

Friends

Bill Dedmon

According to The American Heritage Dictionary, a friend is a person whom one knows, likes and trusts. I am not so sure that that is a good definition of a friend. The Bible has several references to “friend”. There are over ninety-seven references to friend(s) in both the Old and New Testaments. In the New Testament, Jesus speaks concerning friends. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). Jesus paints a much different picture of a friend than our dictionaries depict. The Greek word Jesus used for friend in the text is “philos” meaning, “dear” an associate or neighbor. Concerning neighbor, Jesus tells us what our relationship should be in the account of the Good Samaritan.

In the Old Testament Jonathan and David’s friendship is described in somewhat the same way Jesus spoke of laying down one’s life. *“And it came to pass on the morrow, which was the second day of the month, that David’s place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor to day? And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem: And he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath commanded me to be there: and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king’s table. Then Saul’s anger was kindled against Jonathan, for as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die. And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, wherefore shall he be slain? What hath he done? And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David. So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame”* (1 Samuel 20:27-34).

What is friendship from your perspective? To me friends are those people who will go the third and fourth mile with only a mere suggestion to go the first. I believe friends are those people who will give up their time to help build barns, houses, or move furniture. And when you try to thank them, their reply is, “It was nothing”. A true friend is one who can say “nice shot” over seventy-five times during a round of golf, or “good putt” fifty-four times. Only a true friend can do that. Solomon said, *“A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother”* (Proverbs 18:24).

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