



## Millennium Men Week 11: We Need Each Other

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*I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions?... If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?..."*

*Merchant of Venice. Shakespeare/Bacon*

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The play is about a Shylock who is mistreated by the Christians around him because he's Jewish. The quote is a plead to those around him to see him as human.

How we treat those that are different from us, Muslims, atheists, Transgendered people... Is a reflection of Christ that is in us. Together, in groups, we have a tendency to cloister around those that are most like us and eschew the ones that aren't. Those like us are safe. We feel "right" in our beliefs when we stand only around those that believe the same thing. But Shakespeare echoed a common human sentiment to those oppressed; "we all bleed the same".

My challenge to you is to keep yourself from cloistering around the same fires over and over, seeking acceptance in the "sameness" of others. God has called you out of the comfort zone. He has called you to much more than that. We cannot allow our fires to be extinguished by bland uniformity. Our friend-groups should entail those of differing beliefs, backgrounds, races and political beliefs.

### **What is the status of your friendships?**

We need quality friendships. Our friend groups should be diverse.

Emotional toll of quarantine: Half of Americans have lost touch with at least a few friends

1/10 have lost touch with most of their friends

Women... 3/5 young women report having lost touch with a few friends

16% have lost touch with most of their friends.

Americans have been declining with the number of close friends over the past decades

Percentage of people who have 3 or fewer close friends:

1990's: 27%

In the 2021: 50%

10 or more close friends:

1990's: 33%

2021: 13%

No close friends:

1990's: 3%

2021: 12%

Types of American Friendships:

Situation based

Activity based

40% have online friends only

4/5 black Americans have a friendship from childhood

Gender: Women 50% Men: 25%

Republicans: 11% have no Democrat Friends

Democrats: 29% have no Republican Friends

33% of Liberal Women stopped being friends over politics

23% of Americans that go to religious services one time per week report being lonely

50% Those who never attend church... report being lonely

Since 2015: Teenagers that have interacted with other friends in person has dropped 40%.

Jesus said to His disciples that: **You are my friends.**

John 15:12

This is my command, that you love one another as I have loved you.

**What is the standard of a true friend?**

John 13:34

Love one another, just as I have loved you. By this they will know that you are my disciples.

John 13:35

Greater love has no one than one who will lay down his life for his friends.

1 John 3:16

By this we know love, He laid down his for us. And so we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

Sebastian Junger said that soldiers come home and they miss combat. They miss war. Why? They don't miss the death or the danger, they miss the camaraderie. They miss one another. They desire this level of truth and intimacy that men know when they look in one another's eyes before they jump out of the plane or the Higgins Boat door drops and the bullets begin to fly. The playing field is level. The truth of the matter, the crux of the matter comes to us all that as Shakespeare said, "We all bleed the same." Regardless of our political viewpoints or socioeconomic status. We are all human with flesh, emotions, soul and spirit.

The God that said in Romans 8:37 that we are more than conquerors and that the same God who did not even withhold His own Son from death will not withhold from us any good thing...

Each other.

Reading through the life of David I think the greatest moment of David's life wasn't when they crowned him King, but in the cave when he longed for water from the well of his youth, the well in Bethlehem, and three of his loyal men snuck away, broke through the Philistine lines and brought him water. That's loyalty. That's true friendship. That's honor and David was never honored more than that in his life, in my opinion.

Half of our movies are about friendships and loyalty. It's a characteristic we long for because God placed the longing within us.

We need each other. It is not good for man to be alone.

Men need other men.

There is a fight ahead of us and we need one another to hold each other up when the other is weak. We need wise council, prayer, encouragement, enlightenment, someone to interceded for us, someone to make us laugh and to hold out a hand when we fail.

Jerry Clower once said that real friendship is going to get your buddy out of the ditch and not asking him how he got there. My hope is that you've found someone to connect with in this group. If not, make a point to go to lunch with someone and get to know them. Make a point to reach out and just say, hello. Be available for a phone call. At the end of our lives, it is the relationships we've forged that will be remembered most fondly. And real discipleship happens in relationship. We all need discipling. We all need encouraging.

Thomas Aquinas said, "justice without mercy is cruelty". When discipling our friends, may your words be peppered with grace and mercy, as well as truth.

Ecclesiastes 4:12

*Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.*

How do we get friends?

A friend disadvantages himself for your advantage. A true friend is there in your hardest times. They show up. They celebrate with you when you succeed. They mourn with you through your losses. It's not convenient. That's laying down your life for one another. To gain friends, we must be a good friend.

How good of a friend are you?

How many close friends do you have?

Do you have someone you can share your weaknesses with? (Accountability Partner)



## **Millennium Men Survey**

1. Do you feel like you've grown spiritually through the course of this semester?
2. Do you feel like you have a better idea of what your life's purpose is?
3. What was your favorite or most impactful lesson and Why?
4. What should we add to the class to make it better?
5. What should we leave out of the class?
6. What is your next step, Spiritually?

7. Have you ever been Baptized by the Holy Spirit?

Other Comments: