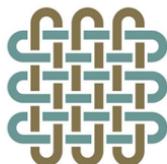


FOREWORD BY RAY ORTLUND JR.

M A D E
F O R
F R I E N D S H I P



*The Relationship
That Halves Our Sorrows
and Doubles Our Joys*

D R E W H U N T E R

“‘We talk about community but not friendship.’ Drew Hunter is right, and in *Made for Friendship* he fills the church’s gap with deep theological truths and helpful practical tools regarding friendship. I’m grateful for this resource!”

Christine Hoover, author, *Messy Beautiful Friendship* and *Searching for Spring*

“This is one of those books with that rare combination of beautiful theology, painful conviction, soothing grace, practical wisdom, inspiring motivation, and enjoyable writing. I hope it will bear much fruit in many lives, starting with my own.”

David Murray, Professor of Old Testament and Practical Theology, Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary

“Drew Hunter will capture you with his compelling vision of friendship. Beautifully written, these pages are filled with fresh insight and practical wisdom. Reading this book will ignite your desire to be a better friend and to savor the joys of friendship.”

Colin S. Smith, Senior Pastor, The Orchard, Arlington Heights, Illinois

“Many contemporary realities work against our attempts to establish and cultivate deep, lasting friendships. Add to that our sinful tendencies that lead us to isolate ourselves, and it’s no wonder many of us are lonely and, dare I say, friendless. In *Made for Friendship*, Drew Hunter reminds us of the basic human need for true friendships. And through historical, biblical, and practical wisdom, he equips us to pursue and foster the kinds of friendships that will half our sorrows and double our joys. I, for one, am thankful for this much-needed reminder!”

Juan R. Sanchez, Senior Pastor, High Pointe Baptist Church, Austin, Texas; author, *Seven Dangers Facing Your Church*

“Meaningful friendships may be one of the most overlooked areas of church health in our time. If we are going to make disciples, the task will bring with it richness of relationships. This book calls us to relational depth for the sake of our own souls, and for the sake of the gospel.”

Matt Boswell, hymnwriter; Pastor, The Trails Church, Celina, Texas

**MADE FOR
FRIENDSHIP**

MADE FOR FRIENDSHIP

THE RELATIONSHIP THAT HALVES OUR
SORROWS AND DOUBLES OUR JOYS

Drew Hunter

Foreword by Ray Ortlund Jr.

 **CROSSWAY**[®]
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Made for Friendship: The Relationship That Halves Our Sorrows and Doubles Our Joys

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To my friends,
for halving my sorrows and doubling my joys.
And Christina,
my beloved and my best friend (Song 5:16).

CONTENTS

Foreword *by Ray Ortlund Jr.* 11

Introduction 13

PART 1: THE NECESSITY OF FRIENDSHIP

1 Forgotten Friendship 19

2 The Edenic Ache 39

PART 2: THE GIFT OF FRIENDSHIP

3 The Greatest of Worldly Goods 59

4 A Friend Who Is as Your Own Soul 77

5 Cultivating Friendship 97

PART 3: THE REDEMPTION OF FRIENDSHIP

6 A Biblical Theology of Friendship 121

7 The Great Friend 139

Acknowledgments 159

Further Reading 161

Notes 165
General Index 175
Scripture Index 181

FOREWORD

I love this book! Pastor Drew Hunter is saying things about friendship that I believe in but have never been able to put into words—and powerful words too. For example:

Friendship is the ultimate end of our existence.

Jesus was a man of friendship, because God is a God of friendship.

Each one of us will eventually step into our final week. Some of us will know when we do. If so, we will take a thoughtful glance backward. And we won't wish we put in more hours at work. We won't wish we took more extravagant vacations. We won't wish we spent more time staring at a screen. But we will wish we spent more time with our friends.

What if you could have a friend who knew you better than anyone, better than you even know yourself? And what if, knowing everything, he still loved you, and even liked you? . . . And what if you could have a friend who, by his very relationship with you, would transform you to become a better friend to others? You can. His name is Jesus. He's called the friend of sinners.

Foreword

Early in my own life, it was my dear dad who showed me the glory of true friendship. I grew up watching my dad love his friends with all his heart, for Jesus's sake. Dad loved to quote Shakespeare, who said,

Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel.

Now that's how to love a friend—wholeheartedly and permanently! Who wants moderate friendships? Who wants disposable friendships? We all long to be less lonely and more intimate with true friends we can count on. I cannot think of a more urgent need among us today—that we would be friends together through thick and thin, to the glory of God. It's a big part of how people will know we really do belong to Jesus, the friend of sinners (John 13:34–35).

