

A Call to Christian Friendship

Ecclesiastes 4:9–12

Friends are (1) a helping hand, (2) provide some safety, (3) often provide comfort, and strength (4).

1. Friends Offer a Helping Hand (vvs. 9-10a)

Read vs. 9

- a. In work and Life
- b. When one Falls
- c. Especially when Falling from Sin

(Gal. 6:1–2).

If we don't have a friend that can help us like this, we need to pray to our Father that He would help us find one. And if we aren't a friend like this to at least a handful of people, we should seek out some brothers or sisters that need such a friend.

2. Friends Provide Some Safety (vs. 10b)

3. Friends Provide Comfort (vs. 11)

4. Friends Provide Strength in Numbers (vs. 12)

Following Christ

In the context of Ecclesiastes 4, the author is warning against the vanity or meaninglessness of working hard to pursue success and wealth but doing it all pretty much for yourself, by yourself, without friends, not sharing yourself or your life, or really serving others much. Jesus made a similar point in His teaching to the Rich young ruler **Luke 12:13-21**.

Jesus is our consummate example of what it means to be a friend, and that of course may not look like what our culture expects friendship to look like, or maybe even what we personally want in a friendship. And that doesn't necessarily mean those things are wrong. We can have desires and wants from a friendship for sure. But we should seek first to follow Jesus in what friendship is, and if someone loves and serves us the way Jesus does, we should praise God for we have found a good friend indeed!

Three clear NT teachings from on friendship.

1. We are called to take the initiative in loving others first (**1 John 4:19**)
2. We are called to love sacrificially (**John 15:13**)
3. We are called to submit to Christ completely in our friendship (**Colossians 3:12-15**)

Augustine wrote that *there can be no true friendship unless those who cling to each other are welded together by God in the love which is spread throughout our hearts by the Holy Spirit.*

This last year has been a challenging one for so many. This next one will I believe be better, but it will still have its challenges for sure. Corona, political unrest, the economy—we all know these things can be stressors. People are in need of some good friends. Let's beg God to lead us into being those kinds of friends in 21, and commit to making it happen! Let's find some new people we can befriend.