

# Characteristics of a Good Friend

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[ 0 : 00 ] And in you, the Bible says you are dead in trespasses and sins. You're a dead man walking, and you don't want to get to God's judgment dead.

The dead are going to stand before him, according to Revelation 20, and they're going to be cast into the lake of fire. And you don't have to be dead when you stand before Christ.

All right, find Proverbs chapter 18 this morning, please. Proverbs chapter number 18. Thank God for the Bible.

It's beyond just an amazing and beyond just a holy book. It's an extremely valuable book. You don't even have to be saved.

You don't have to care about Christ or the Word of God. And your life is better already because of this book. You're here this morning. I mean, you're here in this place, right?

[ 1 : 03 ] You're here. You're in the United States of America. You could have been born and live in a country where the Word of God is nothing, where it's even prohibited. And just the thought, the fact that this Bible exists, your life has been bettered already.

You may not know it. You may not have considered it, but it's true. Now, Proverbs 18, 24. Some of the value. Here's something that we learn from this book.

And I'm going to expound on this topic this morning. Verse 24. Where the Bible says, A man that hath friends must show himself friendly.

And there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. A man that hath friends must show himself friendly.

That's a proverb. That's a statement of truth. And within that statement is an application and a reality. And this isn't a new thought. It's not a new thing.

[ 2 : 06 ] This is true all the way through the human experience, the human race, all the way back to Adam. And thank God for a Bible. It's got such, like practically every topic that exists, the Bible has something to say about it.

It has a presentation of truth. And you could go through your life thinking about, in this particular case, friendship and friends. And you could make your own judgments on what a good friend is and how you should be and what's acceptable to you.

But you could go to the Bible. You could go to the man, the God, I should say, that gave to man everything in whom we have our being, our life and our breath.

And if he gives us instructions, and if he gives us a presentation of something that's true, we'll consider what he says. I think we might do better to analyze his words.

And so the Bible is going to be a valuable book in every way, but in this case, this morning, the topic of friends or friendship. And the word or the context of this topic shows up well over 100 times in this book.

[ 3 : 15 ] And so it's a lot of mentions. And in these mentions, the word of God gives a variety of angles on friends or on friendship. And what I mean by that is it reveals to us the good side, what could be or should be, but it also reveals the negative or the bad side of relationships with other people, specifically those we'll call our friends.

For example, in the Bible, the man Abraham is called the friend of God. And if you're Abraham, that's a pretty good friend to have in your corner.

God, the friend of God. If you needed one friend, Abraham found him one. On the other hand, David had a son named Amnon.

And the Bible says that Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab. And we learned that Jonadab was a very subtle man. And it's not just Jonadab's fault. If you know the story of what Amnon did with his sister Tamar and how Jonadab kind of brought it together or insinuated some

things, helped his friend.

They're friends because they have a connection. They see things through the same eyes. They want the same things. It's not because it's a good relationship. This is not a good relationship at all. [ 4 : 28 ] But they're friends. And you can have friends that are good friends. And you can have friends that are bad friends. And they can be friends. And so know that the Bible word friend is not some positive spiritual thing.

It gives us all sides of it. Amnon got himself in a mess. But that mess was already in his heart. It wasn't Jonadab the subtle friend that made it happen or it was the bad guy. It was in Amnon just as well.

David had a friend. David, King David had a friend, a counselor named Ahithophel. And Ahithophel betrayed David. David said this.

He penned it in the Psalms. He said, Yea, mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me. Now, prophetically, that's the Lord Jesus Christ and Judas Iscariot.

This Bible is amazing. It can be telling a story and telling another story at the same time. But in this case, David had a friend, his own familiar friend that he ate with, that came and sat at the king's table that he counseled with.

[ 5 : 31 ] Yet he lifted up his heel against him. He betrayed him. And speaking prophetically of Jesus Christ and Judas Iscariot, when Christ was betrayed in the Garden of Gethsemane.

I almost said Garden of Eden. In the Garden of Gethsemane, he was betrayed by Judas, whom Jesus greeted, saying, Friend, wherefore art thou come? What are you doing here?

He called him a friend. A friend, the term friend indicates a relationship. One that goes beyond just a mere acquaintance. One that goes beyond just a co-worker. Goes beyond a neighbor.

It's a relationship that's developed there. Even beyond just some guy that you know that you use, a mechanic, or somebody that you have a connection or their number in your phone. It doesn't necessarily make them your friend.

