I. INTRO:
   A. Wed. 6/29 - Don Stewart & Pastors Perspective Live, 3-4pm in Sanct. (not Brian)
      1. Then 7pm Don Stewart will be fielding questions for our Wed night study.
      2. The following Wed July 6th I will be showing Taking The Hill. Raul Ries’ new film

   B. In 1971 James Taylor sang, When you're down and troubled and you need a helping hand, and nothing, whoa nothing is going right. Close your eyes and think of me and soon I will be there to brighten up even your darkest nights. You just call out my name, and you know wherever I am I'll come running, oh yeah baby to see you again. Winter, spring, summer, or fall, all you got to do is call and I'll be there, yeah, yeah, yeah. You've got a friend. Released in April of that year, it had reached #1 by late July.

1. The words friends, friendly & friendship appear over 100 x’s in the Scriptures.
   a) God says a lot about friends.

2. C. S. Lewis said, Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another, “What! You, too? I thought I was the only one.”

3. A friend has been aptly defined as “one who comes in, when the whole world has gone out.”
   a) This is the group of David’s friends we meet today.
   b) David needed the shelter & support of friendship for 3 reasons:
      [1] Personally, he was still flooded in guilt from his adultery/murder.
      [2] Domestically, his family was devastated by death, rape, revenge & rebellion.
      [3] Politically, he was losing control of his kingdom as his ambitious son Absalom maneuvered himself into power.
   c) Before we meet David’s friends, we must 1st deal with A Disloyal Son; then his Loyal Friends! [Outline]

II. A DISLOYAL SON! (1-12)
   A. ABSALOM! (1-12)
   B. (1) Wow, read vs.1 with 14:33!
      1. He regains his status & immediately takes steps to replace David as king off Israel.
      2. He acquires horses & chariots...his private little militia.
3. Then, positions himself as the highest legal authority in Israel...If I were made judge in the land. (4) [politicking at its finest!]

C. (5) See how self may seem to expel self; when in reality it’s but entering deeper into our heart!1
   1. No, no don’t bow to me!
   2. David had won the hearts of the people through sacrifice & service; but Absalom did it the easy way, the modern way, by manufacturing an image of himself that the people couldn’t resist.
      a) Absalom was a hero; Absalom was only a celebrity.2

D. (9) Ironically, David’s last words to his son were, [ﬂesh] “Go in peace!”

E. (10) At the sound of the trumpet - They used a shofar blast to spread the conspiracy & topple a kingdom. Village by village they swung their support behind him.
   1. Today they use a Twitter blast to accomplish the same thing.

F. (12) He offered sacrifices - Under the mask of religion, Absalom still further matured his plans.

III. LOYAL FRIENDS! (13-37)

A. THE KINGS SERVANTS! (13-18)

B. (13) An old Jewish proverb says, “A friend is one who warns you.” (& thats what this man did!)

C. (14) To avoid a bloody civil war, David abandons Jerusalem to his rebel son & run for his life.
   1. And this is his 2nd time to run (1st time from Saul).
   2. But, though the pruning was sharp, it led to greater fruitfulness!

D. (15) His royal bodyguards (the Kerethites & Pelethites)
   1. Listen to their vow...Should we not vow the same to our King?

E. ITTAI (& 600 soldiers from Gath)! (19-23)

F. (19) A Philistine official from Gath who had recently defected to Israel.
   1. A true friend...when everyone has turned away, there will be a few who will say, “I’m with you. Count on me. I’m here to the end.” [Ps: w/their families also!]
   2. That one might even be a person from Gath! A person who had been your enemy, but who has come full circle to become your friend.
      a) Blood ties don’t always guarantee friendship.
      b) David’s son became his enemy while a Philistine proved to be his friend!

G. (21) Prosperity begets friends, adversity proves them!
   1. Is this not the greatest verse! This is how loyal hearts should address Christ!

1 F.B.Meyer, Joshua-2nd Kings, pg.134.
2 Warren Wiersbe, Be Restored, pg.94.
2. It sounds similar to…
   a) Jn.12:26 If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.
   b) 1 Thes.5:10 whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

H. **ZADOK & ABIATHAR (& a company of Levites; w/the ark of cov)!** (24-29)
   l. The ark symbolized God’s favor, which surely was w/David & not Absalom.
      1. David, however, wasn’t comfortable making that assumption.
      2. Return w/the ark & I’ll wait for God to act. [oh, & you can act as spies for me]
      3. A man after God’s heart by surrendering himself completely to God’s will.
         a) David determined to let God have His way with him.
         b) Like Job who said, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.” (13:15)

J. **DAVID’S PRAYER & STRATEGY!** (30,31)

K. (30) What a heart wrenching scene. David’s Son, Jesus, would lead another procession through this very **valley**, to this very **mount**.

