

Friends

Part 1

Introduction.

1. One of the greatest blessings of life is to have a true and faithful friend.
2. I am sure that most or all of us, like most people, desire to have friends especially close friends.
 - a. Friendships can add much happiness and quality to life.
 - b. The one who has a friend is indeed rich.
 - c. An unknown writer wrote "Friends are flowers in the garden of life."
3. This lesson will examine the Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, in regard to what they teach about friends.
4. We will briefly look at the word "friend" or "friends" in the book of Proverbs and then make a study of the word "friend" in the New Testament.
5. This will be a two-part study.

Webster's Definition

1. According to Webster, a friend is "a person one knows us well and is "fond of," "an intimate associate," "a close acquaintance."
2. The word is also "applied loosely to any associate, or as a term of address, even to a stranger."
3. The words for "friend," as they are used in the Bible, have several meanings including Webster's definition of a friend.

Proverbs And Friends

1. The book of Proverbs is a marvelous book to study and it has some important information and instructions about friends and many other important subjects.
2. Here are some references to "friends" in the book of Proverbs.
 - a. **Solomon** tells us what a true friend is like. (Prov. 17:17).

Prov 17:17 A [true] friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity [for a difficult time].

- A true friend sticks with us "at all times" [in every situation].
- He sticks with us through "thick and thin" even when others turn against us and even abandon us.

- Most people are very fortunate if they have a friend who loves and helps them no matter what.
- Most people have very few real friends like the one Solomon described.
- All of this does not mean “a friend” always agrees with everything we do or say nor does it mean a friend never corrects us.
- It does not mean “a friend” never hurts us nor friends never fight or disagree.
- It does not mean a friend is perfect.
- Even a true friend will not always live up to all our expectations.
- We are all humans and make wrong choices and our actions are imperfect at best.

A Blood Brother

- A blood brother may or may not always be there for us, but a blood brother is nearly always ready to help in difficult times.

Prov 18:24 A man of {too many} friends {comes} to ruin, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

- Some people have a lot of friends, but still may come “to ruin.”
- Some of these so-called friends may abandon one when it is not popular to be such.
- **“But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”** It is possible one may be much closer to a friend than his own brother.

b. **Solomon** wrote these words about friends. (Prov. 27:6).

Prov 27:6 Faithful are the wounds [or bruises] of a friend, But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy. The Hebrew word “petsa” means “bruise, wound.” It is translated “bruise for bruise” in Exodus 21:25.

- 1) “The slap of a friend can be trusted to help you. But the many kisses of an enemy are nothing but lies.” IEB
- 2) A true friend will seek to help us even if it is unpleasant to us. He/she is seeking our good.
- 3) A true friend loves us and wants nothing but the best for us.

c. In Proverbs 27 he added these words about “a friend.” (Prov 27:9).

Prov 27:9 Oil and perfume make the heart glad, So a man's counsel is sweet to his friend.

- 1) “Perfume and ointment make a person happy, **And heartfelt advice from a friend is sweet.**” (Prov. 27:9). IEB
- 2) **How sweet it is when a friend speaks the truth to us and seeks to guide us out of genuine concern and love for us.**

3) It is sweet because the true friend loves us and wants the best for us - not use or exploit us.

d. **Solomon** penned these words about friends. (Prov. 17:9).

Prov 17:9 He who conceals [covers, forgives, does not spread] a transgression seeks [promotes] love, But he who repeats a matter separates intimate [close] friends.

- 1) The one who conceals [covers] a transgression seeks to promote and practice love - not wishing to hurt and destroy others.
 - 2) The one who keeps repeating a matter will breakup his friendships and the friendships of others.
 - 3) “Whoever forgives someone’s sin makes a friend. But whoever keeps on talking about that sin breaks up friendships.” (Prov. 17:9, IEB).
- e. Solomon penned these truthful words in Proverbs 27:14 “He who blesses his friend with a loud voice early in the morning, It will be reckoned a curse to him.”
- 1) “Don’t greet your neighbor loudly early in the morning. He will think of it as a curse.” IEB
 - 2) Even a friend can upset or irritate us.

Friendship Warnings From Solomon

1. Danger of wealth. (Prov. 19:4, 6)

Prov 19:4 Wealth adds many friends, But a poor man is separated from his friend.

Prov 19:6 Many will seek the favor of a generous man, And every man is a [so-called] friend to him who gives gifts.

2. Danger of slander. (Prov. 16:28).

Prov 16:28 A perverse [twisted, wicked] man spreads strife, And a slanderer separates intimate [close] friends.

3. Danger of the “deceitful”...”kisses of an enemy.” (Prov. 27:6).

Prov 27:6 Faithful are the wounds [suggestions, criticisms] of a friend, But deceitful [lies] are the kisses of an enemy.

Greek New Testament

1. The Greek New Testament uses two different words for “friend.”

2. There is the “hetairos” [heh **ti** rahs] friend and this friend may be a person does not know or know well.

a. It is used by the owner of the vineyard to refer to **a worker hired from the marketplace.** (Matt. 20:13).

Matt 20:13 "But he answered and said to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius?

b. This word occurs again in Matthew 22:12 to refer to one who was one of “the invited guests” at a

wedding dinner.

