



BAPTIST CHURCH

“Lord, the one you love is sick.”

The Significance of Friendship

John 11:1-3

Introduction

The purpose of the Gospel of John is found in **John 20:31** “**But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.**” CSB

John 11 is the account of Lazarus who died and was raised to life.

John 11 is the only account of Lazarus being raised from the dead,

Every passage of Scripture has Context, Truth and Application.

At the end of **John 10** Jesus left the temple in Jerusalem and escaped to the region where John the Baptist had been baptizing.

According to **John 1:28** the region where Jesus escaped to was Bethany.

There are two towns with the same name.

Bethany on the Mount of Olives

Bethany on the Mount of Olives was approximately 2 miles east of Jerusalem.

Jesus and His disciples often stayed there when they traveled through Judea.

Bethany was the home of Mary, Martha and their brother Lazarus. The tomb of Lazarus can still be found in Bethany. The modern day name of the village is El-Azariah which means “the place of Lazarus.”

The modern day name of the village signifies the importance of this biblical event.

Bethany beyond the Jordan

The region where John the Baptist had been baptizing in the early days of the ministry of Jesus.

Bethany beyond the Jordan was northeast of Jerusalem about 15-20 miles away from Bethany in Judea.

We do not know how long Jesus had been in Bethany beyond the Jordan—a few days or even a few weeks, the threat of death and the escape from the temple in Jerusalem was still fresh on the minds of the disciples—

John 11:8

Scripture

Now a man was sick—Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

² Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair, and it was her brother Lazarus who was sick.

³ So the sisters sent a message to him: **“Lord, the one you love is sick.”**
CSB

Quote Of The Day

“Truly great friends are hard to find, difficult to leave, and impossible to forget.” — G. Randolph

“A day without a friend is like a pot without a single drop of honey left inside.” — Winnie the Pooh

In the context of Mary, Martha and Lazarus there is much to learn regarding friendship in **John 11**.

Over the next few weeks there are five observations from **John 11** we will examine.

Observation One

The Significance of Friendship

John 11:11 “. . . Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I’m on my way to wake him up.” CSB

Friendship is a recurring theme throughout the Bible. In **John 11** we learn much about true friendship from the example of Jesus and His friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus.

Two words in this text related to friendship we need to understand.

Love v.3

So the sisters sent a message to Him: “**Lord, the one you love is sick.**” CSB

The word translated “**love**” in **John 11:3** is the Greek word “**phileo**” meaning to have a special interest in someone with focus on close association, to have affection, to like, to consider someone a close friend.

Friend v.11

“**Our friend Lazarus** has fallen asleep, but I’m on my way to wake him up.”

The word translated “**friend**” comes from the Greek word “**philos**” meaning the love a person has for a father, mother, sister, brother, son or daughter or a close companion.

Having friends is an important predictor of happiness and life satisfaction. The number and quality of social interactions early in our life can predict loneliness, well-being, and depression (Carmichael, Reis, & Duberstein, 2015). Despite these well-documented benefits, people do not always

prioritize spending time with friends. Americans spend about 41 min a day socializing, which is one-third of the amount of time spent on social media, watching TV or commuting (US Dept. of Labor, 2015). Given significant constraints on free time, especially among working adults and parents, individuals must budget their time wisely to make time for friends (Fehr, 2008). Citation: How Many Hours Does It Take To Make A Friend Jeffrey A. Hall, Department of Communication Studies, University of Kansas.

Eight Qualities of a True Friend:

1. True Friends Call on their Friends v.3

So the sisters sent a message to Him: **“Lord, the one you love is sick.”**
CSB

Psalm 50:15 “Call on me in a day of trouble; I will rescue you, and you will honor me.” CSB

We can call on Jesus like He is a true and trusted friend— **Oakley Sunglasses.**

God was honored that I would call on Him to find my sunglasses!

2. True Friends Love their Friends v.5

“Now Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus.” CSB

The word translated **“loved”** is the word **“agapao”** meaning to have a warm regard for and interest in another, cherish, have affection for, have a deep appreciation of someone, to have high regard for someone.

There are times in our lives when we meet people that become dear friends.

It is not possible to have friends without first making friends. Spending time together is a necessary component of friendship development.

Jesus and His disciples loved Mary, Martha and Lazarus because they had spend meaningful time with them.

True Friends are Companions v.11a

“ . . . **Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep**, but I’m on my way to wake him up.” CSB

The word translated “**friend**” comes from the Greek word “**philos**” meaning the love a person has for a father, mother, sister, brother, son or daughter or a close companion.

We don’t get to choose our family but we can choose our friends.

