

HABITS.

Have a Plan ♦ Affirm your Faith ♦ Be a Friend
Intentionally Choose Him ♦ Trust Him ♦ Surrender to Him

Part Three Be a Friend

Characteristics of true friendship

- Consistently present – Sometimes all you have to do is show up for your friends. **See Job 2:13, See Matthew 26:36-38**
- Unconditional love - Regardless of what you do, what happens, or where life takes you, a true friend loves at all times. **See Proverbs 17:17**
- Unwavering support – True friends are in it for the long haul. Even when you've fallen, a true friend is in your corner. When you call, even when you're in trouble, they come. **See Sirach 6:14-15**
- Willingness to challenge – A true friend won't remain silent with what you need to hear, and it will be shared with the deepest of love. **See Proverbs 27:17**
- Full of grace – True friendships weather the sometime difficulties of relationships, quickly forgiving when needed. Grace is freely and generously given. **See Ephesians 4:32**
- Generous with encouragement - True friends build one another up. All of us need someone to be an encourager to us. All of us need to help bring out the best in our friends. **See Ecclesiastes 4:9-10**
- Safe – True friendships have an environment where it is safe to be honest and can speak without being judged. **See Ephesians 4:15**
- Sacrificial – True friends put others' needs first. Jesus said the greatest expression of friendship is to lay down one's life for your friends. **See John 15:13**

Friendship in a church community

- A good friend carries you. No one comes to Christ alone. Part of a friendship should be carrying people to Christ and allowing others to carry you. **See Mark 2:3-4**
- Fellowship with others is essential. It is critical as a part of the Body of Christ that we belong to a community of believers. **See Ephesians 4:2-7**
- Christ centered friendships are relationships among people who share a common dependence on and love for Jesus Christ. They are friendships built around the core of the Christian faith. They require a level of accountability, intentionality, and sacrifice that is distinct from other relationships and rooted in Jesus. **See Jude 1:3**

Friendship with Christ

- We know that Jesus had friends in His life, including His close group of 12 disciples, and others like the family of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, whom He visited often.
- Christ desires a friendship with us—He calls us friends. **See John 15:15** The word in Greek is *philos*, meaning someone who is dearly loved, a friend to whom we would be willing to share our deepest secrets. He is a friend; however He still is Lord, not our equal.

How to Experience Friendship with Jesus*

- *Talk to Him throughout your day.* Set aside time to be alone with Him, to listen to Him. God wants more than an appointment on your schedule though. He wants to be in constant community with you throughout your day.
- *Read His Word.* The Bible contains many promises and reassurances of how much Jesus desires friendship with you. Fill your mind and heart with the truth of this. Read the Bible as if it were a letter from a dear friend. Soak in His words of love and affection and affirmation.
- *Practice being in His presence.* As you go through your day, doing all your daily tasks, practice simply thinking about Jesus. Thank Him for small things, ask His advice, reflect on His love. If you find yourself getting busy and forgetting about Him, don't feel guilty! Just gently pull your thoughts back to Him. **See Psalm 105:4**
- *Be honest.* Tell God every part of your life - the good, the bad, the difficult. The book of Psalms is filled candid, honest prayers.
- *Obey the commands of Christ.* We must strive to be friends of Christ; however, we are not His equals. We must obey the commands He lovingly gave to us. **See John 15:14**
- *Desire God more than anything else.* The Lord commands that we “love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.” **See Mark 12:30**

*Adapted from The Purpose Driven Life

Scripture References

Job 2:13	<i>And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great.</i>
Matthew 26:36-38	<i>³⁶ Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsem'ane, and He said to His disciples, "Sit here, while I go yonder and pray." ³⁷ And taking with Him Peter and the two sons of Zeb'edee, He began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ Then He said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with Me."</i>
Proverbs 17:17	<i>A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.</i>
Sirach 6:14-15	<i>¹⁴ A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter: he that has found one has found a treasure. ¹⁵ There is nothing so precious as a faithful friend, and no scales can measure his excellence.</i>
Proverbs 27:17	<i>Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.</i>
Ephesians 4:32	<i>and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.</i>
Ecclesiastes 4:9-10	<i>⁹ Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. ¹⁰ For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up.</i>
Ephesians 4:15	<i>Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,</i>
John 15:13	<i>Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.</i>
Mark 2:3-4	<i>³ And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic carried by four men. ⁴ And when they could not get near Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay.</i>
Ephesians 4:2-7	<i>² with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all. ⁷ But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.</i>
Jude 1:3	<i>Beloved, being very eager to write to you of our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.</i>
John 15:15	<i>No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.</i>
Psalms 105:4	<i>Seek the Lord and His strength, seek His presence continually!</i>
John 15:14	<i>You are My friends if you do what I command you.</i>
Mark 12:30	<i>and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.</i>

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Questions

1. What characteristics make your closest friendships strong?
2. Do you think it is hard to have friends today? Has your outlook and expectations about friendship changed as you moved through different stages of life?
3. Do you have friends in your life you would be willing to carry you through a difficult situation? Do you have friends that are willing to carry you? Have you considered how you can be the kind of friend who would help someone get closer to Jesus?
4. Is the idea of having Jesus as a friend difficult for you to accept? What stands in the way of deepening your friendship with Jesus? Explain.