

I am God's Friend

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[0 : 00] I ask you to take your copy of the scriptures and turn to John chapter 15.! If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.

I've told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this, love each other as I have loved you.

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants because a servant does not know his master's business.

Instead, I have called you friends. For everything that I learned from my Father, I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last.

Then my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command, love each other. Well, we're returning to our series of studies on the Christians' multifaceted identities, Bible statements of who and what we are.

[1 : 38] We've been looking for several weeks at strangers and pilgrims in this world on our way home to heaven. Today we want to see our amazing identity as God's friend.

God's friend. God's friend. So if you are in Christ this morning, you can say with me, I am God's friend. Say it. I am God's friend.

God's friend. Now, I wouldn't believe that unless I saw it in Scripture, that the almighty, infinite, eternal, unchanging God would call me his friend.

His friend. God's friend. Now, that's different from me saying, God is my friend.

What a friend he is to me. No, this is God saying, John, you are my friend. Do you see the difference?

[2 : 46] Now, to be sure, friendship is a two-way street. And if I'm your friend, you are my friend. That's just the way friendship works. But there's still something amazing, is there not?

In thinking that almighty God would say of us, you are my friend. God himself is a social being. Three persons in the one God. Perfect, intimate friendship for all eternity. He wasn't lonely, and yet he created us.

And when he created us, male and female, in his own image, he created us social beings. And we are made for relationships.

And in the Bible, we see these various relationships established by God. We see husband-wife relationship. We see parent-child relationship. We see brother and sister relationship.

[3 : 54] In the natural family and in the spiritual family. And we see this relationship of friend to friend. And the Bible has many such friendships.

Perhaps most famous of all is that friendship between Jonathan and David. But then there is this amazing relationship in which God befriends sinners.

Saying to mortal men like you and me, you are my friends. You are my friends. Now, where do we see this? James 2 and 23 says, And the scriptures were fulfilled, which say, Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.

And he was called God's friend. Abraham was called God's friend. Now, where in the Old Testament scriptures did God call Abraham his friend?

Well, Isaiah 41.8 is one place. God's speaking to the nation of Israel. And he says, but you, Israel, you descendants of Abraham, my friend. You know Abraham?

[5 : 05] The father of your nation? He's my friend. What an honor to have God say that of you. 2 Chronicles 20 and verse 7.

King Jehoshaphat is praying to God. And he refers to Abraham as your friend. God knows all about that friendship. He claimed it himself.

Abraham. My friend. Now, we have to ask, though, is this just some rare privilege for Abraham alone? That, well, sure, Abraham was God's friend.

No, the New Testament shows that the special privilege of all who believe, this is the special privilege of all who believe along with the believing Abraham.

And we've already read John chapter 15, where Jesus says to his disciples, You are my friends. You are my friends.

[6 : 06] We're going to come back to that. But before turning to that passage, I want us to pause and consider the definition of a friend. There was a time when this was not as needful, perhaps, but we live in the days of social networking sites, and thanks to Facebook and Instagram, well, friend doesn't quite mean what it once did.

Friendship. Watered down, cheapened. I'm told now that people can have thousands of friends, many of whom they've never met. They've never talked to them.

They know very little, if anything, about them. No personal relationship. And yet they are called friends. And all it takes to claim this friendship is a click of the finger.

And presto, you are now my friend, along with all my other 2,000 friends. So don't you feel privileged, and don't I feel important having so many friends?

And even admitting that there are various levels of friendship, I really wonder if it's possible to have thousands of friends when we realize what's involved in friendship.

[7 : 25] Because the dictionaries that I peruse say that friendship involves much more than a click of the finger. It is a close relationship between two people, which is personal and face-to-face.

It's a relationship where there's open communication so that the two parties know each other, and they have a mutual love and loyalty to one another.

That's a friend, according to our dictionaries. And the Bible itself uses this word about 170 times. That's not a few.

