



Discussion:

- How can we be a *Power of One* in showing personal reliability?

4. Intentional Friendship Shows Personal Accountability, “Everything that I learned . . . I have made known to you” (15c).

Taking friendship to a “next level” means investing spiritually in a person.

Discussion:

- What are some “spiritual investments” that will need to be made in order to show personal accountability?
- How would you respond to someone who is looking for a friend?
- How can a “friendly church” become a church that goes beyond smiles and handshakes?

Reflection and prayer:

- Is there at least one person that you know who might become a Christian or grow in the Lord under your influence through friendship?
- What will you do to take that friendship to the next level spiritually?



The Power of Friendship

Biblical Text: John 15:9-17
Biblical Truth: It is possible to know Christ as Friend, as well as Lord.
Lesson Goal: Build a next-level, spiritual friendship with someone who needs you.

Introduction:

A “true friend” is an answer, even a necessity, for the ups and downs of life. If someone says, “I don’t need any friends,” it’s probably not true. We all need friends, we need to know that someone cares about us as an individual.

Discussion:

- What qualities turned an “acquaintance” into a “best friend?”
- How do your “best friend” qualities compare to the type of friendship Jesus offers?

Jesus identified people in many important ways: follower, disciple, servant, or faithful, to name a few. But one of His most tender descriptions was, “friend.” Jesus refers to His relationship with you, His follower, as a friendship. You are His friend. “I have called you friends” (Jn. 15:5b). He intentionally loves you.

Just as He reached out to you in an intentional friendship—“Everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you”—you have an opportunity to reach out to others, to intentionally be their friend. To purposefully take your friendship to the highest level: introducing another person to your Best Friend, Jesus Christ.

Jesus taught His disciples about the power of friendship in John 15:

1. Intentional Friendship Shows Spiritual Authenticity, “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends” (v. 13).

- A. Friends choose to make sacrifices for the welfare of another.
- B. Friends choose to express honesty, loyalty, and unity of purpose.
- C. Friends choose to spend time with each other.

Jesus sought to bring out the best in others, no matter the personal cost. Spiritual authenticity lays itself on the line. It is willing to go to any lengths to seek the best in others.

Spiritual authenticity comes from the indwelt Spirit of Christ.
(Read John 16:12-15.)

2. Intentional Friendship Shows Mutual Responsibility, “You are my friends if you do what I command” (v. 14).

What does He command? (John 15:17).

Discussion:

- Based on Christ’s “command,” what is the responsibility of every Christian?
 - ... In the church?
 - ... In the community?
 - ... In the world?
- How does a Christian fulfill that responsibility:
 - ... In the church?
 - ... In the community?
 - ... In the world?

Following the pattern of a Father-Son relationship, disciples were instructed to love each other—and together, love the people of the world, in and through Christ the Son.

3. Intentional Friendship Shows Personal Reliability, “I have called you friends” (15)

- A. There are people who need to know you as a reliable friend, not just as an associate or neighbor or classmate. Christian friendship is CHRIST IN YOU, being expressed in spirit and in truth.

Discussion:

- Is there a difference between loving someone in “spirit” and in “truth?”
- What are the qualities of both?

- B. Some expressions of friendship are often insincere, for example: “I’ll call you,” “Let’s have lunch,” “Stop by anytime.”
- C. “Next-level friendships” are based on sincere communications—on reliable commitments.