The friend indicates a connection. Deeper than on the surface. More than superficial. And there's different levels of friendships.

[ 6 : 28 ] One friend, it can be authentic. Authentic can be, but it's just small. It's just new. It's not growing. It's not deeply rooted. But then other friendships go back for very long times.

There's certainly different degrees of friendships. But know this, at least now, it signifies a connection. Or even a concern or a care that's reciprocated between the two.

Some, I want to say some things this morning about a good friend. And I want to preach a message. I'm just going to call this characteristics of a good friend. And not all friends are good friends.

And the word in the Bible doesn't imply positive traits or spirituality. There are bad friends. There are bad influences. And we may touch on some of that as we go.

But to begin, let's look at a few passages. We're going to flip around a little bit this morning. I invite you to turn with me to the book of Acts. The book of the Acts of the Apostles in chapter number 27. You're moving into the New Testament past Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

[ 7 : 29 ] And the book of Acts, chapter 27. I want to preach this morning on characteristics of a good friend.

And we'll consider what the Bible has to say about it. And as we do, you weigh this scriptural evidence and truth. And you weigh it against your own life.

And you weigh it against your own friends in your life. And see if this is lighting up. If this is something practical that is manifest in your life that you should have or shouldn't.

Acts 27, verse number 3. This is Paul. He's arrested. He's going to be sailing from one place to another.

He's on trial. And he's getting tossed back and forth. He's locked up, shackled, whatever the case is. He's on watch. He's not getting away. Soldiers everywhere. Watching his every move.

[ 8 : 29 ] And in verse number 3, it says, On the next day we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul. And gave him liberty to go unto his friends. Notice the next three words.

To refresh him. Now that was awful nice of Julius to do that. He didn't have to do that. But he allowed this prisoner, Paul, liberty, to go hang out with his friends for a little while.

And why? To refresh himself. To refresh himself. And let me say, number one, that a good friend is a refreshing friend. It's a friend that's going to make you better.

It's going to lift you up or encourage you and help you in some way on the inside. Paul uses that word more than anybody else in the Bible. This is Luke actually writing about Paul in Acts 27.

But when Paul writes in his epistles to the churches, he uses the word refresh more than anybody. And he says that they have refreshed my spirit and yours. And he refers to the spiritual effect that believers, good Christian friends, can have on one another.

[ 9 : 41 ] He speaks of Titus and he says his spirit was refreshed by you all. He speaks of his friend Anesiphorus and he says he oft refreshed me. But now contrarily, on the other hand, a friend should not be the one that brings you down.

A friend should not be the one that discourages you or drains you of your joy. Some people have a way of doing that very thing. Some people have a way of just passing on their murmuring and their poisonous attitude to other people around them.

And that's the way they live. And if that's your friend, whether you know it or not, you're going to pick it up. It's a grief to the new man inside of you to have that poisonous attitude spread to you.

To hear them constantly criticize and complain. And those kind of friends, they're not good ones. But those kind of friends, if they're in your life, they will have an impact on you.

They will affect you. They will influence you in your spirit. You don't believe me? Let's see if the Bible says that. Look at Proverbs chapter 22. Proverbs 22.

[ 10 : 55 ] Your friends will have an influence on you. Proverbs 22.

So it does have an effect on you. If you walk with wise men, you'll be wise. What about if you make a friendship with an angry man? Look at chapter 22, verse 24.

Verse 24. Make no friendship with an angry man. And with a furious man thou shalt not go. Why? Lest thou learn his ways and get a snare to thy soul.

You're the one that's going to be hurt too. People think, oh, it can't affect me. I can just in one ear and out the other.

If that's your friend, and if that's your acquaintance, the one you spend time with, it will affect you. The Bible says evil communications corrupt good manners. And you can have all the goodness in you that you want, but you get around the evil, it will affect you.

[ 12 : 21 ] It doesn't seem to work the other way around too much, though, does it? It doesn't seem like your good spirit lifts up the evil spirit of another. But a good friend is a refreshing friend.

They're a refreshing friend. It means that they're able to offer something to you. Not only take from you, but offer something to you. The Bible says here in Proverbs that the rich hath many friends. I wonder why. The Bible says in Proverbs that every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts. No kidding. Of course they are. Because there's a lot of leeches looking for a good time or looking for a free ride.

