



Friends Like These
Do I Need Friends?
Ecclesiastes 4:7-10; Luke 5:17-26

Humans need a few things to survive—water, food, shelter, clothing. Then there are plenty of things we all want—extra money, extra time, hobbies. But let me ask you a question. Where do you consider friendship? For most of us, friendship is something we wished we had, but either don't have the time or don't have the energy to pursue. So, most of us simply choose to live without friends. Here's the problem. Just like we were made to need water, God made us to need friends. Friendship isn't optional. That means we need to prioritize friendship and cultivate those friendships.

We need friends because God created us to need friends.

- As you reflect on the message, what stood out to you? What is something you are still thinking about?
- What is something from the message that challenged you? How are you wrestling with that challenge?
- What question(s) do you have from the message?
- What is at least one practical takeaway from the message?

Ecclesiastes 4:7-10

7 Again, I saw vanity under the sun: **8** one person who has no other, either son or brother, yet there is no end to all his toil, and his eyes are never satisfied with riches, so that he never asks, “For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?” This also is vanity and an unhappy business.

9 Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. **10** For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!

Luke 5:17-26

17 On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with him to heal. **18** And behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus, **19** but finding no way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus. **20** And when he saw their faith, he said, “Man, your sins are forgiven you.” **21** And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, “Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” **22** When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, “Why do you question in your hearts? **23** Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? **24** But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” — he said to the man who was paralyzed— “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home.” **25** And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God. **26** And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, “We have seen extraordinary things today.”

- Be honest with yourself. Do you think you need friends? Or better yet, do you live as though you need friends?
- Why do you think we need friends?
- Read and reflect on Luke 5:17-26. How did the paralytic’s friends provide better effort, support, comfort, and protection?
- Return to Ecclesiastes 4:7-10. Remember that Ecclesiastes is considered wisdom literature. What kind of wisdom are these verses offering?

- We often look at Genesis 2:18 as a passage about marriage, and while that is true this verse goes much deeper than marriage. What does Genesis 2:18 teach us about friendship? Think about how God created us.
- What are some obstacles presently in your life keeping you from friendship?
- Reflect on a time when friendship provided better effort, support, comfort, and protection. What was that like? How can that past experience encourage future friendships?
- What can you do right now to either create a new friendship or strengthen an existing friendship?
- Close by praying for one another and your friendships. Take time to share any friendship-specific requests.