Matt 22:12 and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And the man was speechless."

- 1) This invited guest was rebuked because he came to the wedding dinner unprepared without a wedding garment.
- 2) Lack of preparation had disastrous results for this [unprepared] man and it has a disastrous results for us.
- 3) We must be ready for the Lord's coming. (Matt. 25:13).

Matt 25:13 "Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour."

- 4) Because of the uncertainty of life, this preparation must be made now. (Prov. 27:1; Heb. 3:13).

Prov 27:1 Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth.

Heb 3:13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is {still} called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

e. It is also used again in Matthew 26:50 in reference to Judas. (Matt. 26:50).

Matt 26:50 And Jesus said to him [Judas], "Friend, {do} what you have come for." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and seized Him.

- 1) In itself the Greek word "hetairos," used in this verse, has no warmth of affection.
- 2) Sometimes the word was used merely as a way to start a conversation, as Jesus, in the garden of Gethsemane, spoke to Judas with these words.
- 3) Jesus called this thief and betrayer a "friend."
- 4) Jesus knew what the wicked and greedy Judas had come to the garden to do, but He still greeted him as "Friend."
- 5) This is clearly taught in the following verses. (Mk. 14:18-21; Lk. 22:21-23).

Mark 14:18 As they were reclining {at the table} and eating, Jesus said, "Truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me--one who is eating with Me."

Mark 14:19 They began to be grieved and to say to Him one by one, "Surely not I?"

Mark 14:20 And He said to them, "{It is} one of the twelve, one who dips with Me in the bowl.

Mark 14:21 "For the Son of Man {is to} go just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! {It would have been} good for that man if he had not been born."

Luke 22:21 "But behold, the hand of the one betraying Me is with Mine on the table.

Luke 22:22 "For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!"

Luke 22:23 And they began to discuss among themselves which one of them it might be who was going to do this thing.

6) Judas had already agreed to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver (Matt. 26:15).

7) Jesus had earlier said that it would have been better that this one He called “friend” had never been born. (Matt. 26:23, 24).

Matt 26:23 And He answered, "He who dipped his hand with Me in the bowl is the one who will betray Me.
Matt 26:24 "The Son of Man {is to} go, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."

8) It is clear Jesus knew full well what Judas, who pretended to be His friend, planned to do that very night.

9) The Lord knows His true friends.

10) He is not deceived by pretended friends nor is He deceived by those who use Him for personal gain.

11) It is sad there are those who claim to be the friend of Jesus to gain power, fame, wealth and other selfish reasons.

Second Greek Word

2. A second Greek word translated “friend” comes from the word “philos.” [fee lahs].

a. This word occurs 29 times in the KJV and means “a friend, an associate.”

b. Jesus used this word in speaking of Lazarus and it was used with the meaning “to love with the love of emotion and genuine friendship.”

1) Jesus was very close to Lazarus who was a dear friend. (Jn. 11:3, 11).

John 11:3 So the sisters sent {word} to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."

John 11:11 This He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, so that I may awaken him out of sleep."

- Jesus loved everyone and came into this world to die for all (Heb. 2:9), but He was closer to some than others.
- He was close to His twelve apostles, but He was very close to Peter, James and John.
- It appears He was especially close to John.
- John is described “as the disciple whom Jesus loved.” (Jn. 13:23; 20:2).
- Jesus committed the care of His mother Mary to John when He was dying on the cross. (Jn. 19:26-27).

John 19:26 When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He *said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!"

John 19:27 Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" From that hour the disciple took her into his own {household.}

2) “Jesus wept” because of His friend’s death even though He knew He would raise Lazarus from the dead.

(Jn. 11:35).

Jesus Was Criticized Because He Was A Friend “Of Tax Collectors And Sinners.”

3. Jesus was criticized because He was “a friend [philos] of tax collectors and sinners. (Matt. 11:19).

Matt 11:19 "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, **a friend of tax collectors and sinners!**' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."

- a. Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Lk. 19:10), and He was always friendly to those seeking salvation.
- b. He treated them with love and respect.
- c. The word “sinners” includes you and me.
- d. None of us can live above sin and have sinned countless times. (1 Jn. 1:8, 10).
- e. **We are all sinners.** (Rom. 3:10, 23), **but Jesus still died for us.** (Rom. 5:8).

Rom 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

- f. Jesus does not want any to perish, but, like His Father, He wants all to come to repentance. (2 Pet. 3:9).
 - 1) God gave His precious Son for us. (Jn. 3:16).

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

- 2) Jesus, our Friend, laid down His life for us. (Jn. 15:13).

John 15:13 "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

4. **Jesus calls all who obey Him friends.** (Jn. 15:14; Lk. 6:46).

John 15:14 "You are My friends if you do what I command you.

Luke 6:46 "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

Conclusion.

1. The next lesson will focus on the use of the word “friend” as it is used in the New Testament.
2. The New Testament enlightens us on true friendship and motivates us to be a friend of Jesus.
3. We will begin this lesson by studying Cornelius and his friends that he helped bring to Christ.
4. Cornelius was a true friend and was a man who was instrumental in bringing his friends and relatives to Christ.

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