

## session 8 study guide

# the priceless gift of friendship

### starter

COMMON BONDS: Divide students into pairs. Tell each person in the pair that they will have three minutes to find as many things as possible that they have in common with their partner. The students should write the similarities down on a piece of paper. Remind them that they can't say things like "we both have a nose," "we both have eyes," and so forth. After a few minutes, give out prizes for the pair that has the most things in common and the pair that has the most unique thing that they share. Conclude by discussing how having things in common is often a basis for beginning a friendship.

### message

True friendship provides us with a place where we can be cared for, encouraged, listened to, served, forgiven and motivated to grow in faith and share our faith with others. God's Word is rich with such descriptions of a true friend.

### caring and available

Read the following Scriptures, and then write a summary of what they say about being a friend who deeply cares and is willing to be available to a friend in need:

*A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity (Proverbs 17:17).*

*Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn (Romans 12:15).*

*Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2).*

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### encouraging

The special friendship that David and Jonathan had is one of the most inspiring stories in the Old Testament. Read the passages on the next page and then write a summary of how David and Jonathan encouraged each other and how their relationship with God was key to their friendship.

*And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself (1 Samuel 20:17).*

*Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever' " (1 Samuel 20:42).*

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### serving and sacrificing

True friends are unselfish and put the needs of the other person above themselves. Read the following passage and then describe what it means to serve and sacrifice for a friend:

*My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends (John 15:12-13).*

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How do you think this Scripture relates to Jesus Christ being your friend?

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### patient and forgiving

Patience and forgiveness go hand in hand in a true friendship and enable people to endure the ups and downs in the relationship. The following verses give a picture of why patience and forgiveness are such priorities in true friendships:

*Love is patient, love is kind (1 Corinthians 13:4).*

*Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you (Ephesians 4:32).*

What reason does Paul give for being patient and forgiving?

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**considerate with words**

Keeping silent and listening to another person can often be the best way to show friendship. When you do talk, consider the impact of your words—are they helpful or harmful? As Paul writes:

*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen (Ephesians 4:29).*

What could be considered unwholesome talk between friends? What is often the result?

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What is the result of being a good listener whose words are chosen wisely?

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makes you stronger

A true friend will make you a better person—he or she will draw you toward what is good and give you strength to overcome the challenges you face. Ecclesiastes 4:8-12 describes the benefits of a true friend:

*There was a man all alone; he had neither son nor brother. There was no end to his toil, yet his eyes were not content with his wealth. “For whom am I toiling,” he asked, “and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?”*

*This too is meaningless—a miserable business! Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.*

How do these verses describe what a friend is?

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What do you think “a cord of three strands” means?

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## dig

We have many definitions of friendship today, but a true friendship as defined by God's Word is not an everyday event. It takes intentional work and constant maintenance to keep such a friendship going, and this type of relationship can't happen with just anyone.

1. How do true friends respond to each other's hard times (see Proverbs 17:17; Romans 12:15)?

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2. What role does a relationship with God play in building a true friendship (see 1 Samuel 20:42; 2 Corinthians 6:14)?

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3. How is a true friendship with God different from one with a person (see Hebrews 6:13-20)?

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4. Jesus calls us to be His friend. In what ways does He ask us to show true friendship to others (see John 15:12-13)?

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5. What impact might this kind of expression of love have on a friend? How would it impact his or her faith in God?

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6. Why are patience and forgiveness qualities of a true friend (see 1 Corinthians 13:4; Ephesians 4:32)?

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7. What power do our words have—in both positive and negative ways (see Ephesians 4:29)?

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8. How can listening build someone up?

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### **apply**

So, how deep are your friendships? Take the following survey to evaluate the quality of relationships you have with others:

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### **Friendship Survey**

1. How many friends would you say you have in each of the following categories?
- A. Friends who only share a common interest with you (art, sports, music, a school club): \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Friends who are a part of your family life: \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Online friends: \_\_\_\_\_
  - D. Work friends: \_\_\_\_\_
  - E. True friends: \_\_\_\_\_



2. Do you have friends of both sexes? \_\_\_\_
3. Do you have friends who are 5 years younger than you? \_\_\_\_
4. Do you have friends who are 5 years older than you? \_\_\_\_
5. What's the craziest thing you've done with friends?

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6. Who would consider you one of their friends?

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7. What type of friend would they consider you?

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8. List three qualities you have that make you a good friend:

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9. What qualities does your best friend have?

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10. Are your parents your friends? Why or why not?

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11. Do you have more friends or fewer friends than you had one year ago? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Is the number of friends you have important? \_\_\_\_

13. Are you a good friend? Why?

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14. How is the quality of your friendship with God?

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Based on the survey, how would you rank the quality of your closest friendships, with 1 being superficial and 10 being absolutely genuine? \_\_\_\_\_

In developing your friendships, you can take the initiative and be a leader among your peers. The benefits to you and your friends will be worth the work—and even the pain—in that you will have friendships that will weather the test of time and adversity.

1. What can you do to improve your friendships?

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2. Which of your friends has had the greatest positive influence in your life? In what ways?

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3. How can you draw your friends into a closer relationship with Christ?

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4. How can you use God's Word to encourage a friend who is experiencing negative peer pressure?

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5. What are some everyday sacrifices you can make to deepen a friendship?

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6. How can a true friendship with God impact your life? Your other friendships?

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**reflect**

To have true friends, you have to be a true friend—and you need wisdom to know which friendships just aren't going to make it to that level.

1. Why do you think God wants you to have true friends?

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2. True friendship is costly. What do you think it takes to develop a deeper friendship?

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3. Do you have friendships that pull you away from God? If so, what steps can you take to bring these friendships to a place that honors God?

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4. Friends can come and go in your life. How can true friendship with God be a priceless gift?

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5. In regard to the qualities we've been studying, do you recognize when your parent(s) are a friend to you? How does this affect your relationship with them?

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**meditation**



Wounds from a friend can be trusted,  
but an enemy multiplies kisses.

PROVERBS 27:6