

Monday **Dealing with Broken Friendships**

For this week we will look at different friendships in the Bible, some good, some not so good. We will look at a different friendship everyday and learn from what was done properly and what should have been done differently. Today, we will look at Abram and Lot.

1. Read Genesis 13:1-12 – What was the initial conflict between Abram and Lot?
2. Abram understood that there were things in their relationship that could cause strife. He took immediate action to fix a problem. According to verses 8-9, what did he suggest?
3. What area did Lot choose?
4. What area was left for Abram?
5. Did Abram get the better half of the deal?
6. Was Abram willing to suffer loss in order to save a friendship?
7. As a result of moving in separate directions, there was now distance between Abram and Lot. Even in this Abram didn't allow that to affect his friendship with Lot. What did Abram do for Lot in the next chapter?
8. What friendship do you have that isn't going well?
9. What can you learn from Abram and Lot to help you with your friendships?

Though there may be physical distance between you and for friend, that doesn't have to affect the way you feel about that person. Always be willing to help your friends, even if the mess they are in is their own fault.

Tuesday **Dealing with Broken Friendships**

Let's stay in the book of Genesis again for today and look at the account of Cain and Abel. Though the Bible never says that they were friends, they were brothers and would have had some measure of friendship

1. Read Genesis 4:1-15 – What did Cain do for a living?
2. What did Abel do for a living?
3. What did Cain sacrifice?
4. What did Abel sacrifice?
5. What was the initial conflict between Cain and Abel?
6. What did Cain do as a result of his anger?
7. You could probably safely say that the cause of this friendship breakdown was jealousy. Cain was jealous that God accepted Abel's sacrifice but not his own. We aren't told how Abel reacted when Cain's sacrifice wasn't accepted, but we do know that Cain's attack came as a complete surprise. Obviously, it was wrong for Cain to kill Abel. How should he have handled his jealousy?
8. What friendship do you have that isn't going well?
9. What can you learn from Cain and Able to help you with your friendships?

We don't know how much time passed between verses 7 and 8. That would have been the time for Abel to keep communicating with his brother so that things might not have escalated to the point they did. Do your best to keep communication flowing, especially with your friends!

Wednesday
Dealing with Broken Friendships

We'll come back to Genesis later, but for today let's go to the New Testament. Today, we'll look at the friendship between John Mark and Paul. It started off well, had a hard time, and ended up well again. Let's see how things were resolved.

1. Read Acts 12:25 – Who began traveling with Saul and Barnabas?
2. Read Acts 13:6-13 – What did John Mark do in verse 13?
3. Do we know why John Mark left?
4. Read Acts 15:36-41 – What did Paul want to do in verse 36?
5. What did Barnabas want to do in verse 37?
6. What did Paul not want to do in verse 38? Why?
7. John Mark deserted Paul and Barnabas and did not complete the journey with them. Would you say there was tension between Paul and John Mark?
8. Paul and Barnabas ended up getting in a huge argument over the matter. When you get in an argument with someone, you often get your defenses up. This probably happened here. Paul was defending his position. Read II Timothy 4:11 – What was Paul's specific request concerning John Mark?
9. Paul probably had to swallow his pride to make that request. What friendship do you have that isn't going well?
10. What can you learn from Paul and John Mark to help you with your friendships?

Thursday
Dealing with Broken Friendships

Let's head back to the Old Testament. Today we will look at a good example of friendship. There is really nothing negative to say about this friendship. We can learn all good things from them and their example.

1. Read I Samuel 18:1-4 – What happened in the previous chapter?
2. How does verse 1 describe the friendship that developed between David and Jonathan?
3. According to verse 3, how did Jonathan love David?
4. Who was Jonathan?
5. What is the significance of Jonathan's actions in verse 4?
6. God had already rejected Saul as king in chapter 15 and anointed David in chapter 16. Saul was scared and jealous of David. Saul wanted him dead. Jonathan knew he wasn't going to be king. Read I Samuel 20:1-4 – What did Jonathan promise to do for David?
7. Read I Samuel 23:16-18 – Jonathan encouraged David. This was the last time they saw each other. Why did David need encouraging?
8. Jonathan was later killed in battle. Read II Samuel 1:11-12 – How did David react to the news of his death?
9. What friendship do you have that isn't going well?
10. What can you learn from Jonathan and David to help you with your friendships?

