**SERMON OUTLINE**

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| **SERMON TITLE:** | Making Friends Forever |
| **SERMON REFERENCE:** | Proverbs 17:17 |
| **LWF SERMON NUMBER:** | #2001 |
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1. INTRODUCTION
   1. “*A friend loveth at all times*.”
      1. Proverbs 17:17
   2. One of the greatest and deepest needs of human hearts is for friendship.
      1. We have a longing for someone who knows, loves, and accepts us.
      2. Somebody with whom we can share.
      3. Somebody who understands our deepest needs, hurts, fears, and victories.
      4. We need friends.
         1. To say that we do not need a friend would be to deny our humanity.
   3. Today’s message is about how to make friends forever.
      1. It will show us how this can be one of the greatest ministries we can ever do in the name of Jesus and for the glory of Jesus Christ.
2. the marks of a friendship
   1. A friend is someone who shares.
      1. Some definitions of friendship:
         1. A friend is somebody who multiplies our joys and divides our grief.
         2. A friend is someone who understands our silence.
         3. A friend is someone who comes in when the whole world goes out.
      2. Proverbs 17:17
      3. We need friends who will:
         1. Strengthen us with their prayers.
         2. Bless us with their love.
         3. Encourage us with their hope.
      4. A friend is on the scene when we need him or her.
      5. A friend is someone who is wise enough to leave us alone when we want to be alone.
      6. A friend is there to help us celebrate when there is something to celebrate.
         1. A friend is a cause for celebration when there is nothing else to celebrate.
   2. A friend is someone who sharpens.
      1. Proverbs 27:17
      2. A good friend will put a keen edge on our lives.
         1. A good friend sharpens us; a false friend will blunt and dull our lives.
      3. Our English word “friend” relates to the word “freedom.”
         1. A friend is someone who sets us free to be all that we can be.
      4. A friend is someone who encourages us.
         1. They know how to speak the word that will draw us out and lead us on.
      5. Friends make us better people.
      6. Our best friend is Jesus.
         1. He is a friend that sticks closer than a brother.
            1. Proverbs 18:24
         2. He sharpens us by His constant presence with us.
      7. It is a wonderful thing when the person we are married to is a friend.
      8. Friends sharpen us not only by constantly encouraging us, but also by challenging us and confronting us when we have done wrong.
         1. Proverbs 27:6
            1. A friend will love us enough to confront us when we’ve done wrong.
            2. In this verse, “kisses of the enemy” are flattery.

There are a lot of people who love to flatter us.

The difference between a flatterer and a hypocrite:

The hypocrite will say behind your back what he will not say to your face.

The flatterer says to your face what he will not say behind your back.

* + - 1. Thank God for those who love us enough to tell us when there is something that needs to be corrected.
  1. A friend is someone who sticks.
     1. Proverbs 17:17
     2. If you want to know who your real friends are, then make a mistake.
     3. A real friend is someone who stays with us.
        1. Proverbs 18:24
     4. Proverbs 27:10.
        1. Do not forsake a friend.
     5. A friend is someone who walks in when the whole world walks out.
        1. Not like a fair-weather friend who jumps on board when the sun is shining or jumps overboard when the rough times come.
  2. We all have a lot of acquaintances, but thank God for friends.

1. the making of a friendship
   1. Friendships are built.
      1. They do not happen overnight.
   2. Five secrets in making a friend:
      1. All five of these secrets come out of one great principle given by Jesus.
         1. Luke 6:31
            1. “*As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise*.”
      2. “We can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than we can in two years by trying to get other people interested in us.”
         1. Many people are self-centered.
   3. Here are the five secrets in making a friend:
      1. People want to be accepted.
         1. Jesus called His disciples friends.
            1. They were not perfect, but Jesus accepted them.
            2. Jesus does not change us so He can love us, He loves us so He can change us.
         2. We are accepted by the grace of God.
            1. We ought to accept others by the grace of God.
      2. People want to be acknowledged.
         1. If we accept somebody, then we have to acknowledge them.
            1. We have to know that they are there.
         2. The road to the heart is often through the ear.
            1. Pay attention to people.
            2. When people speak, give them your full attention.

Give them eye contact.

* + - 1. Active listening is a God-like quality.
         1. Psalm 34:15

God’s eyes and ears are on us.

If we want people to know, love, and appreciate us, then we have to put our eyes on them and open our ears to them.

And we will be like God.

* + - * 1. Psalm 116:1
      1. When we acknowledge a person, that says they are important to us.
    1. People want to be appreciated.
       1. Find something in somebody that you can complement and appreciate.
       2. “The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated.”
       3. Paul had to address a lot of problems when dealing with people in the Bible and we see in the epistles that almost every time before he corrected them, he would say a word of appreciation or commendation, not condemnation.
       4. Learn to appreciate people.
    2. People want to be affirmed.
       1. We live in a negative world.
       2. People have difficulty doing these steps in making friends because they themselves have such a negative self-image.
       3. There is a problem of teenage suicides today.
          1. Many of these are with teenagers who need to be affirmed.
          2. They need to be loved.
          3. They have a negative self-image.
          4. They are victims of constant put-downs.
          5. They feel that they are not appreciated.

