

May 21, 2013

# EXTREME FAITH

## Extreme Friendship

Connections determine the strength of friendship.

"When we are us we can develop friendships that are strong and real."



## EXTREME FRIENDSHIP

### How connected to your friends are you?

How would you define your connections with your friends. What do you really know about them? Does your connection with them go below the surface, does it share the deepest dreams that you have for your life? Does it share the darkest fears that you have?

Let's take a look at Jonathan and David's friendship again.

"They kissed one another; and they wept together" (1 Sam. 20:41). I'm going to say this, and I don't want you to get upset. Guys can show affection. It doesn't mean they are weak. Yes, those were biblical times, and the customs were different. But consider what those guys had been through together. They weren't afraid of physical contact. They were emotionally connected in the most real and honest way. What have you and your closest friend gone through? When have they been there for you and when have you been there for them. It matters, it really matters, as you go through life you will need friends who will stand with you no matter what you face, or what you have done. Think about it this way have you every done

something that was so stupid that the minute that you did it you know that you screwed up big time? If you have then you know what it feels like to look around the crowd seeking the face of the friend that will not leave your side during that time. Proverbs says it this way. Proverbs 18:24 A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Lets look at that verse a little closer. It says that you might have many companions people that you run with and do things with, you know them and they know you, but you are not really all that connected. If that is you then the question that you have to ask is who has your back? You need to find the friend the second part of the verse is talking about. You need to find the friend that sticks closer than a brother. Yea brothers will fight and they will have rough times but they will stick together when they need each other. Proverbs is telling us that there are friends who will stick closer than a brother.

Continued on page 3...

How strong are your friendships...  
"When we are us we can develop friendships that are strong and real."



What connects you to your friends...  
Common interest, common friends....  
What connects us needs to be more than just a strand, we need more deeper connections that will stand the strain and stress that comes along with friendship.  
Today we can have friends that we know nothing about. We need to take our friendships to a deeper level. We need to be Emotionally connected and invested!

# Be yourself and deepen your friendships

"By Your Side"

Why are you striving these days  
Why are you trying to earn grace  
Why are you crying  
Let me lift up your face  
Just don't turn away

Why are you looking for love  
Why are you still searching  
As if I'm not enough  
To where will you go child  
Tell me where will you run  
To where will you run

'Cause I'll be by your side wherever you fall  
In the dead of night whenever you call  
And please don't fight these hands that are holding you  
My hands are holding you

Look at these hands at my side  
They swallowed the grave on that night  
When I drank the world's sin  
So I could carry you in  
And give you life  
I want to give you life

And I'll be by your side wherever you fall  
In the dead of night whenever you call  
And please don't fight these hands that are holding you  
My hands are holding you

Here at my side wherever you fall  
In the dead of night whenever you call  
And please don't fight these hands that are holding you  
My hands are holding you

'Cause I, I love you  
I want you to know  
That I, yeah I'll love you  
I'll never let you go, no, no



This song is featured on the Over and Underneath album by tenth avenue north

# FRIENDSHIP

## EXTREME APPLICATION

"When we are us we can develop friendships that are strong and real." Have you ever faked who you are around others? Don't worry we all have at one time or another. The goal is to learn who you are from God and be that person. When we are truly us we can grow friendships that will be strong and real. Knowing how God sees us frees us to be us! And when we are us we are at our best!

When we are us we can develop friendships that are strong and real.

## Think About it

Who's back do you have? Who's got your back? Friendship that is built on truth and connections will last, and you will know who's back you've got and you will know who has your back!

## "Pirate From the House of Prayer"

**Aida Skripnikova 19 years old U.S.S.R. 1961**

## How connected to your friends are you?

cont...

That is a tight friendship, those types of friendships don't just happen, they are grown and cared for. How do you care for your friends and how do you develop friendships that will last the long haul? It has everything to do with the type of friend that you are, and a whole lot to do with the second greatest commandment.

Remember last week as we looked at loving yourself, and loving your neighbor, (friend) as you love yourself. I hope that you have been growing your relationship with God and learning who you are through the eyes of God. Remember last week we looked at this one principle over and over, Knowing how God sees us frees us to be us! And when we are us we are at our best! This falls right in line with tonight's theme of **"When we are us we can develop friendships that are strong and real."** We need to get over the fear of not being ourselves around our friends. We need to be us and then allow our friends to be themselves.

It works like this when we are who we were made to be then we can truly allow our friends to know everything about us, and we can allow them to let us know everything about them. What are your dreams, what are your friends dreams? What are your fears, what are your friends fears? It is not always so easy to share everything with everyone, but we should always be able to share our true self with our true friends. When we are close to each other we won't hold anything back, we feel safe to be who we are. Being who you are is the best you that you can be and it will allow your friendships to grow deeper and stronger than you every could have imagined! So work on this throughout the week, be you and start working on your friendships, making them strong and real!