But nowhere does it give us a definition of the word friend. Rather, what it does give us are snapshots of friends and characteristics of those friends.

So we're going to look briefly at the Bible's portrait of a true friend. And I'll mention just three repeated characteristics. They all happen to start with L.

[8 : 26] There's love, there's loyalty, and there's lots of communication. All right? So we come back to our text, John chapter 15, verses 13 through 15.

It's the night of Jesus' betrayal, and Judas has already gone off to find the arresting mob that he'll bring to the Garden of Gethsemane where he expects Jesus to go.

And Jesus, the Son of God, says to these 11 disciples around him, Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

You are my friends if you do what I command you. I no longer call you servants because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends.

For everything that I have learned from my Father, I have made known to you. Now we're going to come to the three L's, but first notice with me just the very obvious point that some people are Jesus' friends.

[9 : 32] Here are 11 of them. And Jesus says, You're my friends. But not everyone is a friend of Jesus. Some are his enemies.

That's James 4.4. You're either a friend of God or a friend of the world, and if you're a friend of the world, you're an enemy of God. There's only two categories. So how do we know if we're one of Jesus' friends?

Well, Jesus' friends are known by their obedience. Verse 14. You are my friends if you do what I command.

That's the first L. Loyalty. Loyalty. By obeying Jesus, they prove their loyalty to him. Two chapters later, when Jesus is praying to his heavenly Father, he says this of these very men that he's talking about.

And talking to. He says, I gave them the words you gave me, Father, and they have accepted them. They have obeyed your word.

[10 : 44] These are the friends of Jesus. They're the ones who obey his word. Now, back in Jeremiah chapter 3, verses 4 and 5, we find these people of Israel claiming that God was their

friend, but the Lord says otherwise.

He says to them, Have you not just called to me, my father, my friend from my youth? This is how you talk, but you do all the evil you can. You see it?

They claim, You are my friend, God. But God's not buying it. No, You are my friends if you do what I command.

Otherwise, you're just deceiving yourself. So, obedience. It's not what makes you his friend, but it is what marks you as his friend.

And there's a huge difference. Obedience is not how you become Jesus' friend, but it is the proof that you are his friend.

[11:57] And that was seen in these 11. Their loyalty was seen to Jesus in their lives, ordered according to his word. So, loyalty.

Friends are loyal to each other. Wouldn't you agree? Isn't that what you want in friendship, is loyalty? Earlier this very night, Jesus told these disciples, You are those who have stood by me in my trials.

Do you hear that loyalty? You stood by me in my trials. Even when others were forsaking me, remember John 6, many of his disciples forsook him and followed him no more.

Do you want to leave too? No, to whom would we go? They stayed with him. They stuck with him in all of his trials. They were true friends.

I enjoyed my two weeks in Arizona. I did many things. I got to see Carrie and Gia and Jada and Paul was there.

[13:06] And I got to climb a mountain. And there was something else I did. I cooked an egg on a non-stick pan.

I couldn't buy one fast enough. It was waiting for me when I got home. Because you see, if you cook an egg on a non-stick pan, the egg can stick to the pan.

And it can be a hard stick. And if you forget that you had an egg in a pan on the oven or on the stove top and you left the room and you come back, it can really be a sticky situation.

It sticks. It sticks. And Proverbs 18, 24 says, there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Brothers are great. Brothers are born for adversity. They stick with you. They give you the shirt off their back. There's even a friend that sticks closer than a brother.

[14:21] They stick with you through thick and thin. They stick to you like glue. They don't forsake you. They don't leave you high and dry when others do.

No. Friends don't treat friends that way. They're on your side. They've got your back. And you can trust them. The fact is, there are many who are just fair weather friends.

And as long as everything's going fine, they're your friends. But then, all of a sudden, they're gone. Where'd they go? They show their true colors. They weren't true friends because friends are loyal to one another.

Friends are loyal. Even Jesus knew those kind of friends that are fair weather friends. He was wounded in the house of his friends. It was a professed friend, Judas, that betrayed him.

