

Biblical Insights on Friendship

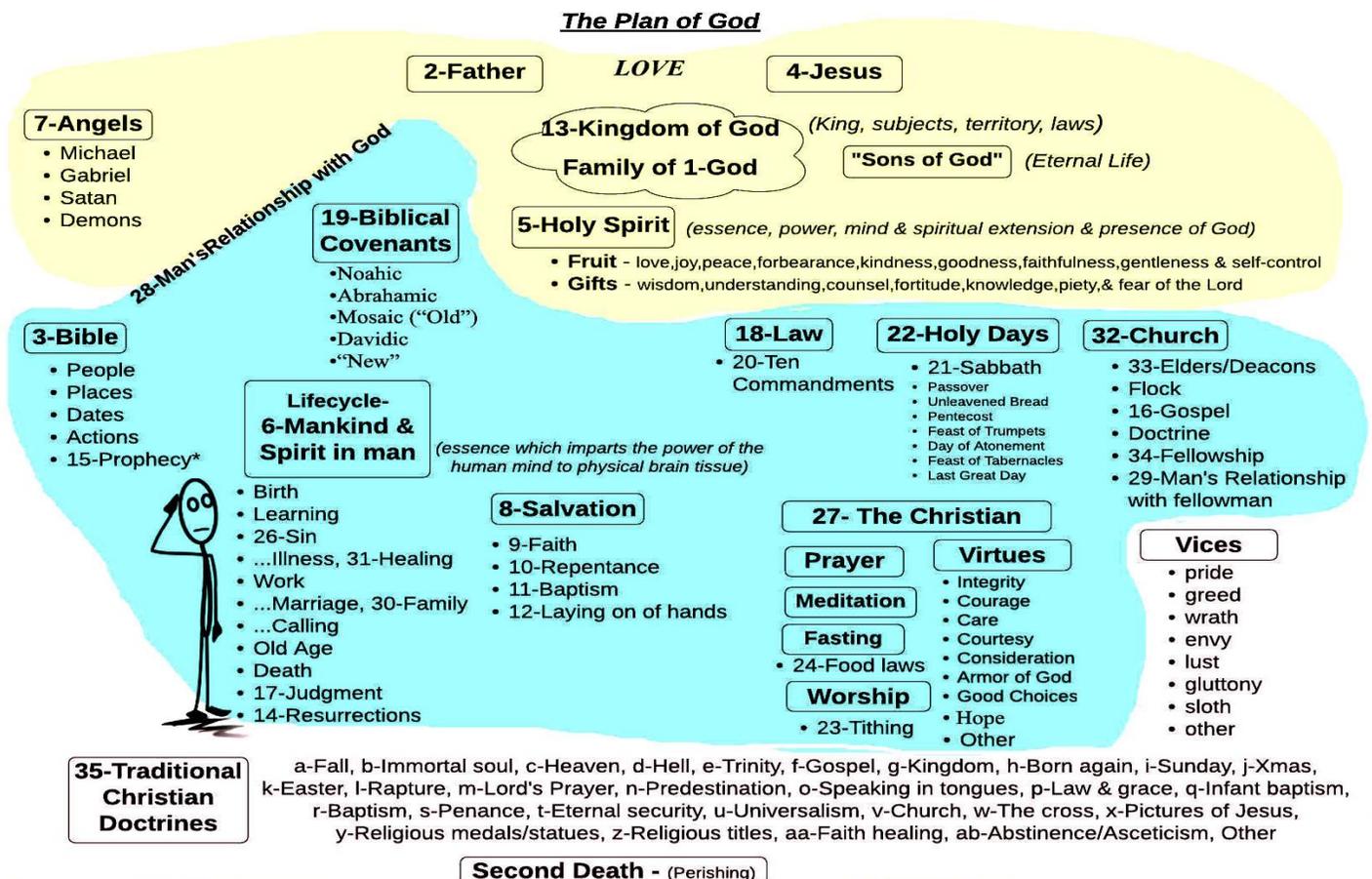
Jesus has many **roles & titles** of influence in our life:

