

THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR John 15:1-15

“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” —John 15:13

I. FRIENDSHIP AND FORGIVENESS (John 15:1-3) *The beginning—redemption and reconciliation*

- A. Jesus Christ as the life-giver (v. 1)
- B. Forgiveness and fruitfulness (v. 2)
- C. Assurance in the promise and power of Jesus Christ (v. 3)

“Redemption means that Jesus Christ can put into any man the disposition that ruled his own life.”
—Oswald Chambers

II. FRIENDSHIP AND FAITHFULNESS (John 15:4) *The commitment—dedication of remaining*

- A. The dependency of relationship
- B. The dynamics of remaining in Christ

“Friendship is one of the sweetest joys of life. Many might have failed beneath the bitterness of their trial had they not found a friend “. — Charles Haddon Spurgeon

III. FRIENDSHIP AND FRUITFULNESS (John 15:5-8) *The evidence—spiritual productivity*

- A. The testing of friendship with Jesus (vs. 5, 6)
- B. The testimony of fruitfulness (vs. 7, 8)

“The fruit of the Spirit grows only in the garden of obedience.” — Terry Fullam

IV. FRIENDSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP (John 15:9-13) *The confirmation—intimacy with God*

- A. Jesus and the love of the Father (vs. 9, 10)
- B. Jesus and the love of believers (vs. 11, 12)
- C. Jesus and the ultimate friendship factor (v. 13)

“There is no substitute for flesh-and-blood friends if we are to understand ourselves and grow in communion with God.” —Timothy Jones

V. FRIENDSHIP AND FULFILLMENT (John 15:14, 15) *The maturity—co-union with Christ*

- A. Authentic discipleship (v. 14)
- B. Assurance of relationship (v. 15)

“It seems to me that the Christian life, when properly lived, is a rhythmic alternation between turning toward God in worship and running toward the world in love and with a passion for justice, between congregation and dispersal, liturgy and labor, worship and work, adoration and obedience.” — Nicholas Wolterstorff

FOR THOUGHT, DISCUSSION, and APPLICATION...

1. In His message recorded in John 15, Jesus makes strong references to “remaining” in Him, and Him in us (vs. 4, 7). How does this apply to our friendship with God? How does it relate to our human friendships?
2. Author C. D. Alexander commented, “Conversion without discipleship is openly implied in much of our evangelical teaching. It has become strangely possible to be Christ's without taking up the cross”. What are your thoughts about this? Is it too rigid when we're trying to be seeker-friendly and meet people's felt-needs?
3. What are your thoughts on how we, as Christians, should choose our human friends. And how can we be true friends to unsaved relatives, co-workers, and neighbors?
4. There are also strong implications of the relationship between *love and obedience*. Discuss the reasons why friendships flop when there are mixed attitudes and values of trust?
5. Cite some retrospective memories of some who have been genuine human friends. What made them so?

