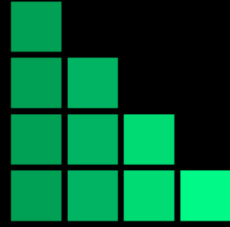


NEW LIFE ONE STUDIES



Study Guide

Message:

“Friend of God”

SCRIPTURE

<i>Main Text:</i>	<i>Other Text:</i>
<i>John 15:12–15</i>	<i>Colossians 1:26–27; Hebrews 4:16; Psalm 23:6; John 1:12; Jeremiah 29:13; James 2:23</i>

UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

*(This section focuses on understanding what the text means —
before jumping to what it means for us.)*

Read John 15:12–15

Main Idea:

Jesus doesn't simply call us servants—He calls us friends and invites us into a relationship of love, trust, and intimacy with Him.

Commentary:

When we think about friendship in Scripture, we find some incredible examples.

David and Jonathan shared a deep covenant friendship. Jesus had His disciples, and within that group He had a particularly close relationship with Peter, James, and John. Paul had meaningful friendships with people like Titus and Timothy.

Scripture clearly shows us that friendship matters.

But Jesus takes friendship to an entirely different level.

In John 15, Jesus says:

“Greater love has no one than this, that a person will lay down his life for his friends.”

Then He says something almost unbelievable:

“You are My friends if you do what I command you.”

Jesus doesn't simply tolerate us. He doesn't merely allow us to come near Him. He calls us **friends**.

And what does He command His friends to do?

Love one another.

Jesus demonstrates the greatest picture of friendship by laying down His life for His friends. His love isn't casual, convenient, or conditional. It is sacrificial.

Then Jesus explains what friendship with Him means. A slave doesn't know what his master is doing, but Jesus says He has made known to His friends what He has heard from the Father.

Friendship with God means He invites us to know Him.

God isn't hiding Himself from us.

He has revealed Himself through His Word. He has given us His Spirit, who teaches, guides, convicts, comforts, and continually points us toward Christ.

God wants to be known. And He wants us to know Him.

Discussion Questions:

1. What stands out to you most about Jesus calling His followers "friends"?
2. How is friendship with Jesus different from simply believing in Him?
3. What does Jesus' command to "love one another" reveal about what friendship with God should look like?
4. What does it mean that Jesus chose to make the Father's heart and purposes known to us?

Takeaway:

Jesus doesn't just call us to follow Him. He invites us to know Him and calls us His friends.

Read Colossians 1:26–27

Main Idea:

God has revealed the mystery of the gospel so that we can know Christ and experience His presence within us.

Commentary:

Paul describes the gospel as a mystery that was hidden for generations but has now been revealed to God's people.

And what is this mystery? **Christ in you, the hope of glory.** Think about the significance of that.

God doesn't simply want us to know *about* Him. Through Christ, He brings us into relationship with Himself.

The Christian life isn't simply learning information about God, attending church, or trying to become a better person. It is **Christ in us**.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the difference between knowing about God and knowing God?
2. What are some ways God has made Himself known to us?
3. What tends to keep us from slowing down and spending time with God?
4. What would it look like for "Christ in you" to shape your everyday life?

Takeaway:

God has made Himself known. Friendship with Him begins when we choose to know Him.

Read John 15:13

Main Idea:

The greatest picture of friendship is sacrificial love, and Jesus demonstrated that love by giving His life for us.

Commentary:

Jesus gives us the ultimate definition of love: **Someone who lays down his life for his friends**. Jesus didn't simply talk about sacrificial love. He lived it. He went to the cross.

He willingly gave Himself for people who could never earn or repay what He was giving.

The cross shows us exactly how deeply God loves us. Jesus already knows everything about you. He knows your failures. He knows your fears. He knows your past. He knows your doubts. He knows the things you wish nobody else knew. And knowing all of that, He still chose the cross. That is the kind of friend Jesus is.

His love isn't based on us having everything together. His friendship isn't something we earn by being good enough. He loved us first.

And because we have received that love, we are called to love others in the same way.

Friendship with Jesus always moves outward.

If we truly know His love, His love should begin flowing through us toward the people around us.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is Jesus' willingness to lay down His life the ultimate picture of friendship?
2. How does knowing that Jesus already knows everything about you change the way you approach Him?
3. What does sacrificial friendship look like in everyday life?
4. Who might God be inviting you to love more intentionally?

