

Monday:

During this series, we want to bring awareness to the relational patterns that have developed in our lives. Awareness of these patterns gives us an opportunity to evaluate how we do relationships. It also helps us make intentional choices to improve how we relate to others, with the purpose of passing on healthier relational patterns. This week we are focusing on the relationship of friendship. As we study Scripture, we see that the men and women of the Bible provide many examples of friendship. One example we can look to for a healthy friendship, and one we can learn from in Scripture, is the friendship between David and Jonathan.

Read 1 Samuel 20: Write out some thoughts about the friendship you see between David and Jonathan. For example, Jonathan wants to believe that his father Saul would not harm David. Instead of pushing David to believe what he wants to be true, Jonathan works with David to discover the real truth. What else do you see in their example of friendship? This past weekend Grant explained Jesus' example of friendship. It is a high calling.

Read John 15:12-13:

We can see Jesus' example of friendship in David and Jonathan. We further see Jesus' example through David in that he loved Jonathan's family even after Jonathan was killed.

Read 2 Samuel 9:

Being a friend means laying down our selfishness and loving one another. We need Jesus and His Holy Spirit at work in us to have healthy friendships. The ironic thing is that healthy friendships also help us grow to be more like Jesus. As we allow the Holy Spirit the freedom to work in us, Jesus' teachings will come alive. Our friends help strengthen our relationship with God because we are following Jesus and the promptings of His Holy Spirit to be a better friend.

Remember this equation:

To be a good friend, I need Jesus=To be more like Jesus, I need friends.

Spend time in prayer. Ask God to show you His will regarding friendships as we work through the devotions this week. Maybe you need a deep friendship like the example of David and Jonathan. If this is true, ask God to lead you to the person He has for you. Maybe God is showing you need to be a better friend. You need to do as Jesus asks and love as He has loved us. If you find you are always the one in need, or if you are continually pushing your agenda in your friendships, surrender to God. If you are the friend of someone who is consistently pushing their agenda on you, it may be that you need to establish healthy boundaries. All of us need deep friendships that help us grow to be more and more like Jesus. What is God showing you as we begin this week on friendship?

Tuesday:

Awareness is the first key to leaving a healthy legacy in our relationships. We have provided a tool here that will help you become better aware of the friendships in your life. Take time to fill out the circle provided. In the center circle, write the names of your deepest friendships/relationships. In middle area of the larger circle, record the people who know you well, but who do not know the most private details of your life.

Finally, write the names of your acquaintances at the outside edge of the biggest circle.

**This material is adapted from the Elijah Project. If you would like more information on the Elijah Project, please visit their website at: <http://livingtheelijahproject.com/index.html>*

As you spend time with God today, ask Him these questions in prayer and **Pray James 1:5** as you ask: Are the people in the center of my circle the most helpful in strengthening my relationship with You God? Lord, are the people in the center of my circle safe? Can I be vulnerable and honest

with them? Father, do I need to move some of my relationships around in my circles? Are there people in the center of my circle who should be in the middle circle? Are there people near the middle of my larger circle who should be in the center? Please help me see Your will. God, am I at the center of anyone else's circle? If so, am I helping to strengthen their relationship with You? Am I allowing them to help me strengthen my relationship with You?

Pray Proverbs 27:17.

Father, am I at the center of too many people's circles? Who do I need to spend more time with and who do I maybe need to spend less time with? Lord, I realize I am maybe not at the center of anyone else's circle. What steps do You want me to take to develop a deep friendship?

Pray Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.

End your time with God considering what He is showing you in regards to these questions. Pray and ask Him to lead you as you become more aware of the friendships in your life. Ask Him to show you your next steps.

Wednesday:

As we begin to have awareness of how we live in relationships, one of the keys to healthy relationships is being intentional. Maybe we know what steps we need to take to be a better friend; the awareness is there, but the purposeful intention and motivation to change is not. Simply knowing what we need to do in our relationships is not enough. It takes intentionality to seek God in this area, first asking Him to help us take the steps we need to take and then actually taking those steps in real time.

To be intentional, we must learn God's wisdom and what His picture of health in a relationship looks like. This week we understand, through John 15:12-13, that Jesus calls us to a high standard. He wants us to love one another as He has loved us. How do we do this in our friendships? Write some examples here:

What awareness is God bringing to you this week about the friendships (or lack thereof) in your life? Do you need to pursue a close friendship? Do you need to be a better friend? As you filled in your circle yesterday and spent time in prayer, what steps are you seeing God asking you to take in regards to the people in your circles?

Pray and ask God how you can be intentional in implementing steps toward health in your friendships. Write your thoughts here and begin to create a plan to implement your next step.

Thursday:

As we become intentional about living out the “one anothers” in Scripture, the Holy Spirit will work to bring about the changes we need. An inward transformation will occur as we continue to integrate Christ’s teachings into who we are.

Let’s look at a few “one another” verses that will guide us in our friendships:

Romans 14:19 So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual up-building.

