

F·R·I·E·N·D·S

Colossians 4:2-18

- ***Have you had a faithful friend, and would you consider yourself to be one?***
- "The benefits of friendship should not be overlooked. Psychological research suggests that stable, healthy friendships are crucial for our well-being and longevity. People who have friends and close confidants are more satisfied with their lives and less likely to suffer from depression. They're also less likely to die from all causes, including heart problems and a range of chronic diseases." - *The Science Of Why Friends Keep Us Healthy,* American Psychological Association, 2023)
- **The testimonies of Paul and his friends (Colossians 4:7-18) showed they were deeply committed to one another, to the Lord and to their church.**
- **Types of friends include: 1) "For a Season" friends, 2) "Fairweather" friends** (Job 19:14), **3) "Fake" friends** (Proverbs 27:6), **4) "False" friends** (2 Timothy 4:10), **5) "Faithful" friends** (Proverbs 17:17, 18:24), **and 6) "Faith-Filled" friends** (Hebrews 10:24-25).
- **Real friends are people who remain steadfast and loyal in our lives, who pray for us, and who encourage us to follow God's will in our life.**
- **Everyone needs faithful, faith-filled friends in their lives.**
- ***What does it take to have greater influence with our friends and others?***

To Have Greater Influence With Our Friends We Should:

PRAY FERVENTLY FOR THEM

- *"Devote yourselves to prayer … Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak about His mysterious plan concerning Christ."* (Colossians 4:2-3)
- **Our prayer and action has the power to open doors of opportunity for our friends and other people.**

- "*The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results*." (James 5:16)
- **Prayer helps us to get God involved in our lives and others' lives, and is an avenue for Christians to help one another.**
- "*Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere*."(Ephesians 6:18)
- **Praying for friends shows we care for them and have their best interest in mind.**
- *"Epaphras, a member of your own fellowship and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings. He always prays earnestly for you, asking God to make you strong and perfect, fully confident that you are following the whole will of God. I can assure you that he prays hard for you and also for the believers in Laodicea and Hierapolis".* (Colossians 4:12-13)

To Have Greater Influence With Our Friends We Should:

LIVE THE <u>TRUTH</u> BEFORE THEM

- *"Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly as I should." (*Colossians 4:4)
- **We should all communicate a clear Christian message not only by what we say but also by how we live.**
- "*Those who have been born into God's family do not make a practice of sinning, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they are children of God."* (1 John 3:9)
- **The gospel communicates best when it is given with truth and love.**
- "*I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes . . ."* (Romans 1:16)
- **Those who love God and others do not withhold the truth from them.**
- **"***Wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses from an enemy*." (Proverbs 27:6)
- **Faithfulness to Jesus causes His love to flow through us to everyone.**
- "*In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and He lives in all of us*." (Colossians 3:11)
- **Living out a godly character can influence our companions to become believers and fellow workers for the Kingdom of God (Matthew 5:16).**

To Have Greater Influence With Our Friends We Should:

SHARE OUR <u>LIVES</u> WITH THEM

- *"Tychicus will give you a full report about how I am getting along. He is a beloved brother and faithful helper who serves with me in the Lord's work."* (Colossians 4:7)
- **One of the best places to share our lives with others is in a Life Group.**

- *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer... Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts." (*Acts 2:42-47)
- ***Life Groups* are where we share life together, share ministry together and begin making connections with people of like minded faith.**
- **All of us need to have friends that push us closer to Jesus, and we need to be the friends that bring others closer to Jesus.**
- *"As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend."* (Proverbs 27:17)

To Have Greater Influence With Our Friends We Should:

SEEK TO BE <u>ENCOURAGERS</u> TO THEM

- **We need to encourage everyone around us, but especially our "faithful, faith-filled friends" like Paul did (Colossians 4:5-18).**
- ***What are some ways that we can encourage our "faithful friends"?***
- **We need to encourage our "faithful friends" to *Share Their Faith.***
    - *"Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone."* (Colossians 4:5-6)
- **We need to encourage our "faithful friends" to *Fulfill Their Calling*.**
    - *"And say to Archippus, 'Be sure to carry out the ministry the Lord gave you.'"* (Colossians 4:17)
- **We need to encourage our "faithful friends to *Remain Faithful to the Lord.***
    - *"Epaphras, a member of your own fellowship and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings. He always prays earnestly for you, asking God to make you strong and perfect, fully confident that you are following the whole will of God."* (Colossians 4:12*)*

- ***What is the Lord saying to me through today's message?***
- *"Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.* (Colossians 3:23-24*)*
- **Christian living isn't about being heroes; it's about living by faith and faithfulness, and surrounding ourselves with faith-filled, faithful friends.**
- Jesus - *"There is no greater love than 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 slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are My friends."* (John 15:13-15)