

## **A FRIEND THAT STICKS CLOSER THAN A BROTHER**

Proverbs 18:24

Two powerful truths are brought to our attention from this text:

1. The **Condition** of Friendship—"A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly."

My job is not to get people to like me. My job is to like people. If you want friends, don't try to get people to like you. Just like them. When you love people and show an genuine interest in them, you'll have friends.

➤ Jesus is One who truly shewed Himself friendly in every way.

2. The **Constancy** of our Friend—"And there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." His name is Jesus. As the song says, "He's the dearest Friend I've Ever Had!"

- Some friends are closer than a person's human brother. Jesus' brothers were not always His friends, and Christ's true friends were seldom His brothers!

The Bible says that a friend loveth at all times (Prov. 17:17). A friend who will stand with you and support you in the good times and the bad times.

Remember Jesus a Friend "*that sticketh closer than a brother.*"

He is the Friend of the friendless! He was called, "A friend of sinners" (Mt. 11:19). *WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS!*

**Three things about Jesus friendship in John 11** (READ vs. 1-11, 30-36).

### **I. Jesus is a *TRUE* friend.**

- Everyone who claims to be your friend, is not necessarily your friend.
  - 2 Samuel 13:3 says, "*Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab...*" But Jonadab was not a true friend. He lead Amnon into deep sin that ultimately cost him his life.
  - Job had three so-called friends who slandered and criticized him. They added more misery to Job's suffering. With friends like these, who needs enemies?
  - Jesus had a friend who betrayed Him with a kiss.
  - Proverbs 14:20 says, "*The rich hath many friends...*" Again, Proverbs 19:4 says, "*Wealth maketh many friends.*" But friends that come by having money are not true friends.

It is said a dog is man's best friend. It doesn't seem to matter what you do to your dog, he keeps loving you just the same. If you had a million dollars and a dog, you would have a million so-called friends and a dog. If you lost the million dollars, those million friends would also be gone, but

you would still have your dog. He doesn't care about money, position or possessions. All he asks is for the privilege of being near his master.

- If you speak his name, you make his day.
- If you pet him on the head, he thinks he is in dog heaven.
- His love is unselfish and undying.
- He is as constant in his love as the sun is in its course across the heavens.

➡ Someone has said that a true friend is one who comes in when everyone else is walking out. But Jesus is not a "fair-weather friend."

➡ Jesus is walking into their town in their hour of crisis and sorrow.

A. A true friend won't FORSAKE you in your hour of need.

Verses 30-32—He didn't turn her away. He received her.

B. A true friend won't FORGET you. Jesus did not forget them (vs. 3-6).

1. Luke 12:6-7— "*Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not **one of them is forgotten before God?** ...Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.*"
2. Hebrews 6:10— "***God is not unrighteous to forget** your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*"
3. Isaiah 49:16— "***I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands...***"

**II. Jesus is a *TENDER* friend** (vs. 33-34). It is impossible to be true friend without having some compassion for another.

**ILLUS**—Job to his so-called friends, "*Miserable comforters are ye all!*"

➡ Jesus was not "cut and dry" in His dealings with Mary and Martha. He dealt with them out of compassion.

A. You see His tenderness in what He SAW (vs. 33-35). Weep with them that weep.

- Jesus didn't say, "Quit your crying!" Some people view crying as a sign of weakness. Why do you think God gave us tear ducts?
- Some have this attitude: "We're Christians and we know Daddy is in heaven. There's no need to cry." Hey, let her cry!
  - ➡ God dwells with broken and contrite heart!
  - ➡ Jesus is "*a man of sorrows.*"

B. You see His tenderness in what He SENSED (v. 33)—Jesus GROANED in the spirit.

➡ The word "*groan*" literally means "to grunt under a heavy load/burden."

➡ Jesus felt the HEAVINESS of Mary and Martha's spirit.

- C. You see His tenderness in what He SHARED (v. 35). He openly shed tears!

*God weeps along with man — And takes him by the hand;  
TEARS ARE A LANGUAGE GOD UNDERSTANDS.  
He wept in Bethany. And He will weep in Kitsap County.  
He's TOUCHED with the feelings of our infirmities.*

**III. Jesus is a *TRUSTY* friend.** Proverbs 17:17—“*A friend loveth at ALL TIMES.*” Christ’s friendship is CONSTANT.

- A. Jesus is our friend even when we FEEL DISTANT—Jesus is in Galilee. Lazarus is in Bethany, 50-60 miles away.
- ➔ Even when you feel a million miles away from God, that does not change His friendship!
  - ➔ His love is CONSTANT. He loved you when you were unsaved. He loves you when you are saved.
- B. Jesus is our friend even when we FIGHT DOUBTS. After Jesus delayed coming to Bethany, Mary and Martha probably had doubts that Jesus’ really loved them (v. 32—“Where have You been, Lord?” “Martha, It’s not where I’ve been... *It’s who I AM!*” (v. 25).
- Some are living in the Past—“Didn’t we have a wonderful revival?”
  - Some are living in the Future—“Won’t it be wonderful there!”
  - But they are missing the God of the present.
- C. Jesus is our friend when we FACE DEATH. Mary and Martha thought death had messed everything up. Jesus proved that “*neither death nor life... shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus...*”
- Your hope may seem dead.
  - Your prayer life may seem dead.
  - Your family may seem dead.

**SUMMATION:** Martin Lindstrom is one of the world’s best brand building experts. He is the author of the groundbreaking book: *Buyology: The Truth and Lies About Why We Buy*. His research helps corporations like Coca-Cola, Nestle, and Red Bull to market their products so people will buy them. *Time Magazine* called him one the “World’s 100 Most Influential People.”

This week I read about a fascinating experiment Lindstrom did using an MRI. This experiment lead him to the conclusion that smartphones have become akin to a best friend in the lives of many people. When the subjects of his experiment heard their phone ring, their brains fired off neurons in the area associated with

feelings of love and compassion. Lindstrom said, “It was as if they were in the presence of a girlfriend, boyfriend, or family member.”

It got me to thinking: How many Christians have a closer relationship to their cellphones than they do to the Lord Jesus Christ. How many neurons in your brain associated with love get “fired off” about spending time with Jesus in prayer, Bible study, or going to church!

Jesus is best friend you’ll ever have. He is better than any smartphone! No one loves or cares for you more than Jesus. If you pay more attention to your smartphone than you do to Jesus, your phone has become an idol in your life.

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I’m thankful for every earthly friend I have. But I have no dearer friend than Jesus.

Jesus wants to be your friend. He is a friend to both the sinner and the saint. It doesn’t matter to Him about what you’ve done, or who you are.

He proved His friendship by dying for you on the cross! John 15:13—  
*“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”*