

## **MEN'S LIFE BLOOMINGTON & GOD @ WORK**

*Tuesday, November 13, 2018*

### **Friendship that is Meaningful**

#### **Overview:**

Male friendships once were common. We built them playing ball together, fishing together, and playing in the neighborhood together. Proverbs 18:24 reads, "One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." As we age the room left over for male friends becomes small, and easily out of focus. A wife, kids, and work change the paths we walk. Without proactive attention given to maintaining or seeking friendships that important male bonding and accountability disappear. Proverbs 27:17 reads, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." Are we forsaking this close bond in our lives that is designed to make us better?

**Hearing Our Stories:** Joshua Holden

#### **Segment Questions:**

- Describe what you think some of the friendships were like in Biblical times? What kind of friends would Abraham have had? Noah?
- Paul was a tax collector before he "saw the light" and became a Christian. What would his friendships have looked like before becoming a Christian? What would his friends have said/done when he became a Christian? What about after he became a Christian?
- Hebrews 10:25 says we should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some. Is that related to friendship, do you think? Could there be a parallel? What was the intent of this passage to encourage?
- How deep, how raw, how strong does the passage in Proverbs 27:17 intend to get in its description of one person sharpening another?

#### **Action Questions:**

- What value did having a close friend present in biblical days before Christ, and soon after his death and resurrection? List the "value"
- What value does having a close friend present in today's high functioning, relatively/comparably financially blessed, and politically charged time we live in?
- Do you seek, respect, and cultivate the Biblical idea of friendships, or the secular idea of friendships?
- For the end of 2018, going into 2019, does it make sense to begin cultivating a meaningful, valuable, and Biblical friendship for accountability/sharpening of your life?

#### **Personal Prayer:**

## Introduction

Proverbs 27:17 As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

Ecclesiastes 4:10 If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.

Proverbs 18:24 One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother

Hebrews 10:25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Male friendships once were common. We built them playing ball together, fishing together, and playing in the neighborhood together. As we age the room left over for male friends becomes small, and easily out of focus. A wife, kids, and work change the paths we walk. Without proactive attention given to maintaining or seeking friendships that important male bonding and accountability disappear.

About the only male bonding is looking at the other dads who are going through the same child rearing craze that we are. We shake a tired hand, bump flabby chests, and tell a story or two before one of the kids pulls us away because they need us. If we don't have kids taking up our time the other guys do, so they aren't available even though we are. Two guys having time on their hands to get together isn't frequent.

So many of us have friends, old ones, maybe new, that aren't as strong today, but we remember back when they were. We hang onto those friendships, barely. We say to each other, "Hey, isn't it cool how we can go a year without talking to each other and then pick right back up where we left off?" Like that is supposed to be a badge of honor. Well, it isn't. It says we have a friendship that we are clearly not cultivating, and it isn't meaningful enough to either of us to be consistently in touch.

In Proverbs we read how iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. What would that time together look like if afterward you said, "Man, that was meaningful"? My wife always asks me, so what did you guys talk about? Did you get deep and real about anything? I always answer, well, not really. I don't even know that we talked about anything significant other than sports.

In Ecclesiastes we read that if a friend falls down, you can pick him up. Too bad for the guy who has no friend there to pick him up. Think about who is in your life right now that would be so supportive that they would be ready to pick you up when you fall? How about a friend who would warn you that you are about to fall unless you make some adjustments? That would be accountability, right? Who here has an accountability partner? That can be either formal, or informal.

In Proverbs we read that those who have unreliable friends will come to ruin, but those great friends are as good as brothers. Have you ever called your buddy "brother"? Some guys I do call brother. I don't mean in the sense that we call him "Tiger" or "Chief" because we can't remember his real name!

If you went to your wife and told her that you need to create time to meet with a guy or two weekly so you could cultivate a strong, accountable friendship, would she say "No way, that is a waste of time. You have too much going on that I don't want you making time for that"? Likely she would say, "Me too! Can I do the same thing with a girlfriend?"

Consider being proactive and intentional about creating a friendship that could sharpen you, hold you accountable, and provide some manly bonding. At some point you will fall, and what a pity if there is no one there to pick you up.