

# LIVING IN CHRIST DAY BY DAY

## *Spiritual Insight Into Opportunities & Opposition*

### *Friends*

John 15:13-15

**Introduction:** Friends. Friendship is one of the most sought after things in a person's life. It is perhaps the most important thing in the life of a child or young person. The desire for friendship causes people to go to great lengths and personal sacrifice and do all sorts of crazy things. Friendship is the most cited reason for marriage in the West. Disappointment in friendship is often the reason for divorce, depression, and tragedy in a person's life. The desire for friendship is the motivating factor behind peer pressure and the loss of identity. When true friendship develops it is one of life's greatest sources of joy and blessing.

**I. The Bible is a Book About Friendship**—if one takes into account friendship and relationship with God, one might say that friendship (and the redemption of lost friendship) is a central theme of the Bible.

- A. Definition of Friendship: a relationship with another person based on the enjoyment of one another and characterized by unconditional love, trust, comfort, security, confidence, and assurance of dependability. Deep friendships last a lifetime and are seldom dimmed by distance or time.
- B. Biblical references to the nature of true friendship:
  - 1. Deuteronomy 13:6—one who is as your own soul
  - 2. Job 6:14—one should be able to expect kindness from one's friends, to lean on them and be encouraged by them to stay true to God
  - 3. Proverbs 17:17—a friend loves at all times
  - 4. Proverbs 10:24—a friend sticks closer than a brother
  - 5. Friends walk in harmony and share life's deepest values: Amos 3:3, "How can two walk together unless they are in agreement?"

**II. It is Impossible to have this level of Friendship with Unbelievers**—if one understands the true nature of genuine friendship then it is clear why friendship with the world is enmity with God (James 4:4). It is impossible to follow Jesus and seek to please Him and have a deep level of intimate friendship with those who do not know Him.

- A. We are warned not to have intimate relationships with unbelievers (business relationships, close friendships, marriages) because "what fellowship does God have with Belial? (2 Corinthians 6:14-18)
- B. This does not mean that we are not to love deeply those who do not know Christ, to value them as people made in God's image, to treat them with respect and dignity, to be kind and helpful and interested in their lives.
- C. At the end of the day, however, unbelievers will never truly connect with a devoted follower of Jesus Christ. In fact Jesus said, "I did not come to bring peace but a sword" and "to divide between [family members]" Matthew 10:34-42

**III. We were Designed by God to be Friends with Him**

- A. Examples of those who are called the friend of God: Moses—Exodus 33:11, Abraham—2 Chronicles 20:7 & James 2:23), Job—Job 29:4 "the friendship with God was over my tent"
- B. Friendship with God includes all of the elements characteristic of a great human friendship (see above)
- C. It also carries some elements that can never be true in human relationships and must always be kept in mind:
  - 1. God is sovereign, always in control, and always right!
  - 2. God is holy, King of Kings, Ruler of the Universe, Maker of Heaven, Earth, & US!
  - 3. God ALWAYS does what is best for us and truly loves us unconditionally; there is nothing we can ever do to cause Him to abandon us in our failures.

"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. (Joh 15:13-15 NAU)

Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent. (Exo 33:11 NAU)

"Did You not, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel and give it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? (2Ch 20:7 NAU) and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God. (Jam 2:23 NAU)

Wealth adds many friends, But a poor man is separated from his friend.

5 A false witness will not go unpunished, And he who tells lies will not escape.

6 Many will seek the favor of a generous man, And every man is a friend to him who gives gifts.

7 All the brothers of a poor man hate him; How much more do his friends abandon him! He pursues them with words, but they are gone. (Pro 19:4-7 NAU)

A man of too many friends comes to ruin, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Pro 18:24 NAU)