And what are those friends offering the relationship? They're just takers. Takers. But a good friend is a refreshing friend that's able to offer something.

The Bible says that in Proverbs 27, verse 17, Iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

[ 13 : 24 ] Sharpeneth the countenance. Not the character. Not the financial portfolio. The countenance of his friend is sharpened by a good friend.

A friend that can refresh. He's a help to his friend. That's a good friend. That's a refreshing friend. He's making his friend better. Now you're in Proverbs. Look back at chapter 17.

A good friend's a refreshing friend. Paul needed refreshing more than once in his life. And he found it at the hand of a faithful friend that cared more for Paul than he did for himself.

Now in Proverbs chapter 17, look at verse number 17. Secondly, I want us to consider this. A friend loveth at all times and a brother is born for adversity.

Now don't misread this. It's not saying that a brother or your siblings are the ones that you fight with, but the friends are the ones that love you. That's not it at all. The friend and the brother are the same person. That's even a common term.

[ 14 : 32 ] He's a friend and a brother. The friend loveth at all times and a brother is born for those times in your life where there's adversity. He's there to help you. He's there to have your back.

And the statement is that he loves you. In verse 17, a friend loveth at all times. And the context, the thought is that they're there for you. Characteristics of a good friend.

Number two, a good friend is a loving friend. I think in this Bible that one of the greatest pictures of a tight friendship, of loving friendship is that of David and Jonathan.

And let's look at it while we have the time and go back to 1 Samuel chapter 20. I just want to show you a few statements the scripture says rather than quote them. Let you see them with your eyes.

1 Samuel 20, something, a quality of this relationship between these two friends. Because these two men possessed a strong bond.

[ 15 : 32 ] And these two men understand they are both, in their own right, powerful figures in a nation. Not just in their households or towns, but in the nation they've got positions of power.

Jonathan's the prince. His father's the king. He's growing up in the palace. He fights. He's a valiant man. Everybody knows his name. And of course, David defeated Goliath.

And in that moment, they began singing his praises and the whole land knows who David is. He's a nobody up to that point. But beyond that, we also know that God has anointed David to be the next king over Israel.

To follow after Saul. Instead of Jonathan. Wouldn't you think that created a little tension between the two men? The one is supposed to be the king.

He's the prince of his father. But the other one's been anointed by God to be the king. And they come together and have a tight friendship and a relationship. A strong bond. It shows me some things. They're both humble men.

[ 16 : 30 ] They're both valiant men. You can read. They've both, in their own right, accomplished some things. They're kindred spirits. And now come to 1 Samuel 20. Look down at verse number. We'll start in verse 16.

It says, So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the Lord even require it at the hand of David's enemies. And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him. For he loved him as he loved his own soul.

You show me. You tell me and teach me where love gets any higher than that. When you can love somebody as your own soul. The Bible says, Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life.

That's his own soul. His own self. And he'll lay it down for his friends. I don't see it getting any stronger than that. As a matter of fact, look to the right a little bit to 2 Samuel chapter 1.

When David finds out that Jonathan is dead, he mourns for him. He mourns for his father Saul, who was pretty much a perpetual enemy of David all of his life that he knew.

[ 17 : 36 ] 2 Samuel chapter 1. And he mourns over these men. And just catch verse 25 and 26. He's saying, How are the mighty fallen in the midst of battle?

O Jonathan, thou was slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan. Very pleasant hast thou been unto me. Thy love to me was wonderful.

Passing the love of women. Passing the love of women. This bond between these two men was unbreakable. It was impenetrable.

Even though Saul, the king, tried to penetrate and split it up. Saul got furiously mad at his son Jonathan because Jonathan was friends with David. Because Jonathan protected David when Saul wanted to kill him.

He said, You perverse son of a rebellious woman. He flipped out on his son Jonathan at the dinner table that time. If you read that, you should read your Bible and be familiar with these. And I can't take you to them all the time.

[ 18 : 39 ] But he flipped out on his son when he knew that he loved David. That they had a relationship and it was strong. And Saul knew, God has anointed David to be king in my stead. I want my son to be king in my stead.

Who is Jesse? I don't want his name, his son, his lineage to be on the throne. It's my lineage. My throne. He wanted Jonathan to have it. He was so angry with his son for not having that zeal.

To want the throne. Not to be motivated. You know, you cut off your enemies. David's your enemy in this case, son. Jonathan didn't see it that way. He loved David.