I believe you will find in Pastor Drew Hunter a kindred soul who understands the ups and downs of friendship that you have experienced. He has done his research carefully and thoroughly. He has written sensitively and honestly. He has pulled in writers and voices from many centuries, right up to our present day. Above all, he is biblical and pastoral, showing you God's way into deeper friendships that can last. I joyfully commend to you *Made for Friendship: The Relationship That Halves Our Sorrows and Doubles Our Joys*.

Let's stop living on a starvation diet of friendship! Let the feast begin!

Ray Ortlund Jr.
2017
Immanuel Church
Nashville, Tennessee

INTRODUCTION

One of my worst memories is standing in the high school cafeteria, holding my tray and looking out at several dozen tables encircled with smiling faces, and feeling lonely because I was new and had no friends. One of my happiest memories is sitting by a fire and relaxing with contented joy because I was with my closest friends. Most of us have similar kinds of memories, but we pass them by without any reflection.

You may think that friendship is great—Who isn't for friendship? But you wonder: Do we really need a book about it? Don't we know enough through experience? Or perhaps you think that only lonely people need a book about this.

We don't think much about this topic because we don't think we need to. And as a result, friendship is one of the most familiar yet forgotten relationships in our day.

Most people have friends. But few of us know *true* friendship. Many of us don't know we're missing two of the greatest joys in life: walking with others in true friendship and knowing Jesus as the great Friend.

J. C. Ryle captured the significance of friendship well: "This world is full of sorrow because it is full of sin. It is a dark place. It is a lonely place. It is a disappointing place. The brightest sunbeam in it is a friend. Friendship halves our troubles and

doubles our joys.”¹ If this is true, there is more to this kind of relationship than many of us know. Most of us think we know true friendship, but few of us do.

This book is about recovering the lost joys of real friendship, and doing so out of the endless resources of knowing our truest Friend. This is not merely a book of handy tips for happier relationships, though you’ll find practical wisdom for friendship here. This is also not a collection of quaint quotes for kitchen calligraphy, though we’ll certainly uncover gems from church history. Instead, this is about raising our esteem for real friendship so highly that we cannot help but pursue it with enthusiasm and joy.

We’ll see that true friendship is worth recovering because no one can enjoy life—true life, life to the full—without it.

If we’re going to grab ahold of the meaning of true friendship, we have to answer the most important questions about it: Why do we need it? What is it? What is its ultimate significance? Part 1 (chapters 1 and 2) makes the case that few relationships today are more neglected and few are more needed than true friendship. Part 2 (chapters 3 through 5) uncovers the unique gift of this relationship: chapter 3, the heart of this book, shows the unique joys of friendship—the relationship that C. S. Lewis called “the greatest of worldly goods” and “the chief happiness of life.” Then chapter 4 shows what real friendship really looks like. And chapter 5, the most practical of the book, gives the wisdom we need to cultivate it well.

The final part (chapters 6 and 7) uncovers friendship’s deepest meaning. First, chapter 6 traces the theme of friendship through the Bible, showing that friendship—friendship with one another and also with God—is at the center of Scripture, the heart of history, and is the ultimate meaning of the universe.

Then chapter 7 leads us to Jesus, the great friend of sinners, the one who lets us all the way in and loves us to the very end. In a statement dense with more significance than many of us may know, he said, “No longer do I call you servants . . . I have called you friends” (John 15:15). Jesus is our Savior and he is our King. He is also our truest Friend. And when we press into this, here’s what we find: the greatest power for becoming a better friend is being befriended by the best Friend.

I wrote this book in the hope that it would not only enrich your life as you become captured by this vision of true friendship, but that you would experience this book with others—that the very process of reading this together would strengthen your relationships. In light of this, each chapter concludes with several questions to discuss with a friend or a group.

Finally, although I wrote this with Christians primarily in view, I hope this book will serve as an entryway for some of you to experience the joy of knowing Jesus. I also think you’ll be surprised at how relevant the biblical perspective on friendship is to your own life and relationships.

You and I were made for friendship and for fullness of joy. These two purposes belong together. And God gave us the first in order to experience the second, because friendship is a primary way that we tap into the true joy we’re all searching for. Friendship is not something we made up; it’s something we were made *for*. It’s a gift from above. So, let’s enjoy it together.

