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# FRIENDSHIP

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By Dr. Randy C. Brodhagen



# FRIENDSHIP

## INTRODUCTION

Relationship is the fondest thing in the heart of God. That is why the thief wants to steal, kill, and destroy our relationship with the Lord, ourselves, and others. But we are not going to let him do that. We are in this life and this world not just to occupy time and space and to talk about our opinions and thoughts. We are here for one purpose, and that is to receive the life of God in Jesus (to hear the gospel, to receive the good news of the love of God, and then to be born again). This life gives us the opportunity to be born again of heaven and God's Spirit.

John, chapter one, says, *"To as many, as received Jesus He gives the power to become sons and daughters of the Most High God, born not of the will of man nor the flesh of man."* The first birth is of the earth, the second birth is of heaven in Jesus' name. Thus we are born of heaven with all the rights and privileges of sons and daughters of the Lord. How precious it is. As we grow in God's Word, we start to find out what all those things are, and then to take our place as God's royal priesthood, chosen generation, set apart people, to give praises to the Lord of Hosts who is worthy. Worthy to be praised.

You have a purpose and a plan in your life that God has put there, and they are to unfold and come forth in Jesus' name. It begins when you are born again. You start to experience *"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,"* and become part of eternity, being ultimately with the Lord who is the hope of our calling forever. No more pain, no more sorrow, no more suffering, no more sickness, poverty, famine, pestilence, evil, depression, or anxiety. No more. Rebellion, wars, gossip, hatred, or bitterness. It may be going on all around you, but it is not in you (not in your head, not in your heart). You will think good God-thoughts, and not be caught up in the world's ways of nonsense, chaos, confusion, fighting, and evil. No more. We are free in Jesus' name. He or she whom the Son has set free is free in Jesus' name.

Abraham walked with God because of his obedience. He had relationship with the Lord, and the Lord called him His friend. We are friends of God too through Jesus. He has made us family and friends, and established relationship.

He loved us first. We don't love Him for any other reason except He first loved us and enabled us to love Him. He gave Himself for us, and that is the best friend that I could ever think of. He was the One who was actually willing to lay down His life for His friends. While we were yet enemies of God, the Lord came and gave His life and rose from the dead for us that we might be His friends. Relationship.

### WHAT IS FRIENDSHIP ALL ABOUT?

First, there is freedom in friendship. "*A friend loves at all times,*" Proverbs 17:17 says — in good times and hard times. God knows that friendship in life has every bit of good times. Every day is a new adventure.

Second, friendship is consistent. Love is consistent. Day in, day out, the love of God never changes towards us. He loves us with an everlasting love that never changes. Whether we are naughty or nice, the Lord still loves us and has good plans for us. We just need to let Him get rid of the naughty and get us back on track so that we are about our Father's business.

Third, friendship is faithful. When we have a relationship, we don't want to stay out of sorts for very long. We want to be faithful to ask God's forgiveness, and He is faithful and just to forgive us of all our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. He actually takes it off the record like it never was. (1<sup>st</sup> John 1:9)

Fourth, one of the keys to a relationship is forgiveness. For giving the love of God out there to everyone you meet. We are here to give out God's love to the people. A friend also cares at all times for others — preferring another more important than self.

Philippians, chapter 2, talks about what Jesus did for us. Everything He did was for us. The Lord loved us as enemies and turned us into friends. Today, the Lord is preparing a table before us in the presence of our enemies. It is just like the Lord to put us there. The highest form of

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maturity in the Lord is to lay down your life for your enemy and consequently to make the person your friend. It is easy to do good to people that are always doing good to you. Thank God for those that are always doing good to you. They are friends, and you will know them by their fruit.

## TURNING AN ENEMY INTO A FRIEND

How do you do that? With the love of God. You quit seeing him or her as an enemy. We are not fighting against people. In the name of Jesus we are fighting against the principalities and powers of darkness.

Understand, it is not even much of a battle because when you speak the name of Jesus, the devil has to bow. The thief has to go in Jesus' name, and it cannot stay around messing up people's relationships or anything else because you are God's friend. When the Lord says so, we are friends forever. I tell people that if I am in their life for a moment, or for 50-60 years, we will be together forever. Unless you are going to hell. If you are going there, I am not going with you. I do not want you to go there in Jesus' name, and I will do everything in my power to keep people from it.

The Lord has a far better plan for us than to be tormented all our days — striving, competing, comparing, having attitudes of inferiority, superiority, power to self, greed, worry, anxiety, or fear. The Lord does not want us in any of that. His perfect love casts out all fear because fear has torment. We should have joyful, happy, blessed lives within the peace of God. That is what I want for you, and that is what I want for me.

Why can't we just be at peace with one another, and accept one another?

## DEFINITIONS OF FRIENDSHIP

I put together some things about friendship. I used the original Webster Dictionary. Webster was a Christian, and he published the original with Scripture passages (the Word of God), and then the meaning of the words. What we have here are definitions of friendship.

