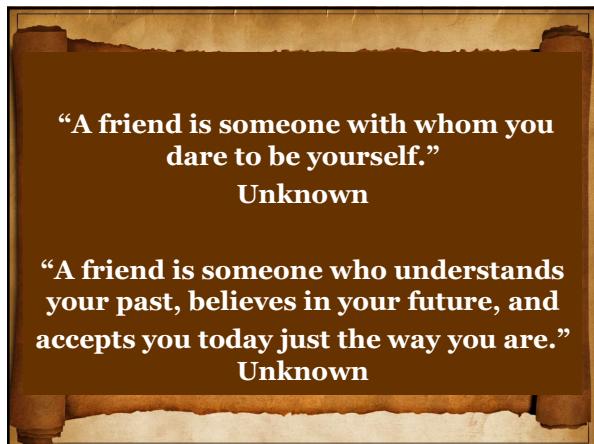




What is a “Friend”?

Webster’s Dictionary:

“One who is attached to another by affection; one who entertains for another, sentiments of esteem, respect and affection, which lead him to desire his company, and to seek to promote his happiness and prosperity; opposed to foe or enemy.”

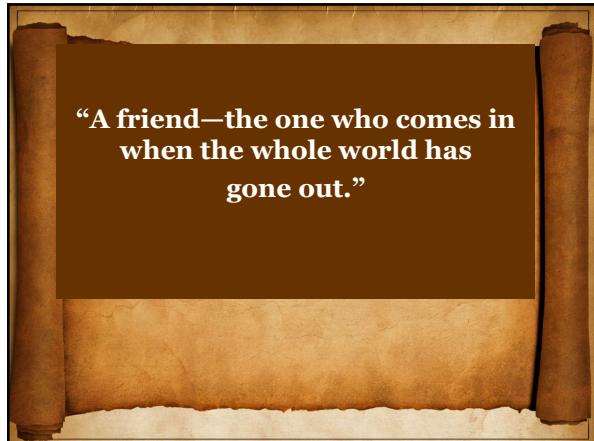


“A friend is one who knows all about you and likes you just the same.”

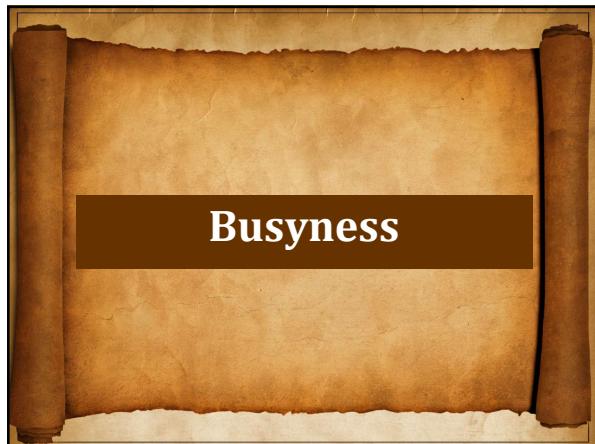
Elbert Hubbard

“A real friend is one who warms you by his presence, trusts you with his secrets, and remembers you in his prayers.”

Unknown



Hindrances to Meaningful Friendships:



"Maybe the biggest single barrier to deep connectedness for most of us is simply the pace of our lives. How often do you hear (or say) things like, 'We've got to get together soon' or 'Let's do lunch in a few weeks when things settle down?'" – John Ortberg, *Everybody's Normal Till You Get to Know Them*



"Although we cannot 'go deep' with all our friends, we do need a few with whom we can share anything. We need people who can hear our hearts and understand. And we need friends who will hold us accountable when we are out of line. Yet, too often we are afraid to allow other people to know our flaws. We want them to think we have it all together. But we desperately need friends who will challenge us to be all God wants us to be."

Kathy Howard



"I CRY to the Lord with my voice; with my voice to the Lord do I make supplication. I pour out my complaint before Him; I tell before Him my trouble.

When my spirit was overwhelmed and fainted [throwing all its weight] upon me, then You knew my path. In the way where I walk they have hidden a snare for me.

Look on the right hand [the point of attack] and see; for there is no man who knows me [to appear for me]. Refuge has failed me and I have no way to flee; no man cares for my life or my welfare."

Psalm 142:1-4 – Amplified Bible

This passage teaches that:

1. A person without friends has no one to whom to share his troubles.
2. A person without friends has no one to turn to when he is overwhelmed.
3. A person without friends has no one to protect his back when enemies come against him.
4. A person without friends has no one to help him when he needs help.
5. A person without friends has no one to care for him.

“Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed.

If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble.

Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.”

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 – New Living Translation

This passage teaches that:

1. A person who has friends has someone to share in his or her labor.
2. A person who has friends has someone to lift him up when he or she falls.
3. A person who has friends has someone to bring warmth to his or her life.
4. A person who has friends has someone to help him or her overcome obstacles.

“Therefore we have been comforted in your comfort. And we rejoiced exceedingly more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all.”

II Corinthians 7:13

A friend is someone who can refresh our souls

1. By sharing their life with us in fellowship and relationship.
2. By caring for us in our times of difficulty.
3. By growing with us in the purposes of God through mutual edification and accountability.

Biblical Principles for Making and Keeping Friendships

- **Practice forgiveness** (Colossians 3:13) – True friends don't hold grudges or remember offenses. Instead they are flexible and quick to forgive.
- **Guard your tongue** (Proverbs 16:28, Ephesians 4:29) – Loose lips ruin many friendships. Careless words hurt feelings. Gossip fosters division. Confidences broken destroy trust. Before we speak, let's pause to consider whether our words will tear down or build up.

“A perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends.”

Proverbs 16:28

“He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates friends.”

Proverbs 17:9

- **Stay close in hard times** (Proverbs 17:17, Proverbs 27:10, Romans 12:10) – A true friend remains loyal when trouble comes. Even if other “friends” fall away they stay devoted and help in any way possible.
- **Nurture them** (Philippians 2:3-4, Romans 12:10) – Friendships will wither without a continual outpouring of time, attention, and resources. Let's show our friends we care about their needs and their interests.

- **Listen to them** (James 1:19) – It takes lots of practice to keep our mouths closed and really hear what others are saying. But this habit is well worth developing. When others feel “heard” they feel valued.
- **Sharpen them** (Proverbs 27:6, Proverbs 27:17, Colossians 3:16, Hebrews 10:24) – The best kind of friend is not merely a “yes man.” Godly friends nudge others closer to Jesus.

- **Pray for them** (James 5:16) – Our friends need our purposeful prayer support. Not just casual, occasional prayers, but fervent intercession with God on their behalf.
- **Love them** (John 13:34, John 15:3, I Corinthians 13:4-8, I John 4:7) – God calls us to love our friends like Jesus loves us – not in mere words, but with intentional actions.

“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.”

Proverbs 17:17

