

Beyond Friendship

John 15:13-14 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. **Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.**

Romans 5:7-8 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Friend – “A person whom one knows, likes, and trusts.”

Friendship isn't always easily described. The Eskimos, they say, have a hundred different words for snow. Unfortunately, the English language isn't quite as innovative, though it has vast opportunities to differentiate meaning. Certainly, friendship is one of those opportunities.

Instead of different words or definitions, we use different adjectives. Close friend. Best friend. Childhood friend. Intimate friend. Trusted friend. Beloved friend. No matter what adjective you use, few could deny the nearly infinite meaning in such a simple word as “friend.”

Friends are special people. We can't pick our family, and we're sorely limited in the number of them at any rate. But our friends can be as diverse and infinite as the adjectives we choose. Our friends, in a very real sense, reflect the choices we make in life.

Being able to relax with your friends is the biggest part of friendship. No performance is necessary! Being with a friend is like “coming home.”

Most of all, friends must “relate” to each other – because the very nature of friendship is **reciprocal** (give and take).

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

FRIENDSHIP SAYS “I WILL IF YOU WILL”

That's why it is so devastating when friendship is damaged, either by one of the people in the relationship, or by an outside circumstance ...

Proverbs 16:28 A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.

Proverbs 17:9 He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.

Our earthly friends often fail us, let us down, disappoint us, or even use us for their own advantage ...

Proverbs 19:4 Wealth maketh many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbour.

Proverbs 19:6 Many will intreat the favour of the prince: and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts.

Job 19:14 My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me.

Job 19:19 All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me.

Job 16:20 My friends scorn me: but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.

Sometimes even when friends try to help us, they hurt us!

Proverbs 27:6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

Sometimes we irritate our friends!

Proverbs 27:14 He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him.

The worst wound a friendship can suffer is betrayal ...

Psalms 55:12-14 For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.

Why do we feel the matters of friendship so deeply? Because we invest so much of ourselves in our friendships.

FRIENDSHIP SAYS “I WILL IF YOU WILL”

James 2:23-24 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**. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

Have you ever heard the saying “three’s a crowd”? That’s how God feels about His friendship with you!

James 4:4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

FRIENDSHIP SAYS “I WILL IF YOU WILL”

But because human beings are so fickle, God knew that friendship was not going to be enough to hold our relationship with Him together. So He did something else, something far stronger than friendship ...

It happens occasionally in Scripture between human beings, but it is very rare for it to actually work out when only humans are involved. It’s called COVENANT.

1 Samuel 18:3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

2 Samuel 9:1 And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?

Long after Jonathan was dead and gone, long after there was any benefit to David from their friendship, David remembered the COVENANT they had made.

It’s rare that covenants between human beings work out – even covenants like marriage – because ...

COVENANT SAYS “I WILL IF YOU WON’T”

Did you know that all you need to do to ruin every relationship in your life is ... PLAY FAIR?! Treat others just like they treat you. If they’re nice, be nice. If they’re not nice, then ...! That’s why the human race is in such a mess. That’s why marriages break up, churches split, and countries war. It’s because we have RELATIONSHIP WITHOUT REAL COVENANT.

GOD IS DIFFERENT – HE IS A COVENANT MAKING AND A COVENANT KEEPING GOD!

Deuteronomy 4:31 (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them.

God’s covenant with King David ...

Psalms 89:30-34 If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.

2 Chronicles 21:7 Howbeit the LORD would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David, and as he promised to give a light to him and to his sons for ever.

Jeremiah 33:20-21 Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers.

THAT’S WHY DAVID WORKED SO HARD TO BRING BACK THE ARK OF THE COVENANT – COVENANT BRINGS GOD’S PRESENCE!

Deuteronomy 7:7-9 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;

COVENANT SAYS “I WILL IF YOU WON’T”

Hebrews 10:16-17 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

2 Timothy 2:11-13 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

Because God made a covenant with me, I have made a covenant with Him. HE IS MORE THAN MY FRIEND.

I WILL IF HE WON’T! If God doesn’t deliver me, heal me, bless me or vindicate me ... I’m still in covenant with Him!