

You've Got a Friend in Me

5-Day Devotional



You've Got a Friend in Me

Barnabas, Paul & the Four Friends

KCLC Radio — Sermon Outline

"You've got a friend in me."
—Randy Newman

A YEAR OF CONTRASTS — 1995

-  **Kobe earthquake** (Jan. 17)
Catastrophic loss, over 6,000 dead
-  **Oklahoma City bombing** (April 19)
168 dead, including 19 children, domestic terrorism
-  **Million Man March** (Oct. 16)
Hundreds of thousands in D.C. for unity and renewed commitment
-  **Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin** (Nov. 4)
Killed for pursuing peace, by one of his own countrymen

A year oscillating between tragedy/division and moments of chosen unity — "are we going to tear each other apart, or find a way to stand together?"

 That same November, **Toy Story** releases — a film and theme song built entirely around unlikely friendship.

THE SONG — ITS BACKSTORY

-  Randy Newman was given simple direction from Pixar: write a song "very specifically about a special friendship" between a boy and his toy.
-  **Toy Story** premiered around Thanksgiving 1995; the song became the franchise's signature theme through every sequel since.
-  Never charted on the Billboard Hot 100 — but 3x Platinum in the U.S., Platinum in the UK and New Zealand; a song people bought and loved by the millions without it ever being a radio "hit."
-  Nominated for the Academy Award for Best Original Song, but lost.

THE FOUNDATION: AGAPE vs. PHILIA

AGAPE (LOVE)	PHILIA (FRIENDSHIP)
	
Commanded love for every brother/sister in Christ.	Chosen friendship. Not commanded. Not guaranteed.
The floor. Freely given. No effort required.	The blessing. Built on top of belonging.

You already have brothers and sisters in this room by faith. The real question is whether you've done the harder work of becoming their friend. Will you risk being vulnerable to find a friend?

1 FORGING A FRIENDSHIP

Barnabas and Saul (Acts 9:26–27)



- As far as we know, Barnabas and Saul had no prior relationship.
- Saul is a brother in Christ (agape) the moment he believes — but the believers "were all afraid of him" (v.26).
- Barnabas takes the risk: he brings Saul to the apostles and tells his story (v.27).
- A friendship begins when one person is willing to trust first — into a vacuum.
- That risk becomes real partnership — traveling together, enduring hardship together (e.g., stoned at Lystra, Acts 14:19–20).

 Agape is the floor. Philia is what's built on top. It's philia, not category alone, that endures hardship.

2 WHAT FRIENDSHIP DOES

The Four Friends (Mark 2:1–12)



- Capernaum is packed — "no room left, not even outside the door."
- They go up and dig through the roof. Not tidy. Messy. Disruptive.
- Jesus sees "their" faith (v.5) — not just the paralyzed man's.
- The carrying is the faith, made physical.
- Sometimes the people we love can't muster faith for themselves — too broken, too stuck.

Your faith sustains others. Your friend's faith sustains you. According to Jesus in Mark 2, faith is corporate, not personal.

3 NOT EVERY FRIENDSHIP LASTS THE SAME WAY



- Barnabas and Paul part ways over John Mark (Acts 15:36–39).
- Barnabas's loyalty to Mark may be why we have the Gospel of Mark at all.
- Seasons change. Friendships evolve. That's okay.
- Gratitude > Resentment > Regret

The goal isn't permanent friendship with everyone. It's faithfulness in each season, with gratitude for the friends God does give us.

★ THE BIG TAKEAWAY



- You can't choose your brothers and sisters. You can choose your friends.
- At least one of you has to go first.
- Sometimes friendship looks like carrying someone when they can't walk.
- Some friendships last a lifetime. Some for a season. Both are gifts.

 *Agape makes us family. Philia makes the journey beautiful.* 

Day 1: You Were Made for Community

Reading: Genesis 2:18

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

Devotional: God looked at creation and declared that it was not good for man to be alone. Before sin entered the world, before hardship or struggle, God identified the need for companionship. This was not a flaw in human design but a reflection of God's own relational nature. You were not built for isolation. The longing you feel for meaningful connection is not weakness; it is the fingerprint of your Creator. These verses are often read through the lens of marriage, they actually point to a much bigger truth, God's deep love and commitment to His people.

Reflection: Reflect today on whether you have been withdrawing from community out of fear or past hurt, and ask God to open your heart to the relationships He has placed around you.

Day 2: Love as the Foundation

Reading: John 13:34-35

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Devotional: At the Last Supper, Jesus gave His disciples a command that would define the entire Christian community: love one another as He had loved them. This love, agape in the Greek, is unconditional and not dependent on whether someone has earned it. It is the baseline, the floor of every relationship we enter as followers of Christ. It does not guarantee deep friendship, but it creates the soil in which friendship can grow. Before you can build meaningful bonds with others, you must first commit to loving them regardless of outcome.

Reflection: Ask yourself today whether you are extending that unconditional love to the people around you.

Day 3: The Risk of Barnabas

Reading: Acts 9:26-28

When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.

Devotional: When Paul arrived in Jerusalem, rejected by his old colleagues and feared by his new family in Christ, one man stepped forward. Barnabas, whose name means son of encouragement, took the risk of vouching for someone the entire community had written off. He had no prior relationship with Paul, no guarantee that his trust would be rewarded. He simply chose to extend grace into uncertainty. Real friendship always begins with someone willing to go first.

Reflection: Consider whether there is someone in your church, your workplace, or your neighborhood who is standing on the outside looking in, waiting for a Barnabas to take that first step toward them.

Day 4: Carried by the Faith of Friends

Reading: Mark 2:1-5

A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

Devotional: Four men carried their paralyzed friend to Jesus, climbed a roof, dug through it, and lowered him down into a crowded room. When Jesus saw what they had done, Scripture says He saw their faith, not just the faith of the man being lowered. The healing came because a community refused to let one of their own remain broken and unreachable. There will be seasons in your life when your own faith feels too thin to carry you, and you will need friends whose belief sustains you. There will also be seasons when someone else needs you to be one of the four.

Reflection: Ask God today to show you who needs to be carried, and who in your life is carrying you.

Day 5: Jesus Called You Friend

Reading: John 15:13-15

Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

Devotional: Jesus did not merely command His disciples to love one another. He called them friends. He drew a distinction between a servant who follows orders and a friend who is brought into the confidence and heart of another. Jesus said the greatest expression of friendship is laying down one's life, and then He did exactly that. Every human friendship, no matter how deep or how brief, is a reflection of this original friendship that God extended to you through Christ. You were called friend before you ever sought Him. No matter what season of life you are in, no matter how alone you may feel, that friendship is the one that will never end.

Reflection: Where in your life have you related to God more like a servant following orders than a friend resting in His confidence? Ask Him today to draw you deeper into that friendship.