1. Savior - **Luke 2:11** For there is born to you this day in the city of David a **Savior**, who is Christ the Lord.
2. Lord - **Romans 10:9** ...if you confess with your mouth the **Lord** Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” (ie authority over all)
3. Shepherd- **John 10:11** I am the good **shepherd**. The good **shepherd** gives His life for the sheep.
4. King - **Revelation 17:14** These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and **King** of **kings**...
5. High Priest - **Hebrews 4:14** We have a great **High Priest** who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God...”
6. Advocate - **1 John 2:1** & if anyone sins, we have an **Advocate** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous
7. Mediator - **1 Timothy 2:5** 8. Teacher - **John 13:13** 9. Bridegroom - **John 3:29**

Today’s focus is on Friendship & how Jesus (*our example*) can help us with this too:

10. Friend - **John 15:15** No longer do I call you servants... but I have called you **friends**...

We’ll explore in life & in scripture: What is a friend? What are the qualities of friendship? How does scripture compare friends to family? (Brothers & Sisters) How does Jesus show us friendship?



Time: (Past - History - Creation, 25-Hebrew Calendar ... Present -(World events) ... (Future - 15-Prophecy*) ... Eternity ...)

What a Friend we have in Jesus

(Page 240 in our Hymnal)

What a Friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to **bear!**
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in **prayer!**
O what **peace** we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer!

2

Have we **trials and temptations?**
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be **discouraged,**

Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so **faithful**
Who will all our **sorrows share?**
Jesus **knows** our every weakness,
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

3

Are we **weak and heavy-laden,**
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our **refuge**—
Take it to the Lord in prayer;
Do thy **friends despise, forsake** thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer;
In His arms He'll take and **shield** thee,
Thou wilt find a **solace** there.



From modern society we learn ...

How Common Is It to Have Friends?

- Most people have at least one friend (*Is this enough? Is it a good amount?*)
- Surveys (such as from Pew Research and Gallup) show that **over 90% of adults** report having at least one close friend.
- However, the **number of close friends** has declined in some countries, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic.



Friendship loneliness is increasing

- A 2021 American Perspectives Survey found:
 - 12% of Americans report having **no close friends**, up from 3% in 1990.
 - 49% said they had **fewer friends** than 10 years ago.
- Young men, in particular, have seen a sharp decline in close friendships.



Most people maintain a small circle

- Many adults say they have **3–5 close friends**, though younger people may report more.
- People often distinguish between "acquaintances" and "true friends."

Friendship varies by culture

- In collectivist cultures (like in Asia or Latin America), friendships may be deeper and more community-oriented.
- In more individualistic cultures (like in the U.S. or parts of Europe), friendships might be more fluid or interest-based.

Important factors that affect friendships:

- **Time investment** – Friendships need nurturing; **busyness** is a major reason friendships fade.
- **Life transitions** – Moving, marriage, or career changes often shift friendship circles.
- **Technology** – Social media helps maintain connections, but doesn't always build emotional closeness.

Summary:

While most people do have friends ... **genuine, close friendships are less common than we might assume**, & many people feel **lonely or disconnected** despite having social connections.

"Friendship isn't a big thing — it's a million little things."

PAULO COELHO



FRIENDSHIP IS THE COMFORT OF KNOWING THAT EVEN WHEN YOU FEEL ALONE, YOU AREN'T.

Most important qualities making up friendship

1. Trust

- **Why it's important:** Trust is the foundation of any strong friendship. Without it, you can't feel safe opening up or relying on someone in times of need.

2. Loyalty

- **Why it's important:** Loyalty means your friend will stand by you, defend you, and support you—even when it's hard. It builds long-term stability and commitment.

3. Honesty

- **Why it's important:** A good friend tells the truth, even when it's uncomfortable. Honest feedback helps you grow and keeps the relationship real.

4. Empathy

- **Why it's important:** Being able to understand and share someone else's feelings creates emotional closeness and helps friends support each other meaningfully.

5. Supportiveness

- **Why it's important:** Life has ups and downs. Friends who encourage you, celebrate your wins, and lift you during lows are invaluable.

6. Good Communication

- **Why it's important:** Clear, respectful, and open communication helps avoid misunderstandings and allows deeper connection.