## TO BE FREE

In relationship, a blessed relationship, there is true freedom. Freedom to be yourself. A true friend loves at all times, whether you are having a

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good day or a bad day, depending on attitude and circumstances. (I want you to understand that you don't have to have a bad day ever again if you are looking at it through this perspective: the Lord is with you, and He is your helper. Then you will not be overcome by the outward situations happening in your life. You will overcome all those things in the name of Jesus because God is with you, and you do not have to be afraid what people will do. Life circumstances, plagues, or economic shortages. You do not have to be afraid of anything because the Lord is for you, He is not against you. He will help you. That is the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.)

And so, freedom in friendship is ready, willing, cheerful, joyous, and allied to someone. We are not out there by ourselves. The Lord never intended that when we were born. He immediately put us into families. His full desire is to put us into His family when we are born again. We must be born again to enter into the kingdom of God. It is the Lord's plan for our lives to be part of His family and not the devil's family.

## WE ARE LINKED UP

In friendship we are yoked together with the Lord and with someone else. We accept the friends as they are. God's love is unconditional. While we were enemies of God, hating Him, not interested in Him, not wanting relationship, Jesus came for us. He initiated the relationship. *"He who would have friends must show himself friendly."* (Proverbs) What He did, He did unconditionally, forgiving us of all our sins and making us holy as He is holy.

His friendship was not based on anything we did. It was by God's grace that we are saved through faith in Jesus, not by our works, or the lack of them, lest anyone should boast. It is the gift of God. (Ephesians 2:8-9) In friendship, we are always giving gifts to one another. You yourself are actually a gift, for the Lord has made us gifts. The Gift was of Himself to us, and we received His gift, His life in Jesus.

It is not about what the Lord can do for you. It is what the Lord has done to you, and it is about Him. He gave Himself to us. In friendship you give

yourself to another, and you are committed to them. That is what love is all about: commitment, accountability to the commitment, and responsibility to fulfill the commitment. How are you going to do it? Willingly, cheerfully, joyfully. Then we are together forever in Jesus' name.

## FRIENDSHIP IS ABOUT LOVE

It is about the freedom to love and care about one another in willing, cheerful, joyous ways. Even the wounds of a friend are faithful when they speak to us in truth. A wise person wants to be corrected, wants to be directed, wants to have God's best, wants the truth.

*"One moves a thousand, two move ten thousand."* Like iron sharpens iron, a brother or sister can sharpen each other in the Lord, but we are not putting down, blaming, shaming, finding fault, being superior or inferior. No, that is not in a godly friendship. If somebody does something that is not right, we care about them enough to speak the truth in love, but not with a condemning, shaming or superior attitude. Rather, we are together in this. We have to help each other to cross the finish line.

A funny example is maybe your friend passes some gas. You don't make a thing of it. You just ignore it, and you move on. I thought maybe you needed something funny today that way because there is so much craziness going on out there. We will just ignore it and not make a big deal of it.

In fact, there is much that goes on in life that love covers. *"Love covers a multitude of sins."* Just let it go on by. You do not even need to respond to it. The only thing we need to respond to is the Lord, the love of God, and the care of the people.

Thank God for the first responders, who help those who are going through troubled times in life. We also thank God for the policemen, firemen, doctors, nurses — all the caring people, the ministers of God around the world. Dads and Moms and bosses in the workplace who care for their employees. Thank God for everybody. I found that I am very thankful and

appreciative of friends. People sometimes are pretty nasty, but love covers a multitude of sins. Continue to love and care for each other. Love does not find fault. The devil is a fault finder, the accuser of the brethren. He is always stirring up trouble through comparing, competing, and showing partiality.

The Lord does not show partiality to anybody. He is a true friend. He loves us all just the same. It might seem that some are blessed more than others. It is only because those people are responding to the love of God more. I am sure that they want everybody blessed as they are.

In the book of Luke, when the lady was caught in adultery, Jesus spoke to the people that brought her out and were going to judge her, throw rocks, and kill her for her sin. He said, *“Let him who is without sin cast the first stone.”* The accusers all came to their senses and walked away because nobody can cast that stone. *“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. There is none that doeth good, no not one,”* the Lord says. Jesus loved us anyway and came to save us because He did not want us lost. He hates it when evil is happening in the earth. Evil causes pain, sorrow, suffering, torment, loss, and grief. The Lord Jesus came to deliver us from all of that, and to destroy the work of the devil who is perpetrating those things, trying to hurt people.

## DO NO WRONG TO A FRIEND

A friend purposes to do no evil to those who are loved and cared about. *“Do to others what you would have done to you.”* You love others and never want to see harm, pain or sorrow come to them. That is a godly relationship.

A devil relationship is just the opposite. It uses people, abuses them, and then throws them away. That is how the devil operates. The Lord will never do us evil. He will never do us harm. In fact, in Jeremiah 29:11-12 the Lord says, *“I know the plans that I have for you, plans for good, not for evil, plans to prosper, to give hope and a future.”* The Lord wants us to

succeed in life, and He has given His very great and precious promises (besides giving Himself) to help us. Every one of those promises enable us to participate with Him in all that He has in store for our lives. His plans are for good, not for evil.

