

You've Got a Friend

*My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other. **John 15:12-17***

How rich are you? I don't mean how much money do you have, or how big is your house. Wealth can be measured in many different ways. This month, as we concentrate on Valentine's Day and love, I'm wondering, how rich are you in terms of people you can count as your friends?

Perhaps you still keep in touch with individuals you have known since grade school. Are you still close with the friends it was so important to have in high school? Many of us see college friends more often—perhaps even at LEC each year. And those friends and colleagues you have accumulated at each school where you taught or in every neighborhood where you lived have probably added to your friendship cache like a rolling snowball. If that is the case, you have been greatly blessed. There are friends you see every day and those you haven't seen in years, but with whom you feel such a strong bond that you never really feel separated. There are friends who are easy to get along with and those whom you love in spite of their idiosyncrasies—and vice versa. With friends you can be yourself. They care for you no matter what. And they don't desert you when the going gets tough. Often our spouses are our very best friends, which is the way God planned it and which enriches the relationship.

Friendship is one of God's greatest gifts to us. It is a blessing—and a responsibility. To have a friend requires that you be a friend—and all that includes.

John reminds us in John 15 that even if our earthly friends are few, we are blessed to be called friends of Jesus, our Savior. This relationship exists not because we are so desirable, but because He chose us to be His friends since before the world began. He couldn't wait for us to be born so He could interact with us, share His life with us, and ultimately die for us because He loves us so. Although we are separated physically for a while, He also can't wait until we will be able to see Him again and enjoy His company for all eternity. In the meanwhile, being friends with Jesus means that we live as His constant companion here on earth. It also means we are friends with all of His other friends along the way. He has set the example of what it means to love one another passionately and unconditionally. That's what friends do.

Social media has made it possible for people to identify and stay in closer touch with their "BFF"s. So as you celebrate Valentine's Day with your friends and with the children in your classrooms, remember to celebrate the true BFF you all share. It's a friendship made in heaven.

(When I typed the title to this devotion, my "computer" made a mistake and substituted the word God for Got. So the title read, You've God a Friend." Where do these typos come from? ☺)

Carolyn Sims, Retired Principal, Abiding Savior, Lake Forest