

Men In Friendship

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[0 : 00] Well, we've had nine classes so far on our subject, the masculine mandate.

! In the foreword of the book, Jerry Bridges writes that what Rick Phillips, the author of the book, wrote is based solidly on scripture. So he gives us an accurate picture of what it means to be God's man.

And that can be and should be very reassuring to us. We don't want to miss the mark, really, of what real manhood is. And God, as the omniscient, wise, loving counselor, he has provided and preserved for us in his word that truth that we need to guide us in understanding really what biblical manhood is.

And we need that guidance today. So it's from God's word that we have what Rick Phillips calls the masculine mandate.

When we think of that word mandate and its definition, it's an official order or commission to do something. It's an authoritative command.

[1 : 15] Now, as men, we might stiffen when someone gives us an official mandate or an authoritative command.

But certainly not in this case, because this mandate comes from God. God is the only sovereign creator, God over all. He's all-knowing, all-wise, all-loving, compassionate.

He's worthy to be heard by people today. He's worthy for us to be listening to him. But not only that, for us to obey him as well.

But we should be listening to this mandate as well because it's for our good. being made in the image of God, severely damaged by sin.

Part of what God is doing for those who come to Him by faith in Jesus Christ is transforming us into the likeness of Jesus Christ in relation to our study today.

[2 : 19] He's transforming us as men into the image of, again, what true manhood is. And that's very good. For those of us who are willing to submit to God and live for His glory.

Anytime we know God's Word and practice God's Word, there is blessing. There is flourishing. There is a fruitfulness to our lives when we walk in His counsel.

Deuteronomy 6, 1-3, God had commanded Moses to teach the people His commandments, His statutes, His rules, if you want to say it that way.

And then Moses said to the people, Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them. Why? That it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you in the land flowing with milk and honey.

Now there's a similar reassurance in the New Testament as well. James 1, 25, other places too, but just pick one out. But the one who looks intently into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, there we go, careful to do them, being no hearer who forgets, but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

[3 : 39] So God truly is showing us His kindness as He gives us this official commission, this authoritative command, so we don't need to stiffen or bristle at this.

This is from God. It's for our good. And we can be reassured that His counsel is true, His counsel about true manhood.

Well, so how's it doing? How are you doing in regard to what you've heard so far in these lessons? Well, I hope you've been encouraged because you've recognized that what you've been hearing is truly what you've been thinking about what manhood is and what you've been putting in practice, not perfectly, but putting it in practice as you've moved throughout the years of your life since you've been a believer.

Or maybe you have recognized some areas where you need to grow and change. Well, that's good too. It's hard at times to recognize those areas where we do need to change, but it's good.

You've seen the biblical model of where you don't measure up, and now by God's grace, the work of His sanctifying Holy Spirit, we can take steps to change.

[5 : 01] In one of the endorsements of this book, Eric Redman writes, may men of the church answer the call of this mandate to stand up and be counted and to live out their faith courageously as workers, protectors, nurturers, and leaders for Christ and all the other topics that we've covered up to this point as well.

Well, this morning, we do want to answer God's call, His mandate, His authoritative command, and respond positively to what God's mandate is about friendship and men in friendship.

And part of what leads us to a high view of this whole matter of friendship and men in friendship, and that I think will really contribute to our positive response to this mandate, is understanding the origin and the purpose of friendship.

Romans 11.36 says, For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen. And then John 1.1-3, In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. Now we tend to, quite possibly, if we're not careful, we could tend to limit these verses just to material items that exist.

[6 : 34] The stars in the heavens, the water, the animals, so on and so forth, that God made. But the all things includes immaterial things as well, like what we're studying today.

Relationships of friendships that we have and can have with one another. So in what way did those friendships that we can enjoy come into existence?

Well, we've heard this as well in past lessons when we see that man was made in the image of God and after His likeness. Genesis 1, 25-27, then God said, Let us make man in our image after our likeness.

So God created man in His own image. In the image of God, He created him. Male and female, He created them. So what we see of men, and of course women too, but we're studying men in friendship, really has its origin in God.

