

the cross of Calvary, He laid down His life for you and me. Not because we were friends with Him, but because He was friends with ALL.

My friend, and I do consider you a friend, perhaps not a "best friend", but a friend enough to lovingly share with you this crucial fact. As much as God loves you, your end result will not be eternity with Him in Glory, but quite the opposite. Yielding to Him means you've chosen Jesus Christ to be your life-long Lord and Savior; given Him complete control, confessed your sin before Him for His forgiveness, mercy and grace, repented and allow the Holy Spirit to guide you as you grow in Him. While Hell was NOT created for human habitation, but for the angels that had fallen, if you do not choose His free gift of

salvation here on earth, when you pass into the next life, He will have no choice but to say, "depart from Me, I never knew you". What a horiffic thing to even imagine; Eternity in Hell.

So dear ones, while we can enjoy our friendships here on Earth, and continue to feed them and grow them, remember, there is a Friend that sticketh closer than a Brother, His Name is Jesus!

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"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him (His Son) should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)
"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved!"

(Acts 16:31)

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The Most Important Question of Your Life...

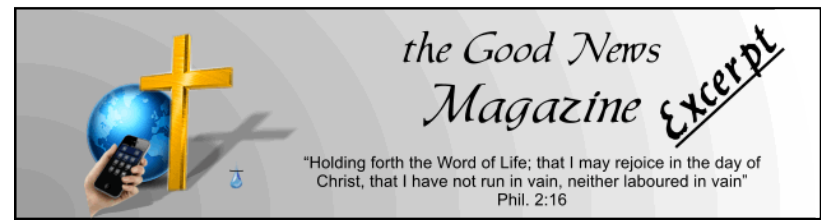
If you died tonight, do you KNOW if you'd go to heaven?

The Easy Steps to KNOW for Sure:

== A == Acknowledge you are a sinner
ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23

== B == Believe the shed Blood of Jesus Christ is the only way to be saved.
The wages of sin is death* but the GIFT of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:23

== C == Confess to God you know you are a sinner and call upon Him to come into your heart.
For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Romans 10:13



Proverb Of Friendship

by Deborah Webster Senese

I think each one of us can look back to the days of our childhood. That last day of school when every child from every class came shooting out of the school building like a bullet. Huge smiles on our faces; It was the last day of school & the first day of summer. What was summer? Playing outside with your friends from dawn til dusk. Yes, there were the whole group of neighborhood friends that we played with, but it always seemed to come down to one special friend whom you did everything with.

Friendships are important. Not just to us as humans, but even throughout scripture, we're shown examples of friendships. My favorite was the true friendship love between Jonathan & David. So much so, that we named one of our sons Jonathan David! The struggles they had to go to just in order to be able to meet together, the risks Jonathan took to even see David when he knew his father was seeking to kill him. But they had a friendship that even those

fears couldn't keep apart. True friendship.

I believe that we take friendships for granted. We have the friends that can do for us and that's when they're our friends. Otherwise, we really don't have too much contact. Then there are the friends that we don't hear from them until they need something from us. There are friends that when you meet for the first time, you instantly click and grows into life-long friendships. That is true friendship.

To have someone, that when your heart is burdened about something, to be able to pick up the phone, or write and pour your heart out to them and them alone knowing they're not going to critique what you share, but prayerfully take before the Lord with you, and seek Godly advice to share back with you, encourage you, cry with you, rejoice with you. These friends are hard to find. But is a true blessing once found. For they are the ones that would do what seems to be impossible for you. The Bible gives us many examples of not only WHAT kind of friend to look for, but the benefits of a true

friend, how you know if they are a true friend, and how to keep that friend.

We're told right in Proverbs 18:24 - "*A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly.*"

Absolutely! A true friendship is give and take. Not one of us is perfect. Even the best of friends, when asked, I'm sure can point out flaws in our characters. Perhaps one we're not aware of, perhaps some we're working on. However, if we prove ourselves to be friendly through thick and thin, it does tend to bring the bond closer together. Does that mean we'll never disappoint? By no means. It means that we do our best to be friendly towards others, and they will either respond in kind, or turn the other way not looking for true friendship. A good verse backing this up is Proverbs 17:17 - *A friend loveth at all times,*" Not just when its been a good day, or everything has gone right. But even when we mess up, have a bad day, hurt them verbally (intentionally or unintentionally). Do we hold a grudge toward them and punish them with our silence when they come to us with an apology? Or perhaps never apologize at all? They may not have realized they even hurt or offended us. But they are our true friend.; And we should love them at ALL times.

True friends also do something to each other. Its like putting two halves together when they are together. They compliment each other. Proverbs 27:17 - "*Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.*". Best friends, true friends, just bring out the best in each other. True friends are not afraid to confront a friend with an issue they may see going in a wrong direction. Because they love them, they may need to share some painful things with them. Hearing those things may be even more painful than the person sharing them. However, a true friend is going to listen, and then "hear" what the friend is saying as they are not one in the same. You can listen to music in the background and hum along subconsciously. But hearing is taking in every word, and pondering it. Praying about it, even praying together about it. In the end, if its a true friendship, you will both come out stronger than before. That is why we are told in Proverbs 27:6 - "*Faithful [are] the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy [are] deceitful.*"

There are many types of friendships, but the one true one is the most important. We're told in the latter part of Proverbs 18:24, "...and there is a friend [that] sticketh closer than a brother." We all have access to this Friend, if we

choose to. That is Jesus Christ! He's as close as a whispered prayer away. Once you have found and yielded your life over to Him, He IS that friend that will NEVER desert you, turn away from you, leave you alone in the darkness of night when you're heart is so heavily burdened. He knows us, He loves us, and He cares for us in a way that our earthly friends may fall short at times. He will not! We're assured of this in John 15:13 - "*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*" Jesus Christ was this man. While He walked this earth, He was man and God. Yet it was His humanity that He offered freely, without hesitation, for His friends...that we may be with Him always even into eternity. And yes, while Jesus was here on earth, it is mentioned in scripture that He was a friend to all, and yet, He had a couple of "best friends". One we know was Lazarus. John 11 conveys this in vs.3 "*Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.*" And again in vs. 5 "*Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.*" While Jesus had a plan, and knew what His Father wanted Him to do, in the eyes of the disciples, Jesus was taking a great risk for these friends as we read in vs. 7 "*Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into*

Judaea again. 8 His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?" But that didn't stop Him. We continue reading and it says, "*after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth;*" So we see that while here on earth, He did have friends...and He saw His friend die. And it effected Him, we know, as one of the most popularly quoted verses because of it being the shortest verse in scripture is because, "Jesus wept". Even though He knew He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead, it pained Jesus so, that He wept. When Jesus tells us He knows all that we've been through, every pain, every emotion we feel, its because He did while here on earth; Everything but sin. That is why He was able to be that One and only special Friend who could lay down His life for a friend. On

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The above is an excerpt from the August 2015 issue of the Kenya-USA magazine: The Good News Magazine. The full issue, including a word search puzzle and more God-honoring articles are at:

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