Their friendship was marked by a strong love for each other. A giving and an unselfish relationship. This reminds me of the New Testament description of charity a little bit. As I read from 1 Corinthians 13, think on David and Jonathan, if you know their story.

Charity suffereth long and is kind. Charity envieth not. Both of them could have envied the other. Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.

[ 19 : 45 ] Charity doth not behave itself unseemly. Charity seeketh not her own. Is not easily provoked. Thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in iniquity.

But rejoiceth in the truth. You know what the truth was for their relationship? David was going to be king. That was the truth. And Jonathan rejoiced in that for his brother David.

Beareth all things. Believeth all things. Hopeth all things. Endureth all things. Charity never faileth. Jonathan not only loved David, but was also there to assist him, to protect his friend, when his own father, the king, sought for his life.

Do you realize Jonathan stripped himself of his royal garments, even down to the girdle, and gave David what a prince wears?

Do you realize David wore the clothes of a prince because his friend Jonathan humbled himself like that? What prince would ever do that for anyone?

[ 20 : 52 ] You can see why Saul was mad. Of course, Saul's spirit was evil against it, but Saul was so mad with his son to act like that. They had a friendship. And a friend, a good friend, is a loving friend.

Now turn back to Job. Go back to your left a little bit, to wherever you are, I don't know. Job chapter 2. The book of Job, the story of Job.

An amazing, a wonderful but terrible story. Let me highlight a few things here to make a point about a good friend.

In Job chapter 2, we learned already in this first and second chapter that Job has lost his sons and daughters. They're all dead. They're gone.

He's lost his possessions, his substance of financial gain and such, and he's a man of great substance. And he lost it all. And so now he has nothing and no children.

[ 22 : 01 ] And in chapter 7, then he's afflicted with boils. And now his wife is against him. And he is just on the ground in ashes.

You've never been there. You don't know what it's like to be this far down. You've been down a little. You don't know what it's like to be this far down, this low. And now look, Job has friends, three friends in verse 11.

Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came, everyone from his own place. Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Namathite.

And they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him. That's legitimate. They're his friends. This is real.

Now we know what happens throughout the book, right? So we kind of get, we think, some friends, because, but for now, understand, this is legitimate from them. They say, have you heard what happened to Job?

[ 23 : 01 ] We need to go see him. Get Selen, get Nehom, or get, get Bildad, and Eli, what's his name? Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar. Let's, we got to make a plan.

Can we do it on Monday? No, we're going to go Tuesday. And they make plans. They make an appointment. We're going to go see him. They're going to go mourn with him. That's a cultural thing. And it's, it's a legitimate thing a friend would do when their friend is in such a bad way.

They make an appointment to mourn with him and to comfort him. They're good friends. They're acting as friends. That's what they ought to do. But when they get there, they're blown away at what they see.

The half wasn't told them. Verse 12 says, and when they had lifted up their eyes afar off and knew him not, that, that guy, that skinny, frail, he looks like a beggar.

He's not wearing nice clothes. He's laying in ashes. He's filthy. We've never seen him like this. That doesn't even look like Job, our friend. They're expecting him to invite him inside and have some tea and sit down in the parlor.

[ 24 : 08 ] They're expecting the treatment. Job's a wealthy, wealthy man. And to come from afar off and see this frail, filthy, boiled, old, diseased man laying in ashes.

It says, they lifted up their voice and wept and they rent everyone his mantle and sprinkled dust on their heads toward heaven. They sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights and none spake a word unto him for they saw that his grief was very great.

So please, get the idea. They're good friends. They don't know what to say. This has taken them by surprise. They're speechless. And so they show up and they end up surmising that if it's this bad, Job, you have to be guilty.

It doesn't make sense. If it's this bad, I mean, we expected it just to be bad, but not this. And so Job, sorry to tell you, buddy, but you've got to, what have you done?

You've done something. And one after another through the book you read, they just point at him and accuse him. Come to 19, Job 19. Job 19, one after the other.

[ 25 : 27 ] You've done something. You're covering it up. You're lying about your character. You're guilty, Job. Nobody gets to this place without being guilty.

So in chapter 19, look at verses 1 through 3. Then Job answered and said, How long will he vex my soul and break me in pieces with words? These ten times have ye reproached me.

You're not ashamed that you make yourselves strange to me. His friends are withdrawn from him.

They're accusing him. And he said, How long are you going to do this?