One who lifted up his heel against him was one who ate his bread with him. Friends are loyal. We see that loyalty in the friendship with Jonathan and David. David. What a loyal friend Jonathan was to David.

[15:25] Even though David was going to get the kingship instead of him. And even though his own father, King Saul, was out to kill David, Jonathan was loyal to David.

And when David was at his worst out there fleeing King Saul, Jonathan found him and he encouraged him and helped him find strength in the Lord. What a loyal friend. And David was loyal back to him even after Jonathan was dead.

He was loyal to him and he brought his son Mephibosheth, that lame man on both feet into the palace and he ate daily at the king's table.

Loyalty marked their friendship. Loyalty is what Job expected but did not receive from his friends. Remember those three friends we say with friends like that who needs enemies.

They turned on him, didn't they? They came and started well. They were quiet. They were quiet and listened. But then they turned on him. They became his tormentors rather than his helpers.

[16:27] And Job says a despairing man should have the devotion of his friends. That's what friends are for, right? Their devotion, their loyalty, they stick with you.

And Job says I didn't have that. These are the kind that they rejoice with you when you're rejoicing. They're happy for your gains. Not jealous and envious.

And they equally can weep with you when you weep. And when one falls down his friend is there to help him up Ecclesiastes says.

Yeah, that's a friend. That's a true friend. Don't forsake your friend Proverbs 27.10 or the friend of your father. They don't forsake you.

No. That's friendship. And Jesus is the best friend that you could ever have. He sticks with you in a bond that is so tight that you're in him and he's in you and nothing can separate you from him or his love.

[17 : 37] Never will I leave you. Never will I forsake you. It can't happen. It won't happen. Does he help us as our friend?

Oh, what devotion he has. An ever-present help in trouble. No one sticks closer to you than your friend Jesus.

Well, that's loyalty. Friends are loyal. Second mark of a friend is lots of communication. Verse 15 of John 15. I no longer call you servants because a servant doesn't know his master's business.

Instead, I've called you friends for everything that I have learned from my father I have made known to you. Here's another mark of friendship.

They are let into this knowledge of what's going on inside and you open up to that friend, don't you?

[18 : 40] Jesus says this is a difference between somebody that's just a servant and someone who is a friend. So how does the normal master of the day relate to his slaves?

Well, it's do this, do that. All day long. And he never stops to explain why. He never stops to give the bigger picture.

Remember, we studied that when we were studying our identity as slaves. No, a friend, though, is altogether different. And if that slave is a friend, well, then you not only say, I want you to do this and do that, but you sit him down and you explain why and you share your heart with them and Jesus has done that with us.

All that I have learned from my father, he says to these eleven, I have made known to you. What do we find him doing? Teaching, teaching. They're sitting, they're walking along the way, they're experiencing life and Jesus is teaching, he's teaching them what his father had taught him.

Tons of communication pouring from Jesus to them. Why? Because he's a friend. He doesn't hold up to himself, but he pours out what he knows.

[19 : 59] Exodus 33, 11 says, the Lord spoke to Moses face to face as a man speaks with his friend. How did God speak to Moses?

Moses, the same way that a man speaks to his friend. How does a man speak to his friend? Just one click and that's it. That's all the communication you get from me. Click, we're done.

No, he's face to face communication. Lots and lots of communication that's going on. It's different. The way you speak to a servant, the way that a servant was treated and the way that a friend.

In other words, you talk to your mailman differently than you talk to your friend. Friends, unless of course the mailman is your friend, right? But you get the point. There's communication, open, bearing, intimacy, closeness, transparency with a friend.

Proverbs 27, 9, perfume and incense bring joy to the heart and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel. people. Ah, favorite smells, favorite perfume, favorite diffuser of oils, incense.

