

What is Friendship?

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As we enter into the month of December, Christmas becomes the center of most activities. The reason for Christmas is the birth of our lord Jesus Christ, His mission in coming to this world and the things He taught which are recorded in the Bible to serve as a road map with which we live our lives. The thought that came to me is that Jesus Christ is the greatest friend there is, and so I am sure that He also wants us to be good friends to one another. I have heard many people say, 'I don't have friends' and have often wondered about that statement. The institution of friendship just like marriage is ordained by God. In the gospel of John: 15 – 14 Jesus said, 'You are my friends if you obey me' This means that friendship has some basic rules be it with God or with ourselves.

Who is a friend? There are many definitions that we can give to friendship. The Encarta dictionary states that friendship is a relationship between people, organizations, or countries that is characterized by mutual assistance, approval and support. It is also the mutual feelings of trust and affection and behavior that typify relationships between friends. Many people after meeting someone on a few occasions refer to that person as a friend. I believe that for someone to qualify as your friend, they must have been involved in your life so much so that a bond is created that can stand any test. Many of the so called relationships that are formed among women in particular do not stand the test of time and situation. This leaves the individuals involved with a bitter taste in their mouths about friendship. For some, they swear that they will never enter into any close relationships anymore.

The picture of a friend that everyone should emulate is that of our Lord Jesus Christ. God called Abraham His friend. He calls everyone that obeys Him his friend. John 15:13 states, "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" You need to watch who you refer to as your friend. The Lord defined who His friends are. Among women we have so many stories of best friends who seduce each other's husband. Some go into business together and one person gets betrayed and loses everything. What about selfish ambition in the service of the Lord that destroys years of love and trust. Covenant friends becoming covenant enemies. The book of Proverbs 18:24 talks about friends who destroy each other and that 'a real friend sticks closer than a brother'

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What kind of friend are you? Wealth makes many friends; poverty drives them away. (Pr. 19:14) The story of Job is a classic example of how people react to you when your situation does not seem so attractive. You become yesterday's news. The book of Proverbs 27:17 lets us know that as iron sharpens iron so does a friend sharpen a friend. In other words, the peace and joy of your friend should be of utmost importance to you. Even the Police department says 'friends don't let friends drive drunk' Instead of being the one to expose the nakedness of your friend, you should be the one covering them up. You should not be making friends just for self-gratification – more like I attend your party, you attend mine, I give you gift, you give me. Women! You complain and talk about the price and quality of the gift that your 'friend' gave you for Christmas or your birthday because you gave a more expensive gift. How about the one who gave it all, Jesus. And yet He is denied every day.

Beware of third parties! A lot of good relationships have been destroyed because of the influence of the third party. Proverbs 16:28 states, "A troublemaker plants seeds of strife, a whisperer separates chief friends" From my experience, the power of the tongue that is not bridled has destroyed many relationships. If your friend is always open to let other people talk about you to her, then she is not operating as a true friend, because a good friend will kill the gossip before it goes further. If she is a constant open door to let the enemy into your life, then it is time to let go. A true friend like Jesus loves unconditionally. Shalom.

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