

BLOCK PARTY

Experiencing Godly Friendships



Friendships are so important in our lives. We all want to have good friends, and we all want to be a good friend. Friendship means using your words and actions to show others you care. Throughout the Bible, we can find great examples of friendships, such as David and Jonathan, Elijah and Elisha, and best of all, Jesus. Jesus is the greatest friend we could ever have. He is always with us. He showed us that a friend loves at all times, and that they are there to help when trouble comes. That's the kind of friend we should look for, and that's the kind of friend we should try and be.

In Ecclesiastes, Solomon wrote, "Two people are better than one. They can help each other in everything they do." Solomon goes on to remind us that like a three-stranded cord, we are stronger when we work together as friends. It is clear from these words in Ecclesiastes that our friendships are very important, but it's even more important for us to find the right friends. While some people can influence you to do good things, others can lead you in the wrong direction. That's why it is essential for us to find friends who will help us love and trust God more and who want the best for us. Even though you should show love to everyone (even Jesus loved sinful people), choose your close friends carefully by spending most of your time with people who encourage you, love you, and help you to grow in your relationship with Jesus.

David and Jonathan had a friendship like that. From promising to help each other, to escaping the dangers of Jonathan's own father, King Saul, they showed us what it means for friends to love each other. It is easy to love your friends when things are going well and when it doesn't cost you anything. However, Jonathan showed his love for David by sharing his best things with David, by keeping David safe, and by sacrificing his right to be the king. In the years to come, David returned Jonathan's love by always being kind to Jonathan's family. Just like David and Jonathan, we can show our friends how loved they are by caring for them, putting them first, and by going above and beyond to help them succeed.

Elijah and Elisha became friends for different reasons than Jonathan and David. Elijah needed encouragement, so God directed him to Elisha. As the years went by, their friendship and love for each other grew. They faced many tough situations, but Elisha never left Elijah. True friends refuse to leave you when you're sad, confused, or hurting. Instead, they stay by you and encourage you with their words and actions. Sometimes it can feel like everyone is out for themselves, but God has a different way for us to live. God wants us to create true friendships by encouraging others. Through God's Holy Spirit, you can become the kind of friend who uses their words and actions to build others up.

Yet none of us are perfect. All of us have been hurt before, and if we're honest, all of us have probably hurt someone else, too. Peter understood this better than anyone. The night before Jesus was put on trial and killed, Peter promised that he would give up his life for Jesus. However, when Jesus was arrested, Peter felt so scared that he said that he'd never known Jesus. After denying Jesus three times, Peter must have felt guilty and ashamed. But Jesus still had plans for Peter. He wanted Peter to take care of His followers, just like a shepherd takes care of sheep. Jesus forgave Peter and restored the broken friendship. When we put our faith in Jesus, He offers that same forgiveness to us. Jesus gave us the perfect example of forgiveness when He died on the cross for our sins. Because of Jesus' sacrifice, we can be forgiven, and through Jesus' forgiveness, we can forgive those around us. When someone hurts you, it's normal to want to stay mad and hold onto anger. But the truth is, when you choose not to forgive, you end up hurting yourself because Jesus said that He won't forgive those who won't forgive others. Forgiveness is not just about accepting an apology and saying it's alright. It's about loving your friends the way Jesus loves you, even if they have hurt you. Of course, if a friend repeatedly hurts you, it's okay to forgive them and then walk away to protect yourself. However, in many circumstances, you will be able to rebuild a friendship through forgiveness. We can reflect Jesus' character best in our friendships when we treat one another with unconditional love, encouragement, and forgiveness. After all, while we were sinning, Jesus loved us enough to die for us – now that's true friendship!



A friend loves at all times. They are there to help when trouble comes.

Proverbs 17:17



Read 1 Kings 19: 19-21, 2 Kings 2:1-12

1. Why did Elisha refuse to leave Elijah?
2. How did Elisha encourage Elijah throughout their friendship?

Read John 21:9-19

3. Peter denied Jesus three times. How many times and why did Jesus ask Peter if he loved Him?
4. What did Jesus ask Peter to do (three times) and what did He mean?

Read Memory Verse

5. When should a true friend show love?
6. Like David and Jonathan, and Elisha and Elijah, how can you help your friends when trouble comes?

Life Application Questions

7. What are some kind things you can say or do when your friends need encouragement?
8. What does it mean to choose your friends carefully, yet still love everyone?
9. How can you forgive a friend even when you don't want to?



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