

- I. ONE THING—The One Thing that I'd like to take away from today's class and believe God to accomplish in my life is:

II. MEDITATION

A. Review your class notes from Tuesday.

- Take some time to think about the main ideas of the lesson. If you want to add details to your notes, you'll find the audio message on our website under the Resources tab. (www.DivineDesignDiscipleship.com).
- Which of the scriptures referenced were particularly meaningful to you? Write out those verses below and spend some time studying them this week.

B. Rewrite your One Thing into a prayer, expressing your heart's desire for God to make this truth become your experience.

III. PERSONALIZATION

A. The Very Best Friend: All of us who have a relationship with Jesus have a true, life-giving Friend!

- We experience life-giving relationship when we connect spirit to spirit: Jn 17:3-- And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.
- Jesus is the best example of a trustworthy friend! He personifies the 3 traits of life-giving relationship: Jn 1:14 NIV-- The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

1. Dwelling

- Definition--encamp; to live in a tabernacle or tent; a place of safety and protection; in Jn 1:14, to be one's tent-mate! (Thayer's Lexicon)
- This word has to do with the human body being the place where the spirit resides. His Spirit dwells in our human spirit.
- Jesus-in-me + Jesus-in-you = connection that ministers life to one another

2. Grace

- Grace means we're treated beneficially despite our performance—Jesus loves us for who we are and not how we behave: Eph 2:8-9 NLT-- God saved (befriended) you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation (His friendship/relationship) is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it (*amplification mine*)
- Relationships that require change or send shame and condemnation are not full of grace.

3. Truth

- Another element of life-giving relationship is opening ourselves (trusting our hearts) to one another as Jesus did: Jn 15:15 NLT— I no longer call you servants, because a master doesn't confide in his servants. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me.
- Jesus vulnerably allowed His friends to see Him in weakness: Mt 26:38 NIV-- Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."
- So the essence of the "truth" aspect of friendship is being real with each other.

• Insights:

B. Purposes of Friendship

- The purpose of friendship is not to cure loneliness. Our deepest needs for connection are already met in Jesus: Pr 18:24—There is a friend that sticks closer than a brother.
- The Lord invested His heart and life into relationships had a spirit-to-spirit exchange of life and that bore fruit for eternity: Jn 15:14-16 NLT-- You are my friends if you obey me. I no longer call you servants, because a master doesn't confide in his servants. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me. You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce fruit that will last

- Friends are intended by God to help us discover and live out our identity, purpose, and call to know Jesus:
 - 1 Cor 12:20-21 TV--So now, many members *function* within the one body. 21The eye cannot wail at the hand, "I have no need for you," nor could the head bellow at the feet, "I won't go one more step with you." 22 It's actually the opposite. The members who seem to have the weaker functions are necessary to keep the body moving
 - 1 Jn 4:20 NAS-- The one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.
 - Ps 119:63 NIV--I am a friend to all who fear you, to all who follow your precepts.
- Insights:

C. The Fruit of Friendship

1. Synergy

- Ray French quote: "Synergy is the creation of a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts."
- Synergy is God's idea! He designed us to be strengthened as we function in unity in our relationships within His body: Col 2:19 GWT-Christ makes the whole body grow as God wants it to, through support and unity given by the joints and ligaments.
- When our friends bring their portion of the presence of God with them and help us connect to His purposes, we are built up in Christ: It is good stewardship of our time and energy to invest in people who are bent on a KOG agenda: Ecc1 4:9—Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work.
- Insights:

2. Sharpen

- We gain strength and effectiveness when we have the friends that offer godly input: Pr 27:17 NLT-- As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.
- It is a rare treasure if you can find a friend who will enter into your issues with compassion, speaking thoughtfully, prayerfully, and gently: Pr 27:9 NLT-- The heartfelt counsel of a friend is as sweet as perfume and incense.
- A friend that will truly prove fruitful in your life is one who knows how and when to point out where you have gotten off track: Gal 6:1-2 NIV-- Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.
- Life-giving friends will love you enough to point out a trend that is not beneficial to you personally or relationally: Eph 4:15 AMP-- Let our lives lovingly express truth [in all things, speaking truly, dealing truly, living truly]. Enfolded in love, let us grow up in every way *and* in all things into Him Who is the Head, [even] Christ
- All of us need friends to help us stay sharp on the truth of 1) who I am, 2) who God is, and what He's spoken into your life.
- Insights:

3. Safe Place

- It is wisdom to surround yourself with friends who will “sign up” to be a part of your growth and healing: Jm 5:16 NLT-- Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.
- We all enter adulthood with areas where we are lacking because didn't have adequate role models or training: 1 Cor 4:7--What do you have that you did not receive?
- God puts us in a new family and uses people within His family to help re-parent us: Mt 12:50-- For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.
- As we walk through life with God and our new family, we receive healing and learn godly living by doing life together. Then He uses us to give life to others: Heb 12:10-13 NLT-- For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always right and good for us because it means we will share in his holiness. 11 No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening -- it is painful! But afterward there will be a quiet harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way. 12 So take a new grip with your tired hands and stand firm on your shaky legs. 13 Mark out a straight path for your feet. Then those who follow you, though they are weak and lame, will not stumble and fall but will become strong.
- Insights:

4. Suffer with Us

- Pr 17:17—A friend loves at all times.
- True friends will serve your best interests in adversity, even when it is costly: Phil 2:4-5 GNT-- Look out for one another's interests, not just for your own. The attitude you should have is the one that Christ Jesus had
- This is especially true when others are grieving: Rom 12:13, 15 NLT-- When God's children are in need, be the one to help them out. 15 When others are happy, be happy with them. If they are sad, share their sorrow.
- Cloud quote: “We must have God and others to connect to in order to let go of what we have lost.”
- Redemptive friends help us leave behind unhealthy emotional ties (physical, emotional, relational) that are restraining us: 2 Cor 6: 11-13 NAS-- Our heart is opened wide. You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections. Now in a like exchange -I speak as to children -open wide to us also.
- Insights

D. Continue to grow in your relationship with God by applying these principles:

- Make God your secure foundation: Ps 118:8 TV--It is better to put your faith in the Eternal (God) *for your security* than to trust in people.
- At the beginning of your day, take a few minutes to connect with God: Proverbs 8:34 NAS-- Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at my doorposts.
- Deepen your intimacy with God by rejoicing in Him. Take time each day to offer Him thanksgiving and praise.
- Maintain connection with God by applying “The Middle of the Page” listening exercise whenever you sense distance between you and Him: “Is there anything causing separation or disconnection between us right now, Lord?”

