

QUALITY
OF
LIFE
BIBLE
STUDY



Friendship®

COMPILED BY
S.MCRAE

FRIENDSHIP

“Quality of Life Series”

LEADER: What is your definition of friendship?

READER: “What is a Friend?” #1 - C. Raymond Beran, in Bits & Pieces
Source ~ <http://www.higherpraise.org/illustrations/friendship.htm>

What is a friend? Friends are people with whom you dare to be yourself. Your soul can be naked with them. They ask you to put on nothing, only to be what you are. They do not want you to be better or worse. When you are with them, you feel as a prisoner feels who has been declared innocent. You do not have to be on your guard. You can say what you think, as long as it is genuinely you. Friends understand those contradictions in your nature that lead others to misjudge you. With them you breathe freely. You can avow your little vanities and envies and hates and vicious sparks, your meannesses and absurdities, and in opening them up to friends, they are lost, dissolved on the white ocean of their loyalty. They understand. You do not have to be careful. You can abuse them, neglect them, tolerate them. Best of all, you can keep still with them. It makes no matter. They like you. They are like fire that purges to the bone. They understand. You can weep with them, sing with them, laugh with them, pray with them. Through it all--and underneath--they see, know, and love you. A friend? What is a friend? Just one, I repeat, with whom you dare to be yourself.

READER: QUOTE # 1

Source ~ http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Friends_And_Friendship

To the query, “What is a friend?” his reply was “A single soul dwelling in two bodies.” - Aristotle BC 384-322, Greek Philosopher

READER: “What is a Friend?” #2 Our Daily Bread

Source ~ <http://www.gospelcom.net/rbc/odb/odb-10-02-00.shtml>

No longer do I call you servants, . . . but I have called you friends. —John 15:15

Socrates once asked a simple old man what he was most thankful for. The man replied, “That being such as I am, I have had the friends I have had.”

Some “friends” are fickle. In the book of Proverbs we read, “*Wealth makes many friends, but the poor is separated from his friend*” (19:4). A true friend, however, “*loves at all times*” (17:17) and “*sticks closer than a brother*” (18:24).

Our English word friend comes from the same root as the word freedom. A genuine friend sets us free to be who and what we are. We can pour out our doubts and talk freely about the wolves howling at the door of our life.

A faithful friend also affirms our worth. Queen Victoria said of William Gladstone, “When I am with him, I feel I am with one of the most important leaders in the world.” But of Benjamin Disraeli she said, “He makes me feel as if I am one of the most important leaders of the world.”

Christians have an inside track on making and being friends because we are part of one family. Haven’t you felt that family tie while talking with a stranger—only to discover that you had Christ in common? And no wonder—He is the truest Friend anyone can have. —HWR

*A friend accepts us as we are
Yet helps us be what we can be;
A friend affirms us when we’re weak—
A friend gives strength to set us free.* —DJD

Our best friends draw us closer to Christ.

READER: QUOTE #2

Source ~ <http://www.higherpraise.org/illustrations/friendship.htm>

“By friendship you mean the greatest love, the greatest usefulness, the most open communication, the noblest sufferings, the severest truth, the heartiest counsel, and the greatest union of minds of which brave men and women are capable.” - Jeremy Taylor 1613-1667 Bishop and Theologian

READER: "A Prized Definition" - Bits & Pieces

Source ~ <http://www.higherpraise.org/illustrations/friendship.htm>

A British publication once offered a prize for the best definition of a friend. Among the thousands of answers received were the following:

"One who multiplies joys, divides grief, and whose honesty is inviolable."

"One who understands our silence."

"A volume of sympathy bound in cloth."

"A watch that beats true for all time and never runs down."

The winning definition read: "A friend is the one who comes in when the whole world has gone out."

READER: QUOTE #3 - George Eliot, quoted in Today in the Word

Source ~ <http://www.higherpraise.org/illustrations/friendship.htm>

"Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person, having neither to weigh thoughts, nor measure words, but to pour them all out just as they are, chaff and grain together knowing that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and then, with the breath of kindness blow the rest away." - George Eliot 1819-1880 Author

READER: QUOTE #4

Source ~ http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Friends_And_Friendship

"Friendship improves happiness, and abates misery, by doubling our joys, and dividing our grief." - Joseph Addison 1672-1719, British Essayist, Poet, Statesman

LEADER: Who is the one person all these definitions describe? ... Jesus.

READER: "A Sticky Friend" Our Daily Bread

Source ~ <http://www.gospelcom.net/rbc/odb/odb-04-03-98.shtml>

There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. --Proverbs 18:24

The word friend is defined as "one attached to another by affection, regard, or esteem; an intimate acquaintance." Jesus defined friendship this way: "*You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. . . . I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you*" (John 15:14-15).

A friend is one to whom we can tell everything and who will never betray a confidence. A true friend will not say anything that injures us. When we hear a group of Christians finding fault with other believers, we may wonder what they say about us when we're not present.