The Lord gave, but He did not take away from Job. The thief is the one who took away, but the Lord restored when Job humbled himself and sought forgiveness for his ignorance of who the Lord was. The Lord gave the Word from Job, chapter 42, to me again the other day that basically said, “Your days are going to be better than your former days if you keep your trust in the Lord. “

## THE BLESSING OF ACCEPTANCE

The Lord accepts. A friend accepts, and you do not have to walk on eggs around each other. Have you ever experienced that? You don't know if the person will judge you if you are doing right or you are doing wrong. You are damned if you do, damned if you don't. You do not have to be concerned about what friends think because their thoughts for you are for good. Their plans for you are for good. They love you. They want to see you succeed. They want to see you come into everything that the good Lord has in store for you. Such is a real friend. They are with you whether you have much or you have nothing.

The Proverbs says you have many friends when everything is going well. However, when you go through trouble like Job did, his friends came to tell him all the things that were wrong with him. What he really needed was to be encouraged and to have somebody speak the truth in love to him. Job's friends just spoke what they always wanted to tell him but were afraid to tell him because he might not have a relationship with them anymore. They wanted something from him.

People that want something from you are not your friends. They are just around as long as they can use you for their purpose, and when they cannot, then you are out. This is the way the world's relationships work. If



they cannot use a people anymore, then they have no more relationship with them. A friend loves at all times.

## ATTACHED BY AFFECTION

Friends are attached by a care for one another. They have love, esteem, and respect, which causes a desire for company.

Friendship is to respect a person, honor a person. All of Job's family gave him gifts after the Lord lifted the affliction that the devil had put on him. They were probably always coming for something from him before. Friendship, instead, is always about giving and caring.

*"Give and you shall receive." — "He who would have friends must show himself friendly."* That causes a desire for company. You want to be around the person. You want to have relationship, but you have godly motives. You want to be a blessing.

## MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIPS

I tell people who are coming into a marriage relationship not to come into a marriage needy, looking for the other to fulfill them, or to compliment them. You want to come into that relationship with Jesus, where you are a blessing. You care about that other person more than you care about yourself, preferring them more important than yourself. You want them to be so blessed by your presence. Bring Jesus in there with you to love them, cherish them, care for them, respect them, honor them. When you do so, since the two are one, it always comes back to you. It is the way blessing works. You give a blessing, the blessing will come back to you. You give a cursing out, a cursing will come back to you.

One time a fellow said to me, "Pastor, my wife is not doing her 50 percent." I thought about that for just a moment and said, "What do you mean?" "I'm doing my 50, and she needs to do her 50." I looked at him and said, "What's this 50 percent stuff?" You know, if you are in a relationship, you have to be in 100 percent. All of you. It is not them doing their 50 and you

doing 50. No, they need to be in 100 percent as well. But it is not a friend's concern what the other one is doing. A friend is giving 100 percent. When you are giving your 100 percent, then the other one will respond. Whatever they do will be a blessing. But in any case, you are "all in." Whatever you do, you do it with all your heart in the name of Jesus to the glory of God. (Colossians 3:17)

## FREE IN JESUS' NAME

Back to the situation where all those fellows had wanted to kill the woman caught in adultery. Jesus said to the woman, "Where are your accusers?" She said, "They're all gone." Jesus said, "*Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.*" In other words, you are free. We would say "free in Jesus' name." This lady came back to Jesus later, and was so thankful to Him for what He had done for her, setting her free. See, He became her friend at that point, and that friendship brought freedom. No condemnation, no judgment. Freedom. But you have to walk in the ways of the Lord to have that freedom. That is why He said, "*Go and sin no more.*" In other words, "You have the power now."

We should say, "In Jesus' name you have power to change your life. God has set you free. The Lord has forgiven you, and you are free to be about the Father's business. Do not go back to those old ways where there is bondage and cursing. Walk in the light of the love of God and the grace of God. Live a life worthy of the grace that God has given you, and do that by the power of the Holy Spirit in you."

We have the power to live for the Lord and not sin, to be about the Father's business in Jesus' name. And it is the acceptance that Jesus put forth, not of the sin. The Lord never accepts the sin because sin is separation from God. It is hateful and hurtful. It is evil. We do not want to have anything to do with it.

*"Hate evil, love what is good."* (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13) Proverbs 17:17 says, *"A friend loves at all times."* All times, all circumstances, all situations.

## FRIENDS ARE NOT HOSTILE

There is no hostility in friendship. You do not get angry and upset at the other person. Nothing will break the bond that is there. Other people are not your enemies, they are your friends. You see them as friends.

One time I was having an issue with certain relationships. I had thought that there was nobody I could not get along with or love until I ran across a few cases. A true test. I kept reading the verse in Proverbs that says, *“When a man’s ways are right before the Lord, even his enemies will be at peace with him.”* I thought on that and thought on that some more.

*Holy Spirit, show me what it means. Give me understanding for my life.*

He showed me that we were enemies of God when Christ died for us, the godly for the ungodly. He gave His life to save us, He emptied Himself and gave us all that He had. Of course, the Lord always fills you back up when you do that. But the point is, He did not have to do that because we had no relationship with Him. He wanted the relationship with us in spite of us.