Therefore, they are not affirmed.

* + - 1. Proverbs 11:9
         1. Evil words destroy; godly skill rebuilds.
    1. People want to be assured.
       1. They want empathy.
       2. They want understanding.
       3. Romans 12:15
       4. When people are going through heartache and problems, they are not primarily interested in our answers or solutions.
          1. But they will be interested if we sit down and cry with them and assure them that we care.

1. the maintenance of a friendship
   1. When we build a friendship, we have to maintain it.
   2. Proverbs 17:17
   3. Friendships are difficult to maintain.
      1. Do not have too many of them.
      2. Proverbs 18:24
         1. One translation of this passage says, “*He who would have many friends must show himself friendly*.”
         2. The New American Standard’s translation says, “*A man of many friends will come to ruin*.”
         3. These two translations are just the same thing rendered a different way.
            1. This verse means to not have more friends than we can show ourselves friendly to.
            2. Don’t get overextended with our friendships.
      3. We can have a lot of acquaintances, but genuine friends are costly.
         1. They cost time and effort.
         2. There is an investment.
            1. But it is worth it.
   4. Benjamin Franklin said, “Be slow in choosing a friend and slower in changing a friend.”
   5. Friends can bring personal, social, emotional, and financial demands.
      1. Friendships need to be maintained.
2. the ministry of a friendship
   1. The Lord Jesus ministered to us.
   2. John 15:13-14
      1. In this passage, the Lord Jesus Christ is talking about His ministry; laying down His life for His friends.
   3. Jesus was a friend of sinners.
      1. That is why they crucified Him.
      2. The lost need the love and friendship of Jesus Christ.
   4. We are now His body, and we are to reach out to those who are perishing.
      1. Practical ways we can do this:
         1. We as the leaders (Sunday school teachers, deacons, church staff), need to set the tone and the atmosphere.
            1. We need to be approachable and real.
            2. We need to learn people, not as simply numbers, but as names.

Memorize names.

* + - 1. We as the church need to learn how to greet people.
         1. We need to learn how to shake hands.

Give a good, warm handshake and a friendly touch.

* + - * 1. Meet people with a look, a word, and a touch.

A look: a smile upon your face.

A word: say, “Good morning!”

A touch: just a hand on the shoulder.

Don’t be overly aggressive.

* + - 1. The church needs to influence.
         1. It is more important to influence people than it is to impress them.
      2. Put a welcome sign on your face.
         1. Learn to smile.
         2. Learn to laugh.

Laughter is music.

Learn to laugh at ourselves.

* + - 1. We need to watch our first impressions.
         1. Research shows that people make up their minds in the first twelve minutes whether or not they are going to feel at home or like a church.
         2. People need to be warmly welcomed in the church.
         3. First impressions are very important.
         4. Think about the stranger who is coming for the first time.

Many of them do not even understand Christ.

They don’t know who we are or what we do.

Don’t take for granted that everybody else is just like us, that they understand what we understand.

Take the fear element out by gentleness, winsomeness, and love.

* + - 1. Don’t embarrass guests.
         1. The three biggest social fears people have:

Gathering with strangers

Making a speech

Answering a personal question in public

* + - * 1. They are with strangers, and we ask them to stand up and tell about themselves.

We think we are being friendly, but we are scaring them.

People do not want to say, sing, sign, or sacrifice anything.

* + - 1. There needs to be an atmosphere in the church where people are welcome and feel at home.
         1. The Sunday school class needs to show hospitality.

Serve refreshments.

Some of the greatest times Jesus had with His people were when He was feeding them at a meal or serving refreshments.

John 21:9-13

It relaxes people.

We are sharing together.

That is what fellowship is.

* 1. We have to begin to love people to Jesus.
     1. There is a ministry of friendship.
        1. Show the beauty, love, grace, and kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ.
        2. Most of our so-called fellowships are sacred societies for snubbing sinners.
           1. We have our little holy huddles, and standing over there is a sinner.

They are never invited in.

* + - * 1. Not every visitor is a sinner; not every member is a saint.
        2. We need to include people; Jesus did.

1. CONCLUSION
   1. If you do not have any friends, then make some friends.
      1. Make some friends for Jesus.
   2. Jesus did not condemn lost people.
      1. There is a difference in acceptance and approval.
         1. You can accept people without approving of what they do.
   3. Jesus was crucified for being a friend of sinners.
      1. Matthew 11:19
      2. Jesus loves you.
      3. All have sinned.
         1. Romans 3:23
      4. If Jesus were not a friend of sinners, then we all would be lost.
   4. Thank God that He loves us.
      1. And if God has loved us, then we need to love others.
      2. If God has accepted us, then we can accept others.
   5. We need to be a family of friends as a church.
      1. Begin to make some friends, not merely for time, but for eternity.
   6. Because of the best friend, the Lord Jesus, may you be His friend and a friend to those whom He loves.
   7. Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
   8. Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
      1. Romans 3:23
      2. Romans 10:9-10
      3. Romans 10:13
      4. Acts 16:31
      5. John 3:16