PART I



**THE NECESSITY
OF FRIENDSHIP**

FORGOTTEN FRIENDSHIP

To the Ancients, Friendship seemed the happiest and most fully human of all loves; the crown of life and the school of virtue. The modern world, in comparison, ignores it.

C. S. Lewis

If we remove friendship from the world, half of our joy goes right out with it. This is because friendship is the ultimate end of our existence and our highest source of happiness. Friendship—with one another and with God—is the supreme pleasure of life, both now and forever, and no one can fully enjoy life without it.

Am I overstating things here? If you think so, you'll have to take it up with someone else. I can't claim much originality for that paragraph. It is essentially derivative. It paraphrases perspectives shared by diverse thinkers through the centuries, from ancient philosophers to great theologians and from modern atheists to devoted Christians. All of these agree: friendship

is not only one of the greatest sources of happiness, but as essayist Joseph Epstein put it, “without friendship, make no mistake about it, we are all lost.”¹

But we don’t often esteem friendship this highly. Every other week my wife brings home from the library about twenty books to read with our sons. The most common theme among the children’s books is friendship. Yet very few adult books share this focus. Why is that? Is it because the rest of us have friendship figured out? Probably not. True, some groups of people value friendship today; even so, high praise doesn’t always translate into thick practice.

One of the central purposes of this book is to make that translation happen—to help us value friendship more highly and then enjoy it more fully.

IN PRAISE OF FRIENDSHIP

So that you know my word is good about that first paragraph, let’s take a brief tour of some historical highlights of friendship. We’ll start with Augustine, the great theologian and early church father from North Africa. He preached in a sermon, “Two things are essential in this world—life, and friendship. Both must be prized highly, and not undervalued.”² I can’t think of anyone who would disagree with the first necessity, yet the second may be a surprise. But he means it.

The eighteenth-century American pastor Jonathan Edwards also thought deeply about the most important realities in life. He wrote that friendship “is the highest happiness of all moral agents.”³ That’s quite a claim, especially from someone who was precise with words: friendship is our *highest* happiness.

Esther Edwards Burr, Jonathan Edwards’s daughter and the mother of the third US vice president, Aaron Burr, reflects this

truth more personally. She wrote to her friend, “Nothing is more refreshing to the soul (except communication with God himself), than the company and society of a friend.”⁴ She added that it is “a great mercy that we have any friends—What would this world be with out them? . . . [Friendship] is the life of life.”⁵

John Newton, slave trader-turned-pastor and author of the hymn “Amazing Grace” wrote, “I think to a feeling mind there is no temporal pleasure equal to the pleasure of friendship.”⁶ So if we set up life’s pleasures at the starting line, Newton says that friendship finishes first every time.

These and many others not only highly valued friendship; they also deeply enjoyed it. Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil the Great were early church fathers and well-known theologians. But they were also best friends. Their friendship endured through distance and even significant relational challenges. Gregory once wrote to Basil, “The greatest benefit which life has brought me is your friendship.”⁷ He also wrote, “If anyone were to ask me, ‘What is the best thing in life?’ I would answer, ‘Friends.’”⁸

We know the Reformation-launching Martin Luther, but his friends also knew him for his “table talk”—his lively doctrinal discussions around the dinner table. His wife, Katharina, also enjoyed her own close circle of companions.

We might think of John Calvin pondering great thoughts at a lonely desk, but “a close study of Calvin’s career reveals that friendships were the joy of his life.”⁹ Addressing two of his closest friends, he wrote, “I think that there has never been, in ordinary life, a circle of friends so sincerely bound to each other as we have been in our ministry.”¹⁰

Esther Burr enjoyed deep friendships, especially with her friend Sarah Prince. She wrote to her, “It is a great comfort

to me when my friends are absent from me that I have [them] somewhere in the world, and you my dear . . . I esteem you one of the best, and in some respects nearer than any sister I have. I have not one sister I can write so freely to as to you, the sister of my heart.”¹¹ True friends are soul siblings.

The Bible praises friendship with as much vigor as any source, ancient or modern. The story of Scripture is carried along by stories of friendships. Naomi had her Ruth, David his Jonathan, and Paul his Timothy. Jesus too had his Peter, James, and especially John. According to the Bible, friendship is an essential ingredient of the good life. The Scottish pastor Hugh Black said of the book of Proverbs, “There is no book, even in classical literature, which so exalts the idea of friendship, and is so anxious to have it truly valued, and carefully kept.”¹²

We’ve seen this praise of friendship span centuries, genders, and ethnicities; it also spans worldviews. Aristotle, like other ancient Greek philosophers, considered friendship indispensable for life. A. C. Grayling, a modern atheist philosopher, claims, “The highest and finest of all human relationships is, arguably, friendship.”¹³ One doesn’t need to acknowledge the friend of sinners to recognize friendship as one of the deepest pleasures of life.