Galatians 5:26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Ephesians 4:2-4 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Philippians 2:3 ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

According to these verses in Scripture, what does it mean to be a friend?

The truth is that need each other, but sometimes being humble, honest and vulnerable is incredibly difficult. What do you find most difficult to follow in these verses? Take time to ask God for His help to live as a good friend. Talk to Him about what you are struggling with this week as you seek to understand His will for you in regards to friendships.

Friday:

Take a few deep breaths and settle into silence.

Choose a very simple prayer to express your openness and desire for God to work in you. (Example: *Abba, Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit, I belong to You.*)

Close your eyes and offer your prayer to Jesus, allowing His will and love full access into your entire being. If/when you become distracted, offer again your simple prayer to God.

One at a time, choose one of the “one another” verses below. For each verse, ask God to help unlock His truth in you, using the three keys of awareness, intentionality and integration. Ask Him to help you leave a healthy legacy in all your relationships. In the specific area of friendship, what next step to do you feel God wants you to take?

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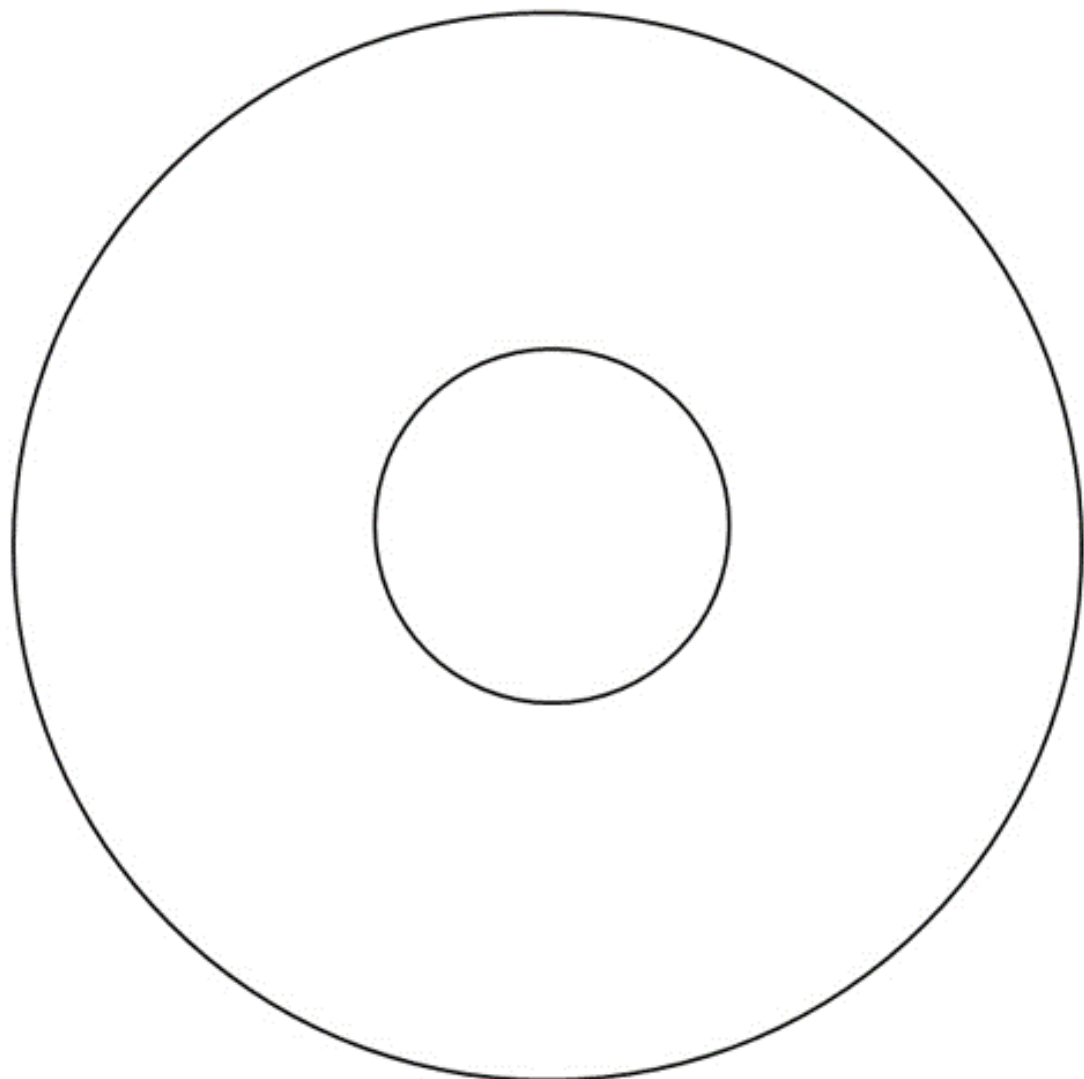
Jesus words imply the active role we have: **John 15:12-13** ¹²“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this that someone lay down his life for his friends.”

