

You've Got a Friend in Me

Week 1: Woody

Healthy Friendships Begin with a Healthy Relationship with Jesus

Icebreaker

If you could have one fictional character as your best friend, who would it be and why? What qualities make someone a great friend?

Introduction

Everyone longs for a friend who will stay through life's highs and lows. While even the best human friendships can disappoint us, Jesus offers something no one else can—perfect love, complete acceptance, and an unbreakable relationship. Before we can become the kind of friend God calls us to be, we must first discover our identity in Christ. This week we'll discuss how belonging to Jesus transforms every other relationship in our lives.

Discussion Point 1: Our Deepest Need Is Greater Than Loneliness

Read: Ephesians 2:1-5

We often think our greatest need is finding better relationships, but Scripture tells us our deepest problem is separation from God because of sin. Loneliness is real, but it is ultimately a symptom of a broken relationship with our Creator. Jesus came to restore that relationship.

Questions

- Why do you think people often try to solve spiritual emptiness with human relationships?
- How have you seen sin affect relationships with both God and other people?
- What does it mean that God loved us "even when we were dead in our sins"?

Discussion Point 2: Our Identity Comes From Belonging to Jesus

Read: John 15:15 and Ephesians 2:8-10



July 12 – You’ve Got a Friend in Me— Week 1 “Woody” – Lead Pastor Marc Riegel

Woody knew who he belonged to because Andy's name was written on his boot. Likewise, our confidence comes from knowing whose we are. We are saved by grace, created by God, and called His friends. Our identity is not based on success, failure, or the opinions of others.

Questions

- What are some places people commonly look for their identity besides Christ?
- How does knowing that Jesus calls us His friend change the way we see ourselves?
- Which truth from Ephesians 2:8-10 encourages you the most?

Discussion Point 3: Healthy Friends Overflow From a Healthy Relationship With Jesus

Read: Ephesians 3:14-19

Only Jesus can satisfy the deepest needs of our hearts. When we are rooted in His love and filled with His Spirit, we stop expecting other people to be our savior. Instead, we are free to love others with grace, humility, and faithfulness.

Questions

- Have you ever expected another person to provide something only Jesus could give?
- Which characteristic of a Christ-filled friend (humble, secure, rooted in love, spiritually strong, etc.) would you most like God to grow in you?
- What practical habits help you stay rooted in your friendship with Jesus?

Takeaway

This week, spend intentional time with Jesus every day—even if it's just 10-15 minutes in Scripture and prayer. Ask Him to deepen your friendship with Him before asking Him to improve your friendships with others. As your relationship with Christ grows, you'll discover that healthy friendships are the natural overflow of a heart that already knows it belongs to Him.

Key Truth: *Healthy friendships begin with a healthy relationship with Jesus.*

If you see this... text Pastor Marc the following phrase for a fun surprise. “Toy Story 5-er”