

“Lean On Me.”

John 15:15-17

Drake Hunter - January 27, 2019

Lord, thank you for being our Friend, and allowing us to lean on you directly and indirectly through our friends in our lives. Forgive us in our isolation and we ask for help in this time of need to break us free of doing “LIFE” man’s way rather than Yours. We open our minds towards your realities and give attention to your truth and Spirit to experience a life “well-lived” through your Son Jesus Christ; Amen!

It’s been three weeks that we have been in our yearlong series “L.I.F.E. ROCK ON!”; and, if you recall, our goal for 2019 is to equip you with understanding what “integrity” completeness is for the Christian who wants the very best for their live in all their relationships.

Each week we are using a “Classical Rock” song to set-up some powerful biblical truths or lessons we can apply to our lives to live a flourishing life through a biblical perspective or worldview. Going back three Sundays, we began the year with the song “Dream On!”, composed and performed by the band Aerosmith, which revealed the biblical truth of the importance of vision. From there the song, “Dust In the Wind” by the band Kansas, which uncovered the powerful truth of living life “Fearing God and obeying his commands”. Last week the “Classic Rock” song “Shooting Star” by the band Bad Company pointing us to the reality that life truly is one breath, and, that “One” breath, ought to be lived out meaningfully attached to virtuous living through Jesus at the core of your life.

This week, the song by Bill Withers, and our message this morning, “Lean On Me.” Read with me...

John 15:15-17

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

"Lean on Me" is a song about friendship and is written and recorded by American singer-songwriter Bill Withers, and it was first released in April 1972. This song is a very familiar song to most, in our day and age. Who’s familiar with this song?

“Lean On Me” is a song about asking for help from a friend when help is needed. Helping friends through their life struggles, no matter how they got there. You see people aren’t meant to suffer alone no matter what our cherished beliefs might be telling us, we all need a friend, no matter how the circumstance, situation or condition came about. No one is to live life in isolation or loneliness, and this song is expressing to a friend that anytime they need help they can rely on them for help. However; know this, it’s not about blind help, it’s about offering the best help to best resolve the pain, sorrow or lack of strength, thereof, to get them to a place of functionality. Functionality is getting more problems out of your life than going in. When help is needed the one asking or needing help must understand they must yield to reasonable or sensible help being offered.

When Jesus walked on the face of the earth his whole message was an offering of help towards mankind, so people had a choice to ask for help in their dysfunctionality, in any relationship, to give Way to a LIFE well-lived in a dysfunctional world. So that, in-turn, we can then be friends with others.

Life, True Life, cannot happen in segregation or in self-centeredness, it only happens when God, Jesus, is your centered friend. You know, your “Bestie”, “BFF” or, as Generation “Z” shares, your “Bros”. Life must be lived out in a self-sacrificial way if any us expects to experience what true friendship is all about. True friendship with God...true friendship with your spouse...true friendship with your family...whatever friendship.

You and I are not to live life in seclusion where it’s all about, “me, myself, and I”, but to live it out being attached and present with friends, your first friend, Jesus, then others. Let me ask you, “Are you a friend, and can you say to a friend, wholeheartedly, ‘Lean On Me’”?

Thinking about it; sometimes, in our lives we all have pain. Yes! Well...Jesus said, “Lean On Me”. We all have sorrows? Don’t we? Jesus said, “Lean on Me”. Jesus said, if you trust me then “Lean On Me”, when you’re not strong or any time for that matter, then, he says, “I’m here for you and you can ‘Lean On Me’ to carry on.” You see, just as Jesus was responsible with this true belief, we, Jesus’ Friends, ought to reflect that same kind of bond with others so we can experience the miracle of friendship.

Friendship has many attributes to it, but the one attribute, perhaps, what comes to mind most, is the attribute of love. Friendship is about love and love is a two-way streak within any real relationship. Jesus said, “Love each other”. Love is a core measurement or dimension of any relationship and is the very nature or definition of God. “God is love.”

1 John 4:7-8

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

We are to “love each other” with a God type of love...that is, a selfless, sacrificial, unconditional Love. In general, this type of love may be thought of as eternal and of sharing of oneself, just like God himself! Now the question is, if I’m going to have this type of love, then the question is, “What is selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love?” I’m so glad you asked.

To help answer this question, let me share the basic dimensions or measurements of God’s love that expresses God’s Goodness to others in the world. They are: Benevolence, Grace, Mercy, and Patience. Let’s briefly define each...first, *Benevolence*.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

By benevolence we mean the concern of God for the welfare of those he loves, and he loves all mankind in the world. God’s love is focused on His most wonderful creature, and it is an unselfish interest in us, for our sake. It’s selfless, sacrificial, and unconditional in nature. It is the opposite of man’s basic definition of love, which expressed in Greek is, “Eros”, in English, erotic love. Erotic love has its place, but it is not the foundation of true love, or “agape” love. Benevolence (generosity, goodwill and altruism) is one dimension of God’s Love. Another dimension of God’s Love is Grace.