A true friend is one who knows all about us and loves us just the same. A young boy defined such a friend as "somebody who sticks to you after he has found you out."

A friend is one in whose presence we can be ourselves without the fear of being misunderstood. That person will not talk behind our back but is one to whom we can bare the secrets of our heart, knowing that we will not be betrayed. Such a friend is Jesus, the One who perfectly fulfills Solomon's words: "*A friend loves at all times*" (Proverbs 17:17).

What kind of friend are you? --MRD

*The kindest Friend I've ever had
Is One I cannot see,
Yet One in whom I can confide,
Who loves and blesses me.* --Shuler

The best friends are like Jesus--they stick with you.

READER: "Time For Friendship" Our Daily Bread

Source ~ <http://www.gospelcom.net/rbc/odb/odb-08-13-01.shtml>

A friend loves at all times. —Proverbs 17:17

We really can't make more time. There are only 24 hours in a day, and no matter how frantically we try it's impossible to stretch those 24 into 25. So our problem isn't how to increase time but how wisely to use our daily allotment of those 1,440 minutes as they steadily tick away.

Stop, then, and think about this vital issue. Apart from eating, sleeping, doing necessary tasks, and working at income-earning jobs, how are we spending that precious commodity we call time? Whatever else we're doing, are we giving time to relationships?

Well-known author Les Parrott III points out that few things are more conducive to our well-being than investing time in friendships. Research shows, he reports, that "ignoring friendship not only diminishes your quality of life but could also be a health hazard." Parrott says that close friendships can reduce the risk of illness.

If investing time in strengthening our friendships is so essential to our well-being, what about our relationship with Jesus? He said to His disciples, "*No longer do I call you servants, . . . but I have called you friends*" (John 15:15).

If you have trusted Him as Savior, are you devoting time to deepen your relationship with the best of all friends? —VCG

*Our life can be so very busy
That we have no time for friends;
But we must spend more time with Jesus,
For His friendship never ends. —Fitzhugh*

Time is a friend when you use it to strengthen your friendship with Jesus!

READER: Greeting card #1 By Francine Pucillo

Source ~ <http://www.geocities.com/snugglemeecloser/Friends.html>

To Have A Friend Is To Invite Someone Closer And Closer
To The Sacred Chamber Of The Heart
To Be A Friend Is To Tread Softly There

READER: Greeting card #2 By Francine Pucillo

Source ~ <http://www.geocities.com/snugglemeecloser/Friends.html>

Comfort love and kindness You'll always find in me... You and I together We'll share life's harmony.

READER: Greeting card #3 By Francine Pucillo

Source ~ <http://www.geocities.com/snugglemeecloser/Friends.html>

Lean on me forever, I'll be there to the end
Totally devoted, Your very loyal friend.

READER: QUOTE #5

Source ~ http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Friends_And_Friendship

"But friendship is precious, not only in the shade, but in the sunshine of life; and thanks to a benevolent arrangement of things, the greater part of life is sunshine." - Thomas Jefferson 1743-1826, Third President of the USA

READER: QUOTE #6

Source ~ http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Friends_And_Friendship

"I remember you and recall you without effort, without exercise of will; that is, by natural impulse, indicated by a sense of duty, or of obligation. And that, I take it, is the only sort of remembering worth the having. When we think of friends, and call their faces out of the shadows, and their voices out of the echoes that faint along the corridors of memory, and do it without knowing why save that we love to do it, we content ourselves that friendship is a Reality, and not a Fancy -- that it is built upon a rock, and not upon the sands that dissolve away with the ebbing tides and carry their monuments with them." - Douglas Fairbanks 1909-, American Film Actor, Writer, Producer

LEADER: If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, you have such a friend.

What about the people He gives you to befriend?

Have you cultivated those relationships as we've described?

READER: QUOTE #7

Source ~ http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Friends_And_Friendship

"The only way to have a friend is to be one." - Ralph Waldo Emerson 1803-1882, American Poet, Essayist

READER: QUOTE #8

Source ~ http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Friends_And_Friendship

"A slender acquaintance with the world must convince every man that actions, not words, are the true criterion of the attachment of friends." - George Washington 1732-1799, First President of the USA

READER: "The Right Connection" #1 by Kenneth Sauer (Excerpt)

Source ~ <http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermon.asp?SermonID=52216&ContributorID=6536>

One of my wife's favorite sayings is by Mother Teresa. "Do small things with great love."

Mother Teresa certainly LIVED what she believed.

And that is what Christ is calling us to do as well.

LIVE WHAT YOU BELIEVE.

If we were to evaluate our lives-our lives would tell us what we believe in.

How do we treat our spouse?

How do we treat our children? How do we treat our co-workers? Do we treat people in a way that reveals Christ?

Are we doing things with great love?

