

# *From My Bible*

Sermon Notes  
& Outlines

# *Friends*

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# Introduction

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These messages are compiled from study notes and outlines of my own and many others. I hope they are a help to you.

I'm sure that all of us have at times "*borrowed*" or "*used*" a sermon we heard or read somewhere along the way. A thought, a word, or an idea jumped out to us from another preacher and we took that thing and ran with it. You have probably used an outline from a preacher brother but ended up preaching something that was uniquely different. Same idea, it just came out differently when you preached. Using your own thoughts, experiences, and illustrations.....the message became your own.

I heard an old-time preacher once say, "*Any message worth preaching ought to be worth preaching again!*" Well, I have certainly preached some sermons again and again. I have borrowed from others to preach theirs again too. Please use these messages as the Lord leads and preach His Word over and over again!

I make no claim of complete originality for this material. Also, please remember that these messages are not expected to substitute for your own personal study of the Word of God! The thoughts and ideas are given as a catalyst to help begin your ideas on a given passage of Scripture or trigger a seed thought to get you going. It is my prayer that the "*stuff*" contained here will further kindle the fire of God's message that is already in your heart. Your own thinking, praying, and studying will be necessary to guide you into the delivery of His Word to your own people.

May these sermons become *messages* from the Lord that He uses in your own life as He has used them in mine.

# To Be His Friends, We Must Obey Him

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**Text: John 15:12-17**

**By Warren Wiersbe**

**Introduction:** Many of us have acquaintances but very hardly any real true friends, and even some of our friends may prove unfriendly or even untrue. Think about Judas? “*Yes, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me*” (Ps. 41:9). Even a loyal friend may fail us when we need him most. Peter, James, and John went to sleep in the Garden of Gethsemane when they should have been praying; and Peter even denied the Lord thrice. Our friendship to each other and to the Lord is not perfect, but His friendship to us is always perfect.

However, we must not interpret this word *friend* in a limited way, because the word indicates “*a friend at court.*” It describes that “*inner circle*” around a king or emperor. (In John 3:29, it refers to the “*best man*”, at a wedding.) The “*friends of the king*” would be close to him and know his secrets, but they would also be subject to him and have to obey his commands. There is thus no conflict between being a friend and being a servant.

The perfect illustration of this in Scripture is Abraham, “*the friend of God*” (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23), who was also the servant of God (Gen. 26:24). In Genesis 18, our Lord and two angels came to visit Abraham as they were on their way to investigate the sin of Sodom. Even though Abraham was nearly 100 years old, he interrupted his noonday rest, greeted the visitors, saw to their comfort, and fed them a lovely meal. In the first fifteen verses of this chapter, Abraham is on the move; and twice he refers to himself as a servant (Gen. 18:3, 5). Note that this old man “*hastened*” and “*ran*” and encouraged others to perform their work quickly, a perfect example of a servant. Nor did Abraham sit and eat with them. Like a true servant, he stood nearby, ready to do their bidding.

In the last half of the chapter, the atmosphere changes, and Abraham is quietly standing still, communing with the Lord. He is still a servant, but now he is being a friend. “*Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do?*” the Lord asked. As a friend of God, Abraham shared God’s secrets.

It is this kind of a relationship that Jesus described when He called His disciples “*friends*.” It was certainly a relationship of *love*, both for Him and for each other. The “*friends of the King*” could not compete with each other for attention or promotion. They were a part of the “*inner circle*,” not to promote themselves, but to serve their King. What a rebuke this must have been to the selfish disciples who often argued over who was the greatest!

How is it possible for Jesus to *command* us to love one another? Can true love be commanded? You must keep in mind that Christian love is not basically a “*feeling*”; it is an act of the will. The proof of our love is not in our feelings but in our actions, even to the extent of laying down our lives for Christ and for one another (1 John 3:16). Jesus laid down His life for both His friends and His enemies! (Rom. 5:10) While the emotions are certainly involved, real Christian love is an act of the will. It means treating others the way God treats us.

So, our friendship with Christ involves love and obedience. But it also involves knowledge: He “*lets us in on*” His plans. Indeed, He is our Master (John 13:13, 16), but He does not treat us as servants. He treats us as friends, *if* we do what He commands. Abraham was God’s friend because he obeyed God (Gen. 18:19). If we have friendship with the world, we then experience enmity with God (James 4:1-4). Lot in Sodom was not called God’s friend, even though Lot was a saved man (2 Peter 2:7). God told Abraham what He planned to do to the cities of the plain, and Abraham was able to intercede for Lot and his family.