You're killing me here. Now look at chapter 19. Look a little further at verses 13. We'll read down a little bit. In verse 13, Job says, He's blaming God, saying God did this.

He hath put my brethren far from me and mine acquaintance are very estranged from me. Nobody's hanging out with me anymore. My kinfolk have failed and my familiar friends have forgotten me.

[ 26 : 29 ] They that dwell in mine house and my maids count me for a stranger. I'm an alien in their sight. I called my servant and he gave me no answer. I entreated him with my mouth. My breath is strange to my wife, though I am entreated for the children's sake of my own body.

Yea, young children despised me. I arose and they speak against me. Young children don't speak against a man, an elder man as Job. That's culturally unacceptable.

And yet, he's in such a low spot that they're treating him like he is just that beggar on the street corner. In verse 19, all my inward friends abhorred me and they whom I loved are turned against me.

My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth. Have pity upon me. Have pity upon me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me.

Why do ye persecute me as God and are not satisfied with my flesh? Job still considers them his friends. And they're beating on him.

[ 27 : 36 ] They're vexing his soul with their words. Insult to injury. Come to chapter 42. Despite the accusations, Job says, you're my friends.

Now look at Job 42. Getting closer here. And notice in verse number 7. When it's all said and done and the Lord shows up and the Lord speaks and declares the truth of the situation, he accuses those three men.

In verse 7 it says, And it was so that after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said unto Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee and against thy two friends, for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right as my servant Job hath.

Therefore, take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering and my servant Job shall pray for you. For him will I accept lest I deal with you after your folly and that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right like my servant Job.

So Eliphaz, the Temanite, and Bildad, the Shuhite, and Zophar, the Namathite, went and did according as the Lord commanded them. The Lord also accepted Job and the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends.

[ 28 : 56 ] When he prayed for his friends, Job prayed for his friends. It went something like this, Lord, please accept these sacrifices and allow these sacrifices to make atonement for their folly and for their insults to you.

They've made them against you. They've not spoken. They were wrong. But Father, they know it now. Please accept this offering.

Please appease your wrath against them. Please forgive them. Apparently, God did forgive them.

And the fact that Job asked God to do it indicates that he did too.

You have to put yourself in Job's position to understand how hard that may have been. You have to see that he has nothing on this earth that's for him.

And the ones that come to help and comfort him ended up turning on him just as bad and one after another, chapter after chapter, they're just digging on him and pushing him. I mean, he could have said, enough with you too.

[ 30 : 11 ] You're not on my side. I'll go it alone then. And the Lord was ready. I read it in the chapter there. He's going to deal with them after their folly.

And they deserved it. But God forgave them and Job forgave them. So let me finally say this this morning, that a good friend is a forgiving friend. And as many problems as you and I have, as far as friends go, I think we're going to need to have some forgiving friends.

In 2 Timothy chapter 4, when Paul is at the end of his life and he's standing in judgment, he's really, he's at the end.

He said earlier in that, he said in 2 Timothy 4 that the time of my departure is at hand. I'm ready now to be offered. And in verse 16, he says that my first answer, no man stood with me, but all men forsook me.

You know who he's talking about? His friends. Other believers. Other companions. And labor. That had labored with him in the gospel. And here he is at the end and he's getting tried and the world and the devil caught up with him and all the work that he's done for Christ.

[ 31 : 26 ] The time of his departure is at hand. He's done. He finished his course. And when he gave an answer, at his first answer, no man stood with me. It must have been quite an answer that he gave for himself and for the Lord.

But all men forsook him. And here's what he says to follow that up. I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. He's talking about his friends.

And when he's in hot water and they turn their back on him, he asks God to forgive them. Because a good friend is a forgiving friend. The Bible says in Ephesians 4, verse 32, to be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another.

Tenderhearted. Has anybody ever told you to be tenderhearted? God did. You know what? You want to be hardhearted when someone does you wrong, puffed up, resistant, tenderhearted, forgiving one another.

In Colossians, he says, forbearing one another and forgiving one another. If any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. So even friends can do you wrong.

[ 32 : 40 ] And sometimes things can come in between very close friends. Come back to Proverbs again. Look at chapter 16. We're almost finished. Proverbs 16, just a few verses here.

You read about Samson and he wanted to go see his wife and found out that his father-in-law gave her to somebody he used as a friend and he flipped out and burned the fields of the Philistines down and then they came and burned his wife and her father and what a terrible thing.