One of my favorite verses of Scripture comes from Ephesians chapter 2: "*For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*"

God is in the fruit-bearing business. That is His work.....that is what He desires for us! Remaining in Christ also means obeying the will of God. God's will is for us to remain in love.

Jesus said: "*If you obey my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.*"

Remaining in love is not always easy. When someone hurts us we want to strike back...not turn the other cheek. When someone destroys our self- esteem we want to tear down, not build up. And when someone pushes us away we want to push back instead of embracing.

When we, as branches, remain in fellowship with Jesus (the Vine)...the task of remaining in love becomes possible because: "*it is not I who live but Christ who lives in me.*"

God wants us connected to Him so that He can give us the supernatural power we need in order to be the Christians He created us to be.....and so that we can influence others to be Christians as well!

Of course, we make this connection with God through a personal relationship with His Son, Jesus Christ, who died on a cross and was raised from the dead so that, through faith in Him, we might be grafted as branches onto the heavenly vine.....and thus begin to bear the heavenly fruit of His Holy Spirit.

Do we have the right connection?

READER: John 15:1-18

1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.

3 "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, **for apart from Me you can do nothing.**

6 *"If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.*

7 *"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.*

8 *"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.*

9 *"Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.*

10 *"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.*

11 *"These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.*

Disciples' Relation to Each Other:

12 *"This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.*

13 *"Greater love has no one than this, that one 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 slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.*

16 *"You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.*

17 *"This I command you, that you love one another.*

LEADER: "4 REASONS TO STAY IN THE VINE" (Excerpt)

Source ~ http://www.sermoncentral.com/print_friendly.asp?ContributorID=&SermonID=55595

(1) VERSE 2 *"he prunes it..."*. Whether or not we believe it, it is vital to our success that he prune us. What this means is He takes off all the dead, no good stuff, only to allow the good part to continue to grow. ****we need to let God rid us of some bad stuff****

(2) VERSE 5 *"bears much fruit..."*. The question must be asked, do we want a little blessing, or a big blessing. We should know that there are more blessings than we will ever know, if we will only believe God for it. And Jesus said, if we would stay in Him, we would not just bear a little fruit, but much fruit.

(3) VERSE 7 *"ask whatever you wish..."*. There are times in life when it seems like we can't get prayer answered for anything. We pray, fast, claim scriptures, etc. but nothing seems to work. A lot of the time, though, our problem is in the fact that we are not connected like we should be. Jesus said if we abide in Him, and His words in us, no matter what it is, just ask and its yours. Many times we can't win the battle, and the real reason we can't is because we are not in tune with Him."

(4) VERSE 8 *"My Father is glorified..."* The greatest reason of all, is so the Father can gain glory through your life. He does this by the things He does through you to bless others. (gifts of spirit, prayer for sick, helpless, bound, bless someone financially, etc.) It's all about Him, not about us!!!

LEADER: What does Jesus mean when He says, "I no longer call you slaves?" (verse 15) To the law.

LEADER: Can we do it...anything...by ourselves?

In verse 3 He says... *"Apart from me you can do nothing."*

LEADER: How do we stay connected to the vine?

Verse 9 says *"abide in My love."*

LEADER: How do we have friendships on earth?

Verse 17 says: 17 *"This I command you, that you love one another."*

READER: 1 John 4:7

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God."

READER: QUOTE #9

Source ~ http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Friends_And_Friendship

"The dearest friend on earth is a mere shadow compared to Jesus Christ." - Oswald Chambers 1874-1917
Scottish Preacher, Author

READER: "Intimate With Jesus" (Excerpt) Oswald Chambers - My Utmost For His Highest
Source ~ <http://www.gospelcom.net/rbc/utmost/01/07/>

Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip?' John 14:9

Once we get intimate with Jesus we are never lonely and we never lack for understanding or compassion. We can continually pour out our hearts to Him without being perceived as overly emotional or pitiful. The Christian who is truly intimate with Jesus will never draw attention to himself but will only show the evidence of a life where Jesus is completely in control. This is the outcome of allowing Jesus to satisfy every area of life to its depth. The picture resulting from such a life is that of the strong, calm balance that our Lord gives to those who are intimate with Him.

READER: "God's Amazing Grace" #1 (Excerpt)

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2a/god's_amazing_grace.htm

I was born and raised in a Javanese family, fully Islamic way in Jakarta, Indonesia. When I became a teenager, I studied about Islamic teachings in my academic education. Islam has many adherents in Java, where I have lived all my life. I prayed five times to "Allah" (deceptively known as God Almighty) almost every day, and I received religious moral education in Islam with great eagerness. Of course, I read the Quran and I learned all of the prescribed ritual prayers. I tried to obey "Allah" as faithfully as prophet Muhammad did.

