

## APPS SERIES BY DAVID H. MCKINLEY

## FRIENDS

What is a friend worth? Can you place a dollar amount on friendship? No.

Never underestimate the power and the impact of friendship

"Five years from now you will be pretty much the same as you are today except for two things: the books you read and the people you get close to."  
—Charles Jones

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

Note the words, "all times." True friendship is not seasonal; it is not "fair weather." Friends stick. Friends last. Friends support. Friends endure. Friends remain. The value of true friendship is always seen and known in life's hardest spaces.

Proverbs has an "App" on friendship and provides important insights concerning people issues and people skills.

**>>Friendship is Essential.** You live in a world that applauds and recognizes "self made" people, but none of us are truly self made. You need others and you reflect the influence others have had on your life.

"As much as we admire solo achievement, the truth is that no lone individual has done anything of value. The belief that one person can do something great is a myth... Even the Long Ranger wasn't really a loner. Everywhere he went, he rode with Tonto!" —John Maxwell

Long before the business world used terms like *synergy*, *collaboration*, *partnership* and *teamwork*, God's Word spoke of the strategic need we have for association with others and assistance.

"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken" (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 ESV).

Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, extolled the worth, value and virtue of friendship. If you heed his instruction, you will improve your relationships and deepen your enjoyment of life.

Friendship can be defined in the following ways:

"A friend is someone who knows all about you and loves you just the same."

"A true friend will go on liking you, no matter how successful either of you becomes."

"A friend is one who strengthens you with prayer, blesses you with love, and encourages you with hope."

"A friend is someone who doesn't go on a diet when you're fat."

"A friend is someone who believes in you when you cease to believe in yourself."

"A real friend is someone who comes in when the whole world has gone out."

We all need true and good friends!

**>>Friendship is Confidential.** There is a trust built between friends that seeks and encourages the best.

"A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24 ESV).

Life can easily come "unglued." You need a friend to stick close to you.

"A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends" (Proverbs 16:28 ESV).

"Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends" (Proverbs 17:9 ESV).

**>>Friendship is Instrumental.** The value of friendships is far greater than just association; it is assistance in making you better because of their association in your life. Herein is the great distinction between the world's viewpoint of friendship and that of Scripture. The world focuses on *sharing*, but God's Word points to *shaping*. Friends shape you!

"Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy" (Proverbs 27:5-6 ESV).

This verse clearly refers to falsehood. A true friend will never cover up something destructive, corrupt and harmful. Sometimes people think being a friend means letting things "slide by." But remember, "... [love] does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices



Friends

Proverbs 17:17

## Friends

Apps Series, Part Eleven

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Scripture: Proverbs 17:17



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A brother is born for adversity.



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with the truth" (1 Corinthians 13:6 ESV).

"As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend" (Proverbs 27:17 NKJV).

"I love you not for what you are, but for what I am when I am with you. I love you, not for only for what you have made of yourself, but for what you are making of me. I love you for not closing your ears to the discord in me, but for adding to the music in me by worshipful listening. You have done it without a touch, without a word, without a sign. You have done it by just being yourself. Perhaps this is what being a friend means after all."

### >>Friendship is Influential.

"A righteous man is cautious in friendship, but the way of the wicked leads them astray" (Proverbs 12:26 NIV).

While friendship is essential, be careful. You must choose your friends wisely. Time, energy, focus and activity won't allow you to have many, many good friends. There are warnings in Proverbs about a gang mind-set, bad influences and rebel hearts. How many people will stand in court this week and face potential sentencing because of wrong associations? Proverbs addresses such traits as defiance, immorality, greed, hate and drunkenness. These traits are not only addressed as behaviors, but also as associations.

"Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel" (Proverbs 27:9 ESV).

Did you become a Christian through the good counsel of a friend? Did you join a church because a friend first invited you?

>>Friendship is Sacrificial. True friendship is measure by what you are willing to give up for your friends.

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

Because of our great need and His great love, Jesus, the Son of God, came to do for us through sacrifice what we could not do through our most sincere effort.

"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13 ESV).

Jesus died for you. Why? By birth, we are all enemies of God. But Jesus, the Friend of Sinners, came that He might redeem us and reconcile us to God.

"For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life" (Romans 5:6-10 ESV).

My pastor and mentor, Adrian Rogers, once described the relational side of salvation as follows:

**Grace.** Grace means that God accepts you apart from anything you have done, but because of what Christ has done for you.

**Faith.** Faith means you accept God's acceptance of you through His love and His grace. You can accept yourself and God's grace at work in you.

**Peace.** You are at peace because you can accept yourself because of God's acceptance of you. You have peace apart from the competition and frustration that so often drives life's motivations. You have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Love.** You accept and joyfully add value to others without the need to maneuver and manipulate others in order to overcome the insecurities of your life. You have peace with God *and* with others.

This is the practical essence of salvation: You are a friend with God and can befriend others for His glory.

Joseph M. Scriven knew the pain of tragedy during his lifetime. He was born in Ireland and spent his young life there, graduating from Trinity College in Dublin. He met and became engaged to a young woman, but tragically, his fiancée drowned the night before they were to be married. Guilt-stricken, he moved to Ontario, Canada, separating himself from Ireland and his painful past. While in Canada, he again met a young woman, fell in love and became engaged.

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Although unimaginable, the young woman fell ill of pneumonia and died shortly before their wedding.

The name, Joseph Scriven, may not be familiar, but the poem he wrote in 1855 to comfort his mother near the time of her death, continues to comfort us today as we sing, *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*.

*What a Friend we have in Jesus,  
all our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry  
everything to God in prayer!  
O what peace we often forfeit,  
O what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry  
everything to God in prayer.*

*Have we trials and temptations?  
Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged;  
take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Can we find a friend so faithful  
who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness;  
take it to the Lord in prayer.*

*Are we weak and heavy laden,  
cumbered with a load of care?  
Precious Savior, still our refuge,  
take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Do your friends despise, forsake you?  
Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
In His arms He'll take and shield you;  
you will find a solace there.*

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