**LIGHTS IN A DARK WORLD (#5)**

***Do You Have A GBFF?***

*“that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.”* - Phil. 2:15

According to that paragon of virtue and accuracy called Wikipedia (can you see my tongue in cheek?) the letters BFF achieved national attention in 1997 during an episode of the TV sitcom *Friends*. The actress Phoebe (played by Lisa Kudrow) explains to the other five that BFF means “***B***est ***F***riends ***F***orever.”

Having a “best friend” is as ancient as Adam and Eve. But now the acronym BFF has been popularized as a quick way for friends to sign off while texting, emailing, or instant-messaging (IM-ing).

But did you know that according to researchers most of the BF’s and BFF’s we form in Junior High and High School dissolve quickly once we graduate and move on in life. And only a few close relationships made in college survive once you either marry and start a family or move into your career.

The influence of this world is like a powerful gravitational force pulling you into its clutches. Peer pressure to conform is almost overwhelming, especially in the days of our youth. We want to fit in, to be accepted, to assimilate with the crowd so that we are not thought weird or peculiar. Being “different” is hard enough to deal with as a mature adult, but to a teenager or twenty-something it is almost unbearable.

God made us social creatures and knew that our friendships would likely determine our future destiny. That is why God spoke so often about choosing our friends wisely. Where would Naomi be without Ruth? Where would David be without Jonathan? We all need “*a* *friend that sticks closer than a brother*” (Prov. 18:24). We all need a BFF in which we can say, *“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity*” (Prov. 17:17).

Do you have a friend like Ruth who would deny her own comfort to say,

“*Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you;
For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge;
Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God.
Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried.
The LORD do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me*.”
(Ruth 1:16-17)

Do you have a friend like David had with Jonathan? It was said, *“the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul”* (I Sam. 18:1-4). What was intriguing about this relationship was the gap in their ages. Jonathan had to be at least 10 years older than David, but their friendship was so special that when Jonathan was killed in battle David wrote this song: *“I grieve over you, my brother Jonathan. You were very dear to me. Your love was more special to me than the love of women*” (2 Sam. 1:26).

To shine as lights in this “*crooked and perverse generation*” it is imperative that we make friends with “*the sons of light*.” Please brother, please sister, take to heart Paul’s exhortation to build close relationships with those who have your soul’s interest in their heart. Listen to his wise counsel to his dear friends in Thessalonica:

*4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. … 11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.*

Did you hear that? “*Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you are doing*.” These brethren had each other’s back. They had become soul-mates for life, true BFF’s. These were Christians bonding together, watching out for one another with all vigilance. They were bound together like a band of brothers.

One of my favorite history authors is Stephen Ambrose. Among my favorite books of his is one that was turned into a TV documentary called *Band Of Brothers*. He traces the lives of men in WW2 who were paratroopers in Easy Company of the 101st Airborne Division. I have saved two quotes from that book that have spiritual value to me as I think of my friendships in Christ. After three years of bloody fighting for each other Ambrose tells us this:

“Within Easy Company they had made the best friends they had ever had, or would ever have. They were prepared to die for each other; more important, they were prepared to kill for each other.”

“They also found in combat the closest brotherhood they ever knew. They found selflessness. They found they could love the other guy in their foxhole more than themselves. They found that in war, men who loved life would give their lives for them.”

Long before Ambrose spoke of friendship in which one would die for another, Jesus uttered these immortal words: *“This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends”* (John 15:13). Now that is a true BFF, with emphasis on **F**orever!.

Young Christian, know this, “*evil companions corrupt good morals*” (I Cor. 15:33). Chances are, if you are eternally lost, it will be because of the friends you chose. Therefore, from my heart to yours, choose friends of light, not darkness.

“*For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light… And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness*” (Eph. 5:8-11).

Find your GBFF (*Godly* Best Friend Forever). Be a GBFF. – Rick