

Everybody Needs a Good Best Friend

Isn't it inspiring when we see Forrest Gump running through the battlefield as bombs explode carrying his pal Bubba? We have to smile when we hear those simple, loving words, "*Bubba was my best good friend, and even I know that ain't just something you can find around the corner.*" It's true. Good best friends are rare.

God surprised David by revealing that his best friend was to be the son of his greatest rival, King Saul. (Read 1 Samuel 18:1-3.)

1. Choose your friends wisely.

Perhaps one of the most important decisions we make is who we choose to do life with. Friendship and connections will determine our destiny, shape our future and direct our steps.

"Do not be deceived: 'Bad company corrupts good morals'" (1 Cor. 15:33).

"A contrary man spreads conflict, and a gossip separates close friends" (Prov. 16:28).

"Don't make friends with an angry man, and don't be a companion of a hot-tempered man, or you will learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare" (Prov. 22:24-25).

2. Forgive your friends willingly.

"Therefore, God's chosen ones, holy and loved, put on heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, accepting one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against another. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive. Above all, put on love—the perfect bond of unity" (Col. 3:12-14).

If we are not reconciled, Jesus reminds us that we can't experience real worship. Worship is always preceded by reconciliation and forgiveness. Otherwise it's just religion.

"Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime; therefore, we must be saved by hope. Nothing which is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by faith. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore, we are saved by love. No virtuous act is quite as virtuous from the standpoint of our friend or foe as from our own viewpoint; therefore we must be saved by the final form of love which is forgiveness." —Reinhold Niebuhr

3. Listen to your friends closely.

Our real friends aren't the ones who simply flatter us and make us feel comfortable with ourselves. The true friend loves us enough to speak truth to us. If we want to grow we must learn this art of speaking and listening to truth.

"Without guidance, people fall, but with many counselors there is deliverance" (Prov. 11:14).

"Better an open reprimand than concealed love. The wounds of a friend are trustworthy, but the kisses of an enemy are excessive" (Prov. 27:5-6).

4. Defend your friends fiercely.

Are you willing to defend your friends when they experience adversity? Solomon describes this type of relationship this way in Ecclesiastes:

"Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their efforts. For if either falls, his companion can lift him up;

but pity the one who falls without another to lift him up.

Also,

if two lie down together, they can keep warm; but how can one person alone keep warm?" (Ecc. 4:9-11).

5. Love your friends sacrificially.

"This is My command: Love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12-15).

A surprising friend is one that will lay down his or her life for you.

A surprising friend is a friend that loves with a God-kind-of-love!

The moment you began your relationship with Jesus Christ you also began a relationship with other Christians. Now you are part of God's family, and in God's family there are no orphans. God did not intend for His children to live as individual islands of faith, but rather as a community of believers, interrelated with each other and part of something much bigger than themselves. That "something" is the Church.

6. Know the greatest friend eternally.

"A man with many friends may be harmed, but there is a friend who stays closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24).

To experience a love that crosses all boundaries of race, opinion, and fear

To be a friend is to know the Friend.

To understand a love that crushes the hard shell of bitterness

To know love in all its aspects

This is to be a friend.

To ignore

To know the need and never take a stand

This is the way of isolation.

His voice beckons us to share this love

It's a sacrifice far and above.

Higher than any mountain

More refreshing than any other fountain

This is the heart of the God.

It's what we choose to applaud

It's what we celebrate today

Precious, more than words can say

And the more we seek His grace

The more hurt we are willing to face.

To be the kind of friend that goes the extra mile

To see the pleasure of His smile

This is what it really looks like to be a friend

A servant faithful to the end.

To seek Him

To find Him

To serve Him

To love Him

To please Him

To be His friend . . .