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“FIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIPS”

ROMANS 12:4-5

The Foundation For Authentic Friendship Is Membership In The Body Of Christ

Romans 12:4-5 “For just as we have many parts in one body and all the body’s parts do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually parts of one another.”

“So we, who are many (individuals), are one body (group) in (vital relationship with) Christ; and individually members of one another.”

— PK’s translation

Life Principle: The foundation of authentic friendship is a common relationship with God that produces spiritual intimacy with others, so... we need to know how to grow in our spiritual intimacy!



Growth In Spiritual Intimacy Involves Five Things:

1. SPIRITUAL UNITY

Ephesians 4:11-13 "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ."

Spiritual Unity Involves Three Essential Elements:

(1) A Common Belief In The Gospel - V13a

"...until we all attain to the unity of the faith..."

(2) A Common Experience Of The Gospel V13b

"unity ... of the knowledge of the Son of God..."

John 17:3 "And this is Eternal Life; That they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent."

(3) A Common Goal Of The Gospel

"to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ".



Key: The goal of Christian friendship is Christ-likeness.

Growth In Spiritual Intimacy Involves Five Things:

2. DOCTRINAL MATURITY AND STABILITY

Ephesians 4:14 "As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;"

3. RELATIONAL VULNERABILITY - V15

Ephesians 4:15 "... *but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ*"

Point: Spiritual intimacy requires vulnerability.

4. UNIFYING COMPETENCY - V16a

Ephesians 4:16a "from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part causes the growth of the body ..."



Growth In Spiritual Intimacy Involves Five Things:

5. ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY - V16b

Ephesians 4:16b *"for the building up of itself in love."*

NOTE: Because we are all members of the same body, we are accountable to each other to build up the body to which we belong. **Christian "accountability" is really encouragement** — the process of building up others in love by encouraging consistency in our words, walk, and work.

CONCLUSION: The foundation for authentic friendship is membership in Christ's body - a personal relationship with God and His people that includes the dimension of spiritual intimacy.

Bottom Line: Spiritual intimacy with others grows when we cultivate...

1. Spiritual Unity - *Through:*

- * A Common Belief in the Gospel
- * A Common Experience Of The Gospel
- * A Common Goal Of The Gospel

2. Doctrinal Maturity And Stability

3. Relational Vulnerability

4. Unifying Competency

5. Encouraging Community

