



## JOURNEY – March 10<sup>th</sup> Teaching Outline

### MEANT 2 LIVE INTRO:

**This year we're learning how God has an intended design for life, and it's best.**

- We know there is something so much more than what we see around us...
- But what does God's design look like for us?

**Our journey to discover God's intended life began with 2 important principles:**

- **God's design is all about shaping our HEARTS – not just our behavior**
  - o Out of love, we give God control and our behavior becomes different.
- **God's design is all about bringing GLORY to God**
  - o Living life as God intended is for our good & God's glory.

**But right away we are challenged with a choice...between 2 versions of life:**

- Living for ourselves, making our own rules
- Living for God, living under His loving control
- Satan wants us to believe the lie that life lived for ourselves is best
- **DO YOU BELIEVE GOD'S VERSION IS BEST? Do you want it?**

**If you DO want God's version...these weeks at Journey can change your life...**

### RELATIONSHIPS RECAP:

**Through healthy RELATIONSHIPS we experience God's amazing design for life.**

**First, our most important relationship is with GOD.**

- God DELIGHTS in you and wants to BE WITH you.
- Do you have a personal connection to God?
- You've got to get to know each other, **SPEND TIME TOGETHER**, invest time
- Talking to God, reading the Bible, music, walks, etc.

***If we want to experience God's amazing, intended design for life we must have a meaningful, personal connection to God. If not, we are missing out on God's life.***

**The second relationship we talked about is with our parents.**

- What if we believed GOD IS AT WORK IN US...THROUGH OUR PARENTS.
- ***Will you to TRUST that God is working for our GOOD through our parents?***

***If we want to experience God's awesome intended life for us, we have to allow God to work in us, through our relationship with our parents.***

## **FRIENDSHIPS RECAP:**

**Through healthy FRIENDSHIPS we experience God's amazing design for life.**

Here is the bottom line:

***Your friendships will either drain you of God's life, or fill you with God's life.***

**Your friendships have enormous power in your life...for good or evil.**

- Even if your friends are not a negative influence...are they a positive influence?
- Are your friendships helping you pursue God's version of life?

**Are you choosing your CLOSE friendships WISELY?**

- Are your friends fools or wise?
- Do your friends help you DESIRE God's wisdom in your life?
- Do your friends know the difference between right and wrong and try to choose the right even when it's hard?
- Are your friends your friends just because they make you feel accepted or did you choose them wisely?
- Are you being accepting of others the way we all want to be accepted?

**For those friends who are not the best influence in your lives...are you committed to being a positive influence in their lives?**

## **THIS WEEK: Our Friendships Part 3**

**Tonight we are going to again do things a little differently...**

- 6 & 7<sup>th</sup> grades to the Journey Room
- 8-12<sup>th</sup> - Conversation / small group format...everyone sit together

**The Power of Influence - Discussion**

- What is one way you've become more like one of your friends?
- How you talk or dress? Share an example...
- In what ways that you think YOU influence YOUR friends?
- Which happens more...you influencing them or them influencing you?

**Read Ecclesiastes 4:10**

If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!

- Have you ever "picked a friend up" when he was down? What happened?
- Have you ever helped a friend avoid trouble?  
- *At school, at a party, not wearing that tacky sweater?*
- How has a friend helped you avoid trouble?
- How can we influence our friends about what God defines as right and wrong?
- When should we use actions and when should we use words?
- Which is more powerful?

## The Power of Influence – Teaching

**Our friends definitely influence us, but we can also be a positive influence on them.**

- Jesus set a powerful example when he was called “a friend of sinners”
- We should never become so exclusive in our friendships that we avoid “sinners”
- But ask God to strip your pride...you are not better than them...in fact, its probably the opposite...you know better... so you are the one held to a diff. std.

**One very specific way we can be a good influence on our friends is just in the life choices we make that demonstrate God’s definition of right and wrong.**

- There is a God who cares, deeply...He wants to protect our hearts.
- He has something beautiful for us. But how would your friends know if we are just doing the same things, going through motions not being real?

