

What is a *Friend*?

From Ronald L. Dart's Program Notes

All of us have lost friends at one time or another for various and sundry reasons. Some of you may have lost friends because you changed your church affiliation or the place where you worship. But you may have lost friends from time to time for other reasons and it is too easy at a time like that to conclude, "Well, I guess they just were not real friends after all. After all, if they had been real friends, they would still be my friends"—once a friend always a friend.

An Analogy for Friendships

It is really a mistake to think that a friendship is indestructible. For even a true friend and even the closest of friends can be alienated and sometimes it's easier to do than we would like to admit, or to face up to. Friendship is a hardy plant but it is not a weed. It will not survive just any old kind of treatment. Like bedding plants, some are hardy and others are not. But if your dog decides your plants make the perfect place to dig or to roll on, most plants aren't hardy enough to take that treatment. Even though you put them in the ground and water them, you're unlikely to have beautiful flowers under such circumstances.

They are hardy plants but they really don't do well with your dog sitting

on them. This is not a very good analogy for friendship but the point is that friendships will survive a lot of things but there are limits and sometimes we can lose real friends along the way who were not false friends, who were not traitors to us, who were not fair-weather friends, as we are prone to call them. They were real friends but somewhere, somehow along the way something went wrong.

If You Have Lost a Friend

You also need to bear in mind, if you have lost a friend, so has the other person, so has your friend. He lost you as a friend and you know he may be sitting around thinking similar thoughts to yours. It is very possible that there are any number of people in the world right now who you think were your friends, and now you say I don't know if they ever were my friends at all. And probably they sit around some nights with their feet up before the fire saying, "Boy, I sure

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thought he was my friend, but I guess he really wasn't my friend after all."
False Friends

There is such a thing as a false friend, but generally speaking a false friend is a hypocrite. He is a person who really knows he is a false friend, who really knows he doesn't like you, but he is pretending to like you because it suits him—it fills his needs for one reason or another.

Conditional Friends

Let's talk about two broad

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CEM is a 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Organization . . .

What does it mean that Christian Educational Ministries is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization? It can mean a lot to you. The offerings and donations you make to CEM can be tax deductible. Speak to your tax accountant or tax preparer to determine how you can deduct your charitable donations and save money on your taxes.

“When The Righteous Thrive, The People Rejoice, But When A Wicked Man Rules, The People Groan”

By Richard Glasgow

That verse is found in the Book of Proverbs, chapter 29, verse 2 and its profundity is eternal regardless of whether or not a person or a nation believes the Bible.

Here in the United States we haven't had “rulers,” as such, as other nations have had throughout the ages. Our elected officials have generally been aware of their temporal term in office and have, for the most part, submitted to the law of the land which is our United States Constitution. After all, they do take an oath to uphold that Constitution.

Oh sure, we've had dishonest presidents, immoral presidents, misguided, naive and maybe even *stupid* presidents in my lifetime, but I don't really think any of them have been “wicked.” That would be a pretty serious charge.

I won't call our current president and his ilk “wicked,” but people all across the country *are*, in fact, *groaning* about the downward spiral besetting virtually every aspect of our society. Mainstream culture has become coarse and ribald. Language is becoming uncensored and morals are maligned as outdated and prudish. Christianity is openly mocked and God has been thrown out of any institution with

government ties. Everything seems to be upside down.

On the other hand, there are growing numbers of people who oppose abortion. Pro-life organizations have been very successful in closing down abortion clinics in recent years, but the current “ruling” party embraces abortion as if it were the most sacrosanct sacrament of their secular humanist religion. Even tax dollars are used to fund Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest provider of abortions.

But (and this is a very big but) the problems being caused by our expanding government cannot be solely blamed on the president and his willing minions. Congress is as much to blame as the Executive Branch and sadly, even more importantly, it's *we the people* who allowed these politicians to be elected and empowered.