It is interesting to note that, in John's Gospel, it was the servants who knew what was going on! The servants at the wedding feast in Cana knew where the wine came from (John 2:9), and the nobleman's servants knew when the son was healed (John 4:51-53).

One of the greatest privileges we have as His friends is that of learning to know God better and "*getting in on*" God's secrets. I can never forget the impact on my own heart when I heard Dr. Oswald Sanders say to the Back to the Bible staff, "*Each of us is as close to God as we choose to be.*" We are His friends, and we ought to be near the throne, listening to His Word, enjoying His intimacy, and obeying His commandments.

One day while he was a fugitive, David was near Bethlehem, his home city, and he longed for a drink of water from the well by the gate. Three of his mighty men were close enough to David to hear his sigh, and they risked their lives to bring their king the water that he wanted (2 Sam. 23:15-17). That is what it means to be a friend of the king.

In John 14:16, Jesus reminded the men that they had this privileged position only because of His grace. They did not choose Him; He chose them! He chose them out of the world (John 14:19) and ordained them to do His will. Again, we find this important word *fruit*. As branches, we share His life and bear fruit; and as friends, we share His love and bear fruit. As branches, we are pruned by the Father; as friends, we are instructed by the Son, and His Word controls our lives.

The word *ordained* simply means "*appointed.*" It refers to the act of setting someone apart for special service. We have graciously been chosen and set apart by the Lord in order to go into the world and bear fruit. He has sent us into the world (John 17:18) as His personal ambassadors to tell others about the King and His great salvation. When we witness to others

and win them to Christ, this is bringing forth fruit to the glory of God.

As I mentioned before, the evidence of true sonship, discipleship (John 15:8), and friendship (John 15:15) is *fruit*. “*Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them*” (Matt. 7:20). Where there is true fruit, it remains; man-made “*results*” eventually disappear. Fruit has in it the seed for more fruit, so the process goes on and on. Whatever is born of the Spirit of God has the mark of eternity on it, and it will last.

Once again, Jesus brought up the privilege of prayer. The friends of the king certainly speak to their sovereign and share their burdens and needs with him. In the days of monarchies, it was considered a very special honor to be invited to speak to the king or queen; yet the friends of Jesus Christ can speak to Him at any time. The throne of grace is always available to them.

John 15:15-16 summarize for us what it means to be a friend of the King of kings. It is a humbling experience, for He chose us and we did not choose Him. We must keep this in mind lest we become proud and presumptuous. It means that we keep our ears open and listen to what He says to us. “*Hast thou heard the secret of God?*” (Job 15:8) “*The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant*” (Ps. 25:14). We must be attentive and alert.

But the purpose for all of this is that we might obey Him and get His work done. The King has tasks that must be performed; and if we love Him, we will obey His commands. We will seek to bear fruit that will please Him and glorify the Father. Our joy should be to please Him.

Jesus closed this part of His message by reminding them (and us) of the most important commandment of all: love one another. There are dozens of “*one another*” statements in the



New Testament, but all of them are summarized in “*love one another.*” Jesus had already given this commandment to the Eleven (John 13:34-35), and now He has repeated it twice (John 15:12, 17). It will be stated in one way or another many more times in the New Testament letters, especially by John in his first epistle. The friends of the King must not only love Him, but also one another. What joy it brings to His heart when He sees His friends loving one another and working together to obey His commands.

This study began in the vineyard and ended in the throne room! The next study will take us to the battlefield where we experience the hatred of the lost world. If we are not abiding as branches and obeying as friends, we will never be able to face the opposition of the world. If we do not love one another, how can we ever hope to love lost men and women in the world? If we are not marching together as the friends of the King, we will never present a united front to the enemy.

“*Without Me, ye can do nothing*” (John 15:5).

We are not simply handicapped or hindered. We are hopelessly paralyzed! We can do *nothing*!

But if we abide in Him, if we stay close to the throne, we can do *anything* that He commands us to do!

What a privilege—and what a responsibility!

# The Importance of Friends

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Text: Psalm 1

**Introduction:** The relationships we have with friends is extremely important. The *Positions, Posture, and Purpose* of friends is given to us in Psalm 1. Notice the words... "*Walketh*", "*Standeth*", "*Sitteth*".....how does someone end up "*sitting*" with this crowd.....gradually thru poor relationships!

