

A True Friend John 15:1-13

Introduction:

1. How would you define “friend?”
 - Webster’s defines a friend as “one attached to another by affection or esteem.”
2. Everybody needs a friend. If you have a true friend, call yourself blessed. If not, ask God to give you a good friend. Everybody needs one.
3. Even Jesus needed friends! Look at John 15:15. This is an amazing verse. Jesus Christ came to this earth and established friendships. In this passage, Jesus mentions the subject of friends three times.
4. A good question to ask is, “What did Jesus teach us to look for in a true friend?” Jesus did not come to this earth with His nose in the air; He didn’t act like He didn’t need anybody. He came to this earth and established relationships and friendships with people – people like you and me.
5. Let’s learn from Christ about true friendship. Also, I want us to see how Jesus Christ is the best friend we could ever have.
6. So, what do we learn from Christ?

First, a true friend wants to spend time with you.

1. **Illustration:** A close friend and his family, who lives out of state, are on vacation. They spend five days in Daytona and never call you one time. You find out later. How do you feel?
2. It is very simple – friends spend time together. Look what Jesus tells his friends in verse 4.
 - “*Abide*” carries the idea of spending time with something or someone.
 - Jesus called the disciples into a close relationship.
3. I love the illustration He uses. He said, “I’m the vine. You’re the branches. In other words, “**attach** yourself to me.” This is awesome! What an invitation!
4. Think about it. From the vine comes life to the branch. Jesus is saying, “I want to share my life with you.” Friendships should be a living, breathing, healthy relationship between people. It doesn’t drain you, but rather, it imparts life.

5. Did you know that Christ desires that kind of a friendship and relationship with you? He really does! Revelation 3:20; John 10:10b
 - **Illustration:** The song titled, “What a Friend.”
6. A friend is someone who is an active part of your life. That’s what Christ wants to be in your life. He wants to abide in you and you in Him.
7. When you have a friendship with Christ, it connects you to the source of real life. Some people think that the Christian life is about religion and rules – not at all. It’s about a life-giving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Second, a true friend loves you unconditionally.

1. Let’s read verses 9 and 12. In no uncertain terms, Christ made it very clear that He loved these twelve men. He wasn’t afraid to say it, and He meant it.
2. Not only did He love them, He loved them unconditionally. When Christ was crucified, these very men forsook Him in His greatest hour of need – they fled. Like us, they were human; they failed.
 - Peter cursed and denied Him. Even though Luke records for us that their eyes met across that courtyard when Peter uttered his third denial, Jesus was still willing to die on the cross for Peter, for you, and for me. Knowing the worst in all of us, He went to the cross on our behalf.
3. After His resurrection from the dead, the angel said, “Tell the disciples and Peter that Jesus will meet them in Galilee.” Then He came to where they were and said, “*Peace be unto you: as my Father has sent me, even so send I you.*” **John 20:21**
4. Christ loved His friends even after they failed. He came to them to reconfirm that relationship He had with them. A true friend loves you even when you mess up and drop the ball.
 - We cannot earn more of His love with good behavior, even as we do not forfeit His love when we fail. However, it **will** bother us. (See Peter’s example: Matthew 26:75.)
5. Did you know that once you enter into a relationship with Christ, it is eternal? Once we accept Christ as our Savior, a friendship is established and a relationship is formed that can never be broken.
 - Why? Because that relationship is sealed with the love of Christ. Romans 8:35, 37-39

6. This truth has carried me through some tough times in my life. Knowing that I have an unconditional love-relationship with Christ.
7. Even through all the bad times and bad stuff, He loves me and doesn't hold my past against me!

Third, a true friend will sacrifice for you.

1. Some people continually sponge off their friends, draining them of their energy and never really give back in the relationship. This, of course, is very unhealthy.
 - If one's love doesn't lead to self-sacrifice and giving, it's not much of a loving friendship.
2. Jesus Christ wasn't this way. Jesus said, "Love and friendship means sacrifice." vs. 13
3. And this is exactly what Christ did. John 10:15, 18
Jesus did not use His power and influence to get what He could from these friends; He didn't use them for His own advantage. He gave and sacrificed for them. 1 John 3:16
 - This wasn't something imposed on Christ; it was embraced by Christ. He gave His life voluntarily and freely.
4. His life was His to keep or give. His life had never been forfeited by sin. He wasn't dying because of something wrong He did, but rather, He was dying for our sins. Willingly out of love, He took our place. 1 Thessalonians 5:10
 - Paul said, "Christ loved me and gave himself for me."
Galatians 2:20
5. Did you know that Christ died for you too? 2 Corinthians 5:14-15
 - You are included; He died for you. He loves you and wants a friendship with you.

Conclusion:

1. Christ wants to be a part of your life. And once you receive Him as your Savior and enter into that relationship with Him, the Bible says that because He died for you, you will want to live unto Him and serve Him.
 - Remember, a true friendship is a two-way street.
2. People ask, "Why do you do all that you do for people, for the church, and for Jesus Christ?" It is very simple. That's what friends do. He

has given me life. He has given me unconditional love. He has given me forgiveness and the guarantee of eternal life in heaven.

3. He died for me. Therefore, I want to live for Him. When you accept Jesus Christ into your heart and life, He begins to change you from the inside out.