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## The Joy of Friendship

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### THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Penny Creek Ward

Hello friend,

Isn't having friends great? I like friends. I hope you have some good friends too. Last week I wrote about families, but I want to say that having friends is super important too.

A friend is someone with whom you can trust to share your true feelings and they won't judge you, because they know you well. It is someone who will take you the way you are. Not only that, they will also try to help and encourage you, and leave you better than they found you. They rejoice in your achievements and good fortune, and mourn with you in your sorrow.

These last couple of weeks I have been able to reunite with many old friends in person, that I haven't seen in a long time. It was so fulfilling. There's something special about having conversations about anything and enjoying it because you are just with a friend.

You may have shared good times or bad times together, but no matter the experience, your friendship remains strong. This is because you helped or served each other, and valued your relationship with them over the difficult times.

It takes courage to be a friend sometimes. When you open yourself up and share precious feelings, you hope they will be respected, and kept sacred. I like this Arabian proverb about friends:

"A friend is one to whom one may pour out all the contents of one's heart, chaff and grain together, knowing that the gentlest of hands will take and sift it, keep what is worth keeping, and with the breath of kindness blow the rest away."

We all have chaff that we hope our friends ignore.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "The only way to have a friend is to be one."

And in Proverbs 18:24 it says, "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

If we cherish the kind of friendship where someone will take us as we are, then that's exactly what we need to do for others.

At the end of the day, it's about being loved. It feels good to be loved. But to get that, you need to love. You need to be a friend first. You need to care.

Jesus was loved because He loved deeply. He knew about everyone's chaff, but loved them still the same.

And He loves you today.

As you feel that love and understand it, you will want to share it with others. You will want to love with the pure love of Christ, unconditionally.

And then, you will have friends.

Here is what Jesus said to his apostles,

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." (John 15:11-15)

Christ is our friend. He's your friend. You can feel safe and at peace with Him. He wants your joy to be full.

That's why we're here.

Maybe it's time to reach out to some old friends. Or spend time with current ones. And feel that joy of friendship.

Your friend,

Bishop Williams

P.S.

- Thank you to those who helped out and attended Brother Robert Van Hover's memorial service yesterday. It was a wonderful service to honor an amazing man.
- May 15th, 5:00pm - Worldwide Devotional for Young Adults with President Nelson and Sister Nelson.
- May 19th, 7:00pm - Everett Stake General Priesthood Meeting for all Priesthood age brethren, 12 and up.
- May 20-21st - Everett Stake Priesthood Commemoration Campout, Cascade Park

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