In the beginning, God was already existing in relationship with Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In another book titled The Company We Keep in Search of Biblical Friendship, Jonathan Holmes writes this, The eternal trinity is the most fundamental expression of community and relationship, and I added friendship, Therefore, one of the simplest yet most profound aspects of mankind being made in God's image is that we were designed to live in friendship relationships.

[8 : 11] And I start thinking of that as I read that and as we'll continue further. I think of what a privilege that we have as human beings and in this case as men to be able to enter into these kind of relationships, friendship relationships, with one another.

That's something unique for us as God's creatures, men made in His image. Because Adam was made after God's likeness, it was not good for Adam to be alone.

Being alone, he could not fully image and display the beautiful image of friendship relationships that exist between God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Holmes continues, in his writing, the problem of Adam being alone, therefore, did not reflect a failure either in Adam's divine design or in his performance as a person.

It lay in the limited nature of humanity that none of us can be a community in ourselves. Well, we can't because I am one.

[9 : 20] I don't have another like me in me. like God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit does. So we, none of us, can be a community in ourselves the way God is in community with Himself.

Adam needed community in order to better image the God who is a community. He was created to pursue, develop, and maintain human relationships as an integral part of being made in the image of the triune God.

So, as we enter into biblical, God-centered friendship relationships with other men, we image or show forth what is true of our Creator God in a very important way.

This is not, this is truly what's at stake when we think of, well, why should I pursue biblical relationships with other men? Well, imaging what is true of God is at stake.

We can't set that aside. We must give ourselves wholly if we want to truly image forth what is true of Him. I want to pursue my growth and development in how I pursue biblical relationships with other men and how I manifest that in my relationships with them.

[10 : 42] And as we do that and give ourselves to it, well, we begin to accomplish the purpose of friendships and that is to glorify God. God-centered friendship relationships glorify God.

They point to what is glorious and beautiful about God. Like Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10.31, we're all familiar with that verse. So, whether you eat or drink, whatever you do, even friendships that we have with one another as men, we do it all for the glory of God.

I have to admit, I haven't always thought of making friendships, maintaining friendships for that purpose. You know, we think of, I need to go to do my work in a way that glorifies God.

I need to be a father in a way that glorifies God and so on and so forth. But have I applied that and really brought it to regular thought that as I come to church or go someplace, that I'm working to make relationships and friendships with others so that I can glorify God more and image forth what is beautiful about Him in His relationship as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

So, that's what we desire to do. That's what we want to do. God-centered friendship relationships truly glorify God.

[12 : 11] They point to what is glorious and beautiful about God. So, our friendship should reflect something of what exists in the friendship relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Now, we're not all there yet perfect. Someday we will be. But we're not there yet. But that doesn't change the goal. that we want to follow through on each and every day.

So, what do biblical friendship relationships look like? Well, let me begin by answering that by looking at what it's not. And again, we'll take some of these first three points from Holmes' book on friendship.

But these first three and I added another one really come up short certainly of glorifying God, but they also come up short in the pleasure and in the enjoyment that we can experience as human beings made in the image of God made for friendships with other, in this case, men.

So, what are some of those wrong concepts or distortions? social media friendships, email, Facebook, Xgram, X, Instagram, Snapchat.

[13 : 29] I had to ask my grandson, Gage, what are some of the social media platforms that people are following Gage? He said, not Facebook. So, I said, well, what else is there? So, he told me about some of these extras.

So, while they do provide an avenue to connect with friends, we had that experience as we were in South Africa when we first went over there, we used Skype.

It was like, eh, eh, eh, in a picture, doing whatever they couldn't do back then. By the time we left, man, in a clear picture, talking, and we still now can speak and communicate with friends over there today through this technology.

So, certainly are some good points about it. But there are some weaknesses as well. Certainly, they're shallow friendships. Many times, they're not honest friendships.

They're easily ended friendships. Isn't there something on Facebook that says, unfriend? Wow. You know, how quick can you do that? I don't like what they said.

[14 : 34] Point unfriended. And, so, weak friendships, easily ended friendships. And the evidence, really, of the shallowness of these online friendships is seen in, really, in the high number of people that admit loneliness and depression today.

