

Got Friends?

I'm concerned. In the age of social networking it's ironic how much loneliness there is in Colorado Springs. Some are unsocial by choice... "I just want to be left alone," and some are isolated by circumstances... no close family members, financial impoverishment (Prov. 19:4), or an image which repels neighbors.

- True friendship overcomes all these obstacles.
- True friendship focuses on the person above the circumstances. Jesus received sinners and ate with them. (Luke 15:1-2) Jesus was not allowing their appearance or their past to prevent an invitation to his friendship.
- True friendship is about giving, not about receiving. *"When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends...your rich neighbors...but invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you"* (Luke 14:12-14).
- True friendship is about giving oneself to another. Jesus demonstrated true friendship when He said, *"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends."* (John 15:13). Because Jesus followed up these words with action, He proved He is our friend.
- True friendship does not promote evil and does not condone any evil done by us. The world offers friendship on its terms, based on evil. Friendship which accepts us as we are and tells us what we want to hear does not eternally serve us. *"Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."* Conversely, *"As iron sharpens iron, So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend"* (Prov. 27:6). We must not give into evil in order to acquire friends. *"Friendship with the world is enmity with God"* (James 4:4).

Do you have friends?

- Start by accepting friendship from Jesus. We all need a friend and we have one in Jesus. There is not a single person which He does not serve and for which He did not die.
- Be a friend to others. This does mean to "play up" to people, trying to win approval, but rather to genuinely care about each person around us. Everyone needs true friendship, whether they know it or not. This starts with us. We do not have to wait for someone to extend friendship to us. We begin by extending friendship to others.
- Do not limit friendships to a select few. There are those to which we are naturally drawn by the same family, the same age, the same economical level, and the same interest. We must be mindful of others so we are not viewed a clique...a closed society. We must constantly work at growing friendships just as Jesus did to befriend us.

Carl Lungstrum