



From the desk of David Sims



## Be a True Friend

*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:13)*

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### How to have true friendship

Have you ever wondered how you can make real true friends? The Bible gives us some answers. Firstly, "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly. (Proverbs 18:24) But what does it mean to show himself friendly? We trust you'll get some answers, in this article.

### How shall we treat friends?

#### Firstly, we need unselfish love

Jonathan, by birth, heir to the throne, yet knowing himself set aside by the divine decree; to his rival the most tender and faithful of friends, shielding David's life at the peril of his own; steadfast at his father's side through the dark days of his declining power, and at his side falling at the last--the name of Jonathan is treasured in heaven, and it stands on earth a witness to the existence and the power of unselfish love.

After the slaying of Goliath David was brought before King Saul, and the king inquired concerning his parentage and life. "And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." Jonathan and David made a covenant to be united as brethren, and the king's son "stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." And, there was no one so dear to David as Jonathan, because he possessed a pure and noble spirit.

Later, Saul represented David as one who was his deadly enemy, and accused Jonathan, his dutiful, and God-fearing son, of urging on the rebellion, because he would not join in the pursuit of his friend. This was an entirely false accusation. It was not David and Jonathan only who were accused, but the king's own tribe, and the people of his realm were all included in these suspicions as traitors and conspirators. He declared that they were all blind to their own best interests, and were destitute of compassion for him, the king of Israel. He had been informed by spies of the interview between David and Jonathan, of how they had entered into a covenant of eternal friendship; and, as Saul knew nothing of the particulars, he was filled with evil surmising as to their loyalty, and deemed that they were plotting against himself and his kingdom. At one time when Saul had furiously condemned David to death, and Jonathan had asked, "Wherefore



### The Day that Never Ends

Stephanie Writes from Alaska

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My husband, Tracy, and I were married almost 10 years. Most of those years were difficult and extremely stressful for me. I spent those years giving birth to baby after beautiful baby until they totaled five! Tracy was gone most of the time, seeking his own interests. He didn't help much at all, coming and going as he pleased. I felt like a single parent. At times he would try to change, but it would always wear off within weeks, sometimes days. The children and I prayed for him for what seemed like forever, but it only got worse. Then our marriage came to a crisis point- either major changes would occur, or our family was doomed to fall apart. I was so weary that I had nearly given up. But the children never stopped praying for their dad. For 4 years we prayed for him what many have dubbed "a radical prayer". It went like this - "Lord, please do whatever it takes to save Daddy (and each one of us), even if it means you have to lay us in the grave". I don't quite know why we prayed that specific prayer. We just felt impressed to pray it for Tracy specifically.

In this crisis time, my husband changed; radically. He asked me what he could do to make things better. He said he was sorry - and meant it. He tried so hard to make up for all the pain he caused. He came home from work - everyday. He played with the children. He prayed for us. He participated in our family. I thought it would wear off soon like all the other times, so I was very skeptical. He asked if he should give up basketball (he played at least 10 times per week). I

shall he be slain? What hath he done?" the king, in a moment of intense anger, had hurled a javelin at his own son, as he had previously thrown one at David. Jonathan had lost all confidence in his father. He was afraid of him, and could not be free and confidential with him; for he saw with sorrow that God had departed from him, and that another spirit had taken possession of him. Jonathon remained loyal to his friend, even at the peril of his life.

We should cultivate tenderness of heart; and surround ourselves especially in the home life with the atmosphere of unselfish love.

### **We should love at all times, even in affliction and peril**

"A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." (Proverbs 17:17)

Through thick and thin we ought to love our friends. In fact, when they pass through affliction, or discouragement, are times when our friends especially need us.

"To him that is afflicted pity should be shewed from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty. My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away;" (Job 6:14-15)

When we suppose one to be in error and sin, we are not to divorce ourselves from him. By no careless separation are we to leave him a prey to temptation, or drive him upon Satan's battleground. This is not Christ's method. "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel." (Proverbs 27:9)

Speak often words that will be a strength, and an inspiration to those who hear. We are altogether too indifferent in regard to one another. "My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off." (Psalms 38:11) We forget that our fellow laborers are often in need of words of hope and cheer. When one is in trouble, call upon him and speak comforting words to him. This is true friendship.

"Love is the basis of godliness. No man has love to God, no matter what his profession may be, unless he has unselfish love for his brother. As we love God because He first loved us, we shall love all for whom Christ died. We shall not feel like letting the soul who is in the greatest peril, and in the greatest need, go unwarned, unlabored for, and uncared for. We shall not feel like holding the erring off, and being critical and exacting, or letting them alone to plunge into further unhappiness and discouragement, and to fall on Satan's battleground, for God will deal with us as we deal with our brethren or the younger members of the Lord's family.

