

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotionals: Jesus, Our Abiding Friend

AM Message by Bro. Mike Bentley – August 30, 2026

Day 1: A Friend to the Outcast

Reading: Matthew 9:9-13

Devotional:

Jesus did not wait for the respectable to come to him. He walked directly to Matthew, a man society had written off, and said simply, "Follow me." The physician does not refuse the sick; he seeks them out. Consider the people in your own life who sit at the margins, the ones others dismiss or overlook. Jesus moved toward them without hesitation. His friendship was not reserved for those who had already cleaned themselves up. It was offered first, and transformation followed. Who in your life needs you to move toward them today the way Jesus moved toward Matthew?

Day 2: A Friend in Grief

Reading: John 11:17-36

Devotional:

In one of the most quietly powerful moments in all of Scripture, the Son of God, who held the power to undo death itself, stopped and wept alongside those who were mourning. He did not rush past their grief to get to the miracle. He entered into their sorrow first. This is the character of your friend Jesus. He does not stand at a distance from your pain and offer explanations. He draws near. Whatever loss you are carrying today, know that the same Lord who wept at the tomb of Lazarus knows your name and shares your grief.

Day 3: A Friend Who Forgives

Reading: Luke 7:36-50

Devotional:

The woman who entered Simon's house had no standing, no reputation worth protecting, and no claim on the Lord's attention by the world's measure. Yet Jesus received her, defended her, and

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spoke words over her that changed everything. His friendship with sinners was never an endorsement of sin; it was an invitation out of it. Romans 3:23 reminds us that every person in that room, including Simon, stood in need of the same mercy. The question Jesus put to Simon is the same one he puts to us: do you understand how much you have been forgiven? Gratitude and love follow from that answer.

Day 4: A Friend Who Stands Firm

Reading: 2 Timothy 4:16-18; Hebrews 7:25

Devotional:

Paul wrote from a place of deep isolation. Those who should have stood beside him had gone. Yet his account does not end in despair, because the Lord stood with him. This is the abiding nature of Christ's friendship. Human friendships, even the best ones, carry the possibility of disappointment, distance, or loss. Jesus carries none of those limitations. He ever lives, as Hebrews 7:25 describes, to intercede on behalf of those who come to God through him. When you find yourself standing alone in a hard moment, you are not actually alone. Your advocate before the Father has not left his post.

Day 5: A Friend Worth Following

Reading: John 15:12-17; Mark 16:15-16

Devotional:

Jesus redefined friendship at its highest level. He did not call his disciples servants but friends, and he grounded that friendship in a love willing to go all the way to the cross. But he also made clear that this friendship moves in two directions. "You are my friends," he said, "if you do whatsoever, I command you." Friendship with Jesus is not passive. It calls for a response of faith, obedience, and commitment. The same Lord who laid down his life for you now invites you into a relationship that outlasts death itself. The question before you today is simply this: will you follow him?