Last year a tourist named "Sam" from Singapore visited the shop at the Jakarta International Airport where I worked. He had a warm and genuine smile that radiated an undeniable inner peace. Well, initially he seemed to be more interested in my colleague than me. Sigh...after that brief encounter with this radiant peranakan Christian, I had mixed feelings. On the one hand, I could not shake the image of his kind and happy face from my mind. I knew that he had something in his life that I didn't have. To my surprise I was later introduced to him by my colleague and we began our courtship. Sam and I fell in love and he shared with me from the Bible: "*Jesus said, 'I am the way - and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'*" (John 14:6). The claim that Christ is the only way made it very clear that the Bible teaches that every human being is a sinner, and yet God loves us and through Christ he can forgive and save us. There was so much I did not understand about Jesus.

I read that "*the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*" (Romans 6:23), but I did not know what it meant. Sam shared with me that his joy came from trusting in Jesus as his Saviour and Lord. He not only told me about God's holiness, he also told me about God's love. When he told me that God demonstrated His love by coming in the person of Jesus Christ to give His life on the cross for our sins, I was amazed. I had never heard anything like that before. It was wonderful, even overwhelming, to think that God is like that and that by trusting in Jesus Christ one could have all of his sins forgiven. Now I could begin to understand why a true Christian had so much joy and peace even in the midst of troubles. A Christian did not need to fear the judgment of God. He had his sins forgiven because Jesus Christ took all those sins on Himself when he died on the cross so that we need not face the judgement of God once and for all. Alleleuia!

READER: "God's Amazing Grace" #2 (Excerpt continued)

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2a/god's_amazing_grace.htm

I wondered if all of this could be true. I thought about it very much - then I told Sam I wanted Jesus to come into my life because he was a real friend, and his sincere love for me touched me very much. That same day, I accepted Jesus as my personal Saviour though I was a little unsure of God's great love.

It is impossible for me to describe the change that Jesus brought in my life when I turned from everything else and put my faith in Him. I felt that a great burden had been removed from my heart. I experienced the same joy that other Christians had. It became a personal reality to me and no longer something I only saw and envied in others. Jesus said that *He came that we might have life and have it in all of its fullness* (John 10:10). I believed that Jesus Christ loved me so much, to die for my sins and conquered death by His miraculous resurrection, the fear of what to come was taken away

By the grace of! God, He rescued me and lifted me up. I am deeply loved, highly favored and greatly blessed by God and that I have nothing to fear. It is a glorious experience to have this certainty - to know that all of my sins are forgiven and God will not impute my sins against me. Amen!

Christ who died for our sins on the cross and rose from the dead. No other religion knows a God of love such as the God who is revealed in Jesus Christ. He loves sinners, not in the sense that he approves their sins

but in the sense that He loves everyone though He does not love the evil things people do. And God's love is not just a matter of words, for the Bible says, *"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8).

When I came to Singapore and became a believer in Christ, Christ has taken care of me and so has my dear husband Sam. Since I came to know Jesus I have found that I have other brothers and sisters in Christ all around me - and many more all over the world via the internet. I left my parents, brother and sister, relatives and friends in Indonesia but God gave me a greater family in Singapore and in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. In fact, God gave me far more than I lost. In the gospel, a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written in Romans 1:17: *"For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live."* Jesus, who sits at the right hand of God in heaven, is my righteousness before God, my heavenly Father. I am God's precious, precious child now and I am greatly blessed in Christ Jesus. I hope my testimony will encourage all who know that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. To God be the glory for all He had done for us. - Orianna Cheah

READER: "Fork in the Road" Warren Webster

Source ~ <http://www.higherpraise.org/illustrations/easter.htm>

Dr. Seamands tells of a Muslim who became a Christian in Africa. "Some of his friends asked him, 'Why have you become a Christian?' He answered, 'Well, its like this. Suppose you were going down the road and suddenly the road forked in two directions, and you didn't know which way to go, and there at the fork in the road were two men, one dead and one alive--which one would you ask which way to go?'"

READER: "The Knife and the nails"

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2a/knife_and_the_nails.htm

Tony was one of the best-liked teachers in our kids' junior high school. And one summer day when he was helping me paint our house, I learned a lot about his background - a lot that was very surprising. Tony told me that he grew up in a very tough neighborhood that was sharply divided into ethnic groups - and ethnic gangs. And he was a fighter - most of the guys in his neighborhood were. He told me, "Five of my good friends died violently in just two months." Two more of his gang friends are serving prison terms. I said, "Tony, how did you ever get out of all that? How'd you end up doing so well?"

His answer blew me away.

When Tony told me what had made the difference, he did something I've never seen him do before - there were tears in his eyes. He said, "One of those friends who died was my best friend. There was a gang fight one night . . . one guy was coming behind me with a blade. It was intended for me. But my friend stepped in front of it. My friend took my knife - and that changed the course of my whole life."

