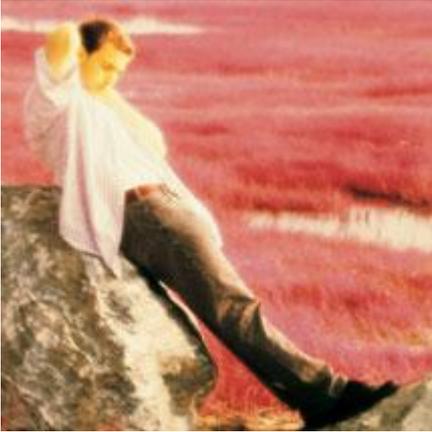


When You Need a Friend



Everyone needs a friend—someone to communicate with, someone who will share the joys and sorrows of life, one who will listen, advise, comfort, and encourage. And that is not a need that has just appeared in our day. Back at the beginning of time God said of the first man, Adam, “It is not good that the man should be alone.” What did God do about this problem? He supplied Adam's need for an earthly friend by creating a companion for him!

That's wonderful, you may be thinking. God created a friend for Adam. But how is He going to fill my need for companionship? You may have found that many times people are friends until you are in real need. Then the friend cannot be found. Your friends may not have met your expectations. Your good intentions toward a friend may have been misinterpreted, or misunderstandings may have severed a friendship. Distance, busy schedules, and other priorities interfere with establishing the kind of close relationships you long for. And there does come a time when friends, no matter how faithful, cannot fully meet our needs.

But don't despair! There is a Friend for you, One whose concern and interest in you goes far beyond the scope of any earthly friendship. Jesus Christ has reserved a place in every heart that only He can fill. And when He does, you will find He is a personal Friend who will never be insensitive, far away, or too preoccupied with something else to find time for you.

Jesus is a Friend who wants to meet all your needs. He will listen with love and understanding when you pour out your problems and perplexities. He never misunderstands or misjudges, and He never makes a mistake in the counsel He gives. His promise is, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5). His presence has cheered and comforted people in hospital beds, on the battlefield, and in every kind of deep trial.

Have you become acquainted with this greatest of all friends? If not, His love is reaching out to you today. He has promised, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). You don't have to fear rejection. Just come to Him and confess the need in your life. Repent of the sins of your past with a truly contrite heart, purposing to turn your back on every wrongdoing. Surrender the control of your life to God, and say, “Lord, I am committing my ways to You. My life is Yours.”

When you give your life wholly to God, you will find that He demonstrates perfectly all the characteristics of a true friend.

He is supportive. When you are worried or discouraged, His promise is, “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Isaiah 41:10). He longs to sustain you.

He understands. Your strengths and your stumblings, your potential and your problems, are all known to Him. How tenderly He considers your needs, questions, hurts, and longings! In Psalm 103:14 we read, “He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.” He accepts and loves us in spite of our limitations. After all, He is also our Creator!

He comforts. When all of life seems to be engulfed in pain and confusion, you can claim His promise, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you” (John 14:18). The anguish may be deep, but He reaches right down into the innermost depths of the heart and comforts as no man ever could.

He communicates with you. Imagine having immediate access to a friend whenever you called! Always there, never a busy signal or a tape-recorded message saying "I'm sorry but we are not able to come to the phone right now . . ." The Lord's message to you is, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee" (Jeremiah 33:3).

He is always ready to help. Many years ago the Psalmist David wrote, "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped" (Psalm 28:7). Are you struggling for balance at the ragged edge of despair? David's strength and shield never failed, not even once. Jesus won't fail you either, under any circumstance.

He thinks of you. This is one Friend who will never forget you. The Bible says that He even has the hairs of your head numbered! To Him, you are a precious and priceless individual, no matter how lonely or forsaken you may feel. What reassurance is found in the words, "I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me" (Psalm 40:17).

He is faithful. Many years ago a songwriter penned the beautiful words, "Can we find a friend so faithful, Who will all our sorrows share?" This Friend will never neglect you, never put you aside for some other friend. He'll always be there for you. In Lamentations 3:22,23 we read that "his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness."

Yes, your friendship with Jesus can be the friendship of a lifetime. So cherish it and maintain it through obedience to His Word and daily communication, because you'll never find another friend who will love you more deeply or completely than He does. God's Word tells us, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). One day at Calvary, Jesus did just that for you.

Is He your Friend today?