## 1. Your Friends Define You (Example: Lot)

- *Talk with your friends* I will soon know you
- *Meet with your friends* I will soon know you
- *Eat with your friends* I will soon know you
- *Hang with your friends* I will soon know you
- *Go with your friends* I will soon know you

## 2. Your Friends Direct You (Example: Rehoboam)

- *Influence* your decisions & choices in life
- *Impact* your life often permanently

## 3. Your Friends Can Destroy You (Example: Amnon)

"*Amnon had a friend*"...cp. Prov. 13:20b

# Psalms 1

Importance of "Friend" relationships / Position Purpose } ex. "lot" } walketh  
} standeth  
} sitteth

① Your friends DEFINE you

- Talk w/ your friends
- Meet \_\_\_\_\_
- Eat \_\_\_\_\_
- Hang \_\_\_\_\_
- Go \_\_\_\_\_  
etc,

how does  
someone  
end up  
here?

- gradually  
from walking,  
standing,  
w/ your  
relationships

Then I have met/know you!

② Your friends DIRECT you

- Influence your decisions/choice
- Impact your life

"Amnon had a friend"  
Prov. 13:20a

③ Your friends can DESTROY you

"Amnon had a friend"  
Prov. 13:20b

## **F – R – I – E – N – D**

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**Introduction:** Be sure to invest time to make some new friends this year. There really is no way to calculate the value of friendship. What is a friend? Check out this acrostic:

**F**aithful to the Lord, His Commission and to you. Many of the greatest joys of your life will come out of God-given friends.

**R**ejoice in your victories and comfort you in your defeats. No one wins everything all the time. A true friend celebrates when you are on top and communicates with you when you are on the bottom.

**I**nspires your life to reach its maximized potential. When you are with a great friend, you will want to live an even greater life.

**E**nlists your involvement in their life and ministry. You are enlisted not simply for what you can do for them; but because of who you are in their life.

**N**oble thoughts and activities emerge out of Spirit-filled friendships. Your thinking will be enriched through powerful, intimate friendships.

**D**edicated to mutual well-being. A real friend seeks a simple approach to their cultivated friendships and enjoys company not just when working but simply enjoying each other's togetherness.

# Defining Friendship

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Text: Prov. 17:17; 18:24

## *“Friend”*

1. A person whom one knows, likes, and trusts.
2. A person whom one knows; an acquaintance.
3. A person with whom one is allied in a struggle or cause; a comrade.
4. One who supports, sympathizes with, or patronizes a group, cause, or movement: friends of the clean air movement.

What is a friend? Someone described a friend as *“somebody who knows all about you and loves you anyway.”* Another described a friend as *“the one who steps in when the whole world steps out.”*

Friendship could be defined as an active concept. Friendship is clearly defined more in terms of what a friend does than by what a friend is. It is not as if we’re saying, *“You’re not my friend unless you do such and such.”* But, *“Because you have exhibited certain qualities such as kindness, sympathy, and interest in me, I believe that you are my friend.”* Consider what the Bible says to be the foundational quality of friendship:

### **1. Friendship Involves Communication**

Exodus 33:11 (Our **Speech** Is Knit Together)

### **2. Friendship Involves Commonality**

Deuteronomy 13:6-8 (Our **Souls** Are Knit Together)

### **3. Friendship Involves Complementing**

Prov. 27:17, Eccl. 4:9-10 (Our **Strengths** Are Knit Together)

### **4. Friendship Involves Compassion**

Proverbs 17:17 (Our **Sympathies** Are Knit Together)

**Judges 20:11** *So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, knit together as one man.*

**1 Samuel 18:1** *And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.*

**1 Chronicles 12:17** *And David went out to meet them, and answered and said unto them, If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, mine heart shall be knit unto you: but if ye be come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in mine hands, the God of our fathers look thereon, and rebuke it.*

**Colossians 2:2** *That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;*

**Colossians 2:19** *And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God*

**Note:** In the other verses we have considered regarding friendship, comparisons have been used to describe different aspects of friendship.

**Exodus 33:11** *And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as (like) a man speaketh unto his friend...*

**Deut. 13:6** *...thy friend, which is as (like) thine own soul...*

**Proverbs 27:17** *Iron sharpeneth iron; so (like) a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.*

These aspects of friendship are said to be “*like*” something, however the verse that we have used to deal with the compassion of a friend simply says, “*A friend loveth at all times.*” There is no point of comparison used here, perhaps because there is nothing like the love of a friend.

