moses didn't have any more objections. I believe that knowing he would have Aaron with him brought him great comfort.

A godly friend sticks by you!

2) A FRIEND WILL HELP KEEP US ... RIGHT

When we want to go do something or say something that is wrong, a friend will stand up to us and try to stop us from straying.

There is a risk that the friend may not want you as a friend But it is more important to do what is right for the friend that it is for the friendship.

When David was King and had sinned by killing Uriah the Hitite and taking Bathsheba, one person stood out: the prophet Nathan.

- Went to the king

2 Samuel 12:1-13

¹ The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. ² The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, ³ but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.

⁴ "Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him."

⁵ David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this must die! ⁶ He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity."

⁷ Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. ⁸ I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you all Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. ⁹ Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. ¹⁰ Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.'

¹¹ "This is what the LORD says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. ¹² You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.'"

¹³ Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

Nathan risked his life in confronting the king with sin!

Nathan knew it was the right thing to do.

A godly friend will stand up to you, will help keep you on the *right* path

3) GODLY FRIEND WILL KEEP US POINTED AT GOD

Background on the history of being in exile

- Smart boys were taken from their family
- They were raised to be leaders, use their gifts & talents in the service of the empire
- Would be somewhat disparaging because they were often removed from families, difficult for the boys & families
- They were trained in the culture, identity, food, everything of the occupier
- They were trained to forget the culture & beliefs they came from

Part of this was eating the food of the new empire and that brings us to Daniel 1

- They were given food from the royal court – food and wine
- It says Daniel did not want to defile himself

Experts have worked to understand this

- There was nothing wrong with eating meat
- Drinking wine was ok
- MAYBE it was because he didn't want to eat that had been blessed by Babylonian prayers to their gods
- If that was the case, then the vegetables they ate would also be in the same category.

The only thing that makes sense is that Daniel and his friends were making a concerted effort to keep God a priority and make God the reasons for their success.

- It was certainly a testimony to the guards
- It helped them remember who they were and where they came from

In Daniel 2 the king wants someone to interpret his dream and to be sure that they aren't just making something up, they'll have to tell him what his dream was

- ONLY Daniel and his friends were able to do so

Daniel 2:27-28

²⁷ Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, ²⁸ but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come.

Even in the midst of

- being in exile
- being occupied
- Being encouraged to forget everything they knew before the occupation

The friends were still looking to God and pointing others that way.

When your friend is struggling, do you asked if they have prayed about it?

Do you ask your friend what they've been reading in the bible lately?

Do you ask if they have been serving God lately?

CONCLUSION

1. Think of ... a friend you are concerned about. Let's pray for him/her.
2. Think of ... a friend who means a great deal to you. Let's pray for him/her.
3. Think of ... someone who was/is a friend but has strayed from what is right.
Let's pray for him/her.
4. Think of ... a friend you've been struggling to talk to them about something.
Let's pray for him/her
5. Think of ... a friend you want God to grab/change/transform. Let's pray for
him/her

Pray for these people now and ALL WEEK LONG.

Express to your friend(s) that you are blessed to have them as a friend, that you thank God for them.

Always make sure to point your friends to God. It will serve as a testimony to others!