The Lord loves us, not for any other reason except for His sake. He is love, and what does love do? It loves. He gave Himself for us.

Many times people say, “I’m entitled to that.” No, you are not entitled to anything. It is a choice.

## RELATIONSHIP IS A CHOICE AND A PRIVILEGE

A lady once said to me, “Pastor, nobody likes me, nobody wants to be around me.” The Holy Spirit sometimes gets me in trouble because I speak the truth in love. I knew her well, so I said, “Ma’am, that’s because you’re so nasty.” If you are nasty, you are angry. The Word says not to be friends with angry people. You do not have relationship with them.

If people want to be stingy and greedy, like a Scrooge, who has to have relationship with that? If you want to be hateful and hurtful, you do not want to have relationship with anyone. That is what the devil does. He wants relationship with no one. He just wants to use people, abuse them, and throw them away. He wants to keep people back from the love of God. If people have relationship with God they might be set free and come into the most awesome life beyond life, but the devil does not want anybody

else to be blessed. He wants no one to be happy, joyful, peaceful, enjoying life. No, he wants people to be miserable, wretched and ignorant. He wants them to be slaves to sin. How evil, but that is what he is all about. He does not want anybody to have one moment of joy in life. What he does is bait and switch. He will give you a counterfeit, like something you think you want, but it is your flesh wanting it.

The Lord says in the book of James that if you have friendship with the world, you are an enemy of God (an adulteress in the relationship with the Lord). Relationship with the world and relationship with God are so far apart! You are in the world, but you are not of it.

That lady who had been nasty became nice. The Lord will help you to be kind and nice to people, and not all about yourself. She became caring and sharing, and guess what? Friends started to develop. Before she had been pushing them away. People do what I call a “Push away spirit,” or “Touch me not.” You come into a room and you are expecting that nobody will like you or want you around. So, you put an attitude there that says, “Don’t touch me. Don’t come close.” Sure enough they will not come close. Then you will walk out and say, “I knew it. Nobody likes me, nobody wants to talk to me, nobody wants to be my friend.” That is because you are not a friend. *“He who would have friends must show himself friendly.”*

## PEOPLE ARE NOT THE ENEMY

Back to my experience with thinking I loved everyone. When I began to think about those people, I thought, *Lord they are not my enemies. I am not Your enemy anymore because you love me.*

*“When a man’s ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.”* All of a sudden I no longer saw those people as enemies. They were my friends. They just didn’t know it quite yet. I was going to show myself friendly. Not obnoxious. Understand what I am saying. Many people are rather obnoxious, like saying, “I’m the real Christian, and I’m going to forgive you, even though you don’t want to forgive me.” That is not the Spirit of Christ nor the spirit of love. Trying to be superior to them is game playing. The Lord is not into that.

## NO GAME PLAYING!

Friends are “What you see is what you get.” They are open, honest, and want the best for everybody concerned. They do not play the *He Said, She Said, Who Said What Game, the Blame Game or the I am conqueror (I am better than you)*. They don’t use or abuse each other for their own personal gain or their own ego. No, they are friends. Everything is open and above-board, honest, and certainly not hostile.

And so, I loved those people, and in time they loved me as well. It is better to have peace but not at a compromised cost. A friend will never put you in a position where you will have to be compromised, or where you will have to choose between them and the Lord. Your first love is to the Lord, and then to them. They will encourage both of you to go to the Lord, number one, and then the Lord will love each other through each other. That is how it works.

## RECONCILE AFTER STRIFE

Strife will invariably happen at times. When there are two in a relationship, you can help the one who falls and vice-a-versa. A three-fold cord is hard to break, the way the Lord intended. But there are whisperers out there that separate chief friends.

There are many factors in life. Maybe you have a difference of opinion. There isn’t a marriage out there where people agree all the time on everything. Invariably strife happens, but where there is a true friendship (like relationship with the Lord), you humble yourself and ask God’s forgiveness if you are out of sorts. If you are faithful to confess your sin to the Lord, He is faithful and just to forgive you and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. (1<sup>st</sup> John 1:9) Paul said in Ephesians, chapter 4, “*Do not let the sun go down upon your wrath.*” I cannot even minister to anyone if I am out of sorts with my bride, Diana. I have to get it resolved before we come to church. It is not so I can feel right and am right to minister. It is that friendship and love supersedes everything else.

## HATE BEING SEPARATED

You do not love in order to get something, or to make something happen. No, you love because you hate separation. You hate evil. The fire of hell is coming up for many people because they reject the relationship with the Lord. They do not want to have relationship with Him. They want nothing to do with the Lord. Fire will be the fact for people separated from Him. He is love, He is goodness, He is light, and He is life forever. It is a horrible, horrible condition and state without Him. There is hell even on earth because people do not have the love and the life of God that comes in Jesus Christ.