It's no news flash that friends make us happy, Meliksah Demir, Ph.D., a professor at Northern Arizona University, has drilled down to reveal exactly what about friendship warms our hearts. It turns out that companionship— simply doing things together—is the component of friendship that most makes us happy. And the reason friends make us happy, Demir has concluded, is this **friends make us feel that we matter**. Citation: Eric Barker, "How To Make Friends Easily and Strengthen the Friendships You Have," Barking Up the Wrong Tree blog (November 2013)

True Friends Help their Friends v.11b

“ . . . Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, **but I’m on my way to wake him up.**” CSB

True Friends are Courageous v.16

Then Thomas (called “Twin”) said to his fellow disciples, “Let’s go too so that we may die with him.” CSB

True Friends Communicate with their Friends vv.21-22

“Then Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn’t have died. ²² Yet even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.” CSB

Words of Frustration— if you had been here

Words of Faith— I know whatever you ask from God, God will give you

True Friends Challenge their Friends vv.26-27

“Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. **Do you believe this?**” ²⁷ “Yes, Lord,” she told him, “I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who comes into the world.” CSB

His name is Floyd Plemmons. A dear friend from college. His challenging words changed my life— “Do you always beat the sheep that way . . .?”

If we truly care about someone, we’ll risk hurting them if it means sparing them pain, embarrassment, or trouble. I’ve wondered all these years why my real friends never told me I was being made fun of. They had to have known.

When challenging a friend never do it in a public setting. That is embarrassing, shameful and hurtful. It also says a lot about our character are we seeking to help or harm our friends?

True Friends Comfort their Friends vv.33-36

When Jesus saw her crying, and the Jews who had come with her crying, he was deeply moved in his spirit and troubled. ³⁴ “Where have you put him?” he asked. “Lord,” they told him, “come and see.” ³⁵ **Jesus wept.** ³⁶ So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” CSB

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. ⁴ He comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort we ourselves receive from God.” CSB

4 Ways to Comfort Your Hurting Friend By Hannah Opperman

There is no “one-size-fits-all” when it comes to comforting your hurting friend. Everyone is different and has different problems.

But whether your friend is going through a health challenge or just lost a loved one, there are ways to comfort your grieving friend in a Christ-like manner.

Show, Don't Tell

Don't immediately quote a ton of Bible verses to your grieving friend. I know, I know, I just said that there are ways to handle your friend's grief in a “Christ-like” manner, and what's more Christ-like than scripture verses? But the Bible doesn't say to text your hurting friend every scripture verse you know about “staying strong” and “having faith” the second difficulty hits them.

That's because if your friend has just lost a loved one, or is going through a difficult time, they may be struggling with some confusion or even anger toward God. Most likely, if you quote a bunch of Bible verses at them, they will just feel frustrated and hurt that you aren't sympathizing with them, making them feel that maybe God doesn't sympathize with them either. But, if you weep with them, and are there for them, you are showing them the compassion and love of Jesus. As a Christian, you're showing them that their pain not only breaks your heart, but it breaks God's heart, too.

Romans 12:15 says, “Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.”

In your friend's grief, they do not feel strong. They feel saddened and weary.

They might even feel betrayed by God or doubt their faith.

There is a quote by Betty Greene, a missionary pilot, that goes

“When people's emotions are involved, they don't want to listen.”

This means that one of the best things you can do is show the compassion and love of God. There is a time for Bible verses, but what your friend may

need most right now is to know that there is still Someone out there who cares deeply for them—Jesus. Let your friend know He is there for them, by being there for them yourself. Don't quote them Jesus. Show them Jesus.

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Be a Willing Listener

Listening is one of the best ways to show a friend that you truly care about them and the difficulty they are going through.

Be intentional to call or facetime them. Make a date to go to the local coffee shop with them and just listen. Let your friend pour out their heart to you and share their troubles. Let them reminisce about the person they lost or express their fears about their health challenge. Nothing shows that someone cares about you more than when they take time out of their day to just sit and listen to you cry your heart out.

By being a willing listener, you're giving your friend the gift of having a safe place to process their pain and feel heard and understood.

Offer Quiet Companionship

If your friend isn't one for sharing emotions verbally, or just isn't ready to talk about it yet, getting together with them is still a good option.

Give them a hug, buy them a coffee, and sit down next to each other. Maybe watch their favorite movie or play a board game. You could even offer to come over and quietly help them with their chores.

Sometimes, all a person needs to know is that someone is there for them, willing to stick around even when life is messy and painful.

Pray and Keep Praying

The most important thing you can do as a Christian is pray for your friend. Pray and ask God to comfort their hurting heart, to give them peace, and to help them feel His presence. God will listen to you.

Philippians 4:6-7 “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Prayer is even more important when your grieving friend is not a Christian. Not only does it provide an opportunity to help them with their pain and show them you are there; but it opens up the opportunity for God to come in and be there for them too. And He is the comfort your friend truly needs.

Christ Enables Us to Comfort Others

Comforting a hurting friend might seem daunting. But because we have Christ in us, we have access to a greater comfort than what this world offers. Because of Jesus and the comfort He has given us, we can comfort those who are in any affliction.

No matter what kind of grief your friend is going through, showing them the love of Christ, being willing to listen to them, offering them quiet companionship, and praying for them are four of the best, and most important, ways to comfort them. Citation: 4 Ways to Comfort Your Hurting Friend, By [Hannah Opperman](#) March 15, 2023.

Jesus is a True Friend

Proverbs 18:24 “. . . there is a friend who stays closer than a brother.” CSB

John 15:12-14 “This is my command: Love one another as I have loved you. ¹³No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you.” CSB

What does a good friend really look like?

