

# You Need a Special Friend

*Like God Himself, all of us desire intimate fellowship with others.  
But more than that, we each need someone that we can  
trust with the deepest secrets of our soul.*

**By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM**

Editor-at-Large

**G**row quiet, busy heart. Sit down, draw a deep breath...now another. Relax and listen.

What is it in your life which bubbles to the surface once the activity ceases? What is it, when you lay your head upon your pillow at night, that emerges from the depths of your subconsciousness, floating always to the surface of your mind...nagging, tugging at the strings of your heart? Whence comes this single thought of soft pain, accompanied by plaintive whimper or sometimes frantic cry, always reminding you that life remains incomplete as long as this remains untouched?

Do you have anyone to whom you can talk? Is there a friend in your life in whom you can confide? No, I'm not talking about some casual acquaintance. Nor a neighbor. Even a companion.

Long ago, Aristotle caught the concept when he said: "What is a friend? A single soul dwelling in two bodies."

I have such a friend. Several of them, in fact. Each of them is a precious part of my life, reckoned, as Emerson once

said, as "The masterpiece of nature." Recently one shared with me an old Arabian proverb:

"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."

Do you have such a friend—one in whom you can trust everything? I have built my life on the basic supposition that everyone needs someone to whom they can tell everything.

Is there someone like that in your life?

I think there is, even if you don't know it.

Loneliness is detested by God. He hates it so much He created human beings just so He could have fellowship with us. He does not want you to be lonely. He has created a special person just for you, one to whom you can open your heart, one who will hear and understand everything.

Of course, we Christians find such a comfort in our Messiah. It is true that we sing:

"What a friend we have in Jesus,

All our sins and griefs to bear...."

But for some of us, making intimate contact with the Jesus we hold in such reverence as He "sits at the right hand of God" is a bit difficult. We're like the little boy who, when told by his mother not to feel lonely because God loved him, responded with a quivering voice, "I know God loves me. But sometimes I need God with skin on."

Is there such a person in your life?

When God said He would fulfill the desires of your heart, He was talking, among other things, of providing for each of us a companion—one with whom we can share everything. I am not talking about a mate. Thank God for the happy ideal in marriage. But you may not have a mate. Or if you do, the one who shares your bed may not have the "same soul dwelling" in his or her body as in yours.

What then?

Calm down, busy heart. Grow quiet. I believe such a friend already exists in your life. It is up to you, however, to open your life...to run the risk of being misunderstood...to venture into the frightening arena of openness, transparency and confession.

*Continued*



No. I'm not talking of the kind of confession where priest and penitent sit separated by a screen: but where friend sits down with friend and says with shaking voice, "No one in all the world has ever heard what I am about to say, but I want to tell you. I need to tell you...."

Are you willing to venture out? To let down your drawbridge and allow that one who is waiting on the far side of your moat to enter your dark castle? Oh, I realize the danger. If you lower the drawbridge, others besides your friend might enter. There are dragons out there. But that is part of the risk involved.

Inner healing begins when the drawbridge is lowered. It is activated when the deep secrets of yesterday are finally revealed to a friend who says, "I understand!" It is complete when the risen Lord, who is not bound by time and space, follows the footsteps of your friend across the moat of your suspicions and fears, touches the hurts of your past and cleanses forever.

Make no mistake. No friend can bring complete healing. No human, regardless of how trained, how godly, can substitute

for Jesus. In the long run it is, indeed, Jesus sitting at the right hand of God who will enter your dark castle, touch the place of your pain, walk beside you through the labyrinthian corridors of your dark past, unlock the rusty doors of the dark dungeons of your soul, and heal. Jesus alone.

But it will often be a friend who knocks on the door of your castle, inviting you to lower the drawbridge. It will be a friend who offers a shoulder for you to lean on, a breast you may wet with tears, an ear which hears and understands, a hand which squeezes warmly and says, "Do not fear. I will not let you down."

Then, once your castle is open, once you have allowed a friend access to your dark basements and cobwebbed closets, you will find it follows as night the day to open your life to the Creator of life. The Lord Jesus Christ.

He then comes, with His healing laser, painlessly cauterizing with the intense light of truth and love, and healing is complete.

Do you have such a friend who will open the door...and then be wise enough to step aside so as not to block the way

of the risen Lord who often follows but one step behind? I believe you do. Even now he is there, she is there, hoping you will be honest enough, brave enough to say, "Look at me the way I really am!" Only then will you discover that you are loved, really loved, as you are—not as you pretend to be as you hide behind the parapets of your safe castle.

As our clothing covers a multitude of fleshly flaws which only we know of, so we mask our true selves from the prying eyes of others. But your friend does not want to know our flaws in order to gloat or condemn or even satisfy his own curiosity. He, she, wants to know, because in the telling you open the door for Jesus to enter and heal.

Do you have such a friend? One who plays the role of God with skin on?

I believe you do.

More important, infinitely more important, are you such a friend to someone else? Someone like you? Someone afraid, but so in need of your friendship? ■

**Jamie Buckingham** is editor-at-large for *Charisma* and author of 36 books.



PORTLOCK

"I should warn you. He just read *The Joyful Christian* by C.S. Lewis."