

FRIENDSHIP

A friend is a person who is intimately known, respected, esteemed, and loved by another. Friendship is the mutual attachment of two persons who are thus known and loved. Friendship is of tremendous value. In fact, it is one of the best things in life, because it makes life rich and full, bright and joyous, tender and sweet. It is the greatest boon of human circumstances. Cicero spoke the truth when he said, "Friendship is the only thing in the world concerning the usefulness of which all mankind are agreed."

I. The Reality Of Friendship.

From experience we know that friendship is a reality. Each of us has friends, and friendship makes life really worth living. In observing others we have noted the friendships that exist between them. Then, all history is full of the praise of friendship. Even the heathen writers made much of it. Socrates, for instance, said, "All people have their different objects of ambition -- horses, dogs, money, honor, as the case may be, but for my own part I would rather have a good friend than all these put together."

When Mrs. Elizabeth Barrett Browning said to Charles Kingsley, "Tell me the secret of your life that I may make mine beautiful too," he replied, "I have a friend!" That was the secret that made all the difference. Constantius, the father of Constantine the Great, said, "My treasures are my friends." The study of biography reveals the truthfulness of what Plautus said, "Nothing is there more friendly to a man than a friend in need."

II. The Reasons For Friendship.

1. Our need of it.

Every person needs faithful friends. It does not matter in what condition man is found, whether in riches or in poverty, whether ignorant and rude or civilized and highly educated, he needs the friendship of his fellows. Friendship is a necessity in our lives.

2. Others need it.

Friendship enables us to share whatever excellencies we may have with others who realize their deficiencies. If others are to be happy, they must have friends too. One has said, "A friend in need is a friend indeed."

3. The will of God.

He wants us to be friends and to have friends. A wise observer said in the long ago, "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly."

III. The Recipe For Friendship.

1. Sincerity.

Sincerity is essential to the making of friends. Some desirable contacts never mature into friendships because selfish motives prompted the desire to develop a friendship. Friendship is to be valued for what there is in it; not for what can be gotten out of it. If you will follow the main roads in history, you will discover that those who had true friends were not so much concerned about having friends as they were with being friends. They were not watching the receiving side; they were strong on the giving side.

2. Friendliness.

If you want friends, you must be friendly. We must take time to smile and chat with people if we are to have friends. The expression one wears on his face is more important than the clothes he wears on his back. A smile costs nothing, but it is invaluable. It enriches those who receive it, without impoverishing the one who gives it. It happens in a flash, but the memory of it lasts throughout life. Yet it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed, or stolen, for it is something that is of no value until it is given away.

3. Be complimentary.

Lincoln once began a letter by saying, "Everybody likes a compliment." William James said, "The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated." It is so much better to look for the good and commend it than it is to search for the bad and criticize it.

4. Like People.

You must like people in general if you want them to like you. You cannot conjure up much of a friendship with anyone if you do not have a fond feeling in your heart for the human species. Will Rogers said, "I never met a man whom I could not like."

5. Do things together.

This cements friendship more than almost anything else. Even to play together makes friends. To eat together makes friends. Still more to work together, strive together, sacrifice together, and suffer together makes friends who are inseparable. Doing things together implies the union of hearts and hands, comradeship in the common aims of life, mutual interest and service.

IV. The Rewards Of Friendship.

1. Comfort.

We cannot live self-centered lives without missing the true glory of life.

2. Counsel.

Talking with a true friend gives great satisfaction of mind.

3. Comradeship.

This is one of the strongest forces in life. It is a great help to us in our difficulties. Nothing is more delightful than having true friends. One should make all the friends he can. He will be rich in proportion to the number of true and faithful friends that he has.

We are deeply indebted to Edgar A. Guest for his delightful poem, entitled,

A FRIEND

A friend is one who stands to share
Your every touch of grief and care.
He comes by chance, but stays by choice,
Your praises he is quick to voice.

No grievous fault or passing whim
Can make an enemy of him.
And though your need be great or small,
His strength is yours throughout it all.

No matter where your path may turn,
Your welfare is his chief concern.
No matter what your dream may be,
He prays your triumph soon to see.

There is no wish your tongue can tell,
But what it is your friend's as well.
The life of him who has a friend,
Is double-guarded to the end.