

## WHAT IS TRUE FRIENDSHIP?

JOHN 15:9-17.

Jesus tells us that we are His friends. Verses 14 and 15 please read along with me. 14. You are my friends if you do what I command. 15. 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.

What are the basic elements of friendship?

There is acceptance. A friendship is composed of two people who accept each other as they are.

I may not understand everything I know about you;

I may not even like some of the things about you; but if I am prepared to accept you as a person just the way you are, and if you are prepared to accept me just the way I am, then we have the basis of a friendship.

This is what Jesus is saying to His followers. By no stretch of the imagination can we believe that Jesus approved of everything He saw in Peter, James and John and the other apostles.

When Jesus called them friends He knew that Judas would betray Him. Peter would deny Him. All the others, apart from John, would forsake Him in the hour of His greatest loneliness in the garden of Gethsemane.

Surely this was a situation when Jesus needed His friends and as they say, 'you know who your friends are when you are in need.'

The disciples of Jesus were far from perfect. Yet Jesus said, 'I call you my friends.

I accept you just the way you are.' He offers us that same friendship, regardless of who or what we are.

We don't have to be saints to be Jesus' friends. All that matters is that we are willing to accept Jesus.

There many aspects in choosing a friend, sometimes we have to be very careful in whom we confide in lets read together the following scriptures regarding caution

Proverbs 18:24

A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother

Proverbs 22:24-25

Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man,  
lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare

Now let's look at how often we pick our friendships based on conditions? Now these reasons may seem harsh but listen to them

I'll be your friend providing your financial or social status is to my liking.

I'll be your friend providing you lead a decent life.

I'll be your friend providing we are the same colour.'

I'll be your friend providing we support the same party, go to the same church... and so on

People may not say these actual words, but that is how they think.

Sadly, there are some who cannot accept God as a friend because they believe they are not good enough for His love.

And yet in the Bible we discover that the people who were most uncomfortable in the presence of Jesus were not sinners but the strict moralists, those who took pride in their own goodness and looked down on the evil of others.

Another element in friendship is respect. It should be easy for us to respect Jesus, for He is faultless.

But the astonishing thing is the respect Jesus has for us. He always looked for the good in people.

Jesus never invaded a person's privacy or destroyed the dignity of their free will.

The last book of the Bible pictures Jesus standing at the door, knocking, waiting for someone to let Him in.

That is the picture of the high regard He has for you and me. He will never kick down the door of our lives.

He simply offers His friendship and waits for us to respond.

Then we have the element of honesty and trust in friendship.

Jesus said, 'I have told you everything the Father told me.' Jesus believed in and practised openness with His friends.

Honesty is essential to friendship. No meaningful relationship can exist on a foundation of deceit.

To be friends, we don't have to know everything there is to know about each other.

We are not obliged to reveal all the secrets of our past lives.

But we do need to feel that we can (the big word) trust each other, share our joys and sorrows, discuss our problems, confide in each other, rely on each other's loyalty.

We can't build anything on lies. This is how we should feel towards Jesus.

He knows everything about us, all our secret thoughts and actions, so it would be futile to try to hide anything from Him.

He is the one friend with whom we can, and must, be totally honest, knowing that He will never betray our trust.

Jesus' offer of friendship is open and honest, no strings attached, no axes to grind. He offers Himself.

'Greater love has no man than this, than that he lay down his life for his friends.'

Calvary is the clearest offer of friendship the world has ever seen.

If we are willing to give to Jesus the same acceptance, respect and honesty that He has given to us, it will be the beginning of a beautiful and lasting friendship.

Today is Mother's day Sunday. Let us remember those mothers who are no longer with us. Your childhood closest friend, confider and advisor. Let us also acknowledge the our wives you may call them sweetheart, darling, but they are your best friend. There is a song called "Your my best friend " some of the words are Your my friend when I am hungry, Your my shelter from troubled winds, your my anchor in life ocean, but most of all your my best friend.

**We might know a lot of people and some we might call our friends - what are the characteristics of a friend, what do we look for in a friend? Jesus calls us His friends - are we worthy of this wonderful relationship with our saviour?**

ASKING and for me the prayer that sums up Friendship is the prayer of St. Richard  
Let us pray

Thank you Lord Jesus for all the benefits which you have given to us.

For all the pains and insults which You have borne for us.

Most merciful Redeemer, Our Friend and my Brother: May we know You more clearly  
Love You more dearly, and follow you more nearly day by day Amen