



## [John 15:13-14](#)

(13) No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends. (14) You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you.

*A Faithful Version*

We like to think of ourselves as rising to the occasion when a time of great crisis arises. We all [hope](#) to emulate what the heroes of [faith](#) did. But as great as they were, [Jesus](#) says here, "Greater [love](#) has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you." It is very easy to think of the sacrifice implied in "lay[ing] down one's life" as dying for another in one moment of time. Though that may occasionally occur, the context shows this sacrifice within the framework of friendship. Friendship occurs over months and years, not just in one moment in time.

In true friendships, because we are eager to help, we willingly spend ourselves ungrudgingly, without tallying the cost. Friends open their hearts and minds to each other without secrecy, which one would not do for a mere acquaintance. True friends allow the other to see right in and know them as they really are. Friends share what they have learned. Finally, and most importantly for this article, a friend trusts the one who believes in him, and risks that the other will never doubt his loyalty but look upon him with proven confidence.

Though the principle given by Christ is applicable to all friendships, He has one specific friendship as His primary focus: ours with Him, or more generally, ours with [God](#). [Proverbs 18:24](#) says, "A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." That friend is Jesus of Nazareth, but He made it very clear that if we are His friends, we will show it in our obedience to His commands. But before we can obey, we must trust Him.

Take a moment to evaluate yourself. Are you as open and frank with Him as He is with us through His Word? Often our prayers are stiff and formal, not truly honest. Besides

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that, sometimes we become bored in His presence and soon have nothing to say to Him. Is it not true that we do not trust Him as fully as we should? That we are often quick to doubt Him? That we easily grow suspicious of Him? That we lose heart or fear that He has forgotten us? That He is not really trying or is unequal to the task of shepherding us into His Kingdom? Though He has **never** failed us, we are so quick to suspect and blame Him!

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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