Then it was my turn for tears. I said, "Tony, maybe you can understand why I try to live my life for Jesus Christ - same reason. My Friend Jesus took my knife - and realizing that has changed the course of my whole life." I Peter 2:24 says, *"He Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed."* Now the "He" in this verse is Jesus Christ, God's one and only Son. I should have gotten the knife of God's judgment - after all, I should have to pay for the sinning I've done. But Jesus stepped in and took my knife. And your knife.

LEADER: Are we staying connected to the One who died for us?

READER: "The Right Connection" #2 by Kenneth Sauer (Excerpt)

Source ~ <http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermon.asp?SermonID=52216&ContributorID=6536>

A five year old boy fell out of bed, waking the entire household with his cry. After his mother had safely tucked him back under the covers, she asked: "Why did you fall out of bed?"

Between tears and sobs, he said: "Well, I guess I went to sleep too close to where I got in."

Too many people do just that in life--we sleepwalk too close to where we began. So we fall short of what God created us to become. Too many people never learn the secret of being connected to Christ...Who is the true vine.

The fruit of the Holy Spirit are not naturally manufactured--they are supernaturally produced!

Those of us who have God's Holy Spirit living in us have the supernatural ability to become fruit producing branches for Christ...all it takes is the right connection!

READER: AN EASTER QUOTE #10

Source ~ www.thisdaysthought.org

"Faith is putting all your eggs in God's basket, then counting your blessings before they hatch." - Ramona Carroll, Author

READER: "That First Easter" by Vickie Lambdin

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon4/that_first_easter.htm

A man called Jesus,
Who from His grave arose,
On that first Easter morning
To vindicate our souls.

He bore the cross of Calvary
And shed His blood for you and me.
He paid a debt He didn't owe,
As through His blood forgiveness flowed.

Then, from His crucifixion,
Our eternal life was formed
And, through His resurrection,
That first precious Easter born.

LEADER READ: "What A Friend We Have in Jesus"

Source ~ <http://www.hymnsite.com/lyrics/umh526.sht>

Words by Joseph M. Scriven 1820-1886; Music by Charles C. Converse 1832-1918

What a Friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!

O what peace we often forfeit, O 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.

Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge, take it to the Lord in prayer.

Do your friends despise, forsake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In His arms He'll take and shield you; you will find a solace there.

Blessed Savior, Thou hast promised Thou wilt all our burdens bear
May we ever, Lord, be bringing all to Thee in earnest prayer.

Soon in glory bright unclouded there will be no need for prayer
Rapture, praise and endless worship will be our sweet portion there.

COMMENTS:

**ALLOW AT LEAST 10 MINUTES AT THE END
FOR PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISE REPORTS:**

COPY THE FOLLOWING PAGES AND DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR READERS:

READERS

“What is a Friend?” #1

What is a friend? Friends are people with whom you dare to be yourself. Your soul can be naked with them. They ask you to put on nothing, only to be what you are. They do not want you to be better or worse. When you are with them, you feel as a prisoner feels who has been declared innocent. You do not have to be on your guard. You can say what you think, as long as it is genuinely you. Friends understand those contradictions in your nature that lead others to misjudge you. With them you breathe freely. You can avow your little vanities and envies and hates and vicious sparks, your meannesses and absurdities, and in opening them up to friends, they are lost, dissolved on the white ocean of their loyalty. They understand. You do not have to be careful. You can abuse them, neglect them, tolerate them. Best of all, you can keep still with them. It makes no matter. They like you. They are like fire that purges to the bone. They understand. You can weep with them, sing with them, laugh with them, pray with them. Through it all--and underneath--they see, know, and love you. A friend? What is a friend? Just one, I repeat, with whom you dare to be yourself.

QUOTE # 1

_____ ▪ _____
To the query, “What is a friend?” his reply was “A single soul dwelling in two bodies.” - Aristotle BC 384-322, Greek Philosopher
_____ ▪ _____

“What is a Friend?” #2

No longer do I call you servants, . . . but I have called you friends. —John 15:15

Socrates once asked a simple old man what he was most thankful for. The man replied, “That being such as I am, I have had the friends I have had.”

Some “friends” are fickle. In the book of Proverbs we read, “*Wealth makes many friends, but the poor is separated from his friend*” (19:4). A true friend, however, “*loves at all times*” (17:17) and “*sticks closer than a brother*” (18:24).

Our English word friend comes from the same root as the word freedom. A genuine friend sets us free to be who and what we are. We can pour out our doubts and talk freely about the wolves howling at the door of our life.

A faithful friend also affirms our worth. Queen Victoria said of William Gladstone, “When I am with him, I feel I am with one of the most important leaders in the world.” But of Benjamin Disraeli she said, “He makes me feel as if I am one of the most important leaders of the world.”

