



The Friendship Jesus Longs to Have with You

Recently I got a “friend” request on Facebook. The woman’s name was unfamiliar. When I checked her page, I found nothing in common with her, not her job, not her school, not her church. We had no mutual friends. Nothing in her life paralleled mine. We didn’t even live on the same continent! But if I clicked on “accept,” it would seem as if I actually had made another friend. But that wouldn’t be true, because friendship has some clear and demanding standards, and a click of the mouse will not produce it.

What would you say are the essentials for a deep and satisfying friendship? It probably will include these:

A long-term commitment to the relationship; treasuring it; each valuing the personhood of the other.

Intentional, purposeful, both encouraging and reproving when needed.

Acceptance without any reservation; compassionate; not turned away by flaws and failures.

Transparency; willingness to share deep heart concerns.

Trustworthiness, truthfulness.

Other-centered, not selfish.

Love with no reservation.

With these essentials in mind, how



would a real and deep friendship with Jesus would look like? Let's accept His invitation: "Come and talk with me." (Psalm 27:8) and find out.

1. Jesus is committed to you long-term. He treasures you above all imagining.

What is God's promise to you (Jeremiah 31:3)?

How deep was Christ's love, expressed the night before He died (John 13:1)?

Jesus will love you "to the end," to the uttermost; beyond the last syllable of recorded time, forever. His love is not diminished by time or circumstance or, for that matter, by your actions. He will be there for you to lean on in the worst times of adversity. When earthly friends might turn away by embarrassment or pique, He will keep on loving you.

What does Proverbs 18:24 say about friendship?

Proverbs 17:17?

How much does He value you? See the cost of the ransom: "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18,19). The

price of the ransom? An exchange of the life of the eternal God Himself for a human being!

That's why Psalm 116:15 says, "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints."

How intimate is Christ's concern for you? (Matthew 10:29-31)

What do First Corinthians 6:20 and 7:23 both remind us about the cost of our salvation?

2. Jesus is intentional in His friendship, purposeful. You will always be changed for the good by His friendship.

You will be encouraged and reprov'd, strengthened and comforted, whatever it is you need at the moment.

Intentional? Obviously. Remember in our last lesson how often He begged you to come? His intentions permeate His love letter to you. He has proved His willingness to pursue a relationship with you.

How can we receive this friendship? (Proverbs 18:24)

But in this intentional friendship, Christ will challenge you to new growth, to new heights of purposeful living and thinking and worship. Something happens when you have this friendship with Jesus. You start thinking, learning, questioning, probing.

What does Proverbs 27:9 remind us?

Proverbs 27:27?

Proverbs 27:6?

Psalm 119:75,76?

How does a wise man respond to the reproof of a friend (Proverbs 9:8)?

How does true love react in a time of need (Proverbs 27:5,6)?

3. He is accepting, compassionate. He is not disgusted by your flaws and failures. He understands.

Imagine! In derision they called Jesus “the friend of publicans and sinners.” Because He made friends with ordinary people they called him “gluttonous and a wine bibber” (Matthew 11:19). Thank God He is the Friend of Sinners, else He could not befriend you and me!

That puts Proverbs 17:9 into perspective: “He that

covers a transgression seeks love, but he that repeats a matter separate very friends.”

Because of Christ’s promise of comfort, how will we be able to comfort others? (2 Corinthians 1:3-5)

An unknown writer described a loving friendship this way:

I love you
Not only for what you are,
But for what I am when I am with you.
I love you
For the part of me that you bring out in me;
I love you
For putting your hand into my heaped-up heart
And passing over all the foolish, weak things
That you can’t help dimly seeing there,
and for drawing out into the light
All the beautiful belongings
That no one else had looked
quite far enough to find. . . .
You have done it by being yourself.
Perhaps that is what being a friend means,
After all.

(From the Pocket Book of Popular Verse collected by Ted Malone, © 1945.)

4. He is transparent; He gladly shares His heart with you.

We were once “bond slaves” to sin. What are we now? (John 15:14,15)

God has no hidden agenda, no expectation of unrealistic performance. Rather, friendship with Jesus means a showering of His loving gifts. What did we learn in our last study from Ephesians 2:7,8?

What does Psalm 40:5 tell us about the results of our friendship with God?

Psalm 138:8?

5. He shares your dreams, your goals; He wants to help you become what you want to become.

Friends are interested in the things that interest their friends. It is not necessary for them to share the same background or upbringing. They learn to enjoy the interests of their friends. How does Psalm 37:4 express this?

Psalm 20:4?

But there are some things in friendship that are mutually exclusive. What does James 4:4,5 warn?

First John 2:15-17?

6. Jesus is absolutely trustworthy and truthful. You can lean on His unchangeability with confidence.

King Solomon asks, “Many will say they are loyal friends, but who can find one who is truly reliable?” (Proverbs 20:6) You will find One who is truly reliable in your Friend Jesus! How is this expressed in James 1:17?

Second Corinthians 1:19,20 states this beautifully: “For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you . . . was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes. For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God.”

When you come to Him to express your need., He answers “Yes!” before you can even complete the sentence!

“Father, I need—”

“You’ve got it!” He answers before you can finish the sentence.

“Father, could I ___”

“Certainly,” He says.

That’s how eager the Son of God is to meet you every need.

You can know this by what you are told in Scripture about the ways Jesus met the needs of every one who ever came to Him. Because “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8), you can know He will react to you in the same wonderful way.

See how Malachi 3:6 expresses this same thought:

7. The greatest expression of His love can be seen in His willingness to die for you.

How does John 15:13 express this?

Romans 5:6-8?

What did King David say about it in Acts 2:25?

What did God say about His friendship with David in Acts 13:22?

This is the unbelievable friendship the Lord Jesus offers to you today. Let's answer His invitation with an heartfelt "Lord, I am coming!"

More:

David's Friendship with God: Psalm 34

The circumstances under which David wrote Psalm 34 are astonishing, according to the account in chapters 29 and 30 in First Samuel. 29:1 through 30:6:

1. King Saul, for whom he'd fought courageously, was now his most vengeful enemy. Saul had spies everywhere trying to find him to kill him, and many people were willing to betray him.

2. David's own wife had despised him because he loved God so passionately.

3. When he sought protection with the Philistines in Gaza, Israel's enemy, King Achish gave him protection until violent protests of army officers made David fear for his life. He pretended to be crazy in order to escape.

4. But when he went back to his home, Ziklag, in the desert, he found it burned to the ground and every family member kidnaped.

Now turn to Psalm 34 and see how David reveals his relationship with God in such a frightening and critical time of his life.



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