The young woman stood on the corner handing out small cards with poems on them. Some took them because they were interested in what she might be handing out, some because she was incredibly beautiful, but most probably took the cards because of the joy and love that shown in her smile as she looked each person in the eye and handed them a card. Each card contained a poem she had written herself. Each poem declared the love and joy she had from knowing Jesus as Lord and Savior. For this she was arrested and brought to trial. Before the court she boldly testified, "The society which you, the Communists, are building can never be just because you yourselves are unjust" She was sentenced to one year of imprisonment. When she was released, she went straight back to her work for the underground church. Because of her beauty, determination, and boldness, she was labeled "a pirate from the house of prayer" by the Communist newspaper Izvestia. One of the things she dared to write was, "You, the atheists, can meet together at any time and do whatever you like talk, read, or sing. Why, then, can we not visit one another? What law forbids this? Why can we not pray or read the Bible whenever we want? We are allowed to speak about God only in church. You would certainly not acquiesce if you were allowed to talk about the theater only in a theater or about books only in a library. In the same way, we cannot be silent about what constitutes the whole meaning of our life about Christ!" Again she was arrested and this time was sentenced to four years in prison, but she did not waver. By the age of 27, Aida was facing her fourth prison term, yet prison seemed to do little but increase her love for God's Word and its importance to her faith. "If it were the other way around, that we had a plentiful supply of Bibles and that there were none in England, I'd be prepared to be the first to take Bibles there.... In prison, the most difficult thing was to live without a Bible." Once, a gospel of Mark was smuggled in to her. "When the guards learned that I had a gospel, they became alarmed and searched the whole camp. During the second search, they found it. I was punished for this and had to spend ten days and ten nights in solitary confinement in a cold cell. But two weeks later I was given a whole New Testament which I was able to keep almost until the day of my release. "The prison was searched many times, but each time the Lord helped me. I knew in advance about the search and was able to keep the precious book. Many other prisoners helped me hide the book, even though they were not Christians." The guards did many other things to try to discourage her and make her deny her faith, but some of these backfired on them. "Once the guard showed me a food parcel. He told me that it contained chocolate and other good things. It was not Continued on page 6...



# DIG IN

Read Proverbs 18:24

What are the top five dreams for your life?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

What are your biggest fears?

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By sharing these things with your closest friends how do you think it would affect your friendship?

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What if your friend was to share there dreams and there fears with you, how would that affect your friendship with them?

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“When we are us we can develop friendships that are strong and real.”

## STEP ONE:

Serve

## STEP TWO:

Love ‘em  
like yourself

## STEP THREE:

Emotionally  
connected

## STEP FOUR

Make it last  
Strong Foundation

CONNECTIONS GO DEEP

**Look it over, read the story again, dig into the questions and write out your thoughts...**

[illegible]



# EXTREME APPLICATION

I've read about Jonathan and David a ton of times. I've seen four things that these two guys did to build, strengthen, and continue their friendship.

The Third thing that stands out in Jonathan and David's friendship

**They were connected by deep connections, not just surface connections:**

"They kissed one another; and they wept together" (1 Sam. 20:41). I'm going to say this, and I don't want you to get upset. Guys can show affection. It doesn't mean they are gay. Yes, those were biblical times, and the customs were different. But consider what those guys had been through together. They weren't 32 Extreme Faith afraid of physical contact. They were emotionally connected in the most real and honest way.

**"When we are us we can develop friendships that are strong and real."**

## MODERN EXTREMES

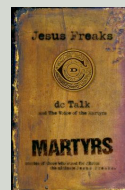
### **"I Rest in the Arms of God" Ivadejda Sloboda U.S.S.R.**

given to me, but it was an encouragement to know that my friends cared about me. That fact meant much more than the food. On another occasion, I was told ten packages had arrived for me from Norway, but I was not given these either... It is a great joy for us to experience definite spiritual fellowship with Christians in different parts of the world. This gave us hope in prison I want to send an expression of love from us all to those who have cared about us and prayed for us." When she was released from her fourth term, Aida had changed drastically. The movie-star beauty of her youth was not only gone, but at only thirty years of age she looked more than fifty. She was haggard and worn by the years of imprisonment. If you had seen her, you would never have recognized her as the same woman, except for one thing: her smile. It still reflected the love and joy of knowing Jesus as Lord and Savior. Of her last and hardest term in prison, Aida wrote, "One text became clearer than ever before, 'My yoke is easy, my burden is light' (Matthew 11:30). Jesus Himself spoke these words and during the three years of prison I came to understand how real and true they are."

In 1991, some twenty years after her fourth and final prison term, the Soviet Union broke up due to the fall of Communism. The government persecutions of Christians has stopped there, at least for a time. The faith and fight of Aida and the others in the underground were not in vain. In 1992, couriers from The Voice of the Martyrs found Aida —

sick, pale, and thin living in a clean, neatly-kept apartment in a crumbling old building in St Petersburg She was an island of cleanliness and order in the midst of chaos; a picture of her heart and spirit It was clear to see that she held no bitterness for her former torturers, only forgiveness. She was surprised about the attention her story had drawn from around the world, but was extremely grateful for it She said, "I have only been able to endure because of the many prayers from around the world. Otherwise I would not have persevered." Don't forget about those in prison. Suffer with them as though you were there yourself Share the sorrow of those being mistreated, as though you feel their pain in your own bodies.

Hebrews 13:3 NLT



Featured Story  
from the book  
Jesus Freaks dc  
Talk and the  
voice of the  
Martyrs



Living life with  
Extreme faith  
and  
Extreme vision

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