Christians have an inside track on making and being friends because we are part of one family. Haven’t you felt that family tie while talking with a stranger—only to discover that you had Christ in common? And no wonder—He is the truest Friend anyone can have. —HWR

*A friend accepts us as we are
Yet helps us be what we can be;
A friend affirms us when we’re weak—
A friend gives strength to set us free.* —DJD

Our best friends draw us closer to Christ.
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QUOTE #2

“By friendship you mean the greatest love, the greatest usefulness, the most open communication, the noblest sufferings, the severest truth, the heartiest counsel, and the greatest union of minds of which brave men and women are capable.” - Jeremy Taylor 1613-1667 Bishop and Theologian

“A Prized Definition”

A British publication once offered a prize for the best definition of a friend. Among the thousands of answers received were the following:

“One who multiplies joys, divides grief, and whose honesty is inviolable.”

“One who understands our silence.”

“A volume of sympathy bound in cloth.”

“A watch that beats true for all time and never runs down.”

The winning definition read: “A friend is the one who comes in when the whole world has gone out.”

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QUOTE #3

“Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person, having neither to weigh thoughts, nor measure words, but to pour them all out just as they are, chaff and grain together knowing that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and then, with the breath of kindness blow the rest away.” - George Eliot 1819-1880 Author

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QUOTE #4

“Friendship improves happiness, and abates misery, by doubling our joys, and dividing our grief.” - Joseph Addison 1672-1719, British Essayist, Poet, Statesman

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Greeting card #1 By Francine Pucillo

To Have A Friend Is To Invite Someone Closer And Closer
To The Sacred Chamber Of The Heart
To Be A Friend Is To Tread Softly There

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Greeting card #2 By Francine Pucillo

Source ~ <http://www.geocities.com/snugglemeecloser/Friends.html>

Comfort love and kindness You'll always find in me... You and I together We'll share life's harmony.

_____ ▪ _____

Greeting card #3 By Francine Pucillo

Source ~ <http://www.geocities.com/snugglemeecloser/Friends.html>

Lean on me forever, I'll be there to the end
Totally devoted, Your very loyal friend.

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“A Sticky Friend”

There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. --Proverbs 18:24

The word friend is defined as “one attached to another by affection, regard, or esteem; an intimate acquaintance.” Jesus defined friendship this way: “*You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. . . . I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you*” (John 15:14-15).

A friend is one to whom we can tell everything and who will never betray a confidence. A true friend will not say anything that injures us. When we hear a group of Christians finding fault with other believers, we may wonder what they say about us when we’re not present.

A true friend is one who knows all about us and loves us just the same. A young boy defined such a friend as “somebody who sticks to you after he has found you out.”

A friend is one in whose presence we can be ourselves without the fear of being misunderstood. That person will not talk behind our back but is one to whom we can bare the secrets of our heart, knowing that we will not be betrayed. Such a friend is Jesus, the One who perfectly fulfills Solomon’s words: “*A friend loves at all times*” (Proverbs 17:17).

What kind of friend are you?

*The kindest Friend I’ve ever had
Is One I cannot see,
Yet One in whom I can confide,
Who loves and blesses me.* --Shuler

The best friends are like Jesus--they stick with you.

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“Time For Friendship”

A friend loves at all times. —Proverbs 17:17

We really can’t make more time. There are only 24 hours in a day, and no matter how frantically we try it’s impossible to stretch those 24 into 25. So our problem isn’t how to increase time but how wisely to use our daily allotment of those 1,440 minutes as they steadily tick away.

Stop, then, and think about this vital issue. Apart from eating, sleeping, doing necessary tasks, and working at income-earning jobs, how are we spending that precious commodity we call time? Whatever else we’re doing, are we giving time to relationships?

Well-known author Les Parrott III points out that few things are more conducive to our well-being than investing time in friendships. Research shows, he reports, that “ignoring friendship not only diminishes your quality of life but could also be a health hazard.” Parrott says that close friendships can reduce the risk of illness.

If investing time in strengthening our friendships is so essential to our well-being, what about our relationship with Jesus? He said to His disciples, “*No longer do I call you servants, . . . but I have called you friends*” (John 15:15).

If you have trusted Him as Savior, are you devoting time to deepen your relationship with the best of all friends? —VCG

*Our life can be so very busy
That we have no time for friends;
But we must spend more time with Jesus,
For His friendship never ends.* —Fitzhugh

Time is a friend when you use it to strengthen your friendship with Jesus!

