

**Week 24**  
**Befriending**

*“...I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.” – John 15:15*

Every friend you have was once a stranger. Friendships, like all relationships, develop over time as you share conversations, meals, events, activities or work on a common cause. In many ways, friendships occur naturally. People who have common interests, work together, have a shared purpose have natural opportunities to spend time with each other and friendships grow. The spiritual discipline of “befriending” is different.

Befriending is an intentional discipline to pursue friendships with people that you do not associate with naturally. Jesus formed many unnatural friendships. He was a carpenter and chose many fishermen as disciples. He was a Jew and chose to be friends with tax collectors and sinful women. Jesus had a reputation as being a “friend of tax collectors and sinners.” Jesus knew that “salt” must be in contact with whatever it is trying to preserve or save from decay. When we adopt befriending as a spiritual discipline, we take on the mission of Jesus to enter the world and love it becoming friends with others.

Befriending is evangelistic, but it is not the same as “friendship evangelism.” Friendship evangelism often means getting to know someone well enough that you can share some information with them. Befriending seeks to form relationships with people and loving them deeply enough that they understand what drives you.

Befriending implies that we are the ones to initiate the relationship. We are the ones to walk across the room to strike up a conversation with the person who is sitting alone. We are the ones who notice the invisible people in the room. We are the ones who befriend the coworker, the neighbor, the parents of our children’s teammates.

Befriending will involve time, commitment, patience, and risk. We will have to bear the burden of keeping the friendship alive by doing most of the inviting. We will bear the risk of feeling uncomfortable in unfamiliar settings. We will bear the risk of getting a reputation based on our questionable friends. We might even be called a “friend of tax collectors and sinners.” Once you form a friendship, love them long enough that they you can say what Jesus said to the disciples, “*I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you,*” and they know your heart.

***This Week***

- Pay attention to the people in your various circles. Make a list of the people you notice and pray that list before God asking Him to lead you to help you choose a friend. Then start sharing life with someone new.

**Week 24**

***Jun 13-19***

<b>Sun</b>	<i>What specific action can you do this week related to your growth goals?</i>			<b>13</b>
<b>Encourage One Another (5)</b>				
<b>Mon</b>	Josh 21	Acts 27	Psa 116	<b>14</b>
	Flag Day			
<b>Tue</b>	Josh 22,23	Acts 28	Psa 117	<b>15</b>
<b>Wed</b>	Josh 24	Phil 1	Psa 118	<b>16</b>
<b>Thr</b>	Judg 1,2	Phil 2	Psa 119:1-8	<b>17</b>
<b>Fri</b>	Judg 3,4	Phil 3	Psa 119:9-16	<b>18</b>
<b>Sat</b>				<b>19</b>