

1. *How can I make friends?* Many people simply do not know how to begin a friendship. They might on occasion stumble into a friendship, but they are often disappointed by the quality of it.

2. *How can I deepen some of the friendships I already have?* There are those who have little difficulty making friends. They do experience problems when the time comes to allow the friendship to grow into a deeper, more trusting relationship.

This resource material is designed to help you deal with these questions. Through the last session, you have studied the value of friends. In this session, you will examine practical ways to establish and deepen friendships. The texts for this session are very different from one another. However, each of them provide some very important guidelines concerning friendship.

The first portion of Scripture comes from the Old Testament—1 Samuel 18:1-4; 19:1-10; 20:1-42; and 2 Samuel 9:1-11. Each of these passages deals with the friendship of David and Jonathan. Be sure to read the entire account concerning their friendship. You will be able to glean numerous insights that can be applied to friendships today. Here are some for you to consider.

gives all of God's people advice concerning many aspects of Christian living including friendships.

As you work through the passages, you will notice that most of James' instructions concerning friends can all be categorized under the heading *showing love*.

We need to spend some time defining love because God did. If God thought we would always know the loving things to do, He probably would have not spent so much time in Scripture defining love and explaining how to practice it. Many times what we think to be love does not meet the standards of love God has set up in His Word. Therefore, we must constantly examine God's commands to measure the quality of our love.

Here are some suggestions you may wish to share with teens for developing and deepening friendships.

### Initiating Friendships

1. Take notice of other people. Don't be so caught up in your own world.
2. Ask others questions about themselves—their hobbies, interests, family, goals, etc.
3. Use the *ball technique* in your conversations. When someone asks you a question, answer it. Then, *throw the ball back* by asking them a question.

1. *David and Jonathan had totally different backgrounds.* David was a shepherd while Jonathan was the son of the king. Such differences did not deter their friendship. Many people today may be missing out on some wonderful blessings if they only associate with people who are like them.

2. *These two men were committed to each other.* They even risked their lives for each other. For example, Jonathan was almost killed by his own father because of his friendship with David.

3. *David and Jonathan cared for each other, even at great personal sacrifice.* Jonathan helped David escape from Saul even though he endangered his own life. David, on the other hand, was able to care for Jonathan's son after Jonathan died.

4. *Although David and Jonathan provided and cared for each other, neither one of them was too proud or stubborn to refuse the help being offered.* They did not view self-sufficiency as the most important achievement. They valued their friendship more.

The second portion of Scripture comes from the New Testament—James 2:1-8; 3:2-9, 14-18; 4:11, 12; 5:16-20. In these passages, James does not tell us a story about two friends, but

4. Make it your goal to become more like Jesus. As you do you will enrich your potential for being a good friend.

### Deepening Friendships

1. Be willing to invest time and energy, both physical and emotional, on your friend.
2. Share your joys and burdens. Pray for your friend.
3. Confess your sins to one another. Keep each other's confidences.

### Reconciling Friendships

1. Talk to your friend before you talk to others (see Matthew 18:15-20).
2. Don't let pride prevent you from saying, "I'm sorry. I was wrong."
3. Realize that you don't always have to agree to be friends.
4. Understand your friend's viewpoint. Respect each other.

Like anything else that is worthwhile, friendships take time, effort, and love. It was God's desire to make us His friends that prompted Him to send His Son. That same desire moved Him to die on the cross for us. His desire for our friendship has allowed us to be rejoined to Him through our submission to Jesus Christ. Let's imitate His example.