People in relationship want to heal, want to get things straightened out. Forgive. Don't give the devil an opportunity to steal, kill, and destroy. Be quick to make amends. However, things happen. Forgiveness is the key that is right there as soon as we ask the Lord's forgiveness (humble ourselves and ask). He forgives and He forgets about it like it never happened. You may run back to the Lord and say again, "Lord, I'm sorry I did it." The Lord asks, Did what? "I did whatever I did that wasn't right with you." He says, "I don't know what you're talking about. I forgave you." What is past is past, what is done is done, what is cleansed is cleansed, meaning it is nonexistent. When the Lord forgives you, and when a true friend forgives you, you do not ever have to talk about it again. It is past. It is over. It is done, it is gone, it is removed. It is not on the record anymore. Only the good is on the record.

## JUDGEMENT DAY

When we Christians stand before the Lord, He is going to judge us. At the Great White Throne the unbelievers and the devil will be put in with those who rejected the Lord's love and provision. They are separated from the believers and go to Gehenna to the place of torment. Why? Because they are separated from the Lord forever. You cannot kill a spirit. (People have a spirit, mind, body, and as such are eternal beings. Angels are also eternal beings.)

Believers will be judged (See 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians), but we will not be judged on the basis of what we did wrong. We will be judged on the basis of what we did right, and rewards be passed out. Some will get more rewards than others, but that is because they believed the Lord. It is not based on

partiality. In the same way many people sitting in church can have life with Jesus, or they can have *abundant* life with Jesus. Why do some have abundant life? Because they go further into all that the Lord has for them.

## GO FOR IT ALL

One time a guy said to me, "I'll just be happy to get in the Pearly Gates," and I said, "What? Just get in the Pearly Gates? I want to go all in and have all that the Father has for us in Jesus' name." There are good God-works that follow saving faith.

God's salvation is the gift of God. It is not based on works. It is the grace of God. It is His heart and desire for His name's sake, but "*We are His good workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works*" (Ephesians 2:10). Those are the works we are talking about. The measure of obedience, the measure of thought on the Word of God, and an application of the Word of God determines the blessings for people. Many are just settling short of all that the Father has for them.

I am not going to be one of them. I purpose that. I want all that the Father has for me to come to me in Jesus' name. I want to believe the Lord for miracles and nothing impossible to the Father. The Father says, "*Nothing should be impossible to you.*" (Matthew 17:20) We want it all.

Go for it all. Do not settle short of all the Lord has for your life spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, financially and in relationship.

Be encouraged today. Go for it all in Jesus' name, and as you delight in the Lord, He will give you the desires of your heart because your heart is God's heart in Jesus. He has some amazing things in store for you. Believe for them.

## ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE LORD

One time the Lord said to me (He is ultimately my best friend. He was encouraging me), "Son, you are not praying for enough." In other words, you are not believing for enough, and I said, "Father, we've seen you do amazing things, impossible things over the years just one after another, after another, and I am believing that everything You have for me will come to me." The Lord is blessing us, over the top, exceedingly, abundantly

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more than we are able to ask or think in Jesus' name to the glory of God. (Ephesians 3:20) He said, "Son, you are not asking for enough."

I said, "Father, you have to help me with this." I started praying in tongues. "Let's loose all these things that you have in store that we are not asking for, or not asking about." I thought I was asking for much. I asked for a lot for everybody, but the Lord said that I was not asking for enough. In other words, "I want to do more than what you are asking for, what you are even thinking about. Therefore, go for it!" That is being a friend.

## RECONCILE AFTER ENMITY

A friend is kind, understanding, and compassionate in good times and hard times, but sometimes in life people are like sick puppies. (Even the vet gets bit by a sick puppy.) People may be hurt and have things going on in their lives. That is why they are upset. That is why they are angry, hateful and resentful. No excuse, no justification, it is just that they need to be healed, and "*A soft answer turns away wrath.*" Sometimes you just need somebody to reach out, care, and understand, and then to help you to overcome in Jesus' name.

I do not believe in sympathy. Sympathy leads people to continue in their path, but compassion takes them over the top, and gets them out of feeling sorry for themselves. Do not invite me to your pity party. One, I will not come, but two, if I did show up I would wreck it. I would just ruin your party because nobody needs to wallow in self-pity ever again in Christ Jesus. If you are an unbeliever, you will have a party that way. Your whole life will be that way. Why be that way when Jesus says, "Come on up to what I have prepared for you. Come into My life that I have for you. Give up the selfish, poor, pathetic life, and come into the life of heaven, a heavenly life, blessed, with good things, joy, and peace forevermore."

Why wallow in nothingness when the Lord has everything for you? It is a choice. Why be depressed when you can have a joyful life every moment of every day? Jesus is in your heart, He reigns, and He is in charge of everything in the earth. Praise God!

A companion comes alongside, like a tugboat comes beside an injured ship and gets it into the harbor. Good times, hard times. Faithful and



committed. Things happens in life, and even the greatest believers have their moments. Elijah had some moments. David had some moments. Moments came to Jesus, but what did He do? *“Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation.”* He overcame in the name of the Lord. Challenge your thoughts.

