

A Heart For Friendship

1 Samuel 18:1-5 (NIV)

After David had finished talking with Saul, *Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself.* From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return home to his family. *And Jonathan made a covenant with David* because he loved him as himself. *Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.* Whatever mission Saul sent him on, David was so successful that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the troops, and Saul's officers as well.

Godly friendship is Spirit-led

Exodus 4:14 (NIV)

Then the LORD's anger burned against Moses and he said, "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and he will be glad to see you.

Exodus 4:27-28 (NIV)

The LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." So he met Moses at the mountain of God and kissed him. Then Moses told Aaron everything the LORD had sent him to say, and also about all the signs he had commanded him to perform.

1 Chronicles 12:18 (NIV)

Then the Spirit came to Amasai, chief of the Thirty, and he said, "We are yours, David! We are with you, son of Jesse! Success, success to you, and success to those who help you, for your God will help you." So David received them and made them leaders of his raiding bands.

Godly friendship is rooted in love

2 Timothy 1:1-5 (NIV)

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, in keeping with promise of life that is in Christ Jesus. To Timothy, my dear son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my

prayers. Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

Proverbs 17:17 (NIV)

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.

John 15:12 (NIV)

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a (NIV)

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

Godly friendship is covenantal

A usually formal, solemn, and binding agreement

A covenant is a relationship between two partners who make binding promises to each other and work together to reach a common goal.

Covenants define obligations and commitments, but they are different from a contract because they are relational and personal.

1 Kings 19:19-21 (ESV)

So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in front of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed him and cast his cloak upon him. And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, "Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?" And he returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elijah and assisted him.

2 Kings 2:1-6 (NIV)

When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; the LORD has sent me to Bethel." *But Elisha said, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you."* So they went down to Bethel. The company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, "Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?" "Yes, I know," Elisha replied, "so be quiet." Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, Elisha; the LORD has sent me to Jericho." *And he replied, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you."* So they went to Jericho. The company of the prophets at Jericho went up to Elisha and asked him, "Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?" "Yes, I know," he replied, "so be quiet." Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here; the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." *And he replied, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you."* So the two of them walked on.

Ruth 1:14-18 (NIV)

At this they wept aloud again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her. "Look," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her." But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me." When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.

Godly friendship is sacrificial

Job 2:11-13 (NIV)

When Job's three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was.

John 15:13 (NIV)

Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

Jesus is our perfect friend because He pours out His Holy Spirit on us generously

Ezekiel 36:26-27 (NIV)

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Acts 2:32-33 (NIV)

God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

Romans 5:5 (NIV)

And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Jesus is our perfect friend because He loves us unconditionally

Jeremiah 31:3 (NIV)

The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.

John 3:16 (NIV)

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 8:35-39 (NIV)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Jesus is our perfect friend because He covenants with us eternally

Hebrews 9:15 (NIV)

For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance – now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

Hebrews 13:20-21 (NIV)

Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Proverbs 18:24 (NIV)

One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Jesus is our perfect friend because He sacrifices Himself for us scandalously

1 John 3:16 (NIV)

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

Romans 5:6-8 (NIV)

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

And now I have a question to ask: that question I ask of every man and every woman in this place, and of every child too – Is Jesus Christ your friend? Have you a friend at court – at heaven's court? Is the judge of quick and dead your friend? Can you say that you love Him, and has He revealed Himself in the way of love to you? Dear hearer, do not answer that question for thy neighbor; answer it for thyself. Peer or peasant, rich or poor, learned or illiterate, this question is for each of you; therefore, ask it: Is Christ my friend? Did you ever consider that question? Have you ever asked it? Oh! to be able to say, "Christ is my friend," is one of the sweetest things in the world.