The Company We Keep Chapter 2 “Everyday Substitutes, the limits of Common Grace”

The goal of this chapter is to realize there are other relationships that can impede or get in the way of true, authentic, Christ centered relationships. The other relationships, although not all are bad, have the power to inhibit relationships that will sanctify us.

Common Grace definition: “Common grace is the grace of God by which he gives people innumerable blessings that are not part of salvation.” Wayne Grudem

-common Grace includes health, sun, rain, joy, prosperity, etc.

Highlights of the Chapter

1. Relationships in a Genesis 3 World
   1. “In a world broken and twisted by sin, we see all around us how quickly we settle for relational substitutes. We are easily deceived into believing the promises the culture makes in this area. Promises that rich, warm, fulfilling relationships can follow quickly and easily as long as we both like the same things.”(pg 32)
2. Substitutes
   1. Social media
      1. Bears little resemblance to a biblical model of friendship (pg 33)
      2. Actually can cause increased loneliness and depression (pg 33)
      3. It creates “friendships” on our terms that we can control and in our comfort zone (pg 34)
      4. People typically project something different that reality.
      5. “Digital connections and the sociable robot may offer the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship.” (pg 35)
   2. The Specialized Friendship
      1. Definition: Reduction of relationships down to a common activity or interest (pg 36)
      2. “Stage of life” common activity. Surround yourself with people who are at a similar point in life.
      3. “Common interests”: relationships according to a shared interest, hobby or area of ministry
      4. It is ok to have specialized friendships but biblical friendships are “ultimately grounded in the greatest and most wonderful common denominator of all, a shared faith in Jesus Christ.” (pg 37)
   3. The Selfish Friendship
      1. Definition: “Friendship purely for what can be gained for the all-important Me.” (pg 38)
      2. Transactional: What can I give you in exchange for something I want
3. Diminished humanity…. “over time as we accept the substitute for the real, the fleeting friendship for the Christ-centered friendship, we ourselves lose some of our humanity. From the Christian perspective, we lose an opportunity to bear testimony to our Creator. We’ve taken a good thing- friendship built on social media or common interests—and hoped it would provide for us the same level of satisfaction as true relationship and friendship. “ (pg 41)
4. Seeing friendship rightly- “Truly biblical friendship ….is intended as a spiritual discipline among God’s people for the purpose of glorifying Him” (pg 41,42)

Do all Dig Deeper questions. Leave time for everyone to answer these.