From the Metagallup survey, just one statistic. It's so prevalent among younger demographics. 27% of young adults, which I assume would be the major ones using these social communications, reported feeling lonely compared to 17% of those age 65 or older.

Next one would be specialized friendships. This is when the individual reduces the relationship to a specific stage of life or common interest or activity. Stage of life, meaning you surround yourself with people who are at the same stage or point of life you are.

Young people with young people. Singles with singles. Young marrieds with younger marrieds. Senior saints with senior saints. Again, not saying that you shouldn't cultivate such friendships.

We do that and we enjoy those kind of friendships. But, to make your chosen demographic, your central focus of friendship relationships instead of Christ and His truth and relationships with others really limits the possibilities of growing and learning and serving opportunities you might have with others that go beyond that certain stage of life and miss showing really forth the beauty of God's grace and goodness in all kinds of friendships with all kinds of people.

[16 : 20] Or maybe common interest friendships. You focus your friendship relationships only on those who share a common interest with you. Sports, fishing, camping, investments, physical fitness, food preparation, on and on we go.

There's all kinds of areas that we can share a common interest with someone else. But again, they make for a weak foundation for our relationships and don't really once again reflect the oneness of our relationships that comes from our union with Jesus Christ that goes beyond any of these other temporary interests and relationships that we might have.

The biblical friendship that has Christ and His Word as the foundation really does stand the test of time and even interest that people might have.

It brings all kinds of people together even as we see this morning. We're not here as Campers for Christ Church or Hot Rodders Reformed Baptist Church or whatever other interests you might have.

We're here as Grace Fellowship Church. People who have their relationship, their friendship relationships based on a common bond that we have in Jesus Christ and His Word.

[17 : 45] and that will stand the test of time. You pick up and you move from here to another church. You go to another church that is a good solid church. Right away you establish new friendships with people because we already have that common bond that makes for a solid foundation for friendship relationships and that is in Jesus Christ.

and then our selfish friendships and this friendship that's built only on what I can gain from that relationship. What's in it for me may be approval.

I want affirmation from others. I'll be a friend of those who affirm me and approve what I think and do. Paul saw the dangers of such a focus when considering the right motive for preaching the gospel.

For am I now seeking the approval of man or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man I would not be a servant of Christ and that's true.

Whether it was for Paul or for us in pursuing relationships with other people. Am I looking just for somebody that's going to give me approval in what I think and do? Then it's really setting up for again a weak foundation.

[19 : 03] And if that person goes away you move away. Now I've got to find another people group that will give me the approval and affirmation that I want. Now our approval and affirmation comes in Jesus Christ.

Or maybe it's prestige or status. This person chooses friends who will make him look important. Who will give him a higher esteem among people. Haman was one of these men.

When he was invited to banquet with the king and the queen he boasted to his wife and friends about the splendor of his riches, the promotion which the king had given him. And in Esther 5.12 he said this, Even Queen Esther, let no one but me come with the king to the feast she prepared and tomorrow also I am invited by her together with the king.

He said, wow, it's so wonderful that I get to be identified with Queen Esther. Probably didn't want that identification the day after that he had said that.

But that's what was important to him and gave him that esteem. Or maybe financial friends. Friends, we make friends with those who will really benefit me financially.

[20 : 15] Proverbs 19, wealth brings many new friends but a poor man is deserted by his friends. Many seek the favor of a generous man and everyone is a friend to a man who gives gifts.

All the poor man's brothers hate him. How much more do his friends go far from him? Well, there's many more examples of these selfish friendships in another book written by Amy Baker titled Getting to the Heart of Friendships.

And then one last one, secluded friendships. Leave me alone. Don't get too close. Having friendships costs too much, requires too much for me. I've been hurt in the past and I'm not going there again.

I'm an introvert. I'm more of a loner. I don't need other people. We think that that's what a real man is. It can be the Jeremiah Johnson. How many have seen Jeremiah Johnson?

