

Friendship

John 15 v 12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

14 You are My friends if you do what I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not understand what his master is doing. But I have called you friends, because everything I have learned from My Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will remain—so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you. 17 This is My command to you: Love one another.

Twice Jesus says, “this is my command.. Love one another” It is said that John preached the same message over and over as an old man.

The 4th-century theologian Jerome tells a story about the Apostle John. John was old and frail, unable to walk, so his disciples would carry him into the gathering of believers on the Lord’s Day. Every week these were his words to the congregation: “Little children, love one another.”

This went on week after week, until at last, more than a little weary of these repeated words, his disciples asked him, “Master, why do you always say this?”

“Because,” John replied, “it is the Lord’s command, and if this only is done, it is enough.”

3 times Jesus uses the word FRIEND.. He makes it clear that, as His disciples, we are no longer servants, or ‘doulos’, in Greek, that is slaves, subservient and bound to.. But we are ‘philos’ friends... There is an implication of freedom, respect, kinship..

Our understanding of friendship needs to be based on Jesus

We all long for genuine friendship. It is a legitimate God shaped desire placed in our hearts. It should be at the foundation of our salvation, marriage and family life. We are chosen, appointed as ‘friends’ and we ask of God in prayer, as ‘friends’.

Some people abandon friendship relationships due to past hurts or abuse, remember Simon and Garfunkel’s song, I am a rock? (Showing my age I guess!)

*I've built walls
A fortress deep and mighty
That none may penetrate
I have no need of friendship, friendship causes pain
It's laughter and it's loving I disdain
I am a rock I am an island*

Through Christ we can know that we have a friend who will never betray us or let us down and will always be available to us. Allow God to bring healing to your heart as you open up to Him. Don’t be a rock or an island! The truth is that we all need friendship.

God has revealed His desire for a friendship connection with His people throughout the Bible:

Moses

*The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, **as one speaks to a friend.** Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent. Exodus 33:11*

Abraham

*James 2: **23** And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and **he was called God’s friend.***

Three Lessons from Jesus about friendship:

- **It is vital!!** Jesus spent time with his friends. They ministered together, ate together, prayed together. How much value do we place on our friendships? Jesus chose - have we chosen? Jesus decided to spend His last moments with friends. Yet His Lordship and ultimate authority remain. We are His friends IF we do what He commands (John 15:14).

The righteous choose their friends carefully, but the way of the wicked leads them astray (Prov 12:26)

Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm. (Prov 13:20)

- **Friendship shows love that is sacrificial.** Jesus gave himself for His friends, including forgiving their failures. Accepting them, even when they denied Him and abandoned Him.

Consider Job, *“After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before.”* Job 42:10

- **Real friendship continues.** It goes on.. It is not fleeting but endures.. Jesus was aware of the failings of His friends, the disciples, but forgave them and blessed them. He saw their potential and believed in them even when they failed Him.

Whoever would foster love covers over an offense, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends. (Prov 17:9)

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity. (Prov 17:17)

What is God saying to me through this message of friendship?

Is there somebody I should befriend?

Is there a friend I need to pray for, reach out to or even forgive?

Do I need to experience healing from the hurt of friendships that have brought pain?

How can I grow in friendship?

How can I grow in my friendship with God?

*What a friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and griefs to bear
And what a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer*

*Oh, what peace we often forfeit
Oh, what needless pain we bear
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer*

*Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged
Take it to the Lord in prayer*