God Family Country

# GUIDED BIBLE STUDY

# A Friend Who Sticks Closer

**Speaker: Julie Pedroza**

## Highlighted Scripture

- **Proverbs 18:24 (KJV, excerpt)**

  *"and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."*

  A faithful friend offers a bond of loyalty that can be stronger than a family tie. Julie invites us to recognize people who stay beside us in joyful and difficult seasons. Such friendship is more than having someone agree with us. It includes honest care, trustworthy listening, and a willingness to help each other grow.

- **John 15:13-17 (KJV, verse 13)**

  *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."*

  Before His crucifixion, Jesus speaks to His disciples about His self-giving love, their friendship with Him, and His command to love one another. Read the whole passage: friendship with Jesus includes following His words and bearing lasting fruit. Asking in His name belongs within that life of dependence and obedience; it is not a promise that every personal wish will be granted. His sacrifice is the foundation for our love, not merely an example of being a helpful friend.

## Discussion Questions

- Julie began with the phrase, 'You're my person.' Who has shown you steady care in both good times and hard times? What made that care trustworthy?
- How can you distinguish a friend who lovingly holds you accountable from someone who tries to shape you into the person they want you to be?
- When someone shares a concern, what helps you listen fully before offering advice? How might you point them toward God's Word without making the conversation about your own opinion?
- In John 15:13-17, Jesus joins love, friendship, obedience, and lasting fruit. How does this challenge the idea that a good friend always tells us what we want to hear?
- Julie asks whether we can become that dependable person for someone else. Which part of friendship needs your attention now: showing up, keeping confidence, receiving correction, or speaking truth with kindness?

## Reflection Challenge

This week, practice the kind of friendship you hope to receive. Choose one relationship and one specific way to offer steady, truthful care. Begin by asking Jesus to shape your motives and actions.

**Ask yourself:**

- Am I seeking this person's good, or trying to make them fit my preferences?
- Do I make room for honest correction as readily as I offer it?
- When a friend is unavailable, do I turn to Jesus with my need and remain open to other trusted support?

**Try this:**

- Thank one person for a specific way they have stood by you. Name what their faithfulness meant.
- Arrange a conversation with someone who needs encouragement. Ask how they are doing, listen without rushing, and follow up afterward.
- Read John 15:13-17 slowly. Write one response to Jesus' command to love, then put it into practice this week.
- If a difficult truth needs to be shared, pray first, choose a private moment, and speak with humility. Be willing to listen and examine your own assumptions.

## Remember

- Faithful friendship is shown through steady care, not only warm words.
- A loving friend can offer grace and mercy while still telling the truth.
- Helping someone follow Jesus is different from making them follow our preferences.
- Jesus' love leads us into obedience and a life that bears lasting fruit.
- Receive the gift of trustworthy friends, and take a practical step toward becoming one.
- As Julie says, 'Be blessed and be a blessing.'

## Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the people who have stayed beside me with patience, honesty, and love. Thank You for Jesus, who gave Himself for us. Teach me to receive His love and follow His words. Help me listen before I speak, offer truth without pride, and welcome correction without defensiveness. Show me someone I can encourage this week, and give me the faithfulness to follow through. Shape my friendships around Your goodness rather than my desire to control or be approved.

In Jesus' name, Amen.