

BLOOM 2023 presents

Sweet & Sour Friendship 2

Name :

Introduction

Recap

Christian friendship is: *a close, constant relationship that uses wise, truthful words to help one another grow to maturity in Christ, our dearest friend.*

1. SOUR FRIENDSHIP- friendship gone wrong

a) Too much of a good thing

Some questions to consider:

- Do you get jealous when your friend gets closer to others? Do you get annoyed when others join in, so you're not spending time alone together?
- Have you lost interest in other friendships, or making new friends?
- Do you avoid conflict with your friend for fear of losing intimacy in the relationship?
- Are flattering words or praise common? (For example, "You are the only one who understands me" or, "I don't know what I'd do without you.")
- Do you share things with this friend that you don't pray about? Is this person always your first port of call for help (rather than turning to God)?
- Do you frequently ask permission from your friend to do things?
- Are you in non-stop communication with this friend (texts, phone calls, whatsapp, emails)?
- Do you feel like you couldn't live without this friend?

b) Presence of 'bad' things

i. Limitations

ii. Sin & insecurity

Galatians 5:17 ¹⁷ *For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.*

Passage	Sinful desires / old self
Galatians 5	Idolatry, Enmity (hostility), Strife, Jealousy, Anger, Rivalry, Envy, Conceit, Provoking each other
Colossians 3	Impurity, Evil desire, Covetousness, Anger, Wrath, Malice, Slander, Obscene talk, Lies
Eph 4	Falsehood, Anger, Stealing from others, Corrupting talk
Phil 2	Selfish ambition, conceit, Looking to my own interests

Idolatry

Selfishness

Pride

Insecurity

2. REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

- a) **Sin** means we'll need to expect:
 - i) *Sour elements*

ii) *Growth opportunities*

b) **Limitations** means we'll need to expect:

i) *Seasonal variations*

ii) *Realistic numbers*

3. STEPS FORWARD

a) **Reflect**

b) **Repent**

c) **Reach out**

i) Your friend

ii) Someone to help you and your friend

d) **Re-orientate**

i) *Yourself* to Christ and the gospel

How change happens / motivation for change	Spirit desires / new self
New identity: we belong to Christ & so crucify our sinful desire Ability: we have the Spirit, so we can live by the Spirit & keep in step with the Spirit	Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-control
New status: we have died with Christ & been raised with Christ New identity: God's chosen ones, holy & beloved	Compassionate hearts, Kindness, Humility, Meekness, Patience, Bearing with each other Forgiving each other, Love, Peaceful, Teaching each other, Admonishing each other, Thankfulness
Christ: He teaches us to put off the old self & put on the new self Christians: we are one body (united) We've experienced forgiveness & love from God through Christ	Speaking truth, Don't stay angry, Speech that builds up, that gives grace to hearers, Kindness, Tender-hearted to others, Forgiving one another
Ability: We have the mind of Christ (humility & selflessness). God works in us to will & work for his good pleasure	Love & unity, Humility, Look to others' interests

ii) *Your friendships* to Christ

e) **(Be) Realistic**

Conclusion

Small Group Time (40 mins)

1. How have you gotten on with friendships since the last Bloom session? Any changes to share with others in the group?

You've been grouped together based on the same friendship issue you most commonly face. Try to narrow the following discussion to thinking about this particular friendship issue. It'll be even better if you have a specific person / scenario in mind. But please refrain from using names or identifiers where possible when you share & discuss with your fellow small group members

2. What might be the greatest contributing factors to your friendship problems? Reflect on points 1 & 2 of the talk. It's probably best that this is personal reflection only.

Limitations

Sin

Insecurity

Wrong expectations

3. How might coming to Jesus, your best 3C friend, help you face this friendship issue? Eg. How will his closeness comfort you, what wisdom & truth might He counsel you with, how could he help you in this time of difficulty? Share this with the group

4. Which of the 'R' steps:

a) Have you already worked through? Share with your group what has been helpful in this.

b) Do you still need to address? How /when will you do so?
What would get in the way of this?

5. Are there questions you have about the talk or topic that you want to raise in QnA? If so, submit it at **slido.com, meeting #2904851**

Interviews

Serene Ting

Annabel Fraser

QnA

Suggested Prayer Time (20 mins) – in pairs

1. Share with your partner your answers to questions 3 & 4, in relation to a particular friendship

2. Pray for each other in light of what they shared:
 - a) that God would work powerfully in this situation
 - b) for them to respond in a God-honouring way, and to grow in overcoming whatever obstacles that would enable them to do that
 - c) for their friend, that they too can respond in a way that honours God, through growing in their relationship with Jesus & grasp of the gospel

Recommended Reading

- “True Friendship” by Vaughan Roberts
- “Messy Beautiful Friendship: Finding & nurturing deep and lasting relationships” by Christine Hoover
- “Relationships: a mess worth making” by Paul Tripp & Timothy Lane