Oh, there's some of you that haven't seen that classic wilderness movie. Yeah, him and all the other guys were out there on their own in the wilderness.

[21 : 22] There's times to be alone and in the wilderness or whatever but not as a regular practice. Such wrong concepts of friendship reflect really, truly nothing of what is glorious about God and contributes nothing toward developing flourishing relationships with others.

So, now let's focus on some of the marks of biblical friendships. And as I work my way through these marks of biblical friendship, let your mind also, this is where I'll let you, let your mind wander a little bit to how they truly tell the truth about Jesus Christ who's the greatest friend that any of us could ever have.

Number one, biblical friendships begin with having a heart for God and others. Truly, that would be true of Jesus Christ as he expressed his love to the Father and has he labored together with the Father and submitted himself to the Father.

Mark 12, 29-31, Jesus answered, the most important is this, is, hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength.

The second is this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. There's no other commandment greater than these. Love God first and most. Prior to our repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, the love in our hearts certainly was misdirected.

[23 : 01] It was directed toward ourselves and my own self-interest. But upon hearing the Gospel and as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit where He grants us spiritual life, faith, and repentance to believe, trusting Christ as our Savior, confessing Him as Lord, now God's Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us and thus the love of God is poured out into our hearts.

So now we have the true potential of making these biblical friendship relationships because we have a new love, the love of God that's poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who's given to us.

and now we do want to please Him and glorify Him. Our hearts have a new orientation of love toward God and we now, as it says in 2 Corinthians 5.9, we now make it our aim to please Him.

Well, as it relates to our topic today, we want to show forth what is glorious about God in our friendship. That's the new orientation of my heart. it's no longer about me first but rather God and His glory.

But then also it's important that we love others with the love of God. Again, that's poured out into our hearts. I could never love that person. Well, yes you can, actually. Even if God was able to love us as we were and are with His kind of love, now that that love is poured out into our hearts, actually we can love others who are unlovely like we still are at times and that we hope others are loving us with the love of God that the Spirit of God has put in their hearts.

[24 : 54] Loving God first then gives us the ability to love others as Christ loves us. Romans 5.5, God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

John 13.34, a new commandment I give to you that you love one another. How? Just as I have loved you. You also are to love one another.

By this all people will know that you are my disciples. You'll be manifesting that which is true of God as seen in the person of Jesus Christ as He walked this earth and really showed biblical friendship in His relationships with all people and in this case of our study toward men, His disciples.

So you begin reflecting on seeing, well, how did Jesus walk among people? How did He work at making those friendship relationships? What did He do to maintain those biblical friendship relationships?

Well, the manifestation of the Holy Spirit's presence in the believer's life is the display of the love of God in our friendship relationships.

[26 : 09] And having such a love in our hearts will manifest it outwardly. And that's what we want to take a look at now. How would it be manifested in our friendship relationships?

Well, in our book, Masculine Mandate, Richard Phillips uses the friendship relationship between Jonathan and David to highlight some of the marks of biblical friendship. Remember, Jonathan was King Saul's son.

King Saul was on a rampage to kill David. Jonathan could certainly secure his position as future king of Israel if David was killed, but selfish ambition was not what ruled in his heart.

He was not callous and unfeeling in this case toward David and certainly toward God and God's command. He was one that also took delight in God's commands, his statutes, and the mandate, the masculine mandate was truly living in.

Their friendship relationship was built upon those greatest commands, love for God and others. David had been serving in God's household and I expect Jonathan was there and heard David playing his lyre and singing songs to calm his father Saul when Saul was harmed by the harmful spirit within him and I also expect Jonathan was there on the battlefield when David went out to face Goliath and David declared God's power, God's glory among two Goliath and up for all to hear and all that David spoke and did I believe resonated with Jonathan and this is what's written in 1 Samuel 18.

[27 : 53] as soon as he, David, had finished speaking on the battlefield speaking to Saul I mean the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as his own soul and Jonathan stripped himself of his robe that was on him and gave it to David and his armor and even his sword and his bow and his belt.

Each man, David and Jonathan, loving God and the other over self is really what gave them that bond of friendship. That oneness of soul that's what united them.

