

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

Growing up, one of the familiar church songs was "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." The lyrics highlight a prayerful relationship with and calling Jesus a "friend." Prayer is how we communicate with Jesus, but having Him as a friend is a more powerful relationship. Most of us have a circle of friends, but none are as committed to helping us as Jesus. Sometimes, we think of Jesus in a position of power, sitting on His throne in Heaven. We forget that He warmly desires to be our closest friend here on earth. It is amazing to think with all the people who will ever walk the face of the earth, Jesus desires to be our personal friend.

I am reading Gentle and Lowly, The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers. One chapter described Jesus as "A tender friend." The chapter reminds us that Jesus was a friend to tax collectors and sinners – some of the most despised people of their day. Jesus gravitated towards them, and they were comfortable around Him. The book described what he was doing as "pulling them into his heart." Jesus sought to be around those who need Him, including you and me. We are sinners. Allow Him to pull you into His heart.

In your inner circle, there may be a few people in your life that you open up to, sharing your worries and deepest fears. If you are lucky, there is one trusted human friend with whom you can engage in a frank, two-way conversation about almost anything. But, like most people, you still hold back something, fearing their rejection. You don't have to hold anything back from Jesus. He already knows everything and is waiting for you to bring Him into the issues of your life.

During the three years of public ministry, Jesus spent much time preparing the disciples to spread the Good News and carry on the ministry. The disciples called Him Rabbi – which meant teacher. In John 15:15, Jesus made a point of calling His disciples "friends." Jesus said to them, "*No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.*" Jesus is willing to share it all with them. He has a purpose for you, too.



The book Gentle and Lowly tells us, "Friendship is a two-way relationship of joy, comfort, and openness" that we mutually enjoy with Jesus. "Jesus is with us, is one of us, sharing in our life and experiences, and the love and comfort mutually enjoyed between friends are likewise enjoyed between Christ and us." Jesus walks with us through every moment of our lives. When you pray to Him, you are speaking directly to His heart. Invite your tender friend, Jesus, into every aspect of your life.

Prayer: Dear Lord. We invite you into our hearts. We are sinners in need of a true friend who weeps with us in times of sorrow and celebrates with life's victories. Be with us this and every day. Give us peace and strength as we navigate life's trials, temptations, and troubles. Walk with me always, Lord. Amen.

*What a friend we have in Jesus; All our sins and griefs to bear
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit; O what needless pain we bear
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer
Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged; Take it to the Lord in prayer
Can we find a friend so faithful? Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness; Take it to the Lord in prayer.*