How can you be a better friend, integrating Jesus words into your life? For example, maybe you have a friend you haven’t called in a while. What do you believe God is asking of you as you finish this week focused on the relationship of friendship?

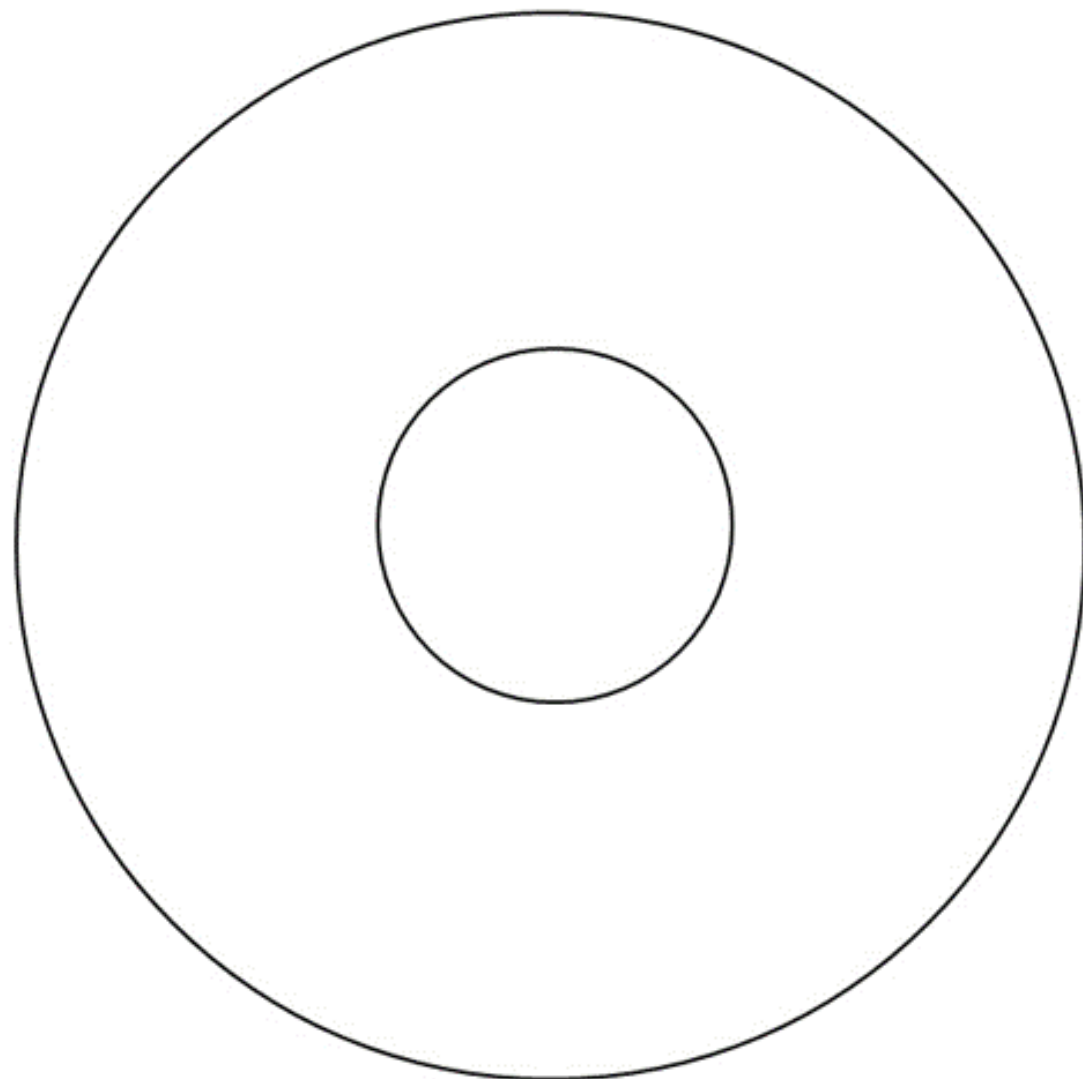
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DEVO | May 27/28, 2017

Tuesday



Tuesday



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All of us need deep friendships that help us grow to be more and more like Jesus. Through the example of Jesus and David and Jonathan, what is God showing you as we focus this week on friendship?

Pick a few names from your circle (from Tuesday's devotion) and pray for each person specifically. Ask God to show you how you can be a better friend for these people.

To be intentional in our friendships, we must learn God's wisdom and what His picture of health in a relationship looks like. This week we understand, through John 15:12-13, that Jesus calls us to a high standard. He wants us to love one another as He has loved us. How do we do this in our friendships? Have you experienced some different ways to become less selfish and more others-focused?

For you, what is most difficult about the humility, honesty, and vulnerability deep friendships require?

Has your definition of friendship changed this week? What is different about your understanding of how to be a friend? How have your expectations of others changed?