

## TRUE FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD AND NEIGHBOR

### *Note to the speaker:*

Talk should be given in a very warm and appealing manner. Help audience to appreciate the great privilege and joy of becoming Jehovah's friend and why we should make every effort to know him and please him

### **TRUE FRIENDSHIP IS ROOTED IN LOVE** (3 min.)

A friend and an acquaintance are not the same

As regards trust, affection, respect, and loyalty, friendship goes deeper and demands a higher degree of responsibility

A friend is a person for whom we feel affection and admiration and with whom we enjoy familiarity and fellowship

A dictionary defines "friend" as "one attached to another by affection or esteem"

Close friends are happy to fulfill the responsibilities entailed by a strong personal attachment, realizing that these give them an opportunity to prove their friendship

He who asks for friendship without loyalty and responsibility, in reality wants only an acquaintance and not a friend (*w92 6/1 24*)

Foundation of all true friendships is genuine love, which is an enduring quality that never fails (1Co 13:8)

Acting in love, a true friend is there for you in times of distress and gives counsel in faithfulness (Pr 17:17; 27:9)

Love for God will motivate us to gain his friendship

The Bible reveals what we must do to enjoy true friendship with God and with neighbor

### **BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF TRUE FRIENDSHIP** (10 min.)

Bible contains many examples of true friendship, which we can imitate

Ruth and Naomi had an enduring friendship

Ruth, a non-Israelite, displayed unusual devotion and loyal love to her mother-in-law, Naomi

Though widowed and childless, Ruth refused to separate herself from Naomi (Ru 1:16, 17)

Her love was such that later on, others could say that she was better to Naomi than seven sons (Ru 4:15; *it-2 828*)

David and Jonathan enjoyed a very close friendship

David's faith in God and the courage he demonstrated when confronting Goliath undoubtedly impressed Jonathan (*it-2 102*)

They became true friends, took each other into confidence (1Sa 18:1, 3; 20:17, 42; *w96 3/15 4-5*)

Although heir to the throne of Israel, Jonathan put David's interests ahead of his own (1Sa 20:31, 32; 23:16-18; *w89 1/1 24-5*)

Friendship was unbreakable because both men placed friendship with and loyalty to Jehovah God above everything else

When Jonathan died, David deeply lamented his passing (2Sa 1:25, 26)

Jesus and his faithful disciples maintained an intimate friendship

He revealed knowledge to them about Jehovah God (Mr 4:34)

Their friendship endured many trials and will last forever (Lu 22:28-30; Joh 13:1)

Jesus was willing to die in their behalf (Joh 15:11-15)

### **HOW TO BECOME GOD'S FRIEND** (15 min.)

We do not automatically become a friend of God simply because he is our Creator

Faith is required; we must believe that God is, and we must seek his friendship (Heb 11:6)

Necessary to acquire accurate knowledge of him, his personality, activities, and purposes (Joh 17:3)

Need to develop a reverential fear of Jehovah and show love for him by obeying him (Ps 25:14; 1Jo 5:2, 3)

Trust essential for friendship with God

Without trust, no relationship, be it with humans or with God, can last

Abraham understood this and repeatedly manifested implicit trust in God (Heb 11:8, 9, 17-19)

He was therefore called Jehovah's friend (Read James 2:21-23)

God loves righteousness and requires that his friends also love righteousness (Ps 33:5)

Seek friendship with those who are God's friends, and avoid those who clearly have no respect for godly principles (Jas 4:4)

Be loyal to God and be willing to speak in his defense (Isa 6:8)

Do not keep friendship with God secret; make public declaration for salvation (Ro 10:10)

Communication with God is essential to having his friendship

Talk to God in prayer, and reveal your innermost feelings (Php 4:6, 7)

Listen to God by reading his Word and applying his counsel (*w92 6/1 26*)

Proper use of “unrighteous riches” is also involved in making friends with God (Lu 16:9, 11-13; *it-1* 873)

Placing Jehovah’s worship first in our lives and making wise use of our assets will help us maintain our friendship with God (*w94* 12/1 18)

Friendship with Jehovah is dependent on our efforts to live up to Scriptural prerequisites (*w89* 9/15 26-30; read Psalm 15:1-5)

#### **FRIENDSHIP WITH NEIGHBOR** (12 min.)

Friendship means doing more than just acting friendly

Must be genuine and have best interests of others at heart

Follow Paul’s counsel to do good to all, but especially toward those related to us in the faith (Ga 6:9, 10)

Do good to *all* by sharing Kingdom hope with them (Mt 28:19, 20; Joh 15:14)

While, like Jesus, a Christian shows love toward mankind in general, he gives the kind of love that goes with friendship only to those who are friends of God (2Ch 19:2)

Take initiative in offering proof of friendship (1Jo 4:19)

Be willing to give of self, time, understanding, and material assets (Pr 17:17; *w96* 11/1 15)

Adhere to righteous principles, and be loyal (Ps 97:10)

Do not be quick to listen to gossip (*w96* 9/15 22; 3/15 6)

Be honest with friend who needs to hear truth, and do not resent friend who speaks truth (Pr 27:6; Ga 4:16)

Show kindness, be compassionate and ready to forgive (Col 3:12-14)

Humility and being quick to apologize sincerely will do much to help us maintain our friendships (*w96* 9/15 22-4)

If necessary, be ready to sacrifice life for brothers, as Jesus did [Briefly relate one or two verified experiences] (*g98* 10/22 22; *w96* 11/1 18)

#### **BLESSINGS FROM TRUE FRIENDSHIP** (5 min.)

Friendship with God not unrealistic or unattainable

Abraham became God’s friend

Like him, recognize that obligations to God are much greater than those in a human friendship

Jesus was God’s Son and closest friend (Joh 1:18)

As did Jesus, strive to be pleasing to God in *all* things (Joh 8:29; *w92* 6/1 25)

Pursuing friendship with God brings us into a warm and loving congregation of Jehovah’s worshipers (Ps 27:10; 133:1)

There we find true friends, who also have Jehovah as their Friend

Appreciate that all friendships that will endure forever are based on friendship with Jehovah

Friendship with God brings happiness now and leads to everlasting life in the future

Soon, Jehovah and Jesus will usher their friends into a new world, where all will be true friends (Isa 11:9)

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited scriptures need be read or commented on)