### **Friends May Betray**

At times it seems: "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness." (Psalms 88:18) No matter how good of a friend someone may be to us, we can not base our happiness, or peace of mind on our acceptance with them. Earthly friends can and do fail us in the time of our greatest need. Job found this out. "My friends scorn me: but mine eye

had begged him for years to put our family, our marriage, before basketball. He would always give me an empty look and say "It's something I have to work on". Now I told him not to give up his favorite sport! I had learned if it wasn't given up for Jesus, that it was only temporary at best. He left the basketball court - forever. I asked him why he suddenly wanted to be with us and give up the things that had been so precious to him. He answered with words that are forever burned into my mind. He said with intense, solemn, eye -contact, "Because God has given me a new heart."

I had never heard words like that from him. Yet I still was so scared to hope. The Lord gently nudged my heart to be patient and watch. Month after month went by. He only got better. He didn't backslide like before - he only got better. Did I dare to hope? 10 months had now gone by. The children and I were nearly used to having a male voice singing at family worship. It wasn't feeling strange to have him home anymore. For awhile it had felt like we had a visitor whenever he was home. Now we were becoming a family! Much precious time had been lost those years. He wanted so much to make it up to us. He knew our son loved to hike. So, one beautiful Sabbath afternoon Tracy and our then 11 year old son, Dylan, made plans with some Adventist friends to hike a local mountain a few weeks later on June 20th, 2003.



They started early - 5am. It had rained the night before so as they hiked through the brush they got very wet. As they ascended above tree line they unexpectedly encountered snow. As they kick-stepped up a snow chute, two hikers, one an 11 year old girl, began to get hypothermic. They were too far to turn back, and to make things even worse, a fog had moved in and they could no longer see to move ahead. They were in trouble and they knew it.

poureth out tears unto God.” (Job 16:20) Many whom we think are our friends, love us merely with selfish reasons. God knows this and has warned us:

And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake. (but with this warning comes the promise) But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls.” (Luke 21:16-19)

And again the warning is given, associated with a promise again. “Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man’s enemies are the men of his own house. Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me. Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness. Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the LORD thy God? mine eyes shall behold her: now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets.” (Micah 7:5-10)

She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her: all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies.” (Lamentations 1:2)

## Godly Response to Betrayal

And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.” (Job 42:10)

"If one of these little ones" shall be overcome, and commit a wrong against you, then it is your work to seek his restoration. Do not wait for him to make the first effort for reconciliation.

## Christ will be a true friend

A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” (Proverbs 18:24) This friend, Christ, is the only one that we can trust to stick with us.

In the scriptures we find examples of some who were friends of God.

And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.” (James 2:23)

When circumstances separate us from every earthly friend, Christ won't forsake us. He says: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Christ, laid down His life for us. And He goes on to say: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.



My son tells me that Tracy was the one who requested that they all stop and pray. Another hiker, Stefan, also tells me that Tracy took one look at the seriousness of the situation, and with deep concern on his face, volunteered to go ahead and search for the route to get everyone down. They watched him until they could see him no more. He never came back. Later that night, after rescuers transported by helicopter the remaining hikers to safety, they found his body at the bottom of a 600-800 ft. avalanche chute.

We had him for only 10 months. I mean really had him. But in that short period of time I saw the power of God at work to change a life from sin unto righteousness! God be praised! The Lord Jesus had changed Tracy from, selfish to the extreme, to, giving to the extreme! His last choice was to lay down his life for his friends.

He died by falling on a rock that broke his physical body. But the Lord showed me that we could rejoice, for he had already fallen upon the Rock and been broken. And because of the first fall, the second was of little consequence. He would rest until the Lord comes to make up his jewels.

10 short months? No way. Just the beginning. And one last thing - June 21st is summer solstice. In Alaska it is 24 hours of sunlight - a day that never ends. Tracy went to sleep on June 20th - the evening right before the day that never ends.

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Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.” (John 15:13-15)

### **How do we treat this heavenly friend?**

Suppose a friend were with us, and we should meet an acquaintance on the way and direct our whole attention to our new-found acquaintance, ignoring the presence of our friend, what opinion would men have of our loyalty to our friend, of our degree of respect to him? And yet this is the way we treat Jesus. We forget that he is our companion. We engage in conversation, and never mention his name or include his instruction in our words. We talk of worldly business matters, and where it does not bruise the soul, where it is essential, we do not dishonor Jesus, but we do dishonor him when we fail to mention him in our intercourse with our friends and associates. He is our best friend, and we should seek for opportunities to speak of him.

His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.” (Song of Solomon 5:16)