Let’s mention again Proverbs 18:24. It says, “*A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.*” This “*friend that sticketh closer than a brother*” has often been associated with our dearest friend – Jesus Christ. We can be confident that this friend loves us at all times, and His love surpasses all others. Truly, He is “*our best friend.*”

*There’s not a friend like the lowly Jesus  
No, not one. No, not one.  
None else can heal all our soul’s diseases.  
No, not one. No, not one.  
Jesus knows all about our struggles.  
He will guide till the day is done.  
There’s not a friend like the lowly Jesus  
No, not one. No, not one.*

# Friends!

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**Text: Proverbs 17:17; 18:24**

**Introduction:** Most likely, one of the greatest movies of all time that dealt with the issue of friendship was Frank Capra's *It's A Wonderful Life*. Throughout his entire life George Bailey showed himself to be an ideal friend and family member. He made sacrifices for the good of his family, friends, and the people of Bedford Falls.

There was also a villain in this movie by the name of Mr. Potter. He stole money that led George Bailey to the threshold of suicide. That's when Clarence the Angel appeared, and showed George Bailey how significant he really was, and that he really did have a wonderful life. The final scene of the movie is a gathering of all of George Bailey's *friends*. They were there to support him emotionally and financially. Did you notice the toast that Harry Bailey, George's Brother, gave? "*To my big brother George, the richest man in town.*" George Bailey was rich in friends!

Did you notice what was written on the inside of the book Clarence left? It said, "*Remember, no man is a failure who has friends.*"

When you have true friends you are truly rich and you are not a failure.

Let's look at some of the helpful aspects of friendship. As we do, be reminded of the best friend of all, the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **1. Friends Are Selected**

It has been said that you can choose your friends but you can't choose your family. It makes sense to choose your closest friends well.



- Friends will have the greatest influence on you.
- Friends will either build you or pull you down.
- Friends will either encourage or discourage you.
- Friends will either help you or hurt you.

I've seen many go downward because they have spent too much time with the wrong kinds of friends. I've seen many experience God's best because they chose the right friends.

**John 15:16** - *“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.”*

If you are wise you will select your friends carefully. You will not select friends who will bring you down, but those that will build you up and that you can build up.

## **2. Friends Stick**

True friends stick with you. You stick with them. When things are going well, your friend is there to enjoy it with you. When things are going poorly, your friend is there for you.

Proverbs 18:24 - *A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.*

You can tell a person is a good friend when he sticks with you. You can tell that you are a good friend when you stick with your friends.

## **3. Friends Sacrifice**

My friends have made sacrifices for me. I have made sacrifices for my friends. A friendship that costs nothing is no friendship at all.

Jesus said in John 15:13, *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

This is exactly what the Lord Jesus did for us. He laid down His life for His friends.

To be the friend of Jesus will also mean sacrifice.

Luke 14:26-27 - *If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. [27] And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.*

To be Jesus' friend will require sacrifice.

- The sacrifice of time
- The sacrifice of talent (used for Him).
- The sacrifice of thought (that pleases Him)
- The sacrifice of treasure
- The sacrifice of tasks done for Him

It may cost everything to be Jesus' friend. It cost Him everything to be your friend. If you will not sacrifice for a friend, you are not much of a friend. If your friend will not sacrifice for you, he is not much of a friend.

The final scene of the movie is a gathering of all of George Bailey's friends. They were there to support him emotionally and financially. Did you notice the toast that Harry Bailey, George's Brother, gave? "*To my big brother George, the richest man in town.*" George Bailey was rich in friends!

When you have true friends you are truly rich and you are not a failure.

# What A Friend We Have In Jesus-Part 1

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**Text: John 15:13-16**

**Introduction:** Webster's dictionary defines "friend" as "a favored companion." Thank God for our true friends! Aristotle was once asked, "What is a friend?" He replied, "A single soul dwelling in two bodies." I am grateful to the friends that I have made as I have traveled through this life. The Lord has allowed my life to be blessed by my having enjoyed the friendship of some very special people. Many of them sit in our church today!

However, there is a Friend Who is more special than any other I have ever met in this life. His name is Jesus and I do not call Him my Friend, but He calls me His. It is one thing for me to sing "What A Friend I Have In Jesus." It is quite another when Jesus says that He has a friend in me! There is a huge difference between the two!

As I read my Bible, I find numerous places where the Lord referred to some as His friends.

## **Moses**

For instance, in the Old Testament, God spoke to Moses as a man speaks to his friend, **Exodus 33:11** "And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle."

## **Abraham**

Abraham is called the friend of God,

**2 Chronicles 20:7** “Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend forever?”

**James 2:23** “And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.. Abraham’s seed, the faithful of Israel, are called the friends of God,”

**Isaiah 41:8** “But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend...”

### **Lazarus**

In the New Testament a man named Lazarus is called a friend by Jesus, **John 11:11** “These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep..” In our text, the disciples are called *friends*.