Yet Christians have a deeper warrant for this kind of praise: friendship is the meaning of the universe. We aren’t just made for friendship with each other; we are made for friendship with God. Jesus, the great friend of sinners, came to befriend us. He said to his disciples, “No longer do I call you servants. . . . I have called you friends” (John 15:15). These familiar words are more profound than we may realize. On the eve of his death, Jesus wanted his disciples to know that the cross was not only the greatest demonstration of love but also a cosmic act of friend-

ship. He said, “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). The cross was history’s most heroic act of friendship.

History, it turns out, is nothing less than the story of how the triune God welcomes us into eternal friendship with himself. To be a Christian is to know Jesus—and to be known by him—as a dear friend. As the great nineteenth-century pastor Charles Spurgeon preached, “He who would be happy here must have friends; and he who would be happy hereafter, must, above all things, find a friend in the world to come, in the person of God.”¹⁴

RECOVERING FRIENDSHIP

For most of my life, I never would have made statements like these. I’ve enjoyed many friendships but not always with great intention. I experienced friendship but never stopped to think directly about it.

This changed when I encountered a few statements about friendship, first in the ancient book of Proverbs, and then from Jesus. Proverbs struck me with its insights and direct statements about it.¹⁵ I eventually came to see the truth in Hugh Black’s assessment: “The Book of Proverbs might almost be called a treatise on friendship.”¹⁶ I soon realized this was the first time I had devoted even a few minutes to thinking directly about friendship as a topic. Perhaps, like me, you have never spent a full two minutes thinking explicitly about it either. Friendship is, for many of us, one of the most important but least thought about aspects of life.

I also considered Jesus’s statements to his disciples about friendship in John 15:12–17. He taught that friendship is the greatest expression of love. It is the meaning of the cross. It is

one way in which he wants us to view our relationship with him. It is how he wants us to relate to one another. According to Jesus, the topic of friendship should take us to the heart of the meaning of the cross, history, and love.

This topic is a deep well, and once I started lowering my bucket, it never touched bottom.

Then I wondered: *Why can't I remember hearing anyone talk this way about friendship?* So I turned to church history. It turns out that many have praised and prized friendship above nearly every other earthly good. We've just forgotten our heritage.

A few things have resulted from discovering the biblical and historical riches of friendship. First, the ancients convinced me that they got it right. Aelred of Rievaulx, a twelfth-century author on friendship, wrote, "Absolutely no life can be pleasing without friends."¹⁷ That's a strong claim. *But is it true?* I wondered. So I looked back and reimagined my life without close friends. What came to mind was a life void of all my happiest memories. If I removed friendship from my past, half of my joy would disappear right with it. Now I simply cannot fathom leading a fulfilling life without friends.

If you ask me what's best in life, I'm going to give you names.

Second, these elevated thoughts about friendship carried me to a depressing conclusion: I'm not as good of a friend as I thought. I've since found that this is a typical first response to thinking more deeply about the nature of true friendship. After sharing some observations about this topic with my friend Joe, I asked him for his thoughts. He responded, "I'm a really bad friend." I disagreed, but I also understood—thinking about friendship exposes our own shortcomings. Once we move beyond clichés to consider *true* friendship, we sense we may not be great friends after all. But there's good news: this is only *ini-*

tially disheartening, because discontent pushes us to take steps forward. Awareness is progress.

Finally, I began to approach my relationships much more deliberately. In some seasons of life before this, I didn't think I had the time to cultivate friendship. It was never entirely absent, but I didn't make it central. But we always make time for what we value. So when this new conviction strengthened, it started messing with my schedule. I found myself thinking about my friends, wishing I had more time with them, and connecting with them to make that happen.

That's what I hope happens to you as you read this book: you become a better friend simply as a result of treasuring friendship more highly.

JUST FRIENDS?

What happened to friendship that we must now make such efforts to recover it? For one thing, we've hollowed out and trivialized *friend* and *friendship*. These words now rest lightly on our imaginations. When we honor our closest relationships, we're quicker to grab familial language like *brother* and *sister* than *friend*. I heard someone say to a tight-knit group of Christians, "We're not just friends; we're family." That's true, and the Bible does reference family more than friends; but why the *just*? Friendship didn't seem strong enough to uphold the weight of the moment.

