

sermon study guide

May 1/2, 2021

(see next page for Sermon Summary)

“How Then Shall We Live?” Part 2: Pursue Relationship

Dr. Henry Schorr

IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. How, and how long ago, did you and one of your best friends meet? Share one or two things that have sustained your friendship? How has this relationship changed over time?
2. What makes your close friends close? Did you choose them? Why? How may you have come by any unlikely friendships?

UP - PURSUE GOD

Read Romans 12:9-13 and Philippians 2:3

3. List the different commands that Paul gives. How do these each help to restore the original plan God had for relationships before the fall in Genesis?

Read Matt 22:34-40 and John 13:34-35

4. How can we keep our spiritual fervor, serving the Lord, and be devoted to one another in brotherly love at the same time? What are intentional rhythms that help you stay connected to one another, to God, and to God’s mission?

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. Who is somebody you are intentionally seeking out to be a friend? What steps can you take to pursue that friendship?
6. Romans 12 gives a detailed description of what true friendships look like. How can this be helpful to you in a relationship that may be strained or in need of repair?

THE WORD (NIV)

Romans 12:9-13

9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Philippians 2:3

3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,

Matthew 22:34-40

34 Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. 35 One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: 36 “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” 37 Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

John 13:34-35

34 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

Pastor Henry set out an imaginary table and chairs for you, your friends and Jesus. As you look at it, does Jesus sit at the head – or do you, or one of your friends? Populate that table and answer the questions as outlined in the summary about the nature of your friendships. What changes do you need to make after this review?

sermon study summary

“How Then Shall We Live?” Part 2: Pursue Relationship

Dr. Henry Schorr

Regardless of our circumstances in life, our foremost pursuit and focus needs to be an authentic relationship with God. Deep, fulfilling relationships are the single greatest factor in personal satisfaction. Jesus indicated in Matthew 22:34-40 that nothing is more important than loving God and loving people. However, we may miss out on these central relationships by pursuing lesser things.

According to various studies, while people interact with numerous people daily, they have few close friends and are still lonely. Most ‘close friends’ are really casual friendships. In Genesis 3, the community God desired for man was fractured and this continues today in marriages, families and relationships. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, God made a way for people to be in right relationship with Himself and others. God’s community, the church, is to be characterized by love, acceptance, belonging, being valued and supported. Paul presents a picture of a God-glorifying, loving, spiritual family in Romans 12:9-11, presenting several traits of godly friends:

1. **Sincerity**. This means a soul-level open, real, humble relationship that goes beyond superficial chatter and is free from hypocrisy and pretense. It guards against evil, lies and falsehood that can damage or destroy relationships.
2. **Devoted to each other**. Your friends are important to you and you seriously cultivate your relationship and commitment to them (Prov 18:24). You choose to see the good in them and believe the best about the other, supporting them when trouble comes.
3. **Honoring the other above yourself**. This means putting the interests of others ahead of yourself (Phil 2:3). Be humble, considerate of others’ feelings, and seek to build bridges rather than divisions. The church is to be known for its supernatural love – honoring and loving others outside of our preferred circle of friends (John 13:34-35).
4. **Challenging each other to stay hot for God**. Encourage each other to ‘keep their spiritual fervor’ and to be fully devoted to God.

Imagine a table and chairs with Jesus at the head and the other chairs holding you and your closest friends. What is the nature of your friendship with them? Who are they? With how many are you open and vulnerable with? How are you honoring, encouraging and helping them to be all God created them to be, and to finish well? How passionate are each of you about prayer and fulfilling the mission to which Christ called us?

Are YOU a godly friend? A Christian life must be radically different than the culture around us, both in our values and priorities but also in the kind of friends we are. We must not let ‘lesser things’ crowd out the time and effort one needs to build healthy friendships. Decide:

1. **Who or what you are going to give your life to**. For you to live is what (Phil 1:21)? How you answer this will impact everything in your life going forward and with whom you associate with.
2. **Who am I going to invite to join me?** While Jesus had many disciples, He could only invest in being on mission with a few. Jesus prayed – then invited – then invested His life in a small group of people to be His representatives in this world (Luke 6:12-13). We must follow this same path and purpose in choosing our friends.

Be wholly committed to Jesus alone, listen for His voice and have the courage to follow where He leads. It will require us to pray that God will bring people around our table who will not only be genuine friends but who walk together to fulfill God’s mission for us on Earth.