### **Publicans & Sinners**

Even more amazing is the fact that one of the charges His enemies made against Jesus was that He was a “*friend of publicans and sinners*”, **Matthew 11:19**

**Conclusion:** The great American evangelist Dwight L. Moody incorporated this song in his sermons, writings, and teachings. This caused many people to believe that the song is an American hymn. Not so. It was written by an Irishman in Canada.

One Hundred fifty years ago two businessmen stood on a Port Hope, Ontario street corner as a little man carrying a saw walked by. One of the businessmen said, “*Now there is a man*

*who is happy with his lot in life. I wish I could know his joy. Perhaps I can get him to cut my winter's supply of wood."*

*"I know that man. He would not cut your firewood. He cuts wood only for the financially destitute and for those who are physically handicapped and cannot cut their own firewood."*

That young woodcutter was named Joseph Scriven. Son of a captain in the British Royal Marines, Joseph was born in Ireland in 1819. After receiving his university degree from Trinity College in London, he quickly established himself as a teacher, fell in love, and made plans to settle in his hometown. Then tragedy struck. The day before his scheduled wedding, his fiancé drowned.

Overcome with grief, Scriven left Ireland to start a new life in Canada. He established a home in Rice Lake, where he met and fell in love with Eliza Rice. Just weeks before she was to become Joseph Scriven's bride, she suddenly grew sick. In a matter of weeks, Eliza died.

A shattered Scriven turned to the only thing that had anchored him during his life — his faith. Through prayer and Bible study he found not just solace, but a mission. The twenty-five year old Scriven took a vow of poverty, sold all of his earthly possessions, and vowed to give his life to the physically handicapped and financially destitute.

Ten years later Scriven received word that his mother had become very ill. The man who had taken a vow of poverty did not have the funds to go home to help care for her. Heartsick, and feeling a need to reach out to her, he wrote the story of his life in three short verses he called *"What a Friend We Have in Jesus."*

Later, Scriven said, *"The Lord and I together wrote the song."* Several of his friends got a copy and one of them carried a

copy to a music publisher. Within two years the little poem of inspiration had been published and coupled to a tune written by an American lawyer, Charles Converse.

Two decades later the great American evangelist Dwight L. Moody came across the song and believed it to be the most touching modern hymn that he had ever heard. It was Moody who gave the song a national platform and caused so many to think that the song had been written in America.

Ironically, Joseph Scriven drowned in a Canadian lake in 1886. He did not live to see his song carried to every corner of the globe.

- James Q. Salter

The information contained in this review is from the author and publisher: Ace Collins, *Stories Behind the Hymns that Inspire America*, (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2003).

# What A Friend We Have In Jesus-Part 2

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Text: John 15:13-16

**Introduction:** A great philosopher once was asked, “*What is a friend?*” He replied, “*A single soul dwelling in two bodies.*” I am appreciative to the friends that I have made in life. The Lord has blessed me by my the friendships of some very special people.

On the other hand, there is a Friend Who is more special than any other I have ever known in my short life. His name is Jesus and I am so thankful I can call Him my Friend. Most everyone in church these days has had the privilege to sing “*What A Friend We Have In Jesus.*” Let’s notice how we can see Jesus as our Friend:

## I. His Friendship Is Seen In His Sacrifice – vs. 13

**A. It Was Voluntary** – The statement, “*Lay down his life*”, indicates a voluntary act. No man “*murdered Jesus*” or took away His life against His will. He voluntarily gave up His life on the cross. He makes this clear by several statements that He made during life and during death: **John 10:18; John 18:37; Matt 27:50.**

**B. It Was Vicarious** – The word *vicarious* means “*performed or suffered by one as a substitute for another or to the benefit or advantage of another.*” Jesus tells us in this verse that His life was being given up “*for his friends*”. In other words, His death was not for Himself, but it was for others. **Isaiah 53:4-6** makes this abundantly clear. When Jesus went to the cross, He was doing so on the behalf of others. It was for those people that He called His friends. Other verses also speak to his truth, **1 Pet. 2:24; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 3:18; 1 John 2:2.** Jesus was dying for you so that you would not have to go to Hell!

**C. It Was Vicious** – The phrase “*lay down his life*” is clean on the surface. It doesn’t nearly communicate the depths of agony that Jesus endured when He gave up His life for us. It is only by looking at several verses throughout Scripture that portray clearly that He paid a terrible price when He died.

