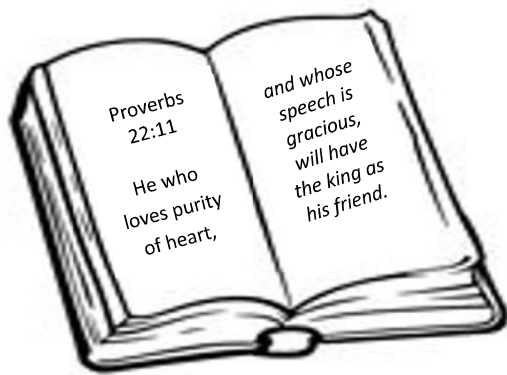


Finding a Friend in Jesus Christ.

It is Easier than You Think!

Imagine yourself hiking a favorite trail. You are alone. You are captivated by the peaceful sounds of nature. The majestic beauty of the landscape moves your senses like nothing before. It's been a while since you've had a sense of calmness around you. Then suddenly, you realize someone else is on the trail; walking beside you. The tranquility of the hike disappears. The escalation of your senses shifts and your heart flutters from nervousness. You find yourself out of breath, your heart is pounding and your mind is telling you to speak. Say something! The stranger while mysterious, smiles at you. Their smile is like a beaming ray of sunshine, warming your body and calming your senses. Their eyes glisten as they look at you. You catch your breath. Your composure is now under control. As the two of you continue walking, you engage in a conversation of many topics. You find yourself laughing & comfortable with this stranger. The



two of you make an unexplainable connection. Time slips away and before you know it, you are approaching the end of the trail and it's time to part ways. Before the good byes are said, you and the stranger decide to meet again another day.

At some point in our life, all of us have made friends with people who we have not met before. In many cases, these are the strangers who become a lifelong companion. Friendships evolve from many components existing within us. Components such as:

- Showing kindness to one another
- Being truthful with each other
- Acceptance of each other's ways
- Learning from each other
- Teaching each other
- Being supportive in difficult times
- Making sacrifices & selflessly helping each other
- Getting through the laughter & tears
- Being committed to your friendship!

The most important factor in developing a friendship is the love you have for each other. This love is the link to your lifelong relationship.

Through time, your relationship circle grows. All the components used in building more relationships are passed along to new friends, family members, your children & casual acquaintances. You have built habits and practices which through time, grows your circle. And through all of this, you have found purity of heart within yourself due to the value of these relationships.

What if the stranger in the forest was Jesus Christ? How would you feel? Intimidated? Joyful? Whether the stranger is Mr. Smith or Jesus Christ, your relationship circle wouldn't change! Friendships grow through conversation. While Jesus may not have a physical presence in the human sense, you can still have conversations with Jesus Christ through prayer. Your relationship with Jesus Christ will still be linked to all the components listed above. The same components that already occupy your heart. You know how to make earthly connections. Therefore, you ARE capable of making Godly connections.

1 Timothy 4:6-8

*If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather **train yourself for godliness**; for while bodily training is some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.*

If you are intimidated by the thought, ask God for help. Remember...**friendships grow through conversation!** Study the Gospel. Get to know the teachings of Jesus. Trust His Word. Share His Word. Take this journey to develop yet, another lifelong friendship which will flourish your Faith. Godly connections will fill your life with truth. Truth leads to purity of heart. YOU already have the devotion needed in making friends.

Invest in your personal spirituality. Be faithful & committed to your new relationship with Jesus; just as you are to your earthly friends. Get your conversation with Jesus started by prayer! It is easier than you think.

Prayer & Thanks to God:

Dear Lord,

Help me with my journey in being a faithful, committed follower of your Word. Guide me in purifying my heart and repenting of my earthly sins. I pray for strength in making a conscious effort in being faithful to the Gospel and God's Word so I can teach and be of service to others. Thank you for all my blessings and for giving me the opportunity to change my ways. Thank you for your undying love and forgiveness. Amen.

