

4

Friendship

July 22, 2023



Sabbath

FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do” (Colossians 3:12, 13, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 14, Unity in the Body of Christ:** “We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 27, 28

WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU

The two young men facing each other stood tall and strong. Though only an arm's length away, it felt as if a huge canyon separated them. The years they had spent together had bound their friendship so that they were closer than most brothers. The futures they each longed for now appeared to be impossible. What had gone wrong?

Jon had been born into privilege. The firstborn of the first CEO of a growing empire. Everyone believed this adored son was being groomed to replace his father one day. The young man appeared to be living up to everyone's expectations of him.

During Jon's childhood the family had practically adopted a boy about Jon's age. Dave had been born the youngest son in a large family of boys. His parents had given Dave many hard and unglamorous chores so that he had learned to be a dependable worker. One such chore required Dave to go to where the CEO was working on a most difficult problem. Many employees had tried to solve it, but Dave, in his youthful innocence, surprised everyone. At first, employees had laughed at Dave's suggestion, but when the young man solved the problem, the future looked brighter for all of them.

The CEO was thrilled and at that time insisted that Dave join the family. Over the years Jon and Dave became inseparable. Then, the father began to hear rumors that the employees might prefer to have Dave as the next CEO. Jon's father became furious; that position was to be held by his beloved son. The CEO began to show Dave that he was no longer welcome.

Jon had heard all the talk about Dave becoming the next leader. Jon loved Dave and believed the adopted brother might be a better leader. Jon really just wanted the best for everyone.

One day Jon realized just how worried and angry his father had become. Jon listened, and learned that his father was thinking of having Dave killed. The CEO warned his son to say nothing about this to Dave and instead find a way to get Dave to walk into a trap.

Because Jon loved Dave, he ignored his father's request and warned his friend of the danger that waited. This warning gave Dave a chance to escape before Jon's father could find him.

Jonathan's actions kept his father, King Saul, from killing David, the anointed, future king of Israel.

Sunday

RESPONDING

- » Read Proverbs 17:14 (NIV).
- » Jennifer was ready for a change. Since kindergarten Cheryl had been her best friend. But now they were going into the eighth grade. While they were still great friends, Jennifer realized their interests were changing. After school Jennifer liked to play sports. Cheryl preferred to go home, practice her music, and read. Jennifer felt it was time to have a different lockermate at school. Would it be better to continue sharing a locker, since that is really not a big deal? If you were Cheryl, how would you feel if Jennifer told you she wanted a change? What other conflicts might good friends have as they get older?

Monday

BIBLE ANSWERS ON UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

- » Psalm 133:1; Ephesians 4:3-6; John 17:20-23.
- » God wants us to be in harmony with each other after the example of the unity that exists between God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit—the three members of the Godhead.
- » What does it take for you to be in harmony (agreement, union) with someone that is disagreeing with you?

- » Fill in the missing words. The verse is from the New King James Version.

“Therefore, as the _____ of God, _____ and _____, put on _____, _____, _____, _____; _____ with one another, and _____ one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must _____. But above all these things put on _____, which is the bond of perfection. And let the _____ of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be _____” (Colossians 3:12-15).



Tuesday

REFLECTING

- » Read Matthew 18:15-17 (NKJV).
- » The animal kingdom has two responses to a problem—flight or fight. As humans we are part of that kingdom. When it comes to fleeing a problem, we’re looking for a way to escape. We can run away from it. We can deny there is a problem, or we may choose to blame others for what is bothering us.
- » There are times we choose to fight instead of flee. This could be the physical kind of fight, with fists flying. But with many, fighting takes the form of using put-downs on other people. Another nonphysical way of fighting is to gossip about the person, hitting them with words.
- » But there is a third response that comes from being connected to our heavenly source of power. God says we’ll be happiest if we face our problems and try to work them out. And sometimes it’s best just to overlook a problem. Is everything worth fighting about?
- » However, some things can’t be overlooked; we have to solve them. The first step is to talk to the person you are having trouble with and try to work it out between the two of you. Other times we may need to get someone else to help us work out the differences and solve a problem.
- » Jesus places a great value on friends. He had several close friends while He was on earth. Jesus also says He wants us to be friends with Him.

Wednesday

BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Look up each text and fill in the blanks. If a version of the Bible is used that you don’t have at home, you can go to www.biblegateway.com. You will find many versions of the Bible on that site.
- 1. “Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should _____ that person gently. But _____ yourselves, or you also may be tempted. _____ each other’s burdens, and in this way you will _____ the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they are _____ when they are not, they deceive themselves. Each one should _____ their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, _____ themselves to someone else, for each one should _____ their own load” (Galatians 6:1-5, NIV).
- 2. “_____ with one another and, if anyone has a _____ against another, _____ each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must _____” (Colossians 3:13, NRSV).
- 3. “What this adds up to, then, is this: _____ more _____, _____ more _____. _____ your neighbor _____. In Christ’s body we’re all connected to each other, after all. When you lie to others, you end up lying to yourself. Go ahead and be angry. You do well to be angry—but _____ your _____ as _____ for _____. And _____ the Devil that _____ of _____ in your _____. Did you use to make ends meet by stealing? Well, no more! _____ an _____ so that you can _____ others who can’t work. _____ the way you talk. Let nothing _____ or _____ of your _____. Say only what helps, each word a gift. Don’t _____ God. Don’t _____ his heart. His Holy Spirit, _____ and _____ in you, is the most intimate part of your _____, making you fit for himself. Don’t take such a gift for granted. Make a clean _____ with all _____, _____, _____. Be _____ with one another, _____ one another as _____ and _____ as God in Christ forgave you” (Ephesians 4:25-32, *The Message*).
- 4. “A _____ is _____ - _____, but a _____ person _____ when _____” (Proverbs 12:16, NLT).
- 5. “Behold, how _____ and how _____ it is for brethren to _____ together in _____!” (Psalm 133:1, NKJV).

Thursday

CONNECTING

- » Read Proverbs 18:24 (NKJV).
- » Friendships come in a great variety. Some friendships you were born into, such as your relationships with brothers, sisters, and cousins. There are friendships that come from years of shared experiences. These friends may have shared swimming lessons, bike rides, class assignments, or childhood worries. Other friendships come from shared interests: you enjoy the same sports, play in the band together, or read similar books.
- » This world is full of potential friends. Sometimes new friends begin to look more attractive than old ones. Some people even begin to feel they’ve outgrown their family. So how do you choose a new friend? Now is the time to consider what kind of friends we should have.
- » We have been born into God’s family. He’s been there while we’re growing up, and seen all the bad in us, and yet wants to be with us. God has chosen us to be part of His circle of friends. As citizens of the kingdom, we should daily consider how we can help others be included in this circle of love.

» Keep a record this week about problems you have each day. Make a note about how you solved them. Think about what works the best and why.

My Solution Journal

Sabbath _____

Sunday _____

Monday _____

Tuesday _____

Wednesday _____

Thursday _____

Friday _____

Friday

APPLYING

- » Read Matthew 5:23, 24 (NIV).
- » Think of the last time you had a disagreement with someone and it ended badly. Did you try to solve your problem by fighting? Did you use put-downs, gossiping, or actual hitting? Did you try to escape by denying there was a problem, or blaming someone else, or running away?
- » Now think of a time a disagreement ended in renewed friendship. Did you work it out by overlooking the problem? By talking about the problem together until you were able to solve it? Or did you get someone else to help you?
- » Which work-it-out strategies might have solved the problem you were just thinking about?
- » What do you plan to do when future friendships are threatened by disagreements?

