



DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR APRIL 13, 2012

THE TROUBLE WITH FRIENDS

Do your best to come to me quickly, for Demas, because he loved the world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. (2 Timothy 4:9-10, NIV)

WE HAVE CONCENTRATED THIS WEEK ON THE IDEA OF FRIENDSHIP. We have enjoyed taking peeks at the friends who came around Bubba Watson after his Masters win on Sunday, as well as recognizing with Jeffrey Cranford and Tom Randall that friendships are instrumental in reaching others for Jesus.

Jesus, we know, went so far as to call his disciples “friends” (John 15:15). How did he show this? He shared with them the many things he had learned from their heavenly Father.

And yet we know this to be true: Jesus’ own friends were not faithful as long as they kept their eyes on the world. Some argued over who was greatest, one stole money from the shared purse, another denied ever knowing him, all but one hid from the cross where he died. When the call of the world came on strains of temptation or difficulty, these men couldn’t hang in there.

Paul, too, found the ways of the world too much for one of his close partners, Demas. He left Paul alone, pursuing the sirens of pleasure, perhaps, or profit.

This is the way of friends. They are not God. They will sometimes fail us. When this happens, we are left with two choices—to go it alone or to stay committed to friendships.

It’s easy to grow cynical about all people once one or two have hurt us. It’s easy to say, “I’ll just handle it myself next time.”

Paul chose another course. When one friend had left him, he begged for the companionship of another.

The holy God chose to forge a relationship with unholy people. And in spite of our unfaithfulness, he does not leave or forsake us. We may find that friends abandon faith and us; this never means we should abandon friends.

Lessons in faithfulness

Read Hebrews 13:4-5. How do these verses contrast the call of the world with the faithfulness of God?

Read Hebrews 13:6-8. How do these verses intertwine the trustworthy friendship of God with an exhortation to trust the people he has called out as leaders? What makes a friend/leader increasingly trustworthy?

God, who is always there

Read 2 Timothy 2:10-13. What commitment did Paul make and for what sake (v. 10)?

How do we see God’s faithfulness defined in these verses? How do you think this knowledge empowered Paul’s commitment?
