

SYNC: The Priority of Good Relationships

(II Corinthians 6:11-18)

Introduction

A) In 1972, American songwriter Bill Withers released the song “Lean On Me” that rose to #7 on the Billboard Song Charts. The story behind the song is interesting. Withers grew up in the coal mining town of Slab Fork, West Virginia. He lived in a decrepit house in the poor section of town. After a stint in the navy, Withers ended up in Los Angeles, California. He found himself missing the strong community ethic of his small home town which served as the catalyst for the song Lean On Me. The lyrics go . . .

*Sometimes in our lives we all have pain
We all have sorrow
But if we are wise
We know that there's always tomorrow*

*Lean on me, when you're not strong
And I'll be your friend
I'll help you carry on
For it won't be long
'Til I'm gonna need
Somebody to lean on*

*Please swallow your pride
If I have faith you need to borrow
For no one can fill those of your needs
That you won't let show*

*You just call on me brother, when you need a hand
We all need somebody to lean on
I just might have a problem that you'll understand
We all need somebody to lean on
Lean on me, when you're not strong*

*And I'll be your friend
I'll help you carry on
For it won't be long*

*'Til I'm gonna need
Somebody to lean on
You just call on me brother, when you need a hand
We all need somebody to lean on.*

What is the “take away?” *Not written necessarily from a Christian perspective, Lean On Me, reveals that God created all mankind (not just Christians) with a need for relationships. We need people. For you and I, we need quality relationships that will build and sustain our faith.*

B) Contextualize this sermon in the series SYNC.

C) Contextualize 2 Corinthians 6:11-18.

I. We Need People

A) We were created for relationships

In Genesis 2:18, God says that it is not good for man to be “alone.” God created us to be relational beings. Because we are communal beings - someone designed for relationships – creation is incomplete without a suitable relationships.*

B) Man’s primary relationship should be with God.

Everything God made pointed Adam and Eve to the primacy of their relationship with him. All of creation was to function as an arrow pointing to God. But in our sin we tend to treat people and creation as more important.*

**Relationships: A Mess Worth Making by Tim Lane and Paul Tripp.*

II. Pursue Right Relationships.

Principle: *Christians must pursue and maintain quality interpersonal relationships that promote their spiritual health and fulfill their innate need for personal connection with others.*

A) The Declaration (v. 11)

B) The Concern (v. 12)

C) The Challenge (v. 13)

III. Caution About Wrong Relationships.

Principle: *Christians are to form no binding interpersonal relationships with people that result in their spiritual defilement.*

Note: *Paul was not saying that Christians should break off all association with unbelievers (cf. 1 Cor. 5:9-10; 10:27). He had previously encouraged the saved partner in a mixed marriage to maintain the marriage relationship as long as possible (1 Cor. 7:12-16). He had also urged his fellow Christians, as ambassadors of Christ, to evangelize the lost (5:20). Paul would never tell us to only buy from Christian retailers, tell us to only work for Christian organizations, or tell us to only live in Christian neighborhoods. He is not promoting isolationism!! He is cautioning us to form no binding relationships with people that result in own **spiritual defilement**.*

A) Different Priorities (v. 14)

B) Different Kingdoms (v. 14)

C) Different Masters (v. 15)

D) Different Lifestyles (v. 15)

E) Different Gods (v. 16-18)

Conclusion

Your greatest relationship should be with Jesus.