

“Best Friends Forever”

Read John 15:12-17

¹²“This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴You are My friends if you do what I command you.”

¹⁵“No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing. I call you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.”

¹⁶“You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain and so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.”

¹⁷“This I command you, that you love one another.”

Study Questions

1. Was Jesus concerned about how the disciples would treat one another after His departure? Read John 13:4, 15:12, & 17:20-21.

John 13:4

“If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; you also ought to wash one another's feet.”

John 15:12

“This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you.”

John 17:20-21

“I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.”

What actions and attitudes did Jesus demonstrate for them, that He could point to as examples for them to follow?

2. If Jesus' gracious actions and attitudes are not replicated by His disciples, will the world believe Jesus is who He said He was—equal with God?

3. The nicknames that Jesus gave to some of His disciples, helps us recognize the type of relationship they shared during the 3 years they traveled together. How would you describe their relationship? What were some of the personalities that existed in the group of the 12?

4. Jesus had demonstrated love for them in spite of their faults, but now He was commanding them to love each other in that same way. If they stayed best friends with each other, what would they also be to Him?

5. Jesus' statement referring to His disciples as "friends" would have made those Jewish minds think immediately of whom? What would this have conveyed to them about their identity and their purpose? Read Genesis 18:23-33.

Genesis 18:23-33

²³Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? ²⁵Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

²⁶The Lord said, "If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake."

²⁷Then Abraham spoke up again: "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, ²⁸what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five people?"

"If I find forty-five there," he said, "I will not destroy it."

²⁹Once again he spoke to him, "What if only forty are found there?"

He said, "For the sake of forty, I will not do it."

³⁰Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?"

He answered, "I will not do it if I find thirty there."

³¹Abraham said, "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?"

He said, "For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it."

³²Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?"

He answered, "For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it."

³³When the Lord had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home.

Why did Abraham have the freedom to bargain with God?

6. Where must genuine friendship in the church of Jesus Christ begin?