

Friendship Jesus-Style ->Pt. 2 True friends are there through tough times

Last week we started an series on the important topic of friends & friendship. True friends are hopeful, reassuring, encouraging, comforting, patient, truthful, forgiving, faithful, loyal, humble, serving & loving. Last time, we learned that true/real friends make us better people. We also learned that sometimes we need to subtract certain "friends" from our life that are actually making us worse people or dragging us down. This week we're going to talk about another important some other aspects of true friendship: true/real friends stick around in tough times. True friends are faithful, loyal, patient, serving and display courage, perseverance and love.

There are many movie examples of this kind of friends: Octavius & Jedediah in *Night At the Museum*, and Steve Rogers & Bucky Barnes in *Captain America: Winter Soldier*. *Brian's Song* (1971) is a true story about loyal friends in very tough times. This movie tells the true story of Chicago Bears players Brian Piccolo & Gale Sayers. During the late 1960s, these two teammate became true friends despite the immense racial tensions of the time. Their friendship grew to an intense brotherly love. When Gale hurt his knee in a potentially career-ending injury, Brian helped Gale with encouragement and exercise. But their friendship took went to another level when Brian was stricken with terminal cancer during the 1969 football season. Sayers stuck by Piccolo's side and was with him throughout his Brian's illness. The month before Piccolo's death, Gale Sayers was accepting the George S. Halas Award for Most Courageous NFL Player and told the crowd that they had selected the wrong person for the award. He said, "I hold this award tonight, but tomorrow it's Brian's. I love Brian Piccolo, and I'd like all of you to love him, too. Tonight, when you hit your knees to pray, please ask God to love him, too." Gale was a true friend to Brian right until the end ,which unfortunately occurred 1970. Gale Sayers went on to complete his Hall Of Fame football career and wrote a book called *I Am Third* that said his life was based on putting God first, others second & himself third (sound like our *J.O.Y. principle*). Brian's friends & family went on to establish the *Brian Piccolo Cancer Research Fund* that helped to largely cure the type of cancer that took Brian's life.

In these examples (Octavius, Steve, and Brian & Gale), we see true & loyal friends. The Bible says: ***There are "friends" who destroy each other, but a real friend sticks closer than a brother (Prov 18:24) & A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity (Prov 17:17).*** True friends are faithful, loyal, patient, serving and display courage, perseverance and love. They don't ditch you when tough things happen. They don't run away from you when a better option comes along.

And that's how Jesus is. He is faithful, loyal, patient, serving and displays courage, perseverance and love to you. Jesus has proved His friendship & love for you by His sacrifice in your place on the cross (**Jn 15:13**). For those that trust in Him, Jesus says, ***"Now you are my friends"*** (**Jn 15:15b**). And our ultimate friend, Jesus, says He'll always be with us no matter what right to the end (**Heb 13:5b & Mt 28:20b**). Jesus said that even though He had to leave earth, His Holy Spirit (the Helper, Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor, Counselor, Strengthener, Standby) would remain in all that trust in Him forever (**Jn 14:16 AMP**). And Jesus said that all who trust in Him are His Body here on earth (**1Cor12:26-27**) and this Body of Christ is there for its members.

So would you want a friend like Octavius, Steve Rogers or Gale Sayers? Jesus Christ is all of that & so much more. Trust in Him & then be that kind of friend you would want to have for yourself. Be faithful, loyal, patient, serving, courageous, persistent and loving friend to the people around you. Remember: ***"the Lord Jesus Himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'*** (**Acts 20:35**).

BIBLE VERSES

Prov 18:24 There are "friends" who destroy each other, but a real friend sticks closer than a brother

Prov 17:17 A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity

John 15:13 (NCV) The greatest love a person can show is to die for his friends.

John 15:15b "Now you are my friends"

Mt 28:20b [Jesus said], "And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Heb 13:5b God has said, "I will never leave you; I will never abandon you."

Acts 20:35 ...the Lord Jesus Himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. We talked about 3 movies that had loyal friends. Name some other famous loyal & faithful friends from movies, books or even real life. How did they show their true & loyal friendship toward each other?
- 2a. Read Prov 18:24. What do you think this verse means? What does it say about true & loyal friends?
- 2b. Should we be loyal & faithful to 'friends' that don't really have our best interests at heart? How should we treat those "friends" who destroy"?
3. Read Prov 17:17. As we learned tonight, true friends aren't just there for you in the good times, they're there for you in the tough time too. How have true friends been there for you in tough times? How have they impacted your life?
4. Read Jn 15:13, Jn 15:15b, Mt 28:20b & Heb 13:5b. Jesus totally proved that He's a loyal & real friend. What does His loyal friendship mean to you in your life? How has His ultimate friendship helped you in the tough times of life?
5. Read Prov 17:17 (again) & Acts 20:35. We all want loyal & faithful friends that are their for us in our struggles, right? But what about you? Are you the kind of friend that puts your friends first, especially in their tough times? If not, what needs to change? Is anything holding you back from being a faithful, loyal, patient, serving, courageous, persistent and loving friend like Jesus?

CLOSING PRAYER: Dear Jesus, thank You for showing us what a true & loyal friend is. Thank You for dying for our sins on the cross & for accepting us now as Your friends. Lord Jesus, thank You for being with us in the good times & bad. Thank you for sending loyal & faithful friends into our lives. Help us, Lord to be more like You: Help us to be faithful, loyal, patient, serving, courageous, persistent and loving to the people in our life. We pray all this in Your Name, Jesus. Amen!