[21 : 17] Ah, isn't that one? It brings joy to the heart. You know what brings joy to a man? It's the earnest counsel of his friend.

friend. I can go to that friend and I don't have any problem pretending with him. I can say it like it is. And I know he's not going to give me anything but the truth coming back. earnest, sincere counsel of a friend. Mmm, it's pleasant, it's enjoyable.

Friends love to be together. They love just to hang out together and talk together. I was going to say that was one of my biggest faults as a husband.

I didn't take my wife out anywhere because we just enjoyed being together. It wasn't that we didn't enjoy other places together but there was just the pleasantness of each other's company and fellowship and communication.

[22 : 24] That's a friend and there are no friends like Jesus who has poured out his heart. What has he told us? He's told us things in the past that we otherwise would never know that from

eternity past the father gave a people to him and said son go die for their sins.

Go purchase their redemption. And you go die and I will raise you from the dead and I will give you the nations for your inheritance and your people will come from all the earth.

And he's told us the way of salvation. It's not by works of righteousness that we've done but it's by the works that he has done perfectly obeying the law on our behalf and then suffering the damnation that we deserve.

What has he told us? He's told us how to live. He's told us the good life. He's told us what's going to happen in the future. I'm I've gone to prepare a place for you but I'm coming back. I'm going to take you to be with me.

There's going to be a great day of judgment in that day. And all who are outside of me are going to hear depart from me. I never knew you and you whom I've known and had this relationship with.

[23 : 30] I will say come you who are blessed by my father inherit the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. I he's told us all this all that he is for us.

That's friendship and Jesus is the best friend. A third mark of friend is love. Love is the central ingredient in friendship.

It's it's the closest thing to defining friendship and I suppose you could pour all the other things into that and just say friends love each other don't they. Indeed that's what Proverbs 17 17 says a friend loves at all times.

You get the stickiness in there. It's it's all times. But a friend loves. And that means that you can pour into friendship all that we find in first Corinthians 13 and in our Sunday afternoon after fellowship luncheons we've looked at two aspects of what love does and doesn't do and and we found that love is so far love is patient and love is kind.

Friends are patient. Friends are kind because a friend loves and we're going to come to one that it keeps no record of wrongs love and and so friends keep no record of wrong.

[24 : 55] Now friends can get their noses bent by one another can't they even closest to friends can can have strong disagreements and even arguments and and say unkind things can't they husbands and wives best to friends.

And yet. There is in love there is in friendship this foundation of grace. love is not proud.

And so when we've wronged our friend we we go and confess our wrong and ask forgiveness and love keeps no record of wrongs so when we're asked to forgive we freely forgive.

And so though we we have been in conflict we go away arm in arm together because friends stick together and how do they do it they do it by love. Friends love each other.

And they don't just keep it in their back pocket so that at the next disagreement we have I can bring that up and just put it in her face. No friends keep no record of wrong.

[26 : 07] And Jesus is the perfect friend isn't he. He loves at all times. He loves me on my good days. He loves me on my bad days. And I have both.

And so do you. But he's so patient. He's so kind. He's willing to forgive all that I confess. He doesn't hold it over my head and bash me with it.

Whatever he puts under the blood is gone. He remembers it no more. Love bears all things. How forbearing Jesus is in his love for me.

John Newton says could we you and I are friends. Could we bear from one another what he daily bears from us. Yet our glorious friend and brother loves us.

Though we treat him thus. Though for good we render ill. He accounts as brethren still. Still my friend.

[27 : 05] Still my friend. He does good to me every day that I draw breath. He's doing good to me. Goodness. Mercy. Mercy. Goodness. Coming to me. I'm receiving. And what am I giving back too often?

Ingratitude. Complaining. Unbelief. Not taking him at his word. And he bears long.

Because love bears long. And friends bear long. And I can't get out. Side of his love. And in our text.

That's where he takes us. Doesn't he? It's where he begins this discussion of friendship. In verse 13. Greater love has no man than this. Then he lay down his life. For his friends.

For his friends. That's what he was to do the very next day for these 11 disciples. to lay down his life. We sometimes read of it in the accounts of war.