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QUOTE #5

“But friendship is precious, not only in the shade, but in the sunshine of life; and thanks to a benevolent arrangement of things, the greater part of life is sunshine.” - Thomas Jefferson 1743-1826, Third President of the USA



QUOTE #6

“I remember you and recall you without effort, without exercise of will; that is, by natural impulse, indicated by a sense of duty, or of obligation. And that, I take it, is the only sort of remembering worth the having. When we think of friends, and call their faces out of the shadows, and their voices out of the echoes that faint along the corridors of memory, and do it without knowing why save that we love to do it, we content ourselves that friendship is a Reality, and not a Fancy -- that it is built upon a rock, and not upon the sands that dissolve away with the ebbing tides and carry their monuments with them.” - Douglas Fairbanks 1909-, American Film Actor, Writer, Producer



QUOTE #7

“The only way to have a friend is to be one.” - Ralph Waldo Emerson 1803-1882, American Poet, Essayist



QUOTE #8

“A slender acquaintance with the world must convince every man that actions, not words, are the true criterion of the attachment of friends.” - George Washington 1732-1799, First President of the USA



John 15:1-18



1 John 4:7



QUOTE #9

“The dearest friend on earth is a mere shadow compared to Jesus Christ.” - Oswald Chambers 1874-1917 Scottish Preacher, Author



“Intimate With Jesus” (Excerpt)

Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip?' John 14:9

Once we get intimate with Jesus we are never lonely and we never lack for understanding or compassion. We can continually pour out our hearts to Him without being perceived as overly emotional or pitiful. The Christian who is truly intimate with Jesus will never draw attention to himself but will only show the evidence of a life where Jesus is completely in control. This is the outcome of allowing Jesus to satisfy every area of life to its depth. The picture resulting from such a life is that of the strong, calm balance that our Lord gives to those who are intimate with Him.



“The Right Connection” #1 by Kenneth Sauer

One of my wife’s favorite sayings is by Mother Teresa. “Do small things with great love.”
Mother Teresa certainly LIVED what she believed.
And that is what Christ is calling us to do as well.
LIVE WHAT YOU BELIEVE.
If we were to evaluate our lives-our lives would tell us what we believe in.

How do we treat our spouse? How do we treat our children? How do we treat our co-workers? Do we treat people in a way that reveals Christ?

Are we doing things with great love?

One of my favorite verses of Scripture comes from Ephesians chapter 2: *“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”*

God is in the fruit-bearing business.
That is His work.....that is what He desires for us!
Remaining in Christ also means obeying the will of God.
God’s will is for us to remain in love.

Jesus said: “If you obey my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love.”

Remaining in love is not always easy. When someone hurts us we want to strike back...not turn the other cheek. When someone destroys our self- esteem we want to tear down, not build up. And when someone pushes us away we want to push back instead of embracing.

When we, as branches, remain in fellowship with Jesus (the Vine)...the task of remaining in love becomes possible because:

“it is not I who live but Christ who lives in me.”

God wants us connected to Him so that He can give us the supernatural power we need in order to be the Christians He created us to be...

...and so that we can influence others to be Christians as well!

Of course, we make this connection with God through a personal relationship with His Son, Jesus Christ, who died on a cross and was raised from the dead so that, through faith in Him, we might be grafted as branches onto the heavenly vine.....and thus begin to bear the heavenly fruit of His Holy Spirit.

Do we have the right connection?

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“Fork in the Road”

Dr. Seamands tells of a Muslim who became a Christian in Africa. “Some of his friends asked him, ‘Why have you become a Christian?’ He answered, ‘Well, it’s like this. Suppose you were going down the road and suddenly the road forked in two directions, and you didn’t know which way to go, and there at the fork in the road were two men, one dead and one alive--which one would you ask which way to go?’”

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“God’s Amazing Grace” #1 (Excerpt)

I was born and raised in a Javanese family, fully Islamic way in Jakarta, Indonesia. When I became a teenager, I studied about Islamic teachings in my academic education. Islam has many adherents in Java, where I have lived all my life. I prayed five times to “Allah” (deceptively known as God Almighty) almost every day, and I received religious moral education in Islam with great eagerness. Of course, I read the Quran and I learned all of the prescribed ritual prayers. I tried to obey “Allah” as faithfully as prophet Muhammad did.

Last year a tourist named “Sam” from Singapore visited the shop at the Jakarta International Airport where I worked. He had a warm and genuine smile that radiated an undeniable inner peace. Well, initially he seemed to be more interested in my colleague than me. Sigh...after that brief encounter with this radiant peranankan Christian, I had mixed feelings. On the one hand, I could not shake the image of his kind and happy face from my mind. I knew that he had something in his life that I didn’t have. To my surprise I was later introduced to him by my colleague and we began our courtship. Sam and I fell in love and he shared with me from the Bible: “Jesus said, `I am the way - and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). The claim that Christ is the only way made it very clear that the Bible teaches that every human being is a sinner, and yet God loves us and through Christ he can forgive and save us. There was so much I did not understand about Jesus.

I read that “the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23), but I did not know what it meant. Sam shared with me that his joy came from trusting in Jesus as his Saviour and Lord. He not only told me about God’s holiness, he also told me about God’s love. When he told me that God demonstrated His love by coming in the person of Jesus Christ to give His life on the cross for our sins, I was amazed. I had never heard anything like that before. It was wonderful, even overwhelming, to think that God is like that and that by trusting in Jesus Christ one could have all of his sins forgiven. Now I could begin to understand why a true Christian had so much joy and peace even in the midst of troubles. A Christian did not need to fear the judgment of God. He had his sins forgiven because Jesus Christ took all those sins on Himself when he died on the cross so that we need not face the judgement of God once and for ! all. Alleleuia!