There is power in agreement, and that is what friendship and companionship is for. One person by himself, Ecclesiastes says, is hard, but with the Lord, you have a relationship, and you are never alone. You have to get that in your head. You are never alone even when you are by yourself. You are not alone, the Lord is with you. He is for you. He is not against you. We need to talk with Him and share with Him, and He will share with us as well.

## BE A SUPPORTER

A friend is an encourager and advocate. Colossians, chapter 3, says to befriend each other. Be compassionate with each other. Do not judge or belittle, like saying, “Where is your faith?” The faith is there, so encourage people to walk in it. Tell them, “Your life isn’t over. God has a plan for you.” Everyone has thoughts that come every day, or times when they are bombarded with them. But a friend helps keep us in balance.

Diana said to me once, “We can’t both be down at the same time.” One has to stay up, and ideally can help the other one in the way God intends. That is who a friend is. *“There is a friend that sticks closer than a brother.”* (Proverbs 18:24) You can have family relationships, or you can have *loving* family relationships.

You cannot really be friends with everybody, but there are different levels of friendship. You can be a friend with everybody. Note what I just said because your attitude is always that every person is the Lord’s child whoever they may be, believer or unbeliever alike. Jesus died for everybody to save everybody. Your heart is always to be reaching out in friendship. It is to be reaching out an open hand in love towards everyone. Not in violence. Your heart as a child of God and the love of God is always reaching out in love.

## PROMOTE THE GOOD OF ANOTHER

Friends want to see everybody come into the best God has for their life. Their prayer is for one another, their heart is for one another. A friend never wants to insult. The Holy Spirit builds, but when He tears down, it is to build something better. People have to get rid of garbage in their lives so they we have some room for the good stuff of God. The Holy Spirit will take away the garbage.

Early in the ministry of Glory To God Ministries the Lord spoke to me. (We started it with the Holy Ghost in 1978. I was a pastor prior to that in a major denomination, but the Lord moved us into what He called Glory To God Ministries, *“for the work which I will do will bring glory to My name”* [when we asked for a name for the ministry]).

As He was telling me about the things to come, He said, “Son, I’ve called you to the garbage detail.” It was rather funny. Well, what do we do? We help people get rid of all the garbage (what is not of God) in their lives, and come into all that the good Lord has for them. However, to clarify, I say, “I am the garbage man, not the garbage can. Don’t dump on me.” What am I saying? A friend in a relationship is considerate of others. We are not to cast all our cares on somebody. We are casting our cares on the Lord, and we help people to cast their cares on the Lord.

Many times people want to dump their trash on one another. A friend never does that. A friend is supportive, is an advocate and befriends. Also, a friend encourages others to go to the Lord, and to cast those cares on the Lord, for He affectionately cares for us and watches over us as we humble ourselves under His mighty hand. (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:7)

## PREFER OTHERS BEFORE YOURSELF

You may prefer yourself, but understand, who takes care of you? The Lord does. You do not need to be needy because the Lord takes care of you. My Daddy in heaven takes very good care of me and that frees me to be a blessing to others and to encourage them to come into all that God has.

Friendship is a noble virtue. Do you think it is something important in our day and age? Definition: “Attachment is from a pure source, or pure motivation that is a noble virtue.” It is not self-interest and is without an

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agenda. I do not want liars around me. I do not want people with their own agenda because they do not have others' interests at heart. They only have their interest at heart. Really, when they cannot use you any more, they will just run down the block. True friendship does not have any other motive. It is pure, and it is very important to respect the worth of another. Respect of the worth of another is kindness. Kindness is undeserved.

## A FRIEND IS KIND

A friend looks for the worth of another. Looks out for it, and protects others from defamation of character. A friend will respect and honor, does not want to hear garbage about a friend, does not want to participate in garbage about someone when the person is a friend. They have relationship.

People are weird sometimes. A couple once said to me,

“Pastor, we just love you. We love the Word. We love the ministry of the Spirit and everything, but we have some problems with the people.”

“You know, I’m with the people, and if you have problems with the people, then you have a problem with me because I am the people’s friend. I love and care about them,” I said.

(Quite frankly, it bothers me sometimes that people cannot work out the problems they have with others. If you are really a friend, and you are really a brother or sister in the Lord, why can’t you work it out? If Jesus loved us while we were enemies, why can’t we work out things amongst ourselves?)

It is a sad thing. I would rather have it another way, but that is the way it is unless people want to change their attitude. It is their call. You cannot make anybody do anything. A friend understands that. People will do whatever they will do.

## CHOICES WE MAKE

People make choices every day for better or for worse, for life or for death. *“Today I set before you blessing and cursing, life and death, chose life,”* says the Lord. We want people to choose what is best for them, but people do not always do that. It bothers me, it bothers the Lord, but I do not see

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the Lord losing sleep over it. I will not lose sleep over it either. We are going to believe God for the best He has for everyone. They choose what they will have from the Lord. *“We know whom we have believed, and are fully persuaded and convinced that the Lord is able to keep that which we have committed to Him.”* Give the people to the Lord, while you love the people and care for them as they permit it. As they allow it.

