



## CONNECTED - FRIENDS (SERMON SERIES FROM JOHN 15)

(From 10/29/17 sermon - Spencer)

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I. **OPEN** - See if there is anyone who wants to share a short testimony, or if there are there specific praise updates or victories that someone might want to share.

### II. **PRAY**

III. **READ TOGETHER John 15:1-15** - *(Our emphasis for this week is found in v 12-15)* **1**"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. **2** Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.**3** Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. **4** Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. **5** I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. **6** If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. **7** If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **8** By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. **9** As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. **10** If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. **11** These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. **12** This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. **14** You are my friends if you do what I command you. **15** 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."

*\*Be sure to take time to slowly walk through this passage, preferably having a Bible teacher provide context and overview.*

**Q** - Sermon takeaways from those who were in attendance? (Spend time receiving reflections from those who were in the service.)

### IV. **REFLECT**

Because of social media, real friendship has taken a beating in last decade. In fact, the Edge Research in their 'State of Friendship in America' study finds friendship in America very depressing. 70% of us all want deeper friendships...but have no idea how to be a better friend. We are expecting from others what we can't be ourselves. This is, as the studies have shown, a crisis in confidence in others. Americans require, loyalty, fun to be with, likes me, and a decent person as the top qualifiers in friendship. Doesn't our friendship status mean that we are friends? Aren't the number of friends equal to how I feel accepted? No, there is no clear indicator between the number of 'friends' you have on line and how you experience 'friendship.' Social media

is a tool, but it doesn't find nor define your friendship...if anything, it causes us to feel a false or superficial connection to people.

This is what Jesus is telling us and is combatting. You can be a good friend, *because* you have first been befriended...not by just anyone...but by the creator of the universe. You can love others (befriend others) *because* He has first loved us. The Gospel truth is that He gave of Himself wholly and completely so that He could call us His friends.

**Q** - How has social media brought confusion to the term "friend" and maybe watered down what true friendship should look like? Discuss.

Go back and look at and read through v. 15 again. Jesus is showing a contrast between a servant and a friend. He has given us very clear instructions for daily Kingdom living, and as His "servants" we are to carry out those responsibilities. However, and this is important, not only has He given us these instructions, but He has also gone above and beyond to reveal Himself to us...His heart, His pain, how he thinks, who He truly is. He didn't have to reveal Himself in this way, but He does.

**Q** - Think about some of the ways that Jesus reveals Himself to us. How does He treat us as friends and not just servants. Take time and think through this one carefully, because in these findings and conclusions we see the heart of the Gospel itself...that God truly loves us and is willing to sacrifice of Himself to have communion with us.

**V. FURTHER APPLICATION -**

**WHAT'S YOUR STATUS?**

Today's Scripture reminds us that we are no longer servants but that Jesus has chosen us to be his friends. Our status and identity has moved from obeying tasks to enjoying a relationship. This week, we are asking that you list out the differences between "being a friend" and "being a servant". We must constantly be reminded that Jesus is the one who changes our status...nothing else.

**SERVANT**

**FRIEND**

**VI. BE ON MISSION** - Jesus has thousands upon thousands of friends, but He also selected 12 to walk with daily in a more intimate manner, and of the 12 He chose 3 to walk even deeper with. a) Who do you have that has befriended you that you need to reach out to to say thank you and let them know that they are loved and appreciated? b) Or, who do you desire to befriend at a deeper level and what steps can you take this week to do so. True friendship is hard...it requires honesty and time. But because friendship originated with the heart

of God, we know that it is so worth it. Lets let our lives be characterized by a few real friendship where there is loyalty, honesty, and sacrifice. And if you desire such a friendship, we encourage you to take it to the Lord in prayer each day.

**VII. LOOKING AHEAD-**

We encourage all CG members to continue reading, praying, and worshipping through John 15 each week.