"Friends Forever" | August 11, 2012 | Order Info


It's a tale best viewed as a parable that has been circulating the Internet for about a dozen years. It's a story of true friendship, and how encouraging someone might even save a life.¹

When Mark was a freshman in high school, he was walking home from school one day and noticed Bill, the new kid, carrying all his books home. 'That's odd,' Mark thought. 'Why would someone take all their books home on a Friday?' Just then a group of kids ran by, knocking Bill and his books to the ground.

The look on Bill's face was such a sad one that Mark walked over to help him. They got to talking, and discovered that they lived near each other. Mark invited Bill to play football with him and his friends that weekend. They wound up hanging out together all weekend, and became friends.

On Monday morning, Mark saw Bill walking to school with the same load of books in his arms. "Boy, you're going to build some serious muscle carrying this pile of books every day!" Bill laughed and gave him half the stack to carry.

Over the next four years, the two became best friends. By senior year, Bill had become a confidant young man who was very popular at school. He studied hard and became valedictorian of his class. He was nervous to give the speech on graduation day, but once again, Mark was there to help him. With a pat on the back, he said, "Hey, big guy, you'll be great!"

During his speech, Bill said, "I am here to tell you that being a friend to someone is the best gift you can give." He then confessed that the reason he was carrying all his books the day he met Mark was that he'd planned to kill himself. He'd cleaned out his locker so his mom wouldn't have to. He looked over to where Mark was sitting and said with a smile, "Thankfully, my friend saved me from doing the unspeakable."²

Paul's letter to the Thessalonians is proof of the power of friendship, too, and the importance of friends uplifting each other. Reading the section of his letter in 1 Thessalonians 2:13-3:13, it's obvious that Paul had deep feelings of friendship for them. He wants to make sure that they aren't being tempted to the point of abandoning their faith. He goes on to say that his hope, joy, and crown when Jesus returns will be to see them there, saved.

Paul's example of love for the Thessalonians sets a good example for us. After he led them to Christ, he didn't forget about them because they were now believers. He kept in touch with them. He kept praying for them. He kept encouraging them. He never stopped caring for them. His work wasn't over after they were converted, but he saw his witness to them as a life-long commitment. And so should it be with those whom we lead to Jesus.

~ nc

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