Relationship is a privilege. People choose whether or not they are going to have relationship with the Lord. He did everything to allow us and enable us to be His friends, but people choose whether they want to be a friend of God. They choose whether they want to be a friend with me. They choose whether they want to be friends with each other. In a relationship the choice has to be both ways. For both people to have a relationship, they have to be 100% into it. Otherwise it is just an acquaintance. People come and go in your life all the time. You always want to be friendly towards them.

#### LET THE LORD BRING THE FRIENDS TO YOU

The Lord will show you who is a friend, and who is not. I have always approached people like that. To me everybody is my friend. But I know everybody is not my friend because many really do not want to have anything to do with me, just like Jesus. Jesus said, “If you are of God, you love Me; if you are not of God, you don’t love Me.”

You will find out that many are not even taking a thought about you, which is okay, but a friend is thinking about you. God puts friends in your life. Do not run around choosing. *I want that person to be my friend, or that person to be my friend.* Watch the motivation. Are you choosing them because they can do something for you? What is the motivation of the heart? I would rather let the Lord bring the friends to me. All the Father has for me will come to me, and during my whole life the Lord has sent people to me.

In fact, in 1978 when He gave the vision of Glory to God Ministries, He said, “I will be sending faithful people to you, – faithful to the Lord, and faithful to you. They will be faithful to your family, they will be faithful to the ministry. You will be one heart, one mind, one spirit, like Paul says, ‘Fulfil my joy’ [Philippians, chapter 2], and they will help you to do what I have

given you to do.” That has been the case—past, present, and future to come.

One day the Lord told me to thank Him for all the people He has sent into my life — past, present, and future. I am thankful for every one of you out there. Many have gone on to the Lord over the years, and I am looking forward to reunion. In a godly jealousy I would like to be with them in Paradise, but I have to finish what the Lord has given me to do, and friends will encourage me to do that. Finish everything the good Lord has given you to do, over the top — exceedingly, abundantly.

## FALSE FRIENDSHIPS

*“Bad company corrupts good morals.”* Thieves hang out with thieves, etc. Rebellious people hang out with rebellious people. Note that those relationships are usually short lived. They are temporary, and they can turn in a moment. The reason is that the motivation or the cause for which those people come together is not a God-cause. It is all about self-interest and promoting one’s own little opinion about different things in life. It is not a love-based relationship. It is based on a cause, on what people believe, on their opinions. Without pride there is no strife.

That kind of friendship is not really a friendship and it dissolves pretty quickly, possibly turning into a moment of hatred and cursing.

It is similar to sharks in the water. When the blood is there, they will tear up each other. Before they were swimming together, but when the tide turns they go against one another. I have actually seen where devils that were working in a person turned other devils in to protect self and personal rights. They care very little about somebody else’s rights. It is all about their rights and nobody can differ from them. When people differ from another and say, “You’re getting too radical, you’re way out there,” they turn on each other and devour each other to the point of killing. Such is a false friendship you do not want.

## CONFIDENCE IN ANOTHER

Friends will put faith in others. They will stand with each other, but they will speak the truth in love to see God’s best. *“Iron sharpens iron”* that way. It is beautiful to say, “I know that you are going to get through this.” It is a

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confidence. Paul stated, *“I am confident of this very thing that the good work the Lord has begun in you, He is faithful to perfect and to complete.”* (Philippians 1) I am of the same heart. I know whom I have believed, and I know the good work the Lord has begun in you, He is faithful to perfect and complete. In other words, you may go around the mountain a few times. You may get out there and act like you do not even know God. But I know that the Lord and the faith and the Word that has been put in you is not coming back empty. It is producing fruit, and eventually you will come to your senses and recover yourself out of the snare of the devil. Nobody can do it for you. You must do it yourself with the Lord. Why? The only way people change is through God’s loving kindness.

If you do not want to change, you will not change, but if you want to change, the Lord will help you. That is what we have taught, what we know is true, and is what we believe. Friends will be like that. They believe that somehow, some way, they will come through the situation. They are not just going to survive, they will overcome in the name of Jesus. That is what a friend is all about.

## BE GENUINE

“What you see is what you get.” There is no other reason except that the Lord has put us together as friends. “Together forever” is a little phrase the Holy Ghost gave me years ago. Be sincere, genuine, have no other personal or greedy agendas. Just care about others and love others — that is what a friendship is all about. No strings attached.

If we cannot live in friendship, we need to at least live in peace. That is a word for today. People may not agree, having all kinds of differences in what they believe. However that should never be a cause for strife, stealing, lying, and talking against each other, being hateful and hurtful. That is the way the devil works. He wants to separate people and divide them from each other. He hates unity. But the Lord is about unity, all about unity, and whatever is separating and dividing is an issue. We need to be at peace with each other.

## DIVORCE, RELATIONSHIPS, WISDOM

If you get a divorce, you do not have to be an enemy of the other person. It just didn't work. You do not need to be condemned about it. Malachi, chapter 2, says that God hates divorce, but what is He actually talking about there? (Divorce, as Jesus mentions in Matthew 19, was a writ of separation that Moses gave out.)

