

FRIENDS WHO WOULD NOT GIVE UP

The word friendship is a warm word, connecting the world together in a bond of peace, for it overlooks an offense and forgives it. The blessing that a friend brings is noticeable in times of one's trials. Solomon said, "A friend loves at all times and a brother is born for adversity" (Prov. 17:17). This is a good definition of friendship. The harmony existent in friendship makes one secure and confident in one another. The foundation of the love existent in friendship comes from the unselfish heart; a heart that knows how to deny self to reach out to a friend no matter what the circumstance. David and Jonathan were good examples of good friends. We see it when Jonathan risked his own life to save David's in time when his father wanted to kill him. He had no jealousy toward him knowing that David was to be the future king after his father's death and not he. Even in its imperfection, friendship offers much good to those who have friends. In the report of Luke 5:18-10, there is a perfect example of friends helping their paralyzed friend to get to YAHSHUA for healing. Guided by faith, they lifted their friend up on the roof and lowered him through the tiles in front of YAHSHUA. This was an amazing act of courage compelled by compassion. Those men overlooked the possible danger ahead of them and the damage they were causing to someone's roof, if that was the case. Faith took them to the Healer even if they had to break through a roof. The Bible tells us that when they could not find a way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him with his stretcher through the tiles into the midst, in front of YAHSHUA (Luke 5:18-19).

When YAHSHUA saw their faith, He said, Man, your sins are forgiven you (Luke 5:20). YAHSHUA saw beyond the physical condition of this man. He saw the root cause of his problem. For him to receive his physical healing, his spiritual condition, had to be dealt with first. So, it was that this man left the place spiritually and physically healed at the words of YAHSHUA, "I say to you, arise, pick up your stretcher and go to your own house. instantly [the man] stood up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went away to the house, recognizing and praising and thanking God" (Luke 5: 24-25). That was the day of his freedom, not only physical, but spiritual; a day of celebration in recognition and acknowledgment of the Son of God by all who witnessed the miracle. as we read, "And overwhelming astonishment and ecstasy seized them all, and they recognized and praised and thanked God and they were filled with and controlled by reverential fear and kept saying, We have seen wonderful and strange and incredible and unthinkable things today!" (Luke 5:26) The healing of that paralyzed man caused great awakening in the lives of all those present. The deed of friends toward one friend, resulted in more than his physical healing; it resulted also in the awakening of the crowd of Whom YAHSHUA was: the Messiah, the Son of God, Who was to come. As a result, a short-lived revival happened that day in the hearts of the people, although years later, the same crowd cried, Crucify Him, crucify Him!

Friendship is a gift that keeps on giving, when from the heart. A gift from God, who also declared having friendship with men. Abraham was considered the friend of God, for his faith and obedience to Him. David was a man after His heart. For his humble and contrite heart. The

world empty of friendship is a cold and indifferent world, disengaged from the needs of those who desperately need its help. We are the world, of course. Each of us plays a big part through our behavior towards one another. The world will be a better world only through friendship that lasts in the frame of time we have left here held by love, the love of God, for He is love, the perfect love that spreads to all. Paul says, "If I speak in the tongues of men and [even] of angels but have no love, I am only a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal." (I Cor. 13:1). It is love that holds friendship together. Only the love of God is perfect in all aspects; it is by His love that we can love and develop friendship that will last and be affective. "Friends have become our chosen family." Whoever wrote this quote, experienced the meaning of true friendship.

Friends are confident in each other. They are carriers of each other's burdens, secrets, and disappointments. As long as there is a line of confidence, life becomes easier in times of sorrow and challenges for all who have friends. In His most challenging time, our Lord YAHSHUA could not find comfort in His disciples, for their friendship could not match His for lack of understanding of what was happening. While in Gethsemane, *He prayed, Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me, yet not My will, but Your will be done. And being in agony of He prayed all the more earnestly and intently and His sweat became like great clots of blood dropping down upon the ground. And when he got up from prayer, He came to His disciples and found them sleeping from grief (Luke 22:38-46).* A friend in distress and alone for having been negated help from a friend, suffers disappointment and rejection. However, a true friend becomes like a brother in trials. Our Lord has taught us the lesson of friendship, when He gave up His own life to save ours. *While we were yet in weakness at the fitting time Christ died for the ungodly. Now it is an extraordinary thing for one to give his life even for an upright man, through perhaps for a noble and lovable and generous benefactor someone might even dare to die, but God shows and clearly proves His love for us by the fact that while we were sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:6-8).*

The Lord YAHSHUA told the His disciples, "You are My friends if you keep on doing the things which I command you to do. I do not call you servants any longer, for the servant does not know what the master is doing. But I have called you My friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from My Father" (John 15:14-15). The disciples of YAHSHUA held a very special position, that of His friends, because YAHSHUA had made known to them "everything that He has heard from His Father." However, to continue in that friendship, the disciples were to obey the teachings of YAHSHUA. Obedience is the link to keep the friendship going with our Savior. As it were for them, it is for His people today. The word of the Lord says, "Who is the man who reverently fear and worships the Lord? Him shall He teach in the way that he should choose. He himself shall dwell at ease and his offspring shall inherit the land. The secret of the Lord have they who fear Him, and he will show them His covenant and reveal to them its meaning" (Ps. 25:12-14).

These verses agree with YAHSHUA'S words above. They resonate His teachings many years later. A sound teaching we must follow to keep in relationship with Him. "You are My friends if You keep on doing the things which I command you to do." *Your word I have hidden in my heart that*

I may not sin against You. (Ps. 119:11). My friend, be a friend today to anyone who comes to you in need, and you will fulfill the law of love, sparkling friendship the way our Lord YAHSHUA desires and have taught us. He said, *Do unto others whatever you desire others to do to you; this sums up the law and the prophet (Matt. 7:12).* This is called the “Golden Rule” we must apply in our everyday living.

THINK ABOUT IT!