

No Greater Love: Following Jesus in True Friendship

Part 1 (June 14, 2023)

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Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. Prov. 13:20
Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy. Prov. 27:6 Oil and perfume make the heart glad, So a man's counsel is sweet to his friend. Prov. 27:9

Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man, lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare. Prov. 22:24-25 Do not be misled; **Bad company corrupts good character.** 1Cor. 15:33 **Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?** 2 Cor. 6:14

Iron sharpens iron, So one man sharpens another. Prov. 27:17 Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. **For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up.** Also, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him; a threefold cord is not quickly broken. Eccl. 4:9-12

A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. Prov. 18:24 **Do not forsake your friend and your father's friend, and do not go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity. Better is a neighbor who is near than a brother who is far away.** Prov. 27:10

Seven (or Eight) "Loves" in Greek; the **New Testament & C.S. Lewis, The Four Loves:**

Storgé (familial love; attachment to what/who is familiar; love of kin, tribe, country [e.g., patriotism])

Philautia (self love); cf. Narcissus → narcissism

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Ludus (playful love/ potentially fleeting love) cf. flirting

Eros (romantic love and/or sexually passionate love)

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Lewis, Four Loves and the New Testament

Storge: empathy bond - includes "need-love" [e.g., baby for mother, pet for hand that feeds, and – in many cases – mutual spousal love]

Philia: (deep) friend bond - "the least biological, organic, instinctive, gregarious and necessary...the least natural of loves". We don't need friendship in order to reproduce, but to the classical and medieval worlds, it is a higher-level love because it is **freely chosen**. "[T]o the Ancients, **Friendship** seemed the happiest and most fully human of all loves; the crown of life and the school of virtue. The modern world, in comparison, ignores it".

Eros: romantic love - "being in love" or "loving" someone, as opposed to the raw sexuality of what Lewis terms as "Venus."

Agapé: unconditional, selfless godly love - "gift love"/ "charity"

Lewis, **"What draws people to be friends is that they see the same truth. They share it."**

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Part 2 (June 21, 2023)

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. Prov. 17:17 *A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.* Prov. 18:24

But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. Also, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, **two will withstand him; a threefold cord is not quickly broken.** Eccl. 4:10b-12

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? 2 Cor. 6:14

Lewis, on *Philia* (deep friendship love) in *The Four Loves*:

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Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics – A central essential to a virtuous life is living in friendship.

Francis Bacon, "Of Friendship" – **"For crowd is not company; and faces are but a gallery of pictures; and talk but a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love."** **True friendship** is for us as human beings a **necessity, "without which the world is but a wilderness."**

Cf. **Agapé**: unconditional, selfless godly love - "charity:" what Lewis calls "**gift love**."

Recapping *and Adding to Our Notes on the Covenantal, Prophetic (Prophetic Type) Friendship of Jonathan & David*:

Jonathan יֹנָתָן "The LORD has given/gives" (*"Given of the LORD"*). *natan/nathan* Heb. vb. "to give"
Cf. Mattathias & Matthew (etc): "Gift of the LORD."

David דָּוִד Hebrew: (1) "David;" (2) "Beloved."

From David's grieving lament on learning that Jonathan & Saul were killed in battle:

"I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant have you been to me; your love to me was extraordinary, surpassing the love of women.

How the mighty have fallen, and the weapons of war perished! 2 Sam. 1:26-27

"extraordinary"

מְאֹד נִפְלְאוֹתָהּ *meod niphleathah* very wonderful ← *pala* Heb. vb. To be extraordinary
pele Heb. n. (& adj.) a wonder/ supernatural
hayipale Is anything **too hard** for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son." Gen. 18:14

פְּלֵא יוֹעֵץ *pele yoetz* "**Wonderful counselor**"/ "**Supernatural Planner**" Isaiah 9:6

Jonathan & David each in different ways prophetic types of Jesus: Examples of covenant-brotherly & hesed/ agape.

Key Action, Mindsets & Issues with friendships:

(1) Choosing;

(2) Mutual effort toward Alignment; and

(3) Trusting/Believing.

Abraham, God's Beloved Friend:

And he [Abram] **believed in the LORD**; & He [the LORD] **reckoned it to him [Abram] as righteousness.** Gen. 15:6

And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “**Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.**” And he was **called “Friend [philos] of God.”** James 2:23

2 Chronicles 20:7 “Did You not, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel and give it to the descendants/seed of **Abraham Your friend forever?**

אֶהְיֶה לְעוֹלָם אֹהַבְךָ ohavka l’olam – “friend forever” or “everlasting friend”

Hebrew literally: “**YOUR BELOVED**” “**to perpetuity**” and/or “**to antiquity**”

Isaiah 41:8-10 “**But you [2ms], Israel, my servant, Jacob – whom I have chosen –**

the offspring [seed] of Abraham, my friend אֹהַבְךָ ohavi;” lit. “**My beloved (friend)**”

“**But you (2d. masc. sing.), Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend;”** you (2d. masc. sing.) whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners, saying to you (2d. masc. sing.), ‘You (2d. masc. sing.) are my servant, I have chosen you (2d. masc. sing.) and not cast you off (2d. masc. sing.);’ **fear not (2d. masc. sing.), for I am with you (2d. masc. sing.); be not dismayed (2d. masc. sing.), for I am your God; I will strengthen you (2d. masc. sing.), I will help you (2d. masc. sing.), I will uphold you (2d. masc. sing.) with my righteous right hand.**” Isaiah 41:8-10

We – in Christ – are Children of Abraham, God's Beloved Friend... and are friends/brothers of Jesus:

Just as Abraham “believed God, and it was reckoned/counted/credited to him as righteousness”?

Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. Galatians 3:6-7

Especially with our Christian friends/brothers, we are to follow through on what God's Word calls us to do for fellow believers (e.g., “one another” passages):

“**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.**” John 13:34

But encourage one another every day, as long as it is *still* called “today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Hebrews 3:13

Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. Romans 12:15

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy & beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, **bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.** Colossians 3:12-13

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