

Faithful Love

A friend loves at all times (Proverbs 17:17).

Scripture: Proverbs 17:17-22

Song: “Blest Be the Tie That Binds”

A small-town police chief may be called upon to serve the community in ways other public servants are not. For example, they may go to an elderly citizen’s home for a call and end up helping to change the batteries in a remote control. Or they may deliver groceries to a shut-in during a snowstorm. Those who serve their communities in such ways reflect what Barney Fife once declared on *The Andy Griffith Show*: “The sheriff is more than just a sheriff. He’s a friend!”

The book of Proverbs contains succinct sayings that normally ring true, but exceptions to these principles exist. Even good friends may let us down. But usually they don’t. True friends remain true, regardless.

Christians are called to demonstrate a certain kind of love; in Greek the word is *agapé*. It’s the type of love that keeps giving even when it’s not returned. It acts on behalf of others even when they are our enemies. It’s God’s kind of love. Jesus died for us while we were yet sinners, and He wants us to give our love sacrificially as well. When we ask God for a servant’s heart, He will give us one—along with the opportunities to use it.

Father, show me today how to love others through my actions. In Jesus’ name, amen.

November 27–30. **Martin Wiles** is a Christ-follower who is also a teacher, pastor, freelance editor, author, husband, father, and grandfather. He has authored seven books and has been published in numerous publications.

Love that Sticks like Glue

Peter replied, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will” (Matthew 26:33).

Scripture: Matthew 26:31-35

Song: “Your Love Never Fails”

What would later become Super Glue was invented 1942 by Dr. Harry Coover as he attempted to make clear plastic gun sights for the Allied soldiers during World War II. His concoction didn't work. However, nine years later, while working for Eastman Kodak, Coover needed a heat-resistant acrylate polymer for jet canopies. What hadn't worked for its initial purpose finally found a use, and in 1958 Eastman Kodak put Super Glue on the market.

Jesus called for followers who would stick to Him like glue, but not all would, including Peter—at least not initially. Before God's Spirit transformed him, Peter was impetuous. His heedless nature led to rash words and actions. And although he pledged to go to his death for Jesus, a short time later Peter would deny even knowing Jesus. Peter's love didn't stick. However, God's love for us sticks like Super Glue. Once we enter a relationship with Him, He never abandons us. In the good and bad times, He stays with us.

Fair weather friends come and go, as do casual acquaintances, but loyal friends stick like glue. God offers His own presence to be with us through life. And by the enabling of His Spirit, we can respond to His faithful love by sticking close to Him as well.

Father, thank You for sticking with me. Help me stick close to You that I might always know the nearness of Your presence. In Jesus' name, amen.

Be an Encourager

Encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness (Hebrews 3:13).

Scripture: Hebrews 3:7-19

Song: “How Deep the Father’s Love for Us”

Teachers have the power to encourage or discourage. When a student in my class scores a good grade that represents real effort, I can write, “Good job!” or “Nice work!” beneath the grade. I might even add a smiley face. I could also choose to write nothing except their grade. When the class completes exercises together and a student answers correctly, I can say, “Very good!” or “Way to go!” Or I can say nothing. School can be tough. Students need all the encouragement they can get.

So do believers. The writer of Hebrews recalls Israel’s foibles in the wilderness after God had delivered them from 400 years of slavery in Egypt. Instead of being the most faithful people—as they should have been—they habitually disobeyed God and complained. Moses had to continually encourage them during their wilderness sojourn.

Being a Christian is tough when life is difficult. Reading God’s Word regularly will encourage us, and having Christian friends who encourage us is essential. Encouraging rather than discouraging, being optimistic rather than pessimistic—these require intentionality. God will give us the right words to encourage others when we ask Him. And as we encourage others, we will also be encouraged.

Father, as I walk through this day, I will seek to encourage others. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Love Loves Everyone

[God said,] “When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them” (Leviticus 19:33).

Scripture: Leviticus 19:30-37

Song: “O the Blood”

The new kid on the block: no one wants to be one, but I often was. Growing up as a preacher’s kid, I found myself the victim of frequent moves. Dad loved preaching, but he did not like staying in any one place for long. And so he didn’t. Every two or three years—sometimes every year—we moved. A few peers made me feel welcome during those years, but most kept to their little groups. Now, as a long-time teacher of middle schoolers, I have noticed the same pattern among my students. Loving and accepting newcomers proves challenging for most.

Many of God’s Old Testament laws seem irrelevant to present-day readers. But the law about loving foreigners—or anyone unlike us—remains relevant. God loves people, and He wants us to show His love to them as well.

God loves variety in plants and animals, as the many aspects of creation demonstrate. He also loves variety in people, as our various languages and cultures reveal. No two of us are exactly alike, but we all have this in common: God loves us and calls us to love each other. He loved everyone enough to give His Son to die for our sins, and the second greatest commandment is for us to love others as we love ourselves. We can challenge ourselves today by seeking to demonstrate God’s love to someone outside our usual comfort zone.

Father, thank You for giving me ability to love others as You love me. In Jesus’ name, amen.