[28 : 08] The battalion. And brotherhood in that group is so tight. That a grenade is tossed into the group. One man. Lays his body down over the grenade.

And takes the blow to shield the others. That by his death they might live. And Jesus says no greater love than that. That a man would lay down his life.

For his friends. And now we've come to the pinnacle. There's no higher love than this. The real test of friendship is not the click of a finger.

It's not the profession. It's not the words I love you. I love you. I love you. The real test of friendship is how far will that love go to meet your need. What cost are they willing to pay for your good? What sacrifice to bring about your benefit? What will they give of their money, their time, their helping hand, their comforting presence? That's the test.

[29 : 10] And Jesus is the best friend a sinner could ever have. And our need was far beyond the need of money or time or presence or helping hand.

Our life was being demanded by God's justice. Our life was being demanded. And when the need was life, he gave his.

He gave his. My best friend loved me more than his own life. And he proved it to me by laying it down for me. He didn't friend us with a click of the finger but by dying for us.

That's what it took. A death under God's wrath that we should have suffered forever in hell in order that we might have this eternal life that he deserved. And he did this, folks, not when we were his friends but when we were his enemies.

That's the teaching of Romans that he we showed our enmity against him by that nature, that sinful nature we had that refused to submit to his laws.

[30 : 24] God said, do this. We said, no. God said, don't do that. We said, we will if we want. We will in these situations. And Paul says, that's how you show your enmity against God.

You just refute. And you can do that with an angry face and a clenched fist or you can do that with a Bible in your hand coming to church every Sunday and you just choose what commands you will believe and obey and others that you'll just ignore.

Thank you. And that was our enmity. Every one of us, we did not like the light. We hated the light. Because our deeds were evil.

And so we hated God. We were all God haters right out of the womb. And God demonstrates his own love for us in this. In that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Didn't wait for us to become his friends before he died for us. While we were still sinners going our own way. Paul goes on, since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him?

[31 : 34] For when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his son. It was when we were yet sinners, yet enemies, under God's wrath that Christ in love laid down his life for us.

And he did it in order to make us his friends. To take us from being his enemies and to make us his friends. This is how we became his friends. Not by our doing his commands, but by his laying down his life for us.

And so he reconciled us when we were unable and unwilling to obey his commands. And he removed the enmity of God against us by taking it upon himself.

And he removed the enmity of our hearts by changing them and taking out the stony heart and putting in a heart of flesh. A heart that loves Jesus and therefore keeps his commands.

So that we render out of a new heart new gospel obedience and show ourselves indeed to be Jesus' friends who do what he says.

[32 : 43] So we're far more than Facebook friends of Jesus, aren't we? How many friends do you have that would lay down their lives for you? Go ahead. Just think of those that you've friended.

I know the whole lot of them. How many? How many would lay down their lives for you? You probably pared it down real quick just to one, two, John Newton.

Which of all our friends to save us would or could have shed his blood but our Jesus died to have us reconciled in him to God.

This was boundless love indeed. Jesus is a friend in need. Greater love has no man than this. And there's no greater friend, no greater love, no greater friend than Jesus.

Remember that, friends of Jesus. When you needed saving from sin's punishment, he laid down his life for you. When you needed a substitute to bear God's wrath, he stepped in for you.

[34 : 01] So what do you need now? That this best and heavenly friend cannot and will not provide for you. Some of you need to be saved in your trial, in your temptation.

It's just not going away. Others need to be saved. You as well need to be saved from yourself, from some fleshly response to that trial or temptation. Do you need comfort for your broken heart? Do you need strength for your weakness? Do you need presence for your loneliness? Hope for your future? Peace for your troubled heart?

An ear to hear you with genuine interest and sympathy with your concerns? It's all here in your best friend Jesus, you see. Believe it, brothers and sisters.

He calls you my friend, my friend. And so, I have to come to the application and I say, well, if I have this wonderful friend, am I making use of him?

