

The Blessing of Friendship

John 15:12-17

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The Bible has much to say about friendship. Here are three things about friendship:

1. The need for friends

The more we desire friendship, the more we are like God. While we may have several acquaintances, we have fewer close friends. The need and want for friends is not a sign of spiritual immaturity, but of maturity. The one thing that was not good before the fall was for Adam to be alone (Gen. 2:18). God made Eve Adam's wife not just for the purpose of procreation or assistance, but also for friendship. The ache for friendship is an ache that is not the result of sin. God made us in a way that we cannot enjoy our joy without friends. While desiring friendship is not the result of sin, the reason we struggle with loneliness and the lack of friends in our lives is because of sin. Sin causes us to be disillusioned with making friends, isolating us in the process. We need friendships!

Jesus Christ, the perfect Saviour and Son of God, chose His disciples to be His friends (v14a). Jesus was telling His disciples that their joy can only be complete if they are friends with Him and God. Friendship love first existed with God in the Trinity. He extended the same friendship He has with God to His disciples. Through Jesus, we now also have been given this friendship (v15).

2. The characteristics of true friends

"He who would be happy here must have friends; and he who would be happy hereafter, must, above all things, find a friend in the world to come, in the person of God." – C.H. Spurgeon. We will only be happy if we have true friends. As we ask ourselves who our true friends are, we must also ask if we are true friends ourselves.

Who is a true friend?

- A. A true friend always loves you, never uses you (vv9-10; vv12-13;

v17). The foundation of true friendship is love. He is one that would lay down His life for you (v13) and never abandon you (Prov. 17:17).

- B. A true friend always lets you in, never lets you down (vv15-16). All throughout the gospels, we see Jesus opening Himself up to His disciples (Mark 9:2-8; 14:37-38). A true friend gives the gift of emotional connection sensitively and willingly. He is a truth-teller (Prov. 27:5-6) that is honest and reliable (Prov. 18:24).

3. The power to forge lasting friendships

It is extremely challenging both to open up, becoming vulnerable around someone, and to be unconditionally there for someone. *"The Christian God, the biblical God is a friendship, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, knowing and loving one another."* – Timothy Keller. The power to forge lasting friendships comes from our eternal friendship with God. Jesus is the perfect friend who loves at all times and would stick with us through eternity. On the cross, Jesus our perfect friend bore our sins, wounds and pain. On the cross, Jesus not only made friendship with God accessible, but empowers and liberates us to be a true friend. Make Jesus the friend your heart desires and you will have all the friends your heart needs!