

Rethinking Friendship

Staff Conversation

Fall 2019

The Daughters 1:9



Spiritual Friendship

1. Rooted in Jesus' life, teachings, and vision of the Kingdom

2. Practiced together by many Christians throughout history

- * Aelred of Rievaulx (a 12th century monk)

- * Wrote the book, *On Spiritual Friendship*



*** Every friendship is based on a shared purpose**

*** Three types of friendship:**

a. “Carnal friendship” – based on a shared pursuit of pleasure

b. “Worldly friendship” – based on shared pursuit of wealth, position or power

c. “Spiritual friendship” – based on a shared commitment to mutual discipleship and growth in Christ

3. Spiritual Friendship – What Is It & How Does It Work?

a. Usually two to four people

b. Core Values and Principles

(1) The friendship is centered around a Kingdom purpose

*** The main purpose = to help each other grow in becoming more mature disciples of Jesus (“being saved”)**

– “Friendship will be full of riches for those who cherish it, when it is completely centered upon God.”

– Aelred of Rievaulx,

On Spiritual Friendship

*** BarnaGroup Poll (2018) – Most friendships are based upon shared similarities that attract people to each other**

- Income (56%)**
- Religious & theological beliefs (62%)**
- Political views (62%)**
- Education level (63%)**
- Life-stage / Age (69%)**
- Social status (70%)**
- Race / Ethnicity (74%)**

*** American adults who identify as Bible-believing Christians are even less likely than most to have friends who are different than them, especially when it comes to:**

- Religious & theological beliefs (91%)**
- Political views (86%)**
- Race / Ethnicity (88%)**

*** In Spiritual Friendship, the primary attractor is . . .**

Jesus!

(1) Our siblinghood in the family of Jesus (“sisters & brothers”)

(2) Our shared commitment to grow into mature followers of Jesus (“being saved”)

(3) Our mutual calling to fulfill the mission of Jesus in this world

*** John 17:20-23 – “Father, I pray that . . . they may all be one, just as we are one I in them and you in me, so that they may be completely one, so that the world will know that you have sent me.”**

*** Gal 3:28 – “There is no longer Jew or Gentile. There is no longer slave or free. There is no longer male and female. For all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”**

*** Eph 2:14-16 – Jesus is our peace . . . He has made Jews and Gentiles into one. He has broken down the dividing wall of hostility between them. He has created one new humanity by reconciling both Jews and Gentiles to God, through the cross.”**

(2) Intentionality and Commitment

- * Clarity and agreement about the purpose for, and principles of, the friendship**
- * A mutual commitment to live this out together**
- * The commitment is aspirational!**

(3) Attentiveness and Responsiveness

*** Attentiveness = being actively available to each other**

- This will require consistently spending an agreed upon amount of time together

*** Responsiveness**

(4) Vulnerability and Honesty

*** “Eph 4:15 – “By speaking the truth in love, we will grow together to become the mature body of Christ”**

*** James 5:16 – “Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other . . .”**

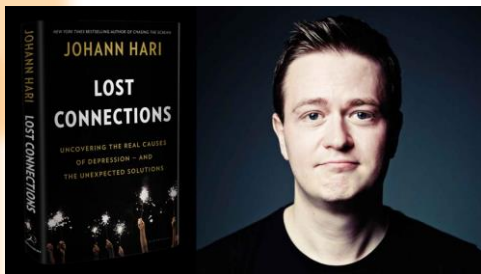
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*

*** Prov 27:17 – “Iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”**

*** Prov 27:6 – “Faithful are the wounds that a friend inflicts, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy”**

*** “Loneliness isn’t the physical absence of other people. It’s the sense that you’re not sharing anything that matters with anyone else. If you have lots of people around you — perhaps even a husband or wife, or a family, or a busy workplace — but you don’t share anything that matters with them, then you’ll still be lonely.”**

– Johann Hari, *Lost Connections: Why You’re Depressed and How to Find Hope* (2018)



(5) Mercy, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation

*** Matt 6: “Forgive us our sins as we have forgiven those who sinned against us”**

*** Matt 5:7 – “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy**

*** James 2:13 – “Mercy triumphs over judgment”**

(6) Trust and Trustworthiness

*** Prov 20:6 – “Many will say they are loyal friends. But who can find one who is worthy of trust?”**

*** “You are only as spiritual as your most committed and intimate relationships are godly How you treat and relate to your most intimate relationships is a measuring stick of your maturity, and how you operate in those relationships is a measure of your spirituality.”**

– Fred Markert (YWAM leader)