[35 : 05] Am I making use of this friend? Oh, we alas forget too often what a friend we have above, Newton. What?

Forget such a friend? Alas, yes, too often forget what a friend we have. We're in the midst of the trouble, the wave of trial is coming over us and we're thinking of this and that and the other thing and last on our mind is that wonderful friend that we have above.

Though we've not seen him, yet we love him and though we do not see him now, yet we believe in him and we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. But not when we forget him.

Oh, no. what a friend we have in Jesus all our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege to carry everything to him in prayer.

Everything. Do you tell your heavenly friend everything? Do you pour out your heart? That's the language. Pour out your heart to him. Just take your heart like a pitcher and just dump it.

[36 : 22] Tell him everything. Everything. What you're thinking. What you're wanting. What you're afraid of. And all without pretending.

You're not telling what you should be thinking. What you should be wanting. What you shouldn't be fearing. Fearing. But just what you are. It's a precious comment in the Gospels when the disciples of John the Baptist heard that their master, John, had been beheaded.

that they went and told Jesus. They expected to find a sympathetic ear in their friend Jesus.

That's what we find, isn't it? Oh, what peace we often forfeit. Oh, what needless pain we bear all because we do not carry everything to him in prayer.

No. I must tell Jesus. I must tell Jesus. I cannot bear my burden alone.

[37 : 28] I must tell Jesus. I must tell Jesus. Jesus can help me. Jesus alone. But he helps me in answers to my cries for help, you see.

This is the communication between friends. and so neglecting this heavenly friend, we go dragging through the day, bearing our burdens alone when we could be casting them on him and go praising our Savior all the day long.

Needless pain. When such a friend is waiting for us and is wanting to hear us and bless us. Well, this is our identity, Christian. Oh, will you believe it?

You are Jesus' friend. Think of yourself as such this week and act like it. Be what you are, Jesus' friend. It's most interesting to hear what the friends of Jesus have to say about him.

I wonder, would you like to hear everything that your friends say about you? Maybe not. Listen to what the friends of Jesus have to say about him.

[38 : 39] Just a few samples from our own hymnal. John Newton, I've been quoting him all morning, but Newton, tell us what you think. One, there is above all others, well deserves the name of friend.

Not a thousand, one. So take all your friends and here's one that above all of them deserves to be called friend.

His is love beyond the brothers. Costly, free, and knows no end. There's love, there's loyalty, there's stickability. It's all found in him.

One. What Newton can pack in two lines about his friend, Jesus. Joseph Scriven, what thinketh thou about this friend?

What a friend we have in Jesus. All our sins and all of our griefs to bear. James Small, oh, I found a friend.

[39 : 44] Oh, such a friend. He bled, he died to save me. And not alone the gift of life, but his own self he gave me. That's the intensity and the closeness of this friend.

He not just gives me the gift of eternal, but his own self he gives, which is eternal life to know him in this relationship. Wilbur, J. Wilbur Chapman, oh, Jesus, what a friend for sinners.

Friends may fail me, foes assail me, he, my savior, makes me whole. Hallelujah, what a friend, saving, helping, keeping, loving, he is with me to the end.

They can't say enough about him. There's a reason why hymns stick around for so long. Why they're favorites for so long. The friends of Jesus, just like you and me, come in here and we sing such hymns.

And as you sing, your heart leaps for joy. And you say, that's it. That's him. That's what he's been for me this week. That helping friend. And we sing out of the joy of our hearts because we have had the help of this friend who is a friend like no other.

[41 : 00] And five rows behind you is someone who didn't come bouncing into church this morning, but someone who dragged themselves to church under a heavy burden of continuing trial or temptation or sin or sadness.

and as they sing or perhaps listen to the singing is all that they can do. And as the congregation sings, they say, that's the kind of friend I need in my trouble.

And the Holy Spirit uses the hymn to remind them that that is the kind of friend that they have in Jesus. All of our sins, all of our griefs to bear.