Friendship often feels light, frothy, and sentimental. Friendship quotes sound cliché: "Old friends warm the heart;" "With a little help from my friends;" "Friends are flowers in the garden of life." Charming (perhaps), but not compelling.

We've also connected it to other trivial words: *Chum*, *pal*, *buddy*. *Band of brothers* carries much more gravitas than *band of besties*.

Here's a test: What comes into your mind when you think about friendship with Jesus? His kingly authority calls us to attention, but friendship with Jesus carries little weight. If his kingship connotes strength like a mountain, his friendship reminds us of a light mist. For many, it sounds no different than calling Jesus a little buddy. Some may wonder if the Bible even allows us to call our relationship with God a friendship. It may sound irreverent to you. I'm eager to consider this significant—and significantly misunderstood—topic in the final chapter, but here we can at least note this: The thought of friendship with God rings hollow today because we've already hollowed out the idea of friendship in general. How highly (or lowly) we esteem friendship with God will correlate with how highly (or lowly) we esteem friendship in general—and that is currently at a low point.

We've also stretched out the word *friend*, making it a broad but shallow term. Like a rubber band stretched too far, too long, *friend* is no longer strong enough to hold our closest companions. Friendship should be more like a submarine, holding few and going deep. But we've made it more like a cruise ship, filled with lots of nice people whom we don't know well at all.

We think of friendship more like the word *drink* (a word covering a whole range of liquids) and less like *coffee* (which is specific, and with its own features). We overextend *friend* to the point of ambiguity, applying it to almost everyone we know. Our large number of Facebook friends may be delightful people. But we don't really know. We *do* know all of them are more like contacts and acquaintances than true friends. *Friendship* now refers to so much that it no longer means much.

Friend has become our title for nice people: if she is kind to me, and if she is not my sworn enemy, then she is my friend. We

mean well, of course—we want to honor people with the title, and we want to be friendly to everyone. But if *friend* means everyone, then *friend* means nothing.

FRIENDS TO MANY AND FRIENDS TO NONE

It may be that we have made the word *friendship* broad and shallow, but perhaps most of us still have close friendships. The stats aren't reassuring on this one, though: we live increasingly isolated lives.

One study shows that in 1985 the average American had about three friends, defined as people whom we can confide in, people with whom we share the most important things in life. But by 2004, just nineteen years later, the average American only had two close friends, and one in four had no one this close at all.¹⁸ In other words, we experience fewer and fewer deep relationships, and one in four of us have no one (*no one!*) to confide in. Some of us may not wish to open up often, but that's not what this study refers to—this refers to a quarter of us who couldn't do so even if we wanted to. The average American has fewer and fewer real friends. We are increasingly lonely, and very often this lasts for long stretches of life.¹⁹

And this isn't just an American problem. The UK has now appointed a minister for loneliness to address the growing problem of social isolation.²⁰ “Rent a friend” companies, first popular in Japan, are now booming in other countries as well. Many people across the globe now pay for a companion to keep them company. Why? Because, as whole societies, we've failed to forge deep relationships.

For some of us, this life looks and feels quite lonely. One past coworker described her daily schedule to me this way: “I work, I go home, and then I watch TV until I fall asleep.”

GOD MADE YOU FOR FRIENDSHIP.

Friendship is one of the deepest pleasures of life. But in our busy, fast-paced, mobile world, we've lost this rich view of friendship and instead settled for shallow acquaintances based on little more than similar tastes or shared interests.

Helping us recapture a vision of true friendship, pastor Drew Hunter explores God's design for friendship and what it really looks like in practice—giving us practical advice to cultivate the kinds of true friendships that lead to true and life-giving joy.



“This is one of those books with that rare combination of beautiful theology, painful conviction, soothing grace, practical wisdom, inspiring motivation, and enjoyable writing. I hope it will bear much fruit in many lives, starting with my own.”

DAVID MURRAY, Professor of Old Testament and Practical Theology, Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary

“We talk about community but not friendship. Hunter is right, and in *Made for Friendship* he fills the church's gap with deep theological truths and helpful practical tools regarding friendship. I'm grateful for this resource!”

CHRISTINE HOOVER, author, *Messy Beautiful Friendship* and *Searching for Spring*

“Hunter will capture you with his compelling vision of friendship. Beautifully written, these pages are filled with fresh insight and practical wisdom. Reading this book will ignite your desire to be a better friend and to savor the joys of friendship.”

COLIN S. SMITH, Senior Pastor, The Orchard, Arlington Heights, Illinois



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