

1 Peter 2:19-25 NIV
“Would you have stayed in Gethsemane with Jesus?”



“For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. ⁽²⁰⁾ But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.

“⁽²¹⁾ To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. ⁽²²⁾ "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."

⁽²³⁾ When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

“⁽²⁴⁾ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. ⁽²⁵⁾ For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”

Today’s subject is friendship.

Friendship relates to a demand Jesus made. Jesus gave a mandate he wants us to take seriously and literally.

Peter referred to it in verse 21 of our text:

“To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.”

To what example of Jesus did Peter refer? Jesus made it clear in John 15.

“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command.”¹

Jesus’ command related to friendship suggests two questions:

- A) Do I follow Jesus’ example in my friendships with others?**
- B) Am I Jesus’ friend?**

We joke a lot about friendship.

False Friend – “Someone who is always around when he needs you.”²

"Acquaintance, n. A person whom we know well enough to borrow from, but not well enough to lend to."

¹ John 15:13, 14 NIV

² Wagster’s Dictionary. – p 18.

"A degree of friendship called slight when its object is poor or obscure, and intimate when he is rich or famous."³

"In prosperity our friends know us; in adversity we know our friends."⁴

I heard about a famer, who was detained for questioning about an election scandal. "Did you sell your vote?" the attorney asked.

"No sir, not me," the farmer protested. "I voted for that there fella 'cause I liked him."

"Come, now," threatened the attorney. "I have evidence that he gave you fifty dollars for a vote."

"Well, now," the farmer said, "it's plain common sense that when a fella gives you fifty dollars you like him."

Consider our two questions.

First, in my friendships with others, am I following Jesus' example?

- **Would I be willing to give up my comfortable chair and favorite TV program to go help you when you are hurting?**
- **Would I risk my life to save you?**



- **Would I face the scorn of others in order to protect your reputation; not join in criticizing you when others are having a good time doing it?**
- **Would I share with you if you were going without necessities?**

A farmer named Bert traveled from his home in rural Maine to faraway Boston. There he heard a lecture on socialism.

To Bert, socialism sounded like a pretty good thing: everyone sharing with one another other and helping each other out. He went back home and announced to his friend and neighbor, Harry that he had become a socialist.

"So, tell me what this socialism thing is, Bert," said Harry. Bert explained that it was all about sharing with one another and helping one another out.

"Let me see if I understand this. Are you saying that, if you had two farms, you'd give me one?"

"Sure," said Bert.

"If you had two pickup trucks, would you give me one?" "Sure."

"If you had two hogs, would you give me one?"

Bert suddenly got red in the face and began looking at his shoes. "That's pretty low, Harry," he said.

"You know I've got two hogs!"⁵

³ Ambrose Bierce (1842-1914, (U.S. writer and poet), *Cynic's Word Book* (1906).

⁴ John Churton Collins (1848-1908), British writer and scholar

⁵ Source unknown

Jesus’ type of friendship means that if you are hurting I’d share one of my two hogs with you.

Not petition or expect the government to do it, or some charity, I’d give you a hog or take the money from my own pocket to pay for your need.

If I were down to one hog, I’d share half a hog with you.

If necessary I’d lay down my life for you.

Am I willing to suffer on your behalf?

One qualification: If you are a Christian, you work to support yourself; you don’t depend on others.

Here’s the true spirit behind Jesus’ command.

“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command.”⁶

Now to our second question:

Am I a friend of Jesus?

Throughout that last evening with Jesus, the disciples kept bragging about their devotion to him.

“I’ll never leave you.”

“I won’t let you down.”

“I won’t forsake you.”

“Jesus, no one is more devoted than I am.”



That type of boasting boomed across the supper table in that comfy upper room.

A few hours later in Gethsemane, the disciples grew tired and sleepy.

Jesus told them how much he was hurting.

The braggarts all fell asleep.

Judas came with the mob and soldiers.

The disciples showed a little bravado.

Peter drew his sword and tried to sever the head of the high priest’s servant.

He didn’t amputate poor guy’s head; only his ear.

When Jesus didn’t resist, the disciples all ran.

Not one windbag remained with Jesus.

Would you have stayed with him in Gethsemane?

It’s hard to put ourselves in that setting.

But when others curse using His name, do we curse with them?

When people make fun of godly principles, do we join in the mockery, stay silent, or boldly say we believe God?

Do you give God the first of your time?

What priority does He have in your wallet, purse or budget?

⁶ John 15:13, 14 NIV

Are you with him all the way through the garden?

An old legend about Martin of Tours tells that one day, that dedicated man sat in his prison cell praying. After a knock at the door, an august presence entered his cell. Martin sensed something very imposing about this mysterious figure, who had come to visit him. Martin stood and bowed deeply, then asked his distinguished visitor who he was. In a voice with great authority, the visitor answered, **“I am your savior come to release you.”** Martin felt uncertain what to think and how to determine if the visitor was telling the truth.

“Would you be so good as to show me the signs of your suffering?” Martin asked humbly. Whereupon, so the story goes, the devil vanished. **Only a true savior suffers with and for those being saved.**

True disciples follow Jesus’ command to suffer with Him.

“To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.”

The Apostle John emphasized another command:

“And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.”



Our society tends to focus on individual stars. Yet the Lord expects us to work as group—as a body—as a team.

Team players know the importance of doing their part.

One day in football practice about 100 years ago, we were scrimmaging. One of our tackles got lazy and didn’t block his man. Our quarterback got really roughed up. The coach said to the tackle,

“You are the quarterback on the next snap.”

While one assistant coach showed the big tackle how to take the snap from center, the head coach told all the other offensive linemen not to block.

Let the defense charge through.

We all saw what a team sport football is.

The tackle caught on even faster.

He made a spectacular play later in a game.

If the Lord lets me attend another high school reunion, I intend to ask that big tackle if he recalls the day he played quarterback during scrimmage.

On outstanding teams, running backs don’t just know how to run when they have the ball.

They also block to protect the passer or the kicker.

They keep blocking until the play ends.

Defensive linemen don’t just make their initial charge at the runner.

If the runner gets past someone else,
that defensive lineman goes after the runner
and doesn't quit until the play is over.

A man who coached youth baseball illustrated the need to be a team in this way: At the first practice, I asked all players what position they wanted to play. Inevitably, the aspiring superstars responded with pitcher or shortstop. I had to explain that God had given some of them the talent to catch and that first base or catcher would be good positions for them. Others had the gifts of running fast and tracking the ball, so outfield was good for them. I found over the years, that God also sent youngsters with the variety of gifts that made a whole team (even if the gifts were in need of some polish).⁷

The Lord has each of us here for a reason. Each of you has a gift for you to use lovingly.

As the Book of Romans explains:

"Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others."⁸



⁷ From Emphasis

⁸ 12:4, 5 NIV

**The Lord expects us to work and act as a team.
We work with one another.**

We act on behalf of one another for God's glory.

We love one another as though we are family.

I read about a wise, old rabbi sitting by the side of the road. A robber came along and said, "Give me your valuables." Without hesitation, the old rabbi said, "Here, this is a valuable diamond and here are two rubies and some emeralds. Take them; go with my blessing." The next day, the robber came back; he gave the jewels back to the rabbi, sat beside him and said, "Forget the jewels, I want whatever it was that made it possible for you to give them to me."

The world should say of us, "We want the unselfish, love that you have in this church."

**"May the Lord make us increase and
abound in love for one another and for all."**

That works to God's glory in Christ.

"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."

Bob Blair

PO Box 176

Cleghorn, IA 51014

www.robertblairbooks.com