Our founding fathers knew well the responsibility of citizens to be well informed and engaged when it came to electing officials to positions of power. Read what Noah Webster had to say: “When you become entitled to exercise the right of voting for public officers, let it be impressed on your mind that God

commands you to choose for rulers just men who will rule in the fear of God (Exodus 18:21). The preservation of a republican government depends on the faithful discharge of this duty. If the citizens neglect their duty and place unprincipled men in office, the government will soon be corrupted; laws will be made not for the public good so much as for selfish or local purposes; corrupt or incompetent men will be appointed to execute the laws; the public revenues will be squandered on unworthy men; and the rights of the citizens will be violated or disregarded. If a republican government fails to secure public prosperity and happiness, it must be because the citizens neglect the Divine commands and elect bad men to make and administer the laws.”

We can't sit back and bemoan the evil excesses and corruption of big government without trying to do something about it, even though it looks like we may be way beyond the point of no return. We need to be “doing the work,” up until the time of Jesus' return and that “work” includes being the salt and light to the world and doing all we can to have a positive influence on society.

In Memory

CEM has received a special gift in memory of Mary Ann Kennedy. Mary Ann was born November 2, 1917 and passed away December 22, 2013. She is survived by her only child, Sharon Padozzi; granddaughter, Renee Sibet; grandson, John Padozzi; and seven great grandchildren, James, Michael, Christy, Katya, Jeremy, Aimee and Heather. She will be greatly missed. Please keep her family in your prayers.

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categories, which there seem to be, of friends. The first of these is what I have chosen to call “conditional friends.” A person who likes you because of what you can do for him is a conditional friend. That is easy to follow, isn’t it? If you happen to be doing pretty well yourself and you are fairly well-off with money and you take him and his wife out to dinner every so often, they rather enjoy that, they like that and they enjoy your company. It is a lot of fun, and they are friends of yours but they are to some extent a friend because of what you can do for them. If you are in a position where you have a certain amount of influence and you can actually do them a favor as far as connecting them with certain people at one time or another, they can like you, they can genuinely appreciate you, but the friendship is to a fairly large extent influenced by what you can do for them. It may not survive if the condition does not survive. It is to say, I will be your friend as long as, I will be your friend until, I will be your friend up to a point, I will be your friend if or maybe or when or whatever the condition that a person sees fit to tie on to the friendship.

A person who likes you for what you have done for him is a grateful person, but he may be a conditional friend. The condition has to do with something that you did and he feels he’s the kind of guy who would feel like a terrible ingrate if he wasn’t your friend or didn’t return the favor.

A person who likes you, because of what he hopes you will become, is a conditional friend. Now does that make any sense to you? A person who thinks that you can be more than you are, a person who hopes for

better things out of you, a person who’s looking to a better you or the image of you who hopes that you might become, is a conditional friend. And when the time comes when he no longer has any hope that you will ever become what he thinks you will, he ceases to be your friend.

Conditional Church Friends

In many churches there can be conditional friends where the people visualize in their mind an image, an idea, a concept of something ideal. When you don’t seem to measure up or don’t measure up quickly enough, or conclude that you never will measure up, they ceased to be your friend.

Some marriages come apart because of this. A husband and wife get married and the woman might think that someday this man is going to amount to something. As time goes on he doesn’t seem to. Then she loses a certain amount of confidence and finally she decides she doesn’t love him anymore. It was like conditional love in the first place or maybe she was in love with the image of the man that she hoped for, that she thought he would become, and when she lost the hope, he was no longer her love, he was no longer her friend. It is a wonderful thing when a marriage is built upon romance, love and friendship.

In too many cases, the friendship turns out to be conditional and of course this kind of conditional friendship both in marriage and elsewhere creates a great deal of strain on the relationship. Pressures are always being brought to bear, to be something other than what you are, and maybe you ought to be. Maybe you need to be different, maybe you need to be more, maybe you need to be greater, but the

continual pressure being brought to bear puts an inevitable strain on the friendship and it is to some extent a conditional friendship.

