

PROVERBS 18:24 (RSV)
ECCLESIASTES 4:9-10 (NIV)
JOHN 15:15 (PHILLIPS)

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MAKE A FRIEND
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CHILDREN'S SUNDAY

What is a friend? One person has said that a friend is "one who walks in when others walk out."--someone who will stick beside you when others have left you alone.

Someone else said that friends are those people whose faces light up when they see you. Do you have friends like that?

Some people say that Jesus said something about friends. But most people don't know about it. In Egypt, not too long ago, some scientists discovered an old piece of paper that had some writings of Jesus that aren't in our bible. Let me quote one sentence from it, "And Jesus said, 'make a friend.'"

Did you notice that it didn't say, 'find a friend' but rather, 'make a friend'?

Let me tell you a little story. In the old West--a pioneer drove his wagon up to a cabin. The owner of the cabin, an old prospector, asked the pioneer where he was going--the man said, "I'm looking for a place to settle where I'll have good neighbors."

The owner of the cabin asked, "What kind of neighbors did you have back east?"

And the stranger replied, "They were the meanest, most unfriendly people you ever saw."

"Well," said the prospector, "you'll find the same kind of people here."

So the man got back in his wagon and drove on.

Later that same day, another wagon pulled up to the prospector's cabin. And the man in this wagon was looking for the same thing as the first one, a place to settle where he'd have good neighbors.

The prospector eventually asked the stranger what kind of neighbors he had had back home.

The man in the wagon answered, "They were the nicest, friendliest people you ever saw."

And the prospector replied, "Well, you'll find the same

kind of people here."

So the settler picked out a piece of land, built a home and found that the people were the nicest and friendliest he'd ever known.

What's the point? It is that to make friends, you have to be friendly too. The first man didn't like people, so he would never find friends wherever he went--but the second man was going to find friends anywhere, because he was friendly and liked people. And it showed.

We need friends, you know. And we might need them more than we think.

Let me tell you another story about a woman, Mrs. Abernathy, who was having a lot of troubles. And though she prayed to God all the time, things didn't seem to get better. She went to talk to her minister about it and said,

"I've had all these troubles and I pray all the time and yet, God seems so far away--and my religion seems very empty."

What do you think the minister said?

He said to the woman, "You've made a terrible mistake, Mrs Abernathy. There will always be times when you will have troubles and times when God seems far away or when it seems that God has forgotten about you or doesn't care. Those are the times--when we don't understand--that we have to hang on to our friends. We were never meant to hold on to God alone. We know that, because God invented friendship for us.

"One important thing you need to remember," said the minister, "is that we need each other--and we need to be each other's friends. Because God gives us strength and love through our friends too--and so, you see, Mrs Abernathy, God hasn't forgotten you."

Remember the words of scripture I read a moment ago?

"Two are better than one, because. . . if one falls down, his friend can help him up." We need friends. And we need to be friends.

I have an assignment for you. This summer, make a friend.

AMEN