

The Friendship of Jesus

Much has been said about Jesus being our best friend. Unfortunately, the concept of friendship has occasionally been misused in attempts to de-emphasize the importance of the obedience of the gospel (Heb. 5:8-9; 2 Thes. 1:8). A brief look at a few Bible verses will help us to understand the importance and value of friendship with Jesus.

Proverbs 17:17 states, *“A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.”* Jesus epitomized this constancy of love in His life and death. The worst adversity that man has ever faced is sin (Rom. 6:23), yet Jesus came to redeem sinners (Lk. 19:10), and died for that same purpose (Rom. 5:6-8). Jesus, our friend, loved us in our darkest hour of need. We may return a bit of that love in obeying Him (Jn. 15:13-14).

Proverbs 18:24 says, *“A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”* An individual who would enjoy the friendship of others must be willing to take the initiative in establishing a relationship. Jesus did this when He left heaven to live, suffer, and die among us (Phil. 2:5-8). He took the initiative in reaching out to us when sin had so dulled our senses that we knew not who, or what, to reach out to. He became like us, was tempted and suffered so that He could care for us and serve as our high priest (Heb. 2:17-18).

Proverbs 27:17 relates, *“Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.”* A true friend will always serve to lift us up rather than drag us down. A true friend, in seeking to better those whom he has befriended, will make no excuse for error or overlook anything that would endanger his friend in order to maintain a relationship. Jesus challenges us daily to be better than we were the previous day (Lk. 9:23). The apostle Paul recognized this (Phil. 3:13-14), and we, like Paul, ought to determine to break the shackles of the past and “...press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 says, *“Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: But woe unto him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to lift him up.”* Jesus stands ever ready to help those who come to Him, learn of Him and take His yoke upon them (Mat. 11:28-30). There are many burdens that man cannot bear alone, but none as weighty as sin and judgment. All accountable people sin (Rom. 3:10, 23), all are worthy of death (Rom. 6:23), and no sinner can plead his case without Christ. Do you really want to face the Judge without an Advocate (1 Jn. 2:1-3)? Jesus, like a true friend, stands ready to sever as an Advocate to satisfy the justice of God on behalf of all whom He knows through their keeping His commandments.

How might we respond appropriately to the friendship that is offered to us by Jesus? We must show ourselves friendly in laying down our lives for Him in obedience to His commandments (Jn. 15:13-15), and by laying down our lives in service for one another (1 Jn. 3:16). “There’s not a friend like the lowly Jesus. No, not one.”

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