And sometimes a light surprises the Christian while he sings and faith revives and hope revives and love revives.

And they go home different than when they came because of what they've seen and heard and been reminded about, about their unseen friend in heaven. Now that's the Spirit's work as we sing hymns and psalms, hymns and spiritual songs in our hearts and sing them to one another.

[42 : 17] This is the Spirit, the filling of the Spirit, the evidence of it. These hymn writers are just saying about their friend Jesus what the Bible says about Him. They found the report to be true in their experience and they can't stop singing of Him.

So this is my identity, a friend of Jesus. And He a friend to me. If that's the case, then I need to relate more to Jesus Christ as my friend.

I say that as a confession. I need to think of Jesus as my friend and relate to Him throughout my day as my friend.

If He's there for me, I need to make better use of Him as my friend. As my friend who delights in my fellowship even more than I delight in His and who listens more carefully to my words than I do to His and who has more sympathy for my burdens than I have for His and who's more ready to act the part of a friend than we are to even ask Him.

There's far more to this moment-by-moment friendship with Jesus than what I'm availing myself of. And that's to my own loss.

[43 : 41] But I believe it's also to the loss of His glory and His delight in me living as His friend. Let me put it this way. Suppose that you went through some special training at work to be certified in a specific skill that nobody else in your business had.

And you passed the test and you're now certified. That's your specialty. That's what you had to contribute to that place of work. And then a problem comes up and they need that specific skill that you have and they don't come and see you.

They act like either you're not certified or that you're not there. And so they muddle their way through it and make a mess of things. Does that please you?

No, you've been trained. You went through all that study and now you want to be called on in the hour of need. You want to take what's been given to you and what you have now and use it for the benefit of the company.

It pleases you to be called on, doesn't it? Well, your friend Jesus went through rigorous training for you, his friend. 33 years of it of suffering while he was tempted and tried in every way like you are.

[45 : 07] He never sinned once. I wonder if we've ever entered into the sufferings of Jesus. And I'm not talking now about the cross.

I'm talking about everything that led up to the cross and being tempted and tried. He's passed flying colors, perfect obedience, born under the law that he might as a man obey the law and redeem lawbreakers.

He's qualified, he's certified, he's got a perfect obedience and he can provide what no one else can provide because he also went to the cross and suffered there for sin and he can provide

forgiveness.

He can do that. He's qualified. The only one in the world in the universe of heaven and earth. He's got that qualification. Now here you are and you've come in and you've got a sin weighing you down.

Your conscience is smiting you and as your friend he's more than happy to have you come to him in your sin seeking his mercy and forgiveness.

[46 : 16] It's what he came down for. It's what he became man for. It's what he became sin for. It's what he became a curse for. It's why he was damned for. It's why he was raised and exalted for.

It's why he lives for that he might extend mercy to you as a faithful friend and high priest. So bring him your sins. He's got pardon and power for you.

And so with your trials and temptations he was tested and trained in this field and he's been there and he's gone through all of it and so now he's qualified to help you because he himself suffered when he was tempted.

So run to him in your temptations. Run to him in your trials and he's delighted to have you as his friend running to him that he might pour out his grace to help you.

But you say oh I don't want to bother him. Do you ever say that about friends? They want to help you. I don't want to bother him. Don't want to bother her. It is no bother to Jesus Christ to forgive the sins of his friends.

[47 : 26] To help his friends in times of need. No in fact if you're his enemy it's no bother to him to have you come and to throw yourself on his mercy.

He'll receive you. Remember he loves you dear friends of Christ more than he loved his own life. He lost it for you. So confide in him.

Consult him. Make him your first go-to in any kind of need that you have and honor him by leaning hard upon him. He loves to be put to use by his friends.