7. Mutual Respect

- **Why it's important:** Respect keeps boundaries in place and prevents taking one another for granted. It shows you value the person for who they are.

8. Forgiveness

- **Why it's important:** Mistakes and misunderstandings happen. The ability to forgive keeps friendships from falling apart over minor or even major issues.

9. Shared Values or Interests

- **Why it's important:** While not strictly necessary, common ground helps sustain the friendship and gives you things to enjoy together.

10. Reliability

- **Why it's important:** A reliable friend follows through and can be counted on. This builds confidence and security in the relationship.

11. Sense of Humor

- **Why it's important:** Laughter brings joy and eases tension. A shared sense of humor strengthens the bond between friends.

12. Gratitude

- **Why it's important:** Friends who express appreciation make each other feel valued, deepening the relationship over time.



We'll be friends til we're old
and senile ... and then we can
be new friends.



Biblical examples of great friendships

1. Jonathan and David – *1 Samuel 18:1-4*

“...the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.”

Lesson: True friendship involves deep loyalty, selflessness, and covenantal love—even when it costs you.

2. Ruth and Naomi – *Ruth 1:16-17*

“Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you... Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God.”

Lesson: A good friend sticks by you through loss, change, and hardship.

3. Job’s Friends (Initially) – *Job 2:11-13*

“...they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great.”

Lesson: Sometimes the best support is silent presence. (Though they later failed, this part was commendable.)

Jesus Wept.
- John 11:35

4. Jesus and Lazarus (and his sisters) – *John 11:3, 35-36*

“Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, ‘See how He loved him!’”

Lesson: A true friend is emotionally connected, compassionate, and present in times of sorrow.

5. Paul and Timothy – *Philippians 2:20-22*

“For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state.”

Lesson: Good friends care deeply, serve alongside each other, and mentor with sincerity.

6. Moses and Joshua – *Exodus 33:11; Numbers 27:18-23*

“So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face... But his servant Joshua... did not depart from the tabernacle.”

Lesson: Friendship includes mentorship, shared purpose, and faithful service.

7. Philemon and Paul (regarding Onesimus) – *Philemon 1:17-18*

“If then you count me as a partner, receive him as you would me.”

Lesson: A friend helps restore relationships, even at personal cost.

8. Elijah and Elisha – *2 Kings 2:2*

“Then Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Stay here, please, for the Lord has sent me...’ But Elisha said, ‘As the Lord lives... I will not leave you!’”

Lesson: Faithful friendship involves unwavering loyalty and shared calling.

9. Abraham and God – *James 2:23*

“And he was called the friend of God.”

Lesson: The ultimate friendship is with God—based on faith, obedience, and trust.



10. The Four Friends Who Lowered the Paralytic – *Mark 2:3-5*

“When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven you.’”

Lesson: True friends bring you closer to God—even through obstacles.

11. David and Ittai the Gittite – *2 Samuel 15:21*

“...As the Lord lives... in whatever place my lord the king shall be... even there also your servant will be.”

Lesson: Loyalty in crisis shows the heart of a true friend.

12. The Centurion and His Servant – *Luke 7:2-10*

“...a certain centurion’s servant, who was dear to him, was sick...”

Lesson: Compassionate care and interceding for others show the heart of godly friendship.

Key Scriptures on Friendship

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

2. Proverbs 18:24 - A man who has friends must himself be friendly, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

- Friendship requires effort, and the deepest friendships can be stronger than family bonds.

3. John 15:13 (Jesus speaking) - Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.

- Jesus defines the ultimate expression of friendship: sacrificial love.

4. Proverbs 27:17 - As iron sharpens iron, So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

- True friends challenge and refine one another.

5. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 Two are better than one... For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up.

6. Proverbs 22:24–25 - Make no friendship with an angry man, And with a furious man do not go, Lest you learn his ways And set a snare for your soul.

- Caution is needed in choosing friends; their character influences your own.

7. Proverbs 13:20 - He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will be destroyed.

- Friends impact your wisdom and destiny.

8. 1 Corinthians 15:33 - Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits.'

- The people you associate with can shape your character—for better or worse.

9. Colossians 3:12–14 - ...put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another... above all these things put on love...

- A guide to the character traits that nurture deep relationships and friendships.

10. Romans 12:10 - Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another...

- Godly friendship is rooted in selfless affection & mutual respect.

11. Galatians 6:2 - Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ

12. James 4:4 - Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

- Not all friendships are beneficial—this warns of spiritual compromise.



How to Build and Deepen Meaningful Friendships

1. Be the Kind of Friend You Want to Have

"A man who has friends must himself be friendly..." – Proverbs 18:24

- Practice kindness, encouragement, honesty, and loyalty.
- People are drawn to those who uplift and show genuine interest in them.

2. Be Consistent and Available

- Deep friendships require **intentional time**—text, call, meet up, even briefly.
- Check in regularly, not just when you need something.
- Small consistent efforts matter more than grand occasional gestures.



3. Listen More Than You Speak

- Ask about their day, dreams, struggles.
- Practice **active listening**: don't interrupt, and do "reflect back" what you hear.
- Avoid making it all about you.

4. Be Vulnerable (Wisely)

- Share your real thoughts, fears, and joys—it deepens emotional trust.
- Vulnerability invites closeness, but use discernment about who and when.

5. Be Open to Making New Friends

- Sometimes we overlook people who could be wonderful friends.
- Ask God to open your eyes to someone who needs encouragement or connection.

6. Forgive and Apologize

- Real friends will hurt or disappoint each other at times.
- Offer grace and humility. **Forgive quickly** and **apologize sincerely**.

7. Speak the Truth in Love

- Faithful are the wounds of a friend... – **Proverbs 27:6**
- Don't flatter or enable destructive behavior.
- Real friends offer **gentle correction** when needed, always with love and respect.



8. Set Healthy Boundaries

- Don't fear saying no or asking for space—mutual respect includes limits.
- Boundaries preserve friendship from burnout or imbalance.

9. Encourage and Affirm Often

- “Encourage one another and build each other up...” – **1 Thessalonians 5:11**
- Speak life over your friends. Let them know you see their value.

10. Pray for and with Your Friends

- Prayer strengthens both spiritual and emotional closeness.
- Ask, “How can I pray for you?” and follow through.

11. Celebrate Their Wins

- Be genuinely happy for their achievements—even when you're waiting on your own breakthrough.
- Celebration without jealousy builds trust and shows maturity.

Nobody's your friend until they defend your name in your absence.

12. Stand by Them in Failure or Pain

“A friend loves at all times...” – **Proverbs 17:17**

- Stay present when life gets messy—through grief, sin, job loss, or heartbreak.
- Your loyalty during hard times proves your friendship is real.

12 Characteristics of Jesus as a friend

1. Sacrificial Love - Jesus lays down His life for His friends.

John 15:13–15 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

2. Loyalty- Jesus remains faithful to His disciples, even when they falter.

Matthew 26:31–32 Then Jesus said to them, “All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: ‘I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.”

3. Forgiveness - Jesus forgives Peter after his denial.

Scripture: John 21:15–17 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You. He said to him, “Feed My lambs.”

He said to him again a second time, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?”

He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.”

He said to him, “Tend My sheep.”

He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?”

Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?”

And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.”

Jesus said to him, “Feed My sheep.

4. Empathy Jesus weeps with those who mourn.

John 11:33–35 Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. And He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to Him, “Lord, come and see.” Jesus wept.

5. Encouragement Jesus encourages His disciples before His departure.

John 14:1–3 Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, **believe also in Me.** In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

6. Patience Jesus patiently teaches His disciples.

Luke 24:25–27 Then He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.



7. Honesty Jesus speaks truth to the rich young ruler.

Mark 10:21 Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.”



8. Supportiveness Jesus supports Mary and Martha in their grief. (John 11) ... or ...

Galatians 6:2 Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the **law of Christ.**

9. Humility Jesus washes His disciples' feet.

John 13:12–15 So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

10. Trustworthiness Jesus fulfills His promises.

Matthew 28:20 ... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.



11. Compassion Jesus feeds the hungry multitude.

Matthew 15:32 Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, “I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.”

12. Presence Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to be with His followers & Jesus hears & answers our prayers

John 14:16–17 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