Friday
Dealing with Broken Friendships

Head back to Genesis today. Let's look at the friendship between Joseph and his brothers. That friendship really didn't go well at all, but Joseph and his brothers were eventually reconciled. How did that happen?

1. Ready Genesis 37:1-4 – What was the initial source of conflict between Joseph and his brothers?
2. On top of the first conflict, Joseph had two dreams, both of which were to tell him that his family some day would bow down to him. Read Genesis 37:18-27 – What did his brothers initially want to do to Joseph?
3. What did they end up doing with him?
4. Joseph was eventually sold into slavery and ended up in Egypt. Through course of time and many unpleasant circumstances, Joseph ended up as second in command in all of Egypt. It was revealed to Joseph that there would be seven years of extra food followed by seven years of famine. Joseph devised a plan to stockpile food. Everyone affected by the famine, including his brothers, came to Egypt to buy food from them. When his brothers came, Joseph recognized them, but his brothers didn't. Read Genesis 45:1-5 – Had Joseph held a grudge against his brothers for so many years?
5. After this Joseph moved his whole family to Egypt. His father, Jacob, died, and his brothers became fearful that now Joseph would take revenge on them. Read Genesis 50:19-21 – What was Joseph's response to his brothers' fear?

Joseph would have had every right in the world not to be kind to his brothers, but he was determined to salvage his friendship with them. Be kind even when you have been wronged!

Saturday
Dealing with Broken Friendships

Today, we will look at the life of Hosea and how he reacted when the friendship with his wife broke down. Hosea's life experiences were to picture Israel's unfaithfulness to God and His unconditional love for them.

1. Read Hosea 1:2-3 – What kind of woman was Gomer?
2. Though God told Hosea to marry Gomer, it is never instructed to a general audience to marry someone who has already proven to be unfaithful. Was Hosea obedient to God?
3. Hosea married someone who was not known to be faithful. He married a harlot. Read Hosea 2:2-5 – Shortly after their marriage, what did Gomer do?
4. Gomer returned to her former lifestyle of being a harlot. How do you think Hosea felt about that?
5. How would you feel?
6. Read Hosea 3:1-3 – What did God tell Hosea to do concerning Gomer?
7. According to verse 2, what did Hosea have to do to get his wife back?
8. What friendship do you have that isn't going well?
9. What can you learn from Hosea and Gomer to help you with your friendships?

Hosea remained faithful to Gomer, even though she was not faithful to him. That may happen in human friendships. Be sure to be faithful and ready to forgive and welcome your friend back.

Sunday
Dealing with Broken Friendships

We started the week in Genesis, and we will end it there. We will look today at the friendship between Adam and God. If ever there was someone who didn't deserve forgiveness, it was Adam, but God was quick to make restoration.

1. Read Genesis 3:6-11 – What was the initial source of conflict between God and Adam?
2. What did Adam do to try to cover himself?
3. What did Adam and Eve do when God came looking for them?
4. God began talking with Adam and Eve about their current condition. After God handed down their punishments, He came back to them to demonstrate His love for them. Read Genesis 3:21 – What did God do for Adam and Eve?
5. Adam and Eve tried to cover themselves, but it wasn't good enough for God. God made them coats of skins. Where did the skin come from?
6. Something had to die in order for the relationship between God and man to be restored. Who had to die in order for our relationship with God to be restored?
7. Did God have to do that for us?
8. What friendship do you have that isn't going well?
9. What can you learn from God and Adam to help you in your friendships?

God's reconciliation with man is the greatest example of unconditional love and forgiveness. John said it well, "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." If God can mend a friendship with us, we can certainly mend our friendships!