1. Betrayed by Judas and deserted by the disciples - **Matt. 26:47-56**
2. Beaten by the Temple guards - **Luke 22:63-64**
3. Rejected by the very people He came to save - **Matt. 27:17-25; John 1:11**
4. Scourged - **Matt. 27:26** (Ill. Furrows - **Psa. 129:3**)
5. Mocked by the soldiers and crowned with thorns - **Matt. 27:26-29**
6. Beard plucked from His face - **Isa. 50:6**
7. Stripped Naked - **Matt. 27:35**
8. Crucified - Nailed to a cross and hung up to die - **Matt. 27:35**
9. Absolutely marred beyond belief - **Isa. 50:14**

When His death is considered from this viewpoint, it takes on renewed meaning and wonder! He did all of this for you – **John 15:13!**

**D. It Was Victorious** – There are those who look at the death of Jesus on the cross and cry “*What a tragedy!*” Yet, His death was not tragic! His death ranks as one of the most glorious days in the history of this world! When He was nearing the end of His time on the cross, Jesus uttered a cry that proclaimed His death as a time of great victory – **John 19:30**. He knew that in His death, He had satisfied the righteous demands of God concerning the atonement for sin; **Isa. 53:10-12**. The fact that God was forever satisfied was proven three days later when Jesus was resurrected from the dead, **Matt. 28:1-6**. Now, sin could not only be forgiven, but redeemed sinners would live forever!



## II. His Friendship Is Seen In His Sharing vs. 14-15

**A. He Shares His Love** – Jesus reminds us that he loves us! This is a truth that permeates the pages of the Word of God! His love is said to be “*everlasting*”, **Jer. 31:3**. His love is said to be the motive behind the cross, **Rom. 5:8**. His love is something from which those who are in it can never be separated, **Rom. 8:38-39**. Love is said to be the essence of the divine nature, **1 John 4:8**. There is nothing in the world like knowing that you are love by God! Of course, this is just like a true friend, **Pro. 17:17**.

**B. He Shares His Life** – These verses tell us that Jesus not only gave His life *FOR* us on the cross, but that He also *IMPARTS* His life to us day by day. This is seen in the great change He makes in every life He touches, **2 Cor. 5:17**. He takes us with all our sins and fleshly desires, saves us by His grace and gives us a heart to live for Him! The redeemed sinner literally becomes a vessel in which the life of Jesus Christ lives, **Col. 3:3; Gal. 2:20**. Every life He touches changes! This is seen countless times in the Gospels. When Jesus passed by lives were forever changed! (Ill. Blind, lepers, deaf, demoniacs, lame, sick, dead, all were miraculously, perfectly and permanently changed by the power of His touch!)

**C. He Shares His Lessons** – Jesus tells His disciples that He has chosen to treat them like friends. He will not keep the truth hidden from them, but He will teach them all things about the Father. This is another blessing of having Jesus as a Friend. He is the revelation of God, **John 14:9; John 1:18**. He teaches us truth about God, His work and His word. Of course, He does this through the Person and work of the Holy Spirit, **John 16:13**. He teaches us about God: How to love Him; How to live for Him; How to worship Him; How to praise Him; How to enjoy Him; How to fellowship with Him; How to share Him with others. He shares with us the deepest

secrets of divine truth. He holds nothing back from His friends!

### **III. His Friendship Is Seen In His Salvation - Vs. 16**

**A. We Are Chosen By Him** – If you are saved, or if you ever get saved, it will be because the Lord in His grace chose you! After all, the sinner is dead in his sins, **Eph. 2:1**. As a result, he cannot come to God by his own initiative. Before the sinner can be saved, he must be called to come to the Lord for salvation, **John 6:44**. That calling is what we call conviction. It is an inner awareness of one's sins and a certain knowledge that Jesus Christ is the only hope of the sinner, **John 16:7-11**. When sinners are called to come to Him and they respond in faith, salvation is the result, **John 6:37-40**. Thank God for a Friend like Jesus Who would take our place on Calvary, and in spite of our sins, love us enough to call us to Himself for salvation! That is what I call a true Friend!

**B. We Are Called By Him** – I salvation weren't enough, after He saves us, He calls us into His service, **Eph. 2:10**. He does this by gifting each of us to fulfill a special place in the body of Christ, **1 Cor. 12**. His plan for us after salvation is to use us for His Own glory in the world. He desires that we be actively involved in His work. He has promised those who will serve Him that they enjoy His power and His success in His service, **John 15:5**. His promise is that we will be used to accomplish things that will be eternal in their scope. That is a true Friend Who knows us as intimately as Jesus does, and yet still He chooses to have intimate contact with us, and beyond that, He chooses to use us in His service for the glory of God.

