

My Friend Loves Me All the Time

Lesson 6

Introduction:

- A. This is one of the Biblical definitions of a friend.

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

“To him who is afflicted, kindness should be shown by his friend,
Even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty (Job 6:14).

- B. But how can I do this and not condone the sinful actions of others?

I. THE PEOPLE MOST ATTRACTED TO JESUS WERE THE PEOPLE MOST CONDEMNED BY OTHERS.

- A. Jesus invited the troubled.

“Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

- B. Rank sinners were more attracted to Jesus than the religious people.

“But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go, work today in my vineyard.’ He answered and said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, ‘I *go*, sir,’ but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of *his* father?” They said to Him, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw *it*, you did not afterward relent and believe him” (Matthew 21:28-32).

1. He taught that each person was important and He treated them that way.

“For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26).

2. He selected a tax collector as one of His apostles.

Then He went out again by the sea; and all the multitude came to Him, and He taught them. As He passed by, He saw Levi the *son* of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, “Follow Me.” So he arose and followed Him (Mark 2:13, 14).

3. He ate with them.

Now it happened, as He was dining in *Levi’s* house, that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, “How *is it* that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?” When Jesus heard *it*, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance” (Mark 2:15-17).

4. He accepted their company, admiration, and gifts. Luke 7:36-50
5. He forgave them. John 8:3-11

II. HOW CAN I LOVE THE SINNER, NOT APPROVE OF SIN, AND HELP HIM/HER TO OVERCOME SIN?

- A. Understand my job description: it does not include keeping a heaven and hell list of people living or dead.
 1. It is true that we can judge the actions of people and respond appropriately as God has authorized in the Bible.
 - a. We can inspect fruit.

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

“Therefore by their fruits you will know them” (Matthew 7:15, 20).

- b. We can withhold fellowship from brethren who rebelliously participate in willful sin.

But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner – not even to eat with such a person (1 Corinthians 5:11).

- 2. However, I have not been authorized to keep a heaven and hell list, a summary of eternal judgment decrees.
 - a. It is not the time and I don't have adequate information.

But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God (1 Corinthians 4:3-5).

- b. I don't have the books.

And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books (Revelation 20:12).

- c. I don't have the authority.

“For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son” (John 5:22).

- 3. But what about judging righteous judgment? John 7:14-24
 - a. This had to do with Jesus' education and whether He was teaching the truth.
 - b. This was in response to Jesus healing a man on the Sabbath day.
- 4. The judgment committed to the Son exclusively was eternal judgment. John 5:22-29

- B. Be honest with myself, always searching for and applying truth to myself as I relate to others.

I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that *there is* nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean.

Do you have faith? Have *it* to yourself before God. Happy *is* he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *he does not eat* from faith; for whatever *is* not from faith is sin (Romans 14:14, 22, 23).

- C. Really give people a choice; invitation is not manipulation.

“Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you also want to go away?” But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (John 6:66-69).

For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect (1 Corinthians 1:17).

- D. Always leave the front door open and keep looking down the road for those who choose to come later. Luke 15:11-24
- E. Reassure people of their value, acceptance, and the availability of forgiveness. Matthew 26:69-75

“But go, tell His disciples – and Peter – that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you” (Mark 16:7).

Conclusion:

- A. How could you apply the principles of your Friend, Jesus, to develop a friendship with a dishonest politician, a prostitute, or a street person?
- B. What structure would you set to keep from being infected with the sin in their life?
- C. When and how might you proceed into a Bible study to teach them the good news of Jesus?
- D. After their baptism, how would you help them place membership in this congregation, feel a part of the fellowship, continue to grow as a Christian, and be accepted as an important part of the body of Christ?

The God of One More Chance

A man named Peter stumbled bad,
Lost all the love he ever had.
Fouled his own soul's divinest spring,
Cursed, swore, and all that sort of thing.
He got another chance, and then
He reached the goal of God-like men!

A boy goes wrong, the same as he
Who fed swine in the far country;
He seems beyond the utmost reach
Of hearts that pray, of lips that preach;
Give him another chance, and see
How beautiful his life may be.

Paul cast the young man, Mark, aside,
But Barnabas his metal tried,
Called out his courage, roused his vim,
And made a splendid man of him.
Then Paul near death, longed for one glance
At Mark, who had another chance.

King David, one dark day, fell down,
Lost every jewel from his crown;
He had another chance and found
His kingly self redeemed, recrowned.
Now lonely souls and countless throngs
Are lifted by his deathless songs!

Far-fallen souls, arise! Advance!
Ours is the God of one more chance!

- Author Unknown