Conditional Friendships Can Be Reflexive

That means the friendship is seen in terms of the self. It has to do with what can be done for me, how do I feel about you, what do I want from you, what do I hope you will become—all the things about you are seen in relation to me and the friendship is built on my reaction to you rather than being built upon you. This is a conditional friendship.

Conditional “In-Group” Friends

A person who likes you as long as you’re in the “in-group” is a conditional friend, because the condition of the friendship is that you remain a part of this group and when you leave this group you become a part of the ‘out-group’ and you are no longer a friend. Now does that mean that you weren’t a friend before? Oh no, he was your friend before and as long as you stayed in the “in-group” you were his friend, but it was a conditional friendship. Many religious organizations, which believe in a very strong “in-group” and “out-group” psychology, depend heavily on this psychology for the maintenance of the relationships in the church. They inevitably create conditional friendships. The friendships that exist within the boundaries of such an organization are for the most part going to be conditional friendships.

Unconditional Friends

After being disfellowshipped from our former church association, we had a number of unconditional friends. There were a number of people who just didn’t pay any attention to the disfellowshippment,

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who said, "Oh no, you are my friend, You will always be my friend, I don't care what anybody says, a friend is a friend." There are people who will have that kind of loyalty and I call them, "unconditional friends." This is the second kind of friend. This is a person who likes you. He doesn't like you as long as, doesn't like you until, doesn't like you because of. None of these conditions are implicit in this, he likes you because you are you. No qualifications, no conditions, no as

long as, no until, no dependence on group approval.

The unconditional friend will not try to take advantage of you when trials strike. He will be there to support you and take your side all the way. You can count on him. He will have compassion. He will spend time with you. He will find ways to help you. He will not undermine you. He will stay with you at night in the hospital. You can count on him through thick or thin. He is loyal to you and will fend off

the enemies. He is your unconditional friend.

Friendships are extremely important to the Christian. Trials and hard times come to all of us and we need to develop Christian friends who will stand by us. You need this *Born to Win* CD by Ronald L. Dart, *What is a Friend?*, to more deeply understand your responsibility in a friendship relationship. Learn the lessons from King David and how he was a loyal friend. Order this today. It will enrich your life.

What Our Listeners Say

I listen to 99.1, WJMM, Lexington, KY daily and I must say that I have never heard the Bible taught word for word as I myself remember the stories that I have read with my own eyes. So I chose to listen and I'm so thankful that I did. Your teachings are music to my ears! I thank God for your teachings and that you read the Word straight from the King James. I plan to ask others to join me in listening to the true teachings from the Bible. You have such a gift for what you are doing. Keep up this wonderful work! PS. Thank you so very much! Gods' Word being taught just the way you teach it is greatly needed in a big city like ours where much sin does abound. I pray God blesses your radio ministry and lays it on the hearts of many to send monetary donations to cover the costs. In Jesus' Name, Amen!!

KCBC 770 AM, I listen every weekday 12:30 PM. Most insightful Bible reading around. Historical background absolutely superb. Very well done.

I listen to you on AM 670 KLT, Denver, CO regularly and thoroughly enjoy your program. I appreciate the detail and explanation you put into each program. I hope you can keep the program on this station.

I listen on KTYM, Los Angeles, CA and really want it to stay on the radio. I appreciate your program and love how down to earth you are. Hope you stay on here.

I listen to your radio program on WYDE 92.5 every weekday morning on the way to work. I am learning so much and truly enjoy your program.

Good morning, I recently started listening to WXJC radio station on my commute to work each day. I have found that I enjoy listening to Ronald Dart and the way he preaches and explains the Word very much. On Friday January 6 he finished up a series and I'd love to have copy of this so I could listen again. Thank you all for doing the work you do and the continued praise of our Father. God bless.

Hot Off The Press!

CEM's 2014 Feast of Tabernacles will be held at the Granbury Resort Conference Center in Granbury, TEXAS.
Exciting news to follow!

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*That the man of God may
be proficient and equipped
for every good work.*