**C. We Are Comforted By Him** – He lets us know that our relationship is further blessed by the fact that He promises us that we will enjoy an intimate relationship with His Father also. Jesus tells us that because of our friendship, we are brought into a place where we will receive answers to our

prayers. This is a great comfort as we travel through this world! Because we are in this relationship with Jesus, we are reconciled to the Father, and as a result, we are invited to come before Him and to make our petitions and requests known, Phil. 4:6-7; Heb. 4:16. The idea here is that we do not travel through this world without a Helper and without a Friend, **Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5.**

**Conclusion:** *What a Friend We Have in Jesus* was written by Joseph Scriven. He was born in Ireland in 1820 and lived there for the first 25 years of his life. Sometime in 1845 he emigrated to Canada, as many another Irishman has done, seeking his fate in the New World. He died in 1886 at the age of 66, after a varied life filled with difficulties such as many a settler has known. He was brought to Christ as a result of losing his bride-to-be on the eve of their marriage. She was accidentally drowned a few hours before they were to be joined in holy matrimony. What an indescribable grief! How easily it might have led him in the opposite direction to unbelief and bitterness and hardness of heart. I always think of this when I come to the last lines of verse three: "*In His arms He'll take and shield thee; Thou wilt find a solace there*".

It appears that the hymn was written a long time before it was seen by anyone save himself and his mother. It was written to comfort his mother in a time of great sorrow, and we can imagine what it meant to her after her son had died. How many hearts it has comforted since, no one knows but the Lord.

# Genuine Friendship

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Text: 3 John 13

**Introduction:** Sometimes a letter just will not do! Our minds become inundated with thoughts as we write to one another and we realize some things are just better said in person. Notice how John addressed this subject with Gaius.

Matthew Poole writes, *“This Gaius was well known by the apostle, not only to be a steadfast professor of the truly Christian, uncorrupted faith, (which is implied in his avowing his love to him in the truth, or upon the Christian account), but to be so improved and well-grown a Christian, that he reckons he might well make the prosperous state of his soul the measure of all the other prosperity he could wish unto him.”*

## I. John’s Affection For Gaius, Vs. 13

### A. Friendship, Vs. 13

*“I had...”* vs. 13. The phrase suggests a close friendship. John doesn’t say *“the church”* or *“the committee”* or *“we”* - he says *“I”*. One-on-one relationships that grow into genuine devotion are difficult to find.

### B. Freedom, Vs. 13

*“...many things to write...”* vs. 13. Genuine friends know you always have the other person’s best interest at heart. True friendship like this will help you cope with your problems, but won’t ignore them. Real, true friendship can say many things without fear.

## II. John’s Allegiance To Gaius, Vs. 13

### A. Perpetual, Vs. 13

*“but I will not with ink and pen...”* vs. 13. I get the feeling this wasn't John's first letter to Gaius, however, it is the one God wanted us to have. This letter encourages us to fellowship with Christian brothers and sisters, to avoid false leaders and to have loyal friendships that are in reality, true friendships. Listen! True friendships don't just happen. True friendships are built. True friendships are nurtured and guarded. John and Gaius' friendship was perpetual. Their friendship was ongoing, it was good when they were together and it was good when they were apart.

#### B. Personal, Vs. 13

*“...unto thee:”* vs. 13. John and Gaius didn't need a mediator. One preacher said it this way, *“You know how I know your boss isn't your best friend? You get your wife to call in sick for you, like you're too sick to talk.”* When your loyalty is personal you don't need someone to do your talking for you.

**John 15:13** *“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”*

What a friend we have in Jesus. Are you that kind of friend?

# When You Really Need A Friend

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**Text: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**

**Introduction:** When you need a friend remember God warns us about being friends with everyone. Some people have friends because they are so desperate that they violate God's Word and will about friendship. In **Proverbs 22:24-25** "*Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.*" Further we read in **Proverbs 29:22** "*An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.*"

We read in **Proverbs 18:24** "*A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.*" Some see this verse as follows: "*There are friends who pretend to be friends. . .*" According to the Scottish Proverb, "*False friends are worse than bitter enemies.*"

The *Oxford Dictionary's* Word of the Year in 2009 was "*unfriend.*" In March 2013 the *Oxford English Dictionary* added "*defriend*" to the list of new word entries. Of course these words refer to the social media phenomenon called Facebook. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the term "*befriend*" means "*to become or act as a friend to.*"

For a believer, friendships are to be uplifting. You should be a better person because of your friends and your friends should be better because of you. In **Proverbs 27:17** we read, "*Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.*"

We read in our text, **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12** "*Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.*"

*Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”*

Here are three times when you might really need a friend.