**In today’s culture, we see a thing called “relative truth” taking over.**

- “There’s no right or wrong, you just have to do what feels right for you!”
- People have an excuse to live a destructive, sinful, life because it “feels right.”
- Meanwhile our lives are being blown up and we are being crushed

**The Bible defines for us God’s absolute truth about what is right and wrong.**

- 10 commandments, and Jesus teachings, help us know that certain things are absolutely wrong...stealing, murder, lying, sex outside of marriage, cussing...
- We rely on the Bible as our absolute truth.
- Without that we are the ones deciding.. and based on our track record.. we are not that good at it? Are we?

**Do you know enough of the Bible to know what that truth is?**

**Just remember, actions speak louder than words.**

- Live a life that screams you believe in God’s truth and way of life.
- Be ready to help your friends through conversation when the right time comes.
- Can we speak with love and humility, but speak boldly?

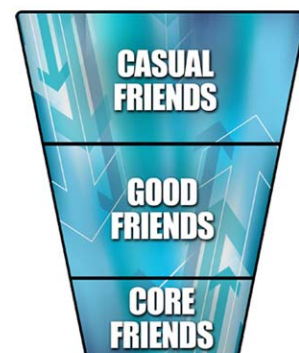
**Answer to yourself silently...**

- Are you a positive influence on your friends in your actions?
- Are you also willing to be a positive influence through conversations?
- Are the majority of your friendships a positive or negative influence in your life?
- Who has God placed in your life that you can, humbly, be a good influence on?

## Examining our Friendships – Teaching

**“CASUAL FRIENDS”**

- People in the same place as you...in your class, lunchroom, sports team, etc.
- Friends you want to positively influence and share Christ’s love with through your life and actions.
- Even though you might spend a lot of time together...they have no real influence in your life.



### **“GOOD FRIENDS”**

- Friends you choose to be with, enjoy being with them.
- Friends that influence you, positively or negatively
- Friends you influence in actions and conversations
- Critical to identify those friends that make bad choices, have no concern for authority, are deceptive, etc; foolish people.
- Sometimes we need to abandon these friendships all together.
- Other times we need to step back, maybe spend a little less time with them, and move those friendships towards a more casual friendship.

### **“CORE FRIENDS”**

- Those few friends that truly know and care for you.
- These may not be the people you spend everyday with...and that's ok!
- MUST be a positive influence...neutral is not good enough...
- If you were struggling with purity...how would they lead you in that struggle? Tell you to just do whatever you want, or encourage you to fight for purity?
- We all need just a few of these deep friendships...probably just 2 or 3 in reality
- OUTSIDE a dating relationship. Girlfriends & boyfriend will likely come and go...but your guy friends / girl friends can be there for a lifetime.
- GF / BF should be a positive influence, in your “good friends” but not core
- You may have none of these friendships...yet. And that's hard, but be patient and start pursuing those who MIGHT become your core friends. Take initiative.

#### **Proverbs 13:20**

Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and suffer harm.

### **How do we make the change? – Large Group Questions**

- How do you develop core friendships?
- How do you shift negatively influencing friends towards a more casual friendship without “ditching” those friendships?
- Are there some friendships that just need to end sometimes? When?
- How can you be a good influence on casual friends without them negatively influencing you?

### **How do we make the change? - Teaching**

- Spend MORE time with certain people
- Spend LESS time with certain people
- Don't CALL negatively influencing people for advice
- CALL positive friends...make plans for the weekend...take initiative
- Be VULNERABLE to these people...that's how you bond
- Be INTENTIONAL about being a good influence on others
- Don't ISOLATE yourself...but be wise about who your CLOSE friends are

**Do you want God's life? Are you ready to start making some choices and decisions? It may not be easy.**

**Question Sheets...examining your friendships. Be honest.**