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Best Friends

Key References: John 15 and 17; *Steps to Christ,* chap. 11, pp. 93-104; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 10, pp. 167-170; Our Beliefs, nos. 5, 14, 4















power**text**

"I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them" (John 17:26).

Think of your best friend. What makes them laugh? What makes them mad? What makes them happy? When you know someone very well, you know how they think and act. You even begin to think and act like them.

power**point**

Our friendship with Jesus grows stronger when we pray.

John was one of Jesus' closest friends. Perhaps because John was the youngest of the 12 disciples he seemed to confide more in Jesus than the older men did—just as one would with a best friend. Jesus valued His special friendship with John.

Right from the beginning John stayed close to Jesus. At first John's friendship with Jesus might have been classified as "opposites attract." John was not a patient, humble person. In fact, he and his brother James were called the "Sons of Thunder" (see Mark 3:17). John was proud. He was ambitious and ready to fight at a moment's notice.

Being close friends with Jesus, an always-honest friend, meant that John sometimes heard about the flaws in his character. As good friends do, Jesus would point out when he was acting selfish, bossy, or impatient. Yet Jesus loved John's enthusiastic, sincere, and loving heart.

Jesus responded to John's devotion by frequently inviting him, along with two other disciples, when He went to pray. This is how John learned about the importance of prayer. He often observed that "very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed" (Mark 1:35). John learned to follow his Master's example, and as a result, the closer John stayed to Jesus, the more like Him he became.

That didn't mean that John suddenly became perfect. One time, when some Samaritans were not treating Jesus with respect and wouldn't let Him sleep in their town, John and his brother got really

Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 47.

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Sunday

READ Read 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 and this week's story, "Best Friends."

LEARN Begin to learn this week's power text, John 17:26.

PRAY Pray that your friendship with God will grow this week.

Monday

READ Read John 17:15-19.

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write how you think the disciples may have felt when Jesus prayed for them. How do you feel knowing that Jesus prayed for you?

PRAY Go for a walk around your block. As you see people, silently pray for them and ask God to draw them closer to Him.

Tuesday

RESEARCH Find and read the following texts: John 15:7; James 1:5, 6. What do they tell you about prayer? What does Ephesians 6:18 tell us to do when God doesn't seem to answer our prayers?

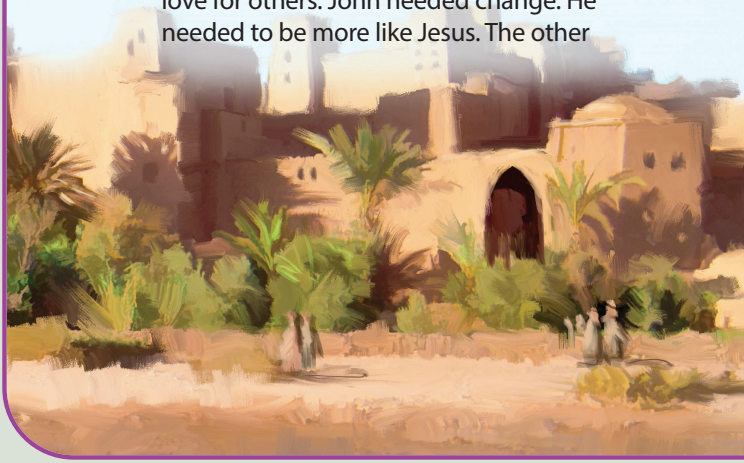
TELL Ask an adult to tell you about a time God gave them wisdom.

PRAY Sing a prayer of praise to God.

upset. They could see Mount Carmel in the distance, where Elijah had called down fire from heaven. That would be a perfect punishment for the insolent Samaritans, they thought. So they went running to Jesus to tell Him their idea. Of course, Jesus was sad with their response. He suggested that they simply go to another village.

No, John had not overcome his temper overnight. Neither had he overcome wanting to be the best. One time John and his brother had told someone to quit casting out demons in the name of Jesus because the person wasn't one of Jesus' regular followers. What they were really worried about was how it made them look. They weren't always successful when they tried to cast out demons, even though they were close friends with Jesus. However, Jesus reminded them that they could be successful in their work for others only if they trusted God completely and prayed regularly (see Mark 9:29).