And this is the bond that really truly does bring us together as friends and the bond that will enable us to continue as friends. We're going to work as the principle in the book is you work to move in that direction to make friends and then you continue to to keep or maintain those relationships, those friendship relationships as you move day by day.

And out of this common bond of love for God and others, there was really a shared covenant or commitment to each other. 1 Samuel 18.3 Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as his own soul.

[29 : 17] That word covenant. An agreement of perpetual friendship. In the literal word it says a pledge. An alliance of friendship. I mean, such a practice isn't totally foreign to us.

We've all attended weddings before. There's a covenant of marriage. The couple speaks their vows to each other. Certainly, it's an agreement of perpetual friendship that we're hearing from these two individuals.

covenanting together. But then also church membership. When we have a service where we welcome in new church members, the individual and the members declare to each other their love for God and each other, and we all covenant and pledge to certain actions that will contribute to a perpetual friendship.

This alliance of friendship that we have. So these are strong commitments that we make certainly verbally to one another, but then we live out day by day as we even are here today.

We begin thinking, well, how will I show this covenant of friendship that I have with so-and-so as I move through the hallway or after the service or during the week, so on and so forth?

[30 : 40] Well, even apart from marriage or church membership, true biblical friendship has this kind of solid commitment that isn't easily broken.

There truly is a loyalty of love for God, His glory, and my friend that I have. Does this describe your approach to friendship relationships?

Well, let's go on. Their friendship was a bond of sacrificial love. Jonathan displayed true friendship in his sacrificial love toward David.

His friendship with David truly cost him hugely. It cost him his royal position and possessions. 1 Samuel 18, Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David and his armor and even his sword and his bow and his belt.

It cost him his father's favor. Jonathan truly was a friend of David and Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan and he cursed Jonathan and Jonathan's mother.

[31 : 46] And when Jonathan said David didn't deserve to die, Saul hurled his spear at Jonathan. Proverbs 18, 24, A man of many companions may come to ruin.

There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. In this case, you could say father. Jonathan was that friend of David. But it also cost him time and energy to go to David.

Proverbs 17, 17, A friend loves at all times. And Jonathan was that kind of friend to David. So again, do we find ourselves to be this kind of friend to others that we're willing to sacrifice position, possession, time, whatever else there might be when my friend is in need?

Am I willing to sacrifice what it takes to help him? Jonathan was. In fact, next point, he took the initiative. It motivates you to move toward others, not away.

1 Samuel 23, 15, David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. David was in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh. Jonathan, Saul's son, rose and went to David at Horesh and strengthened his hand in God.

[33 : 06] I don't know how Jonathan found out about David's situation, but when he did find out about it, he moved in David's direction to help him as a true friend.

He took the initiative and went to David. That's what that bond, that commitment, that covenant of friendship, what it does when your friend is in need.

Phillips in his book says, from the comfort of the king's royal provision, he ventured out into the desert deprivation of his friend.

To remind you of another friend that did that, Jesus Christ went into our desert deprivation to come to us and to help us, that's true friendship.

But friendship also speaks the truth in love. Jonathan moved in the right direction and also discerned what David needed most. 1 Samuel 23, Jonathan strengthened David's hand in God and he said to him, Do not fear, for the hand of Saul, my father, shall not find you.

[34 : 14] You shall be king over Israel and I shall be next to you. Kind of reminds you of someone else as well, right? I will never leave you and never forsake you. Saul, my father, also knows this.

David was in a desert place, both physically, but I'm also sure in his own soul at that time, emotionally.

The wilderness of Ziph, King Saul constantly pursuing him, trying to kill him. You think he might have been weary and discouraged, beginning to doubt quite possibly the plans that God had for him, that he was supposed to be king?

Well, in the midst of his great difficulties, when David possibly began to doubt God's plan, his friend Jonathan, moving his direction, came to him and reminded him that God's promises would come to pass.

You shall be king over Israel. Jonathan discerned what David needed most and he spoke God's truth and promises to him.

[35 : 21] A couple other verses there. Proverbs 27, Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend. Profuse are the kisses of an enemy.

The sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel. You think David found that counsel from his friend Jonathan as sweet to his soul when he needed it?

We can be those kind of friends to each other, providing that kind of sweet counsel from God's Word. but we have to be ready to live out of this covenant relationship, this commitment to be a true friend, a biblical friend, a one who's ready and willing to manifest what is true in the friendship between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ as he manifested that friendship to us.

Proverbs 28, 23, Whoever rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with his tongue. as friends, are we ready to speak God's truth to one another in those times of need?

There's so much more that could be shared in regard to what some of those marks are. How can I become such a friend to others?

[36 : 38] This is where, this is on that sheet that I handed out to you. just for some additional reflection as you go from here today. Number one, become a friend of God by repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

You can have that new heart orientation. Reorient your heart toward loving God first. And with that love of God that's poured in your heart, now you'll find yourself ready and wanting, desiring, as Jesus said to us and came to us, you'll also have this new desire because the love of God is in your heart.

To move in the direction of building those kind of friendship relationships, making them and maintaining them. But first, become that friend of God.

Submit to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit to make you more like Jesus in making and maintaining friendship relationships. Certainly, make it a matter of prayer.

You think, yeah, just not that kind of person. Hey, anyone of us could say that about in any other area of our lives, this is what I am and I'm not like this.

[37 : 49] That's what God's all about doing. The sanctifying work of His Holy Spirit through His Word, praying for one another that we would be able to be transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

God gives grace and mercy in your time of need. Some other verses there. Two, continue to study the Scriptures for God's counsel on friendships.

Refer to the various verses in the Bible where the word friend is used and record what's indicated about friendship. There's a lot of verses in there that I didn't hit on this morning. You can go through the Scriptures and see what kind of friendships there were between people.

Paul and Silas. And on and on we go. Jonathan and David. Job and his friends. You can see some negative examples as well in the Scriptures.

What qualities of true friendship are seen between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? There's a good discussion question. If we had another half hour in class, we could open it up and begin sharing.

[38 : 56] What do I see in their relationship that really we could manifest in our relationship with each other? What qualities of true friendship toward people are seen in the life of Jesus?

Some examples there. Three, evaluate your motives and actions regarding how you make and maintain friendships. What you need to change or put off in your motives and actions so that you can glorify God more in how you make and maintain friendships.

What godly motives and actions can you put on this week in order to glorify God as you make and maintain friendships. As you go from here this morning, what will you do in your friendships with each other here?

Thankfully, in our church, we see individuals staying together and talking. Well, that's good. That's a good exercise of building and maintaining some of those friendships.

But you're going to have to move beyond there as you move throughout the rest of your day and week. number four, go in the power of the Holy Spirit and reach out to other men and make and maintain friendships that glorify God and are for their welfare and you will be blessed in doing so.

[40 : 16] It will go well with you. You will have that kind of joy. Jonathan Holmes, a quote to finish up, friendship flourishes best when we seek to be and embody the type of friend we see in God Himself and the person of Jesus Christ and His Word.

Well, my friends, in our friendship with God and each other, let's go this week, even today, as I said, and make it our ambition and our aim to glorify God, to image forth what really is truly is true of God in the relationship between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Well, in an act of friendship, let me pray for you. Heavenly Father, how we can be here as a group of men this morning just giving thanks to you for this honor that we have by faith in Jesus Christ to be at peace with you, to be a friend of you, and we know that it was because you took the initiative years and years ago before the foundation of the world, and then you continued to work in sending Jesus Christ to manifest truly what it is to be a friend of God and to be a friend to others.

You've worked in our hearts, You've changed our hearts, and Father, with this new desire, we pray now that we would keep in step with what Your Holy Spirit wants to do in us and through us in building biblical friendships with each other and then with others beyond this building.

Father, we depend on You to do that work in us by the power of Your Spirit. We know that You will help us as friends, to encourage each other to continue on, and we look forward to the flourishing that will come in Your name being honored and glorified, and in the pleasure that we'll be able to enjoy as being children of God.

[42 : 29] In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.