

February: Walk in Love with Family and Friends
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Verses:

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life
for his friends. John 15:13 (ESV)

And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom
you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond
the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell.
But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Joshua 24:15 (ESV)

Upward Gaze:

Heavenly Father, thank you for the friends and family you place in our lives. Thank you for the love we
can show them because of the love you show us. Guide us in our relationships that all we say and do
will bring you glory and honor. In Christ's most holy and precious name. Amen.

Development of Theme:

Do you have a friend? Of course, you do. Do you have family? What a silly question. We all are
blessed with people in our lives. Some we love, some we tolerate, some we could do without.

I was fortunate to grow up in a loving home in Georgia. My extended relatives lived in Florida and
Europe. My dad, mom, and sister were my family. We were close growing up.

My parents would make sure, despite the crazy schedules, that we would sit down to dinner together as a
family. We would have movie nights, game nights, weekend getaways. My parents did their best to
show us a home of love, so that we could one day make one for ourselves.

We are commanded to love one another, despite ups and downs. My sister and I do not have a strong
relationship now. She chose a path for her life that I did not agree with. One that has lead her down
many hard roads that I wish she never had to travel. Despite her choices, I love her because my Lord
and Savior commands me too. I can't fix her, I can't judge her, but I can love her.

Jesus gives us great advice. "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and
that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.
Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you
do whatever I command you." (John 15:11 – 14 NKJV)

That's a powerful scripture about friendship. We are commanded to love one another. Jesus does not
ask or suggest, but commands. Also, Jesus calls us His friend. All we must do in order to have that
friendship is to obey His commands. His friendship is one that is perfect. We get to be real and honest
with Jesus. We can't hide behind our masks. He already knows all our secrets. Nothing is hidden from
Him.

Putting scripture into action, what does it mean to love one another? Loving others means putting them
before yourself, spending time with them, talking and listening so you may get to know that person. It
means having patience and being ready to help where you can.

Any relationship is hard. Whether it's friendship, family, co-workers, church members, etc. Relationships are something that you must be mindful of. You can't neglect your relationships, or they cease to exist.

The most important friendship in my life is my friendship with Jesus. He is the one I go to constantly. If I'm sad, I tell Him all about it. If I'm mad, I give Him an ear full. If I'm in need of advice, I trust and value His. I know that He will be everything I need for any situation I'm in or going through. I love that I always have an open invitation to come to Him, no need for an appointment.

We are to be imitators of Jesus Christ. He was friends to sinners, He was approachable, He offered help to many in need. As an imitator of Jesus, are we mindful of the people around us? Are we approachable? Do we just surround ourselves with like-minded people? Do we throw away a friendship because of a misunderstanding or disagreement? Do we shun family because they upset us, and we can't let go of a grudge? Do we choose not to befriend someone because we think they are too needy, or because they wouldn't fit in with our current circle of friends?

With that said, I know that there are some unhealthy relationships that we must distance ourselves from. It is important to follow God's lead in relationships. He is good to put us into relationships that He wants us in. Equally He is good to give us discernment if we need to exit a relationship.

We need make it a point to learn from Jesus and His interaction with those around Him. In doing so we will end up being the best family member and friend to those in our lives. Let's commit to show the world what walking in love with family and friends truly looks like.

Inward Glimpse (Reflection):

Ask God to reveal healthy or unhealthy relationships in your life.
Make an effort to reach out more to your family members.
List all your friends and families, and write to one person each week.

Outward Glance (Discussion):

Look for ways to celebrate friendship within your local CPWM. Celebrate birthdays of the month. Get together outside of the group. Invite someone over for dinner or coffee. Look around during church and see who sits alone.
Reach out to new people and follow up with them.
Setup a team to stay on top of visitors, or members who are sick and in need of help. It's so easy to assume someone else is handling something only to later find out no one did anything.

One more peek:

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.
Galatians 6:10 (ESV)