

“Christian Friendship continued!”

Proverbs 17:17; 18:24; & 27:6

**¹⁷ A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity.
Proverbs 17:17 (NKJV)**

²⁴ A man *who has* friends must himself be friendly, But there is a friend *who sticks closer* than a brother. Proverbs 18:24 (NKJV)

⁶ Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy *are* deceitful. Proverbs 27:6 (NKJV)

I. Christ-like friendship –

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Proverbs 17:17 (NKJV)**

1. How we can and should be Christ-like in our friendships:

A. Service –

¹⁴ If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

John 13:14–15 (NKJV)

B. Self-sacrifice –

¹³ Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. John 15:13 (NKJV)

Self-sacrifice is not always physical death, that is of course the highest form but

²⁵ The generous soul will be made rich, And he who waters will also be watered himself. Proverbs 11:25 (NKJV)

⁹ He who has a generous eye will be blessed, For he gives of his bread to the poor. Proverbs 22:9 (NKJV)

C. *Of course, generosity should be kept secret –*

² Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. ³ But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly. Matthew 6:2–4 (NKJV)

2. *Love is an essential ingredient to Christ-like friendship –*

¹⁷ A friend loves at all times ...

A. *Of course, your friend loves you when he is sharing your blessings ...*

B. *But here adversity is mentioned –*

... And a brother is born for adversity. Proverbs 17:17 (NKJV)

At the worst time of my life, some people who I thought were FRIENDS were like sharks to blood!

Others were BRIGHT DOUBLE SUNS!

3. *How we CANNOT and CAN be like Christ –*

A. *We CANNOT be like Christ is now in Heaven, or as He has always been as God –*

²⁴ But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. ²⁵ Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. ²⁶ For such a High Priest was fitting for us, *who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;* ²⁷ who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. Hebrews 7:24–27 (NKJV)

*Jesus is eternal, He is omnipresent (everywhere) He can hear every prayer!
He is omniscient. Meaning He is all knowing, He knows every NEED!*

*B. We can be like Christ was as our example on earth –
Jesus had many disciples, only 12 Apostles and there were three of them who were particularly CLOSE -*

² Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. Mark 9:2 (NKJV)

³² Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” ³³ And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. ³⁴ Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch.” Mark 14:32–34 (NKJV)

Whoever we are we have limited time, limited resources, we are not omnipresent and so we may have spouses, family, close friends, friends, acquaintances and even sadly enemies –

⁴⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, Matthew 5:44 (NKJV)

In one sense we love all in another sense, we love those closest to us ...

II. True Friendship should be reciprocated, but ... –

²⁴ A man who has friends must himself be friendly, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. Proverbs 18:24 (NKJV)

1. If someone is good and kind and generous toward you, as much as you are able, be a friend back to that person ...

2. Reciprocation does not have to be equal with friends ...

A. This is never the case with Christ, He has given us MORE than we can ever give back!

B. Jesus wants us to cultivate such friendships ourselves, where we expect NO RETURN –

³³ And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil...

**³⁸ Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”
Luke 6:33–35 & :38 (NKJV)**

3. Let “Love one another” is the command to Christians –

**³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”
John 13:34–35 (NKJV)**

A. We are loving Christ when we LOVE the LEAST of His brethren –

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. ³³ And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’

**³⁷ “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You*, or thirsty and give *You* drink? ³⁸ When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You*? ³⁹ Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ ⁴⁰ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.’
Matthew 25:31–40 (NKJV)**

B. Who are the goats?

- *Not the Greatest of All Time –*
- *Not baptized babies –*
- *They are people who seem like Christ's sheep but are NOT -*

⁴¹ “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: ⁴² for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’

⁴⁴ “Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’ ⁴⁵ Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do *it* to one of the least of these, you did not do *it* to Me.’ ⁴⁶ And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” Matthew 25:41–46 (NKJV)

C. Jesus will remember and reward the smallest things we do –

⁴¹ For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward. Mark 9:41 (NKJV)

¹⁰ For God *is* not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, *in that* you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. Hebrews 6:10 (NKJV)

III. The hardest part of true friendship –

⁶ Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy *are* deceitful. Proverbs 27:6 (NKJV)

1. Your best friend will tell you the TRUTH about YOUR SIN, Jesus does –

⁴⁴ You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it. ⁴⁵ But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. John 8:44–45 (NKJV)

2. *If Jesus would have LOVED sinners in the way SINNERS define love, He would have never been crucified ...*

¹⁸ “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. ²¹ But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. ²² If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ He who hates Me hates My Father also. ²⁴ If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. ²⁵ But *this happened* that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, ‘*They hated Me without a cause.*’ John 15:18–25 (NKJV)

3. *This hatred is the hatred of Cain –*

¹⁰ In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. ¹¹ For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, ¹² not as Cain *who* was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother’s righteous.

¹³ Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. ¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love *his* brother abides in death. ¹⁵ Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

¹⁶ By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. ¹⁷ But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

¹⁸ My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. 1 John 3:10–18 (NKJV)

4. *Speak the truth in love –*

¹¹ And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Ephesians 4:11–16 (NKJV)

5. *False prophets are NOT Friends –*

¹⁴ They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, Saying, ‘Peace, peace!’ When *there is* no peace. Jeremiah 6:14 (NKJV)

6. *Love and sin just don’t go together at all –*

⁹ Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Romans 12:9 (NKJV)

⁴ Love ... ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 1 Corinthians 13:4 (one word) & :6 (NKJV)