“The Right Connection” #2 by Kenneth Sauer (Excerpt)

A five year old boy fell out of bed, waking the entire household with his cry. After his mother had safely tucked him back under the covers, she asked: “Why did you fall out of bed?” Between tears and sobs, he said: “Well, I guess I went to sleep too close to where I got in.”

Too many people do just that in life--we sleepwalk too close to where we began. So we fall short of what God created us to become. Too many people never learn the secret of being connected to Christ...Who is the true vine.

The fruit of the Holy Spirit are not naturally manufactured--they are supernaturally produced! Those of us who have God’s Holy Spirit living in us have the supernatural ability to become fruit producing branches for Christ...all it takes is the right connection



“God’s Amazing Grace” #2 (Excerpt Continued)

I wondered if all of this could be true. I thought about it very much - then I told Sam I wanted Jesus to come into my life because he was a real friend, and his sincere love for me touched me very much. That same day, I accepted Jesus as my personal Saviour though I was a little unsure of God’s great love.

It is impossible for me to describe the change that Jesus brought in my life when I turned from everything else and put my faith in Him. I felt that a great burden had been removed from my heart. I experienced the same joy that other Christians had. It became a personal reality to me and no longer something I only saw and envied in others. Jesus said that He came that we might have life and have it in all of its fullness (John 10:10). I believed that Jesus Christ loved me so much, to die for my sins and conquered death by His miraculous resurrection, the fear of what to come was taken away.

By the grace of! God, He rescued me and lifted me up. I am deeply loved, highly favored and greatly blessed by God and that I have nothing to fear. It is a glorious experience to have this certainty - to know that all of my sins are forgiven and God will not impute my sins against me. Amen!

Christ who died for our sins on the cross and rose from the dead. No other religion knows a God of love such as the God who is revealed in Jesus Christ. He loves sinners, not in the sense that he approves their sins but in the sense that He loves everyone though He does not love the evil things people do. And God’s love is not just a matter of words, for the Bible says, *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8).

When I came to Singapore and became a believer in Christ, Christ has taken care of me and so has my dear husband Sam. Since I came to know Jesus I have found that I have other brothers and sisters in Christ all around me - and many more all over the world via the internet. I left my parents, brother and sister, relatives and friends in Indonesia but God gave me a greater family in Singapore and in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. In fact, God gave me far more than I lost. In the gospel, a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written in Romans 1:17: *“For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, “He who through faith is righteous shall live.”* Jesus, who sits at the right hand of God in heaven, is my righteousness before God, my heavenly Father. I am God’s precious, precious child now and I am greatly blessed in Christ Jesus. I hope my testimony will encourage all who know that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. To God be the glory for all He had done for us. - Orianna Cheah



AN EASTER QUOTE #10

“Faith is putting all your eggs in God’s basket, then counting your blessings before they hatch.” - Ramona Carroll, Author



“The Knife and the nails”

Tony was one of the best-liked teachers in our kids’ junior high school. And one summer day when he was helping me paint our house, I learned a lot about his background - a lot that was very surprising. Tony told me that he grew up in a very tough neighborhood that was sharply divided into ethnic groups - and ethnic gangs. And he was a fighter - most of the guys in his neighborhood were. He told me, “Five of my good friends died violently in just two months.” Two more of his gang friends are serving prison terms. I said, “Tony, how did you ever get out of all that? How’d you end up doing so well?”

His answer blew me away.

When Tony told me what had made the difference, he did something I’ve never seen him do before - there were tears in his eyes. He said, “One of those friends who died was my best friend. There was a gang fight one night . . . one guy was coming behind me with a blade. It was intended for me. But my friend stepped in front of it. My friend took my knife - and that changed the course of my whole life.”

Then it was my turn for tears. I said, “Tony, maybe you can understand why I try to live my life for Jesus Christ - same reason. My Friend Jesus took my knife - and realizing that has changed the course of my whole life.” I Peter 2:24 says, “He Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed.” Now the “He” in this verse is Jesus Christ, God’s one and only Son. I should have gotten the knife of God’s judgment - after all, I should have to pay for the sinning I’ve done. But Jesus stepped in and took my knife. And your knife

That First Easter”

By Vickie Lambdin

A man called Jesus,
Who from His grave arose,
On that first Easter morning
To vindicate our souls.

He bore the cross of Calvary
And shed His blood for you and me.
He paid a debt He didn't owe,
As through His blood forgiveness flowed.

Then, from His crucifixion,
Our eternal life was formed
And, through His resurrection,
That first precious Easter born.