

Close Encounters: Close Friends

1 Corinthians 13: 1-13 (NIV) *If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*

- 1. Admit you need help.**
- 2. Start looking for it in a small group.**
- 3. Ask God to help you find a few close friends.**
- 4. Love each other enough to speak truth into each others lives.**

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS – Wk 2

Getting Started:

1. Who was your best friend growing up?
2. When was a time you really felt like your friend had your back, or came through for you in big way? How did you feel about your friend? How did you feel about yourself?

Going Deeper:

Pastor Scott talked about what love looks like between 2 people in the form of Spiritual Friendship. Spiritual Friendship has been referred to as a sacrament, because it is one of the most powerful vehicles for us to experience love, grace, and growth in our life. What does this type of spiritual friendship look like?

1. Read I Samuel 20:1-4, 17. What do these verses model to us about spiritual friendship? Do you think relationships like this are common? What is the toughest part of developing a friendship like we see between David and Jonathan?
2. Read Galatians 6:1-10. What are the principles listed in these verses? Do you think they apply to spiritual friendship?
3. Read Proverbs 22:24-26. What do these verses have to do with the friendships we have? Based on these verses, what should we look for in someone that we may share spiritual friendship with?
4. Do you think spiritual friendships are important for your life right now? Why? Do you have these types of relationships in your life presently?

Acting Out:

1. Make a list of 3 people who are already in your life, that have the potential to develop into deeper spiritual friendship.
2. Pray for these people each day this week, asking God to give you opportunities to open up in a deeper way to one or more of them.
3. Make a choice to be more vulnerable to one or more persons in your group this week.

Further Reading This Week:

I Samuel 14, I Samuel 16, I Samuel 18, I Samuel 19, I Samuel 20