

## THE WAY OF WISDOM: ANCIENT PATHS FOR THE NEW YEAR #3 Adam Heather

- Where have you seen God at work in your life this week? (Share any brief examples and encouragements).
- Was there anything from Sunday's message which you found particularly inspiring or challenging?
- Was there anything else you particularly noticed?

From Amy Orr-Ewing last week: *"Wisdom is like a woman to fall in love with, rather than a set of rules."*

**"Friendship"**

Learning to drive a car is challenging, but techniques become second nature with practice - we learn to understand how it works. Wisdom is learning to understand how things work.

Perichoresis is the divine dance of God as trinity and it is from this interaction that creation was birthed. Friendship/relationship was the purpose of creation and is the goal of redemption. In Gen 1-2 there was utopia but not all was good (Gen 2v18) so God created human relationship. Paradise is about "we."

Larry Hurtado (Destroyer of the Gods) asked: Why did the early church grow? What was the allure to join the church when persecution was rife? He discovered: Unprecedented diversity; Forgiveness in a culture of honour/shame; and Care for the poor including Roman poor. It was a community of friendship.

RA Emerson: Friends do not ask "Do you love me?" But "Do you see the same truth? Are you passionate?"  
CS Lewis: "We picture lovers face to face but friends side by side. Their eyes look ahead. That is why people who simply want to make friends never seem to make any - the very condition of having friends is that we should want something else besides."

We need friendships for flourishing. Dan Penner says: Show me your friends and I will show you your future

What is the anatomy of being a good friend?

1. **Consistency.** Pro 17v17 *A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.* Love is "other focused, self sacrificial"
2. **Loving through what (s)he covers.** Pro 17v9 *Whoever would foster love covers over an offence, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.* Be kind and patient. Foster infers raising with care
3. **Loving through what (s)he confronts.** Pro 27v6 *Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.* Accountability is giving account of ability. Believing in the vision of what the person is becoming. Do we give permission to others to speak into our lives?
4. **Wise through knowing what to say.** Pro 18v21 *The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.* Give the gift of encouragement - you can't overdose on it!
5. **Wise through knowing what not to say.** Pro 16v28 *A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends.* Gossip is cancerous - it grows and brings death. Jesus says when there's a problem talk to the person (Matt 18v15) inferring not to talk about that person.

Adam concluded his talk with the following questions and a quote from Jesus:

- Who might you need to forgive?
- To whom might you need to apologise?
- Who might need your encouragement?
- Who might you need to lovingly confront?
- Who is someone you could invite for a meal?
- Where could you join a team to serve shoulder to shoulder with others?

*Jesus: This is how I want you to conduct yourself in these matters. If you enter your place of worship and, about to make an offering, you suddenly remember a grudge a friend has against you, abandon your offering, leave immediately, go to this friend and make things right. Then and only then, come back and work things out with God. Matt5v23-24 Msg*

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