Takeaway:

Jesus showed us what friendship looks like by laying down His life for us.

Read Hebrews 4:16

Main Idea:

Because of Jesus, we can approach God with confidence and receive the mercy and grace we need.

Commentary:

One of the most incredible realities of friendship with God is that we don't have to hide from Him.

Hebrews tells us to approach the throne of grace with confidence because Jesus made a way for us!

We don't approach God because we have earned the right to be there. We approach because He has invited us.

God wants relationship with His people.

Discussion Questions:

1. What keeps people from approaching God with confidence?
2. How does God's mercy change the way we approach Him after we fail?
3. What do you need to bring before God's throne of grace right now?
4. How would your relationship with God change if you truly believed He wanted you to come to Him?

Takeaway:

God doesn't tell us to clean ourselves up before coming to Him. He invites us to come and receive His mercy, grace, and help.

MAKE IT PERSONAL

Every one of us knows what it's like to want friendship.

We were created for relationship. We want to be known. We want to be loved. We want someone who will listen. We want someone who will stay when life gets hard. We want someone who knows the real us and loves us anyway. And Scripture tells us that this desire ultimately points us toward

God. Jesus doesn't just offer us information about Himself. He offers **Himself**. He calls us friends. He loves us. He listens to us. He gives us wisdom. He strengthens us. He comforts us. He answers prayer. He fights our battles. He calls us His sons and daughters. He promises His presence.

Psalm 23 tells us that goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives and that we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

This is the God who calls us friend.

Reflect:

1. What does it mean to you that Jesus calls you His friend?
2. Do you tend to relate to God as a distant God, a taskmaster, or a friend?
3. What keeps you from spending more time with God?
4. What would it look like to intentionally get to know God this week?
5. Who is someone God may be asking you to love more intentionally?

Key Truth:

God already knows everything about you. The invitation is to spend your life getting to know Him.

LIVING IT OUT

Let this message move you from reflection to action this week.

Get to Know Him

Spend intentional time with God each day. Read His Word, pray, and create space to listen.

Be a Steward of the Word

Don't simply read Scripture for information. Let God's Word shape your thoughts, decisions, relationships, and actions.

Approach His Throne

When you are struggling, don't run from God. Run **to** Him. Bring your fears, failures, questions, and needs to Him.

Love People Well

Jesus commanded His friends to love one another. Look for a practical way to demonstrate sacrificial love to someone this week.

Slow Down and Listen

Put down the phone. Turn off the noise. Take a breath. Spend time in God's presence and ask, "Lord, what are You showing me?"

Choose Friendship with God

Friendship with God is an invitation, but it requires a response. Choose to pursue Him, trust Him, obey Him, and walk closely with Him.

FOR LIFE GROUPS

ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER

Talk through these together:

1. What does it mean to you that Jesus calls His followers "friends"?
2. Who has been an example of a good friend in your life, and what made that friendship meaningful?
3. What makes friendship with God difficult for you sometimes?
4. What is one practical way you can spend more intentional time with God this week?

5. Who is someone in your life who may need the kind of sacrificial friendship Jesus describes?
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PRAY TOGETHER

Thank God that He has made Himself known and invites us into relationship with Him.

Thank Jesus for laying down His life for His friends.

Ask God to help you know Him—not just know about Him.

Confess the ways you have allowed busyness, distractions, fear, or sin to create distance between you and God.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you slow down, listen, and recognize His voice.

Pray for opportunities to love others sacrificially and reflect the friendship of Jesus.

Ask God to help your group become people who know Christ deeply and make His love known to others.

FINAL THOUGHTS

God really loves friendship.

Not friendship as the world defines it. Something deeper. Something sacrificial. Something eternal. Jesus looked at His disciples and said, **"You are My friends."** The God who created the universe invites us into relationship with Him. He already knows everything about you. He knows your story. He knows your struggles. He knows your failures. He knows your hopes. He knows the things you have never told anyone. And He still

calls you friend. He didn't just tell us He loves us. He demonstrated it. He laid down His life.

The Christian life isn't simply about knowing the right things about God. It's about **knowing God**. So slow down. Open His Word. Pray. Listen. Follow. Love people. Get to know Him.

This Week's Challenge:

Be a friend of God. Seek Him. Spend time with Him. Love what He loves. Listen to His voice. Obey His Word.

And let the love you've received from Him flow through you to the people around you.

Because the God who calls you friend is the God who **laid down His life for His friends**.