## **I. When You Have Fallen And Need To Get Up**

Remember the old TV commercial, “*I’ve fallen and I can’t get Up,*” about a Life-Alert button alarm? The little phrase caught on quickly but for us it should be more than a catchphrase.

**Ecclesiastes 4:10** *“For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.”*

Dr. F. B. Meyer states, *“A friend is invaluable if we stumble or fall on the path of life. ‘Woe to him that is alone when he falleth.’..... ‘Brethren,’ says the Apostle, ‘if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted.’ Let us watch for each other’s souls; if any is falling away from the truth, or into some insidious trap, let us lift him up. Let us exercise the brotherly solicitude that Barnabas did for Paul.”*

## **II. When You Get Cold (Frozen) And Need To Warm Up**

In **Ecclesiastes 4:11**, we read, *“Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?”* The *Pulpit Commentary* gives the following: *“The winter nights in Palestine are comparatively cold, and when, as in the case of the poorer inhabitants, the outer garment worn by day was used as the only blanket during sleep, [Ex. 22:26-27] it was a comfort to have the additional warmth of a friend lying under the same coverlet. Solomon could have had no such experience.”*

Personal interest and involvement are major factors in friendship. Dr. F. B. Meyer explains, *“Friendship ought to make our spirits glow. ‘How can one be warm alone?’ Of course, in a spiritual sense there are divine sources of caloric. The love of Christ kindleth to vehement heat. But it is certainly easier to keep up the temperature when we have a kindred heart beside us. Perhaps this was one reason why our Lord sent forth His disciples by two and two (Mk. 6:7).”*

### **III. When You Face Opposition And Need To Stand Up**

**Ecclesiastes 4:12** *“And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”*

George Whitefield (1714-1770) reportedly stated, *“If you are going to walk with Jesus Christ, you are going to be opposed ...”*

Sometimes we encounter verbal opposition as well as physical opposition. From **Proverbs 17:17b** we read, *“...And a brother is born for adversity.”*

In **1 Corinthians 1:10** Paul writes, *“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”*

Paul the apostle writes in **Ephesians 6:13-14** *“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;”* True friends will encourage you to stand for truth and righteousness in the evil day!



**Conclusion:** Someone wisely states, *“The time to make friends is before you need them.”*

The best friend to have when you really need one is Jesus! Are you a friend of Jesus? If He is to be your friend it must be on His terms.

Rev. Robert L. Wheeler, D. D. reportedly said, *“If I had the wisdom of Solomon, the patience of Job, the meekness of Moses, the strength of Samson, the obedience of Abraham, the compassion of Joseph, the tears of Jeremiah, the poetic skill of David, the prophetic voice of Elijah, the courage of Daniel, the greatness of John the Baptist, the endurance and love of Paul, I would still need redemption through Christ's blood, the forgiveness of sin.”*

There are times when you really need a friend.

# How To Recognize A True Friend

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From Notes of Adrian Rogers

**Introduction:** Are you a friend or enemy? How can we tell which from which? Some things are rather obvious. Some are not so obvious.

Back in the 1970's, Pepper Rogers, coach of UCLA's football team, suffered through a dismal season. He came under strong criticism and pressure from alumni and fans. Things got so bad that he felt as if all his friends were gone. "*My dog was my only true friend,*" he said. "*I told my wife that every man needs at least two good friends—and she bought me another dog.*"

Did you know that the deepest need of the human heart is for closeness? That's just another way of saying friendship. Now, I'm not talking about casual acquaintances or false friends, but true friends. Let me give you three marks of a true friend.

**A True Friend Sharpens.** He will make you a sharper person, a better person. Proverbs 27:17 says, "*Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.*"

**A True Friend Sticks.** A true friend is steadfast. We read in Proverbs 17:17: "*A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*" If you want to see who your real friends are, just make a mistake and see whether or not they leave you.

**A True Friend Stabs.** You say, "*I don't want to be stabbed.*" Well, listen to Proverbs 27:6: "*Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.*" A friend who really loves you will wound you if it's necessary. That is, he will tell you the truth and won't give you hypocritical kisses when he needs to do a little spiritual surgery on you.