But a good friend is a forgiving friend. And there's things that can affect the relationship of friends that can come between. Take a look at this. Chapter 16 and verse number 28. The Bible says, A froward man soweth strife and a whisperer separateth chief friends.

Chief friends. Real good friends. But somebody running their mouth can get in between them and separate them. Look at the next chapter, 17 and verse number 9.

He that covereth a transgression seeketh love but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.

[ 33 : 58 ] The word very means true friends. Real friends. He that repeateth a matter separateth very friends. A true friend. Somebody that you're really a friend with.

Close with. And that relationship can be separated. There can be a division there. When somebody is repeating a matter that doesn't need to be repeated.

In verse 9. He that covereth a transgression seeketh love. Now he's not talking about hiding sin but he's talking about concealing something that doesn't need to be made known.

Doesn't need to be broadcast. And it can be covered by guess what? By love. Look at chapter 10 and you'll see it there. Proverbs 10.

You'll see what covers it and forgives it and overlooks it. Proverbs 10 verse 12. Hatred stirreth up stripes but love covereth all sins.

[ 35 : 02 ] A good friend's a forgiving friend. A friend that can conceal a matter. A friend that's not a whisperer or someone who's going to be a repeater. A good friend will forgive and forget.

Now we've been expounding this morning upon what a good friend is to you, right? But do not miss this. Don't overlook this where we started. A man that hath friends must show himself friendly.

It's a two-way street. And you're one of the ways. It's not just about is that friend going to forgive me? It's not just are they going to refresh me?

Are they going to love me and care for me? It's a two-way street. These are qualities that you are to display to others.

Qualities you are to display to your friends. It's easy to look at Job's situation and relate that to ourselves because we see ourselves as innocent. We've never done anything wrong.

[ 36 : 07 ] Every problem with people and relationships is, well, duh, it's their fault. We're Job in the story every time.

Maybe we need to look at the other side. Maybe we need to see that we are guilty of backbiting and not refreshing.

We're guilty of spreading the matter and not concealing it. We're guilty of accusing or of not having grace or of not loving and not forgiving.

These qualities this morning, characteristics of a good friend need to be in us forgiving and loving and refreshing. They need to be in us as much as they're in the friends that we choose.

They say this. They say, a good friend is hard to find. Why is that? It shouldn't be hard to find in Bible Baptist Church. You know why?

[ 37 : 09 ] Because we have the Bible to tell us how to be a good friend. We have the Scripture to change us and to help us. So how about your friends this morning?

Your friends good friends? Are they helping you? Are they refreshing your spirit? Or are they bringing you down? Are they taking you toward righteousness and toward truth?

Are they taking you to the world and to sin? Are they casting all of their poison on you? or are they lifting you up? What about your friends?

Are they good friends? Will they love you? Or will they leave you? What kind of friend are you then, secondly? In the relationship, it takes two.

Are you a taker or are you the giver? Are you quick to cut them off? Are you quick to shun them? Are you quick to love them and forgive them?

[ 38 : 10 ] A man that hath friends must show himself friendly. Here's some good characteristics, some characteristics of the Bible of a good friend. They gotta be in you.

You want friends, don't you? Nobody wants to say, nobody likes me, I don't have any friends. Oh, there's a reason. There's a reason. And a man that hath friends must show himself friendly.

Let's pray. Lord, I ask that this morning that these words, these thoughts from your book would resonate in our lives and hearts, that we take serious our relationships with others.

Lord, that we'd never be guilty of bringing someone down when we ought to be bearers of fruit of the Spirit and caring and loving and lifting them up.

God, I pray that we could be friends to one another in this church to display that love and that forgiveness that the Word of God displays. And I pray, God, that we could find friends in this life that are the same.

[ 39 : 18 ] Lord, if somebody in here has got some bad friends, show it to them. Open their eyes to it. Speak to their hearts that they might know what they ought to do. And God, if we haven't been that friend, then show us.

Help us to humble ourselves, to display love and humility and all these characteristics that Jesus Christ has shown to us. We're thankful once again for the Word of God, for how this Holy Book is so valuable in these ways.

Now, God, it's our job to submit to it. May your Holy Spirit have his way in our hearts, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Got a number? We're going to sing a song here, 354, I believe.

Please join me in standing. If the Lord's dealing with your heart about anything, if you want to talk to him, now's a good time to...