



"If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap. If you want happiness for a day, go fishing. If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune. If you want happiness for a lifetime, help somebody."

—Chinese Proverb

**01-Mar-19**

## **Friends of the Friendless (Part One)**

Recently, an old *I [Love](#) Lucy* show came to mind. After a bit of research, I found that the episode I had recalled was titled, "Lucy's Last Birthday."

Thinking that everyone has forgotten her birthday, Lucy leaves her son in the care of an elderly neighbor and goes to a nearby park where she sits alone on a bench and stewes over the perceived thoughtlessness of her friends and even of her husband. While there, a group of traveling street musicians approaches her. She comes to find out that they use their music and comradery to impart encouragement to the forlorn of this world.

All the members of the entourage had their own experiences with loneliness and rejection, and they naturally commiserated with one another. After having been rescued from their loneliness, they reached out to help others—they sought to be the "Friends of the Friendless," which is what they named their itinerant band.

Are we friends of the friendless? [God](#) exhorts His children to adopt this attitude and reach out to others in our fellowship who may be experiencing difficult times. These days, more people than we may imagine lack nearby, sympathetic, external support. The apostle Paul's statement in [I Corinthians 1: 26-27](#) intimates that a good many church brethren fall into this category:

Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many of you were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of [the world](#) to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. (*Holy Bible, New International Version*®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by [Biblica, Inc.](#)® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.)

This passage should help us to have the right mindset toward others in the church. Knowing ourselves and our backgrounds, we are aware that God does not now call the best and the brightest examples of humanity to have a special relationship with Him. We tend to be weak and lack resources, but God saw potential in us. Years ago, a church of God minister jestingly called true Christians "the cream of the crud."

Returning to the *I Love Lucy* episode, Lucy joins the ranks of her new friends and later leads the troupe as they march into the nightclub where her husband is the bandleader. She makes a passionate speech about how she feels, describing herself as "the flotsam of the sea, a pitiful outcast, shunned by [her] fellow man." To help us realize just how low she felt, some synonyms for *flotsam* are "wreckage," "debris," "waste," "dross," "refuse," "trash," and "garbage." She felt neglected, horrible, and worthless. At that moment, she needed a true friend.

No matter who we are or where we have come from, every one of us needs a friend. A recent book by Drew Hunter, *Made for Friendship*, posits that human beings have a universal need for friendship. The book details what a friendship should look like and how to cultivate meaningful relationships. It also offers interesting insights on how to recover true friendship, a few of which are worth sharing in this context.

What was the first instance of negativity in the world? Most of us would immediately answer, "[Sin](#)!" But that is not correct. The first problem in the human world was solitude, aloneness. When God looked at His creation, He repeatedly pronounced things as "good" or "very good," but after He created Adam, the Genesis account tells us that He announced, "It is *not good* that man should be alone" ([Genesis 2:18](#); emphasis ours). His declaration appears before our first parents' sins, recorded in Genesis 3. God judges that an individual alone, without companions, without friends, is not good. We can be sure that He had always planned to create Eve to provide a suitable companion for him, among many other reasons.

Friendship is a major theme throughout the Bible, and since the time of Adam's and Eve's first sins, God has been working to restore friendship between Himself and humanity, as well as between a man and his fellow man. The whole plan of salvation has as its goal to bring God and all humanity into a loving relationship. When [Jesus Christ](#) came, He did not give His life for strangers, but He says plainly in [John 15:13-15](#) that He laid it down for His friends. He suffered and died for those with whom He would have a close, loving relationship.

[The gospel](#) of Jesus Christ is more than forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Our Savior tells us that He gives all who trust Him and obey Him the privilege of being His friends. What is more, we are not to be just His friend but develop friendships with all His friends too: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" ([John 13:34-35](#)). He calls us all to be His friends, and we reciprocate by not only being His friend but also by following His example and forging strong friendships among His disciples.

The Bible contains several examples of friendship: David and Jonathan, Ruth and Naomi, [Moses](#) and Joshua, Paul and [Barnabas](#), and others. They are all worthwhile to study, but in the next essay, we will continue to look at the precedent that our Savior Jesus Christ Himself set for us.

- John Reiss

## **From the Archives: Featured Sermon**

### **[God's Pattern of the Family](#)**

by Martin G. Collins

Radical feminism has deteriorated and compromised all human institutions—from governmental, educational, corporate, religious (including certain segments of the greater church of God) right down to the family structure. Men have abdicated their God-ordained leadership roles, producing chaos and confusion in the wake of this abandonment. The family structure, with assigned orders of responsibility (not orders of importance implying superiority or inferiority), is paramount to God's plan. The Bible contains the domestic history of the family, receiving blessings or cursing according to the success or failure of the father's leadership. The family structure was intended to mirror the Divine spiritual structure with Christ submitting to God the Father and the Church submitting to Christ. In the family, the husband submits to Christ and the wife submits to her husband. As Christ loves the Church, the husband is commanded to love his wife as he loves his own body, sacrificing for her and protecting her, regarding her as co-regent and chief counselor, delegating essential complementary duties to her. He is prohibited from being a pompous tyrant (intimidating her and provoking his children to wrath), but he is enjoined to provide leadership and make decisions, mirroring Christ's relationship to the Church. As men assume their roles as leaders of families, this also extends into the church and into the community. As men abdicate this responsibility, women have been forced to fill the leadership vacuum, contrary to God's intention. As we fulfill our God-ordained family roles, we qualify to become joint heirs with Jesus Christ, ruling over the entire universe.

---

## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **[No Greater Love](#)**

by Staff

Christ says in God's Word that we can show no greater love than in

sacrificing our lives for our friends. How do we do this? We must come to the point where we are doing this daily!

---

If you would like to subscribe to the C.G.G. Weekly newsletter, please visit our [Email Subscriptions page](#).

---