

1. Proverbs 17:17: “A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.”

- a. A friend is someone whom you associate with and whom you care about, (who cares about you)...a friend is someone to whom you give your love, your time, your help, your compassion and your listening ear. Proverbs 18:24
 - i. “A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticks (who will cling) closer than a brother”.
- b. Every one of us as children of God ought to be FRIENDLY humans, the friendliest among all with whom you socialize each day.... the love of Christ should come forth from your life, along with compassion and Christlike affection for any and every human that you meet in the concourse of life.
 - i. The 2nd great command is “Love your neighbor as (you love) yourself”.
- c. If you are friendly, I believe you will have many who will call you, their friend! The reason.... Your care and concern and your listening ear, but also, because you stick, you don't jump ship when your friendship is challenged and tested by adversity, but you continue to love your friend!
- d. Adversities, difficulties, disagreements, offenses, and even betrayals and denials don't shake the love of a true friend!
 - i. Joseph, even after being hated, abandoned, and sold as a slave to the Ishmaelites by his own brothers, even after living in Egypt as a slave and in prison for more than 13 years.....even after all of that, his love for his own betraying brethren remained intact!
 - ii. Even after Peter's triple denial, Jesus' love and friendship could not be broken! He was a Friend that didn't cast Peter aside! Luke 22:54-62
- e. So, I ask myself, and I pray that you ask yourself, are you a true friend to others, do you continue to love, are you born for adversity, and do you stick, even after you've been mistreated, hated, denied, and betrayed?

2. The 2nd thing I want you to consider this evening is one of the most beautiful things about Jesus in the days of His humanity: “He was a friend to sinners”.

- a. He didn't discriminate or shun certain groups of people because of how they looked, because of their reputation, or because of their sin.... But He befriended them, loved them, conversed with them, showed kindness to them, sat with them, and had lunch with them, ALL TO LEAD them out of the misery and miserableness of their sins and into a place of reconciliation with God, salvation from their sins, and peace with God.
- b. None of us could ever be “The Friend” that the Lord Jesus is to us, but we certainly ought to have a desire to emulate His Person in our lives!
 - i. Some might say to you that your motivation for befriending them IS TO tell them about Christ! What better motivation is there, what better friend to have, than one who can point them to the love of Christ and salvation of their soul?

3. Luke 15:1-2: Sinners drew near to Christ.... because He was friendly to them!

- a. Why did these sinners DRAW NEAR to Christ? Because He loved them, He was their Friend, He was compassionate and cared for them. Luke 19:1-7
 - i. My prayer for each of you and me is that sinners would draw near to us because we possess within us the love, compassion, and friendliness of Christ! Oh that our lives would compel sinners to draw near to Christ rather than our sins repelling them to go away from Christ.

- b. Do sinners “draw near” to you? Are you friendly, and a friend to all types of people no matter who they are and what they’ve done? Or do you repel them by unfriendliness, or give them the impression that you have no interest in them?
- c. Last: Friendship in the world can be messy, involved, and difficult, (and I am not talking about being a friend of the world, which is enmity with God), I’m talking about being a friend to sinners IN the world, helping them to look to Christ to be freed from their sins and their misery.
 - i. Luke 10:25-37. Next time we have a fellowship, ask God to help you to get out of your comfort zone, and go sit with someone else rather than those that you always sit with.... get out of your comfort zone and be friendly.
- d. What kind of friend are you? Are you a friend that sticks through thick and thin? And are you a friend to sinners?