Octavius Winslow says whatever brings you to him be it trial, temptation, sin, sadness, need of any kind it makes you know him better and moves your heart to love him as your best friend and that's a win-win for him and for you and if the truth be known brothers and sisters that's one of the reasons behind many of our trials and troubles is that our best and our heavenly friend is wanting to draw us nearer to his heart.

he's just that loving of a friend. He misses his friend's love. Revelation 2 Oh you're doing so well in so many ways you there at Ephesus but I just got this one thing one complaint you've lost your first love.

[48 : 57] Jesus notices that he's your friend he loves you and he loves your love for him. So I have to ask myself there's two ends to the stick aren't there?

There's Jesus is my best friend and yet there's the fact that Jesus says to me you are my friend. So we need to look at both ends of the stick. I have Jesus as my friend he's my friend then that means I can run to him then I need to ask myself am I making use of my friend?

But then we need to just turn the stick around and say does Jesus count me as his best as his friend? Am I his friend? Is that what he calls me?

That's what I am that's my identity? Well then let me think for a moment at least about what kind of friend am I to him? We've talked a lot about what kind of friend he is to us what kind of friend are you to Jesus?

Are you loyal? Are you loyal? Are you doing what he says? Are you sticking with him? When everybody in the world around is using his name as a curse word and just drifting off away from Jesus negligent ignorant ignoring him people are making fun of him making fun of his word are you loyal to stand up for Jesus?

[50 : 29] Or are you ashamed of him and his word? What kind of friend are you to this friend that's so loyal to you? What about your communication with him? He speaks to you right here the love letters of your friend he's speaking to you what are you saying back to him?

He loves to hear your voice what kind of friend are you to him? And what about that love? Is he your first love? So may the Lord help us to deal with this identity of having Jesus as my friend and him having me as his friend.

He's the best friend a sinner could ever have or ever want because he he is and has everything a sinner needs we've seen that you need forgiveness he's got it you need grace and mercy he's got it you need righteousness before God he's got it he's got what nobody else has so so if you're lost

and without Christ here's a friend for sinners but I also need to tell you that if he's not your best friend he will be your best enemy your worst enemy excuse me he's one or the other that's the way the Bible presents itself and those that do not embrace him as their friend and their savior in this life when he comes again they're going to be crying for rocks and hills and mountains to fall on them and to hide them from the the wrath of the lamb Jesus who's their enemy you don't want him against you you want him for you why should you go out of here anything other than a friend of Jesus he's offering it to you freely come to me come to me trust in me
I'll be your forever friend sticks closer than a brother in this life in the day of judgment I'm not going to ditch you I'll be right there I'll be your advocate with the father then I'll welcome you into everlasting dwellings what a savior what a friend we're going to sing of it if you take your hymnal 432 close with this friend today seek him call on him I found a friend oh such a friend he bled and died to save me trust him in that kind of faith 432 song of Jesus what a friend for sinners we're going to sing all the verses but the chorus only after the odd verses so the chorus only after verses 1, 3 and 5 let's stand as we sing of our precious friend the Lord Jesus let's pray
Father in heaven thank you for sending your son thank you Lord Jesus for being this friend that we've just read about and sung of we're not singing hallelujahs enough forgive us we're moping and complaining under our trials and under our sins and under our pain and suffering when you are best heavenly friend though out of sight are ever present and so strengthen our faith forgive us and make us to know you near as near as the trouble is ever present help only a prayer away and one who will stick with us to the end thank you thank you you've stuck with us this week you've not forsaken us we thank you that you've saved us and you are saving us we need saving from ourselves even yet you're helping us so we need your help and you're keeping us we need to be kept to the end and you're loving us thank you that nothing can separate us from your love now fill us then with a sense of just what a friend we have in Jesus and then fill us with the properties of a friend in response to him that we would be his friends and treat him as friends treat friends help us we're weak and we need you for this and draw someone who's still an enemy to realize that while [55 : 28] Jesus was here he was called the friend of sinners and that for the good reason that he's ready and willing and able to make any sinner his best friend draw them today we ask in Jesus name amen to him to him to him!