L. David why are you weeping?
   1. Because you have been chased out of your kingdom? Because you lost your throne? **No!** What most likely broke David’s heart was the evidence of his sin in his children & in his kingdom.

M. Why did **Ahithophel**, David counselor, defect? Maybe because David had committed adultery with his granddaughter Bathsheba?

N. **HUSHAI!** (32-37)
   O. Hushai was waiting for David at the summit...wearing the clothes of sympathy (a torn robe & dust on this head)
      1. Hushai - a servant, an advisor, a friend.

P. W/o question & w/o being offended that David chose not to take him along, Hushai returned to join Absalom’s court to give him bad counsel & act as a spy. **Yes, espionage!**
   1. As it turned out, he played a key role in saving David’s life & kingdom.
   2. Faith in God is not inconsistent w/making wise preparations for our defense.
      a) As one said, it’s doing our part & asking for the supernatural.

Q. All of these men were **taking risks** for the sake of the Lord & the kingdom...but they considered it an honor to serve their king, & help restore him to the throne.
1. Friendships always require risks!
2. Ittai gave a vow of loyalty; Zadok & Abiathar gave spiritual support; Hushai worked on David’s behalf.

R. FRIENDSHIP!
S. The words friends, friendly, & friendship appear over 100 x’s in the Scriptures. [God says a lot about friends]

1. Friends are not optional; they’re essential!3
   a) There is no substitute for a friend - someone to care, listen, to feel, to comfort, & yes, occasionally to reprove. True friends do that best [Faithful are the wounds of a friend Pr.27.6]
   b) Some might say, I only need Jesus! Well, than you’re more spiritual than Jesus & Paul, for they needed friends.
   c) Some people make enemies instead of friends, because it is less trouble. E.C. McKenzie
   d) I always find it interesting when you can walk away from a conversation w/someone & they didn’t ask anything about you.

2. Friends are not automatic; they must be cultivated!
   a) Prov.18:24 A man who has friends must himself be friendly.
   b) Samuel Johnson wrote, “One should keep his friendship in a constant repair.”
      (1) Like trees, friendships need constant cultivation.

3. Friends are not neutral; they impact our lives!
   a) Those who are close to us rub off on us, change us.
      (1) Bees example: When you buy honey, it is classified by the floral source of the nectar from which it was made. i.e. by what flowers they’ve been rubbing up against!
      (2) Their morals & philosophies, convictions & character eventually become our own.
      (3) 1 Cor.15:33 Do not be deceived: “Evil company corrupts good habits.”
      (4) Prov.13:20 He who walks with wise men will be wise.
         (a) Choose your friends carefully & wisely. Gossips usually gravitate to gossips.
             Rebels run with rebels. You want to be wise? Choose wise friends!

4. Friends come in varying degrees, some of whom play more significant roles in our life than others.

3 Adapted from Charles Swindoll, David, pg.250.
a) **Acquaintances** - those whom we have *superficial interaction* with.

   (1) “How are you?” “Fine” “Great!” (I’m really not fine, but I can’t tell you because you’re only an acquaintance)

b) **Casual Friends** - are people w/whom we have *more contact*; w/whom we have *common interests*; & w/whom we have *more specific conversations*. Yet, there is still a safe distance.

c) **Close Friends** - are those people w/whom we share *similar life goals & w/whom we discuss the hard questions*.

   (1) We do *projects* together, *exercise* together, *socialize* together, sometimes even *vacation* together.

   (2) C. S. Lewis said, Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another, “What! You, too? I thought I was the only one.”

d) **Intimate Friends** - are the people with whom you have *regular contact & a deep commitment* to *mutual character development*.

   (1) You have the *fewest number* of intimate friends, but you also enjoy the *highest level* of honesty with them.

   (2) We are open & vulnerable with them.

   (3) With them you share the freedom to *criticize & correct; encourage & embrace*. Why? Because *trust & mutual understanding* has been *established* between them.

   (a) “Friendship is a *single soul* dwelling in *two bodies*.” - Aristotle

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T. Questions to ponder:

1. If you were *another person* would you like to be a friend of yours?

2. How would you rate your *spouse*? As an acquaintance; a casual friend, a close friend, or an intimate friend?

3. Do you have an *intimate* friend?

   a) If *yes*, maybe its a good time to let them know you are *thankful* for them.

   b) If *no*, maybe its a good time to get a shovel & plant a few friends.

   (1) *You’ll never regret it*. Just ask David!