Titus 2:11

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.

Grace is another measurement in which adds to the integrity of God's Love. Grace means that God supplies us with undeserved favors or friendship. He requires nothing – meaning, God doesn't require you to add anything to the true beliefs He put in place for you to live out a well-lived life through His LOVE. He requires nothing! Salvation is indeed the gift of God and there is nothing you need to do to receive it. If God gave to all what we all deserve, none would be saved. Everyone would be lost and condemned. Grace is truly undeserved favor of God and is available to all.

Benevolence is the first dimension of God's LOVE, then Grace, now we have yet another, it's known as Mercy.

Psalms 103:13 (AKJV)

Like as a father pitieth his children,
so the Lord pitieth them that fear him

God's mercy is about pity. Think about it, when a guilty person (Raise your hand if you've ever been guilty.), approaches a Judge, the guilty one cries out, "Have mercy on me!"; for he is proclaiming his guilt and asking the Judge for compassion (pity) in this pitiful situation. Mercy, then, is a tenderheartedness and loving compassion for pitiful friends. Is it not? We see this dimension of love expressed through Jesus.

Mark 6:34 (KJV)

And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion [pity], because they were as sheep [needy, miserable, and gloomy] not having a shepherd [why people need an under-shepherd]:
and he began to teach them many things.

Mercy is yet another dimension of God's Love. "so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Do you fear God? I do!

We now have Benevolence, Grace and Mercy, and to round out God's Goodness of Love, we have one last dimension, patience/persistence.

2 Peter 3:15

Bear in mind [We have to think about it] that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him.

Here, we read of God's Persistence or Patience, and patience is withholding judgement. "Judge not" Jesus said. Judge not means to reserve your interpretation and not to assume or find fault in the pain, hurt, suffering, or any circumstances, for that matter. Why? Because it's not your PLACE!

People love (man's ways) to quickly criticize, find fault, and grumble [gossip and slander] about things without understanding, respecting and appreciating the big picture. (The church's new beautiful wall, with the green base, should come to mind for those who "judged it" before the project was completed). When people, where ever they may be, restaurants, Facebook, one-on-one, etc.,

criticize and find fault based on their little opinions, feelings or preference without understanding the bigger picture they lack God's Love, period! Why? Without realizing it, this type of selfishness, empty speech and lack of understanding cause HURT! That's why it's known as gossip and slander. Quit reacting to man's way and stand firm on the greatness of God's way. Patience is required on your part, so, "Judge Not!". It's absolutely not your place.

Patience's on your part is needed to truly be an expression of God's love completely – you are not the Judge. If God can be patient with you, then you can be patient with those you call friends. Again, your friends: your spouse, your family – immediate or church – your chums, colleagues, and fellow residents of the planet earth. Again, can I say it any clearer. Stop gossiping and slandering!

The basic dimensions of God's Love are: Benevolence, Grace, Mercy, and Patience. When all dimensions are present in a friendship, then know "integrity" is in place when it comes to being a friend. A friend who knows how to help in the time of need and not add more problems.

A selfless, sacrificial, unconditional Love does not come naturally to us. Because of our fallen nature. Because of your bad habits [gossip, slander, lack of self-control], or old nature (all your vices or bad habits working together – bad character), we are incapable of producing such a love within ourselves or within our friendships. However; If we are to Love as God Loves, that Love—selfless, sacrificial, unconditional – is only possible when it comes from "The One and Only" and The True Source of Love – God!

This is LOVE that "has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us" when we became friends of God, then and only then, can you know Love and share that love with others so you can with your words, rather than gossip and slander, add value within all your conversations with all your relationships. Friendship is about leaning on each other, first leaning on Jesus, then leaning on each other for support through pains, sorrows and victories in this Life.

Bill Whither's got it right when he wrote the classic song, "Lean On Me". Friends (spouse, family - personal or church – chums...whatever) are to lean and love each other, always, be it, in a time of need or otherwise. However; we as Christians don't position ourselves on the greatness of a song, but on the solid greatness and good make-up of God's LOVE. Jesus, in John 15 said, "I call you Friends and I require you to love each other" period. To love and lean on each other through Generosity, Grace, Mercy and Patience if, you, the one I call a Friend, expects to live a satisfying and fulfilling life with God, self, and others, now and for all eternity.

The Message: "Lean On Me". Amen! If you took-in the message today, say, "ROCK ON!"