



Rip off the Roof | Shawn Johnson | 4.2.17

LG Weekly

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer these two questions:

If you could pick one Biblical event to witness, which one would you pick and why?

SHARE

This week, Shawn spoke powerfully about the people we have in our lives, and the relationships we either foster or need to start fostering.

“Show me your friends and I will show you your future.” This is a heavy statement, and one that could be jarring for some folks. It can be easy to be in complacent friendships that seem harmless; yet those we call our friends deeply impact our lives whether we realize it or not. The other side of this coin is living in isolation. For some, it might be easier to not get close to friends, or stay away from “community.” Being known is vulnerable, and community is messy. It also takes effort and intentionality, as community does not happen without investing time.

Let’s read Mark 2: 1-5, 10-12

The friends in this story knew no bounds. They recognized their friend’s need and could not stand by apathetically. Can you imagine if this man did not have these friends?

What makes the group of men in this story so special? They fought fearlessly for their friend to experience Jesus, and this changed their friend’s life forever. The man on the mat now had a chance live an entirely different life because of his encounter with Jesus that day, and he wasn’t capable of making that encounter

happen by himself. He needed community to help give him that opportunity, and his community decided to not hold back on what they were willing to do, even if seemed crazy. They wanted their friend to have more of Jesus, and they did not stop until that happened.

Let's read Proverbs 13:20

When you think about this group of men, and about the types of friends they are, what words come to mind?

Think about your current friends, what words come to mind when you think about that group?

Spend a couple of moments to reflect on your own group of friends. What are you thankful for? What is lacking? *(Remember, if you need to make changes to the group of friends you have, let's not talk badly about them, keep focused on the choices you believe God is asking you to make.)*

G R O W

As Shawn talked about, whether we like it or not, every relationship in our life is taking us somewhere. So we have to be honest enough to ask ourselves these questions today:

Where are your relationships taking you?

Where are your relationships not taking you?

When is the last time you sat down and evaluated your relationships and the impact they have on your life? Apart from right now, for some of us it might have been months, years, or maybe even never. Yet if we are not living with that level of awareness and intentionality, we can potentially suffer great consequences. We were designed to live in community. Jesus modeled the Lord's heart for this in the short time he walked on the earth. Was his community full of perfect people? Absolutely not! They were a wreck most of the time. However, each of their hearts were *for* the Lord. Their desires and hopes rested in knowing God better, and living their lives in ways that honored him. Our community doesn't need to be perfect. In fact, if you are looking for flawless friends, that is the surest way to guarantee you will end up without ANY friends. Not to mention that we can't even offer flawless relationship in return! We are all broken, and we are all bruised. Thankfully, the common redeeming factor is the need for the Lord in our lives, and our desire to know him better. The community we choose must reflect that desire as well.

Let's read Proverbs 9:10

If we think about it, our relationships reflect – to some extent – our view of the Lord. How seriously do we take his call on our lives? How deep does our desire to live a life that pleases him sink in? Are we compartmentalizing this area of our lives and not inviting him in? Our relationships can be one of the most powerful influencers in our life. For some of us, we have been blessed and intentional with fostering community that pushes us closer to the Lord. We have friends who champion our walk with the Lord, and we are able to do the same for them. For others, our circle of friends are not spurring us on in our relationship with the Lord, and whether it is directly, or indirectly; they are pushing us further away from him. And for some of us, a circle of friends is absent in our lives altogether. We have been living in the safety of isolation, and the fear of being vulnerable enough to make real friendships is all we need to stay hidden.

Which category do you feel you fit in and what are your feelings about that?

Has there been a time in your life or a season in your life where your community or friendships greatly impacted your life in a positive way? Has there been a time in your life when the opposite was true, and you were negatively influenced?

Take a moment to think about your group of friends, and your community. What do those relationships say about your relationship with the Lord? *As a reminder, we are not attempting to reduce your relationship with the Lord to your relationships, as we know our relationship with him is intimately personal. Instead, we are recognizing that our relationships impact us and our walk with God.*

M O V E

Relationships offer such a unique and beautiful enhancement to our lives and our relationship with God. As we are all aware, this life on earth is wonderfully rewarding, but at other times can feel full of despair and heartache. Life is messy, and so are relationships. The Lord designed us to live in relationships, and when he lays out a model for our lives, it is for a reason. We need our friends, and our friends need us.

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.

Ecclesiastes 4:9,10

As we have been talking about what type of relationships we have, it would be a missed opportunity to not also talk about the kind of friend we are. We need our relationships to be healthy support systems, and those we are in relationship with need the same from us. Am I the type of friend who is pushing others to be closer to the Lord? Would I fit what Shawn spoke about as far as the types of friends one should have? It is not only important to evaluate our relationships; it is important to evaluate who we are in our relationships.

It is also crucial to acknowledge that for some, the greatest pain you've experienced is through the context of relationships. It might not be easy for some to engage in relationships and to trust others. If this is the case for you, please be kind to yourself and acknowledge the pain you've experienced, and spend some time with God in seeking his plan for you to restore those broken parts of your heart.

What can you tangibly start doing today to begin forming healthier relationships?

How do you think your friends are experiencing you as a friend? Is there anything you could start to do differently to be a more intentional and supportive friend?

Is there any fear for you when you think about having a healthy and close community? Take a moment to reflect on how your view friendships in your life. Is any part of your view fractured and in need of restoration?

Know the difference: During this study, we were talking about the relationships we have in our lives, and the importance of those relationships being healthy and drawing us closer to God. We want to make clear the difference between friends that we give access to our lives, hearts, and emotions, and the ones that we are intentionally entering into relationship with for evangelistic purposes, mentoring, or discipleship.

We are not suggesting that you should not have friends who live a different lifestyle than you, don't know the Lord, or are making unhealthy choices. We are called to love on people and walk beside those who are struggling or don't know Jesus. The difference is the intentionality of the relationship, and your awareness of why you are choosing to be in that relationship.

P R A Y

As a group, spend some time praying for each other and the struggles we all face. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to talk more freely.

T O G O

James 1:17

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.