John was proud. He thought he was the best. John's ambition led to jealousy among Jesus' followers. John's selfishness also prevented him from growing even closer to his Friend Jesus. By contrast, Jesus' character always reflected selfless love for others. John needed change. He needed to be more like Jesus. The other





disciples couldn't quit talking about the fact that James and John's mother had asked Jesus if they could be the two top advisers in His kingdom.

In spite of his weaknesses, his temper, and his pride, John stayed close to Jesus. He learned from his Master that through much prayer and faith in God he could overcome his weaknesses. Jesus promised, "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you" (John 15:7). Holding on to these words, John could trust God to help him be more patient, kind, and loving. You may be wondering, *What became of John as he*

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Wednesday

READ Read Ephesians 6:18.

THINK This Bible verse encourages us to pray for "all the Lord's people." Who are some people for whom you could pray?

COMPARE In your Bible study journal, compare praying to talking with a friend. How are they alike?

PRAY Make a list of words, starting with the letters A through M, of things for which you want to praise, thank, or ask God.

Thursday

READ Philippians 4:6, 7.

WRITE Write your own definition of prayer in your Bible study journal.

SHARE Tell someone that you are praying for them.

PRAY Make a list of words, starting with the letters N through Z, of things for which you want to praise, thank, or ask God.

Friday

READ Read 1 Timothy 2:1.

LISTEN Read or watch the news today. Pick one story and pray for the people involved.

WORSHIP Read Psalm 103 with the family tonight for worship.

PRAY With your family, pray that God will be with you as you begin His special day.



continued to spend time walking and talking with Jesus? The changes were gradual, but each day John learned to be more like his Best Friend, Jesus. Later, on the night when Jesus would be on trial, John would be in the judgment hall. He would not pretend that he didn't know Jesus; he would just stand in a corner and watch, as close as he could be to his Best Friend. The next day, when Jesus would be led to Calvary to be crucified, John would follow along, supporting Jesus' mother. As Jesus would look at His mother and John at the foot of the cross, He would have the assurance that there would be no safer place for her than in the heart and home of His beloved friend, John.

During Jesus' ministry on earth, John came into a very close relationship with Him. However, John, and the rest of Jesus' followers needed to continue walking with Him and talking with Him in order to keep their friendship growing.

Jesus thought of the time He would no longer be present with them, and He prayed for the greatest gift of all for His disciples and all other believers—the gift of staying connected with Him. He would send the Holy Spirit to make this connection possible.

John had watched Jesus spend much time in prayer, talking with His Father. The more he thought about it, the more John wanted to have that special kind of relationship in which he could talk with God, just as one talks to a best friend. John decided to follow Jesus' example of staying connected with his heavenly Father in prayer.

At the end of his life John would receive from Jesus the special messages in Revelation. Jesus could entrust this very special task only to someone He knew well and trusted. A very close friend.



PUZZLE 6

HEROES OF FAITH

Instructions: Unscramble the letters to give the names of people who the Bible identifies as heroes of faith. The names, when unscrambled, are in alphabetical order. (Two names have more than one word.)

BLEA	___ ___ ___ ___
AHRAAMB	___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
KAARB	___ ___ ___ ___ ___
EBCAL	___ ___ ___ ___ ___
LAIDEN	___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
IDDAV	___ ___ ___ ___ ___
HLEAJI	___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
EHASIL	___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
HCENO	___ ___ ___ ___ ___
ARZE	___ ___ ___ ___
IGNEOD	___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
EHIZAKEH	___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
AAISC	___ ___ ___ ___ ___
ISAHAI	___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
JOCAB	___ ___ ___ ___ ___
TPHJAEHH	___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
IEMEAHJR	___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
OPEJHS	___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
HASOJU	___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
OSMSE	___ ___ ___ ___ ___
ANHO	___ ___ ___ ___
ROPTHPSE	___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
BARAH	___ ___ ___ ___ ___
SMNSAO	___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
CSKI	___ ___ ___ ___
ONAWM	___ ___ ___ ___ ___
LMOONSO	___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
HPNETES	___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
WOT	___ ___ ___
LNBDI	___ ___ ___ ___ ___
NEM	___ ___ ___
EACHRHIAZ	___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___