Understand, unity is always better than separation. If things cannot work, be careful with that because there is such a thing as forgiveness. With the Lord nothing is impossible, and He can make it work. Malachi, chapter 2, is referring to where you condemn the person and judge the person. You say to them, or you are thinking, *Go to hell, stay away from me. I don't want you in my life ever again.* Cursing that person is what God hates. He hates strife. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7 would be helpful to look at.

## STILL BE AT PEACE

You can depart as friends, you can depart in peace. You do not have to be enemies. That is what the devil would have. People may disagree on many things (you know, they always say, "Don't talk religion, don't talk politics"). Let me tell you, beliefs are what life is all about. It is what moves people. It is very important to understand that you do not have to be in strife just because you have differing thoughts. Be big like God. The Lord puts up and tolerates all of us, but He has given a way to a better life.

He came to separate and then to restore. That is, separate us from evil, and then come into what He has. The Spirit of the Lord will create division because He has to get rid of the evil to bring in the good. Then He frees us to make a choice for God's good, separated from the evil. That is the way the Lord does it.

The devil wants to divide us from what is good and have us concentrate on what is evil, hateful or hurtful. Peace says, "Okay, you believe what you believe, I believe what I believe. We can still be at peace even though we differ." Do not give the devil an opportunity. Believe according to what God says,

*"A servant of the Lord must not be quarrelsome, but patient, gentle, apt to teach, per venture God will give repentance to the person to come to their*

*senses so that they recover themselves out of the snare of the devil.” (2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, 2:24-26)*

If you are at war with people, they will not receive a thing you have to say. You are their enemy then, and the war is on.

But *“When a man’s ways are right before the Lord, even his enemies will be at peace with him.”*

So, don’t get into strife. They believe what they believe. I believe what I believe. The Lord will sort it all out when the day comes, but I am not going to be in strife with anybody. I hate strife. God hates it. You need to hate it. It destroys friendships. You cannot even be a friend if you are in strife. You cannot even have a marriage if you are in strife. You cannot run a business if you are in strife with your employees. There cannot be any strife in government. We have to work together whether we agree with each other or not. It is a God-given right in our country to vote, but certainly not to break the law. We need to unite on that; otherwise there is no community.

## FAVOR, NOT PARTIALITY

Notice there is a difference between favor and partiality. Friends help and assist others. If you know two people (one is your friend and the other one you do not know well), you do not show partiality to your friend even though you love them. God does not show partiality to anybody, but provides everything for all. Whosoever will partake of it will partake of it. Some people will choose to be your friend, others will just walk on by, but be friendly to everybody.

*“Faithful are the wounds of a friend.” (Proverbs 27:6)* Jesus was a friend of the publicans and sinners. If you are to reach people, you have to be friendly with them – not judge them, not condemn them. Jesus says, *“I have not come to condemn the world, I have come to save the world.”* (John 3:17)

Who needs help? Those who are not in relationship with the Lord. The Lord loves them. Jesus gave Himself for them, and we need to do the same, but we do not accept evil and wrong things they are doing. Maybe



we once did the same things ourselves. The Lord wants all people loved and saved, and we reach out to them.

## BE WARNED

The thief tries to “*separate chief friends.*” (Proverbs 16:28), and He is actively working against us to keep us from the Lord. The Lord shows His love, and wants to be our friend, but the thief tries to prevent that from happening. We need to be aware of it, and we need to understand that we are not going to let a whisperer separate friends. We will not listen to garbage about anybody because there is a motive with what is going on.

Sometimes there is a warning. Some people are evil, like Proverbs says. When they speak smooth, you don't believe it because there are seven abominations in their hearts. Such a warning is done out of love. The Lord tells us that out of love to keep us from evil. There is a time when you have to warn people, or inform them that some things are not right. A friend does not want somebody falling into a demonic trap that will hurt them and cause sorrow.

Events happen to separate friends. (Proverbs 17:9) I found when people are in strife, they will come to you and try to undermine the other person, so that you will take sides. Do not take sides and let separation come. You do what the Lord directs you to do. Mind your own business, for if you get into meddling in other people's business, you take a dog by the ears. Those in strife may work it out while you are still in strife because you took up their offense.

Maybe you need to say to your friend, “We need to forgive that person. We need to pray a blessing for that person, and ask God's forgiveness.” A true friend is going to speak the truth in love to his friend to help the friend to recover out of the snare and do what is the right God-like thing.

## IN CLOSING

As a friend of God, and as a friend of yours, I just want the Lord's best to be upon you and bless you in every way. If you are sick right now, in Jesus' name, be healed. If you are going through an emotional time, be healed in Jesus' name.

*Curse whatever is not of God on minds and body, Lord. Bless their finances, prosper them over the top in every way. Lord, let true relationships rise up and get even better — over the top, stronger. May Your people always stand together as one with You in Jesus' name.*

Friends, we have much to do here. Get out about the Lord's business. Keep up God's good work during these times. Always remember not to let the world get inside of your circumstances or situations. Be not overcome of the world, but overcome the evil with good. Do not be a friend of the world, be a friend of God. Have nothing to do with the devil and the world's ways in Jesus' name.

Go make some friends today, and encourage the ones you have.