

**Big Idea:** As a believer, you can't get more of Jesus, but Jesus can get more of you.

**Group Discussion:** Think about your childhood best friend. What is one of your best, worst, or even craziest memories with him/her?

This morning we are kicking off a 4 part series called "The Love Buzz" that focuses on **God's plan to overtake the world with His love**. This is a plan that is refreshingly simple, especially in comparison with our plans for "big" things that we tend to make so complicated.

His simple plan to love us, generates a buzz in and about us that spreads and spreads until the whole world is buzzing with God's love! So today we start by focusing on this **"buzz" personally**, which is revealed in His **friendship**. Yes, I said FRIEND. God wants to be your friend. God's plan to take over the world begins with being your friend.

It sounds waaaaay too simple right? It's not. It's also not revolutionary, but it is **freeing**. Freeing that He has chosen to love you through friendship, one of the most elementary things in humanity.

>>My 3 year old can't drive, cook a hot pocket, multiply, or tie her shoes (actually that sounds a lot like a 13 year old boy...) **BUT** she can do friendship, for better or worse. God has chosen to do something we implicitly understand even as children: be friends.

We are going to look at the **Evolution of Relationships** and where Jesus fits in.

**1. Stranger:** In this level you don't know the other person exists; she isn't on your radar. You don't like or dislike him, you don't know he is alive until you bump into him turning a corner. This relationship is effectively 0%.

**Think Jesus:** This would be knowing there was some guy named Jesus that a bunch of religious people make a big deal about but you're not sure why.

While Jesus may be a stranger to YOU, you were never a stranger to Jesus.

- **Psalm 139:14-16** He knew you before He created you.
- **Ephesians 2:11-12** You were a stranger with no hope.
- **Romans 5:7-8** God loved you enough to send Jesus to die while you were still a sinner in rebellion against Him.
- **Romans 6:23** While you deserved death for your sins, He gifted you life.

**2. Acquaintance:** This is the "How are you?" "Good, how are you?" "Good" level. You're barely on a first name basis. You're prone to call people "pal" "guy" "girl" "hey you!" "friend" "fellow grunt" or whatever else comes awkwardly spewing out because you don't remember names. At best you know his name his name, office location, the general idea

at what he does for a living, and that he has a daughter you *think* is named Kayla, when it's actually Kayda. This level is like you skimmed some bad cliff notes.

**Think Jesus:** As an acquaintance of Jesus you know the message the Church preaches, about you needing a Savior from your sins to make peace between you and God and give you the hope of eternal life. But for whatever reason, you've never trusted in Him for salvation and begun to follow Him.

While you might only know the big picture about Jesus, He knows the hairs on your head and considers you valuable. (Luke 12:6-7)

You **THINK** following Him means no more fun and a long list of rules. **JESUS** says following Him brings fullness, joy, hope and freedom! (John 10:10, Romans 5:1-5)

**3. Friend:** The friendship level is genuine. I know you see one more level and this this one is a trick! Nope. This is a legit, friendship level. Its "**philos**" in the Greek and it means "beloved," "dear," "fond one" or just "friendly."

With a friend you: talk, check in on FaceBook, hang out once in a while, gravitate towards one another at functions, and have a pretty good working knowledge of one another. You're "buyin what their sellin" at this point. **Your friendship is a real, tangible thing.**

**Think Jesus:** First off, HE called YOU friend, NOT the other way around. "...I have called you FRIENDS and I have told you everything My Father told Me! You didn't choose Me, but I chose YOU." (John 15:15-16)

- You didn't earn His friendship by being awesome. (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- You can't lose His friendship by being a horrible friend (John 6:37, 39)

Some of you can't think of Jesus as a friend because you see Him as some impersonal banker that made a transaction for your soul, and now you're trying really hard not to tick Him off. And now you're worried I'm telling you there's a level with Jesus more special than friendship and you're not good enough to get there.

**Stop trying to please a deity and start resting in a friendship.**

The big idea is: "**As a believer you can't get more of Jesus, but Jesus can get more of you.**" Maybe you just need the first half today. Maybe you just need to hear God say in a still small voice "Child. You've got all of Me you can possibly have because I gave it all freely and never asked you to earn it or maintain it."

In Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus says "*Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*"

If you walked in a stranger to Jesus today, we just want you to leave an acquaintance, having heard what He did for you because He's always loved you. We want you to process His love and desire to be your friend.

If you walked in an acquaintance, we want you to be called Jesus' friend today. We hope you'll trust in Him for salvation and become a fellow brother or sister in Christ and walk this journey with us.

If you walked in a believer, with a Savior and Lord in Jesus, but NOT a friend, we want you to breathe in deep and rest in the friendship of Christ, trusting He didn't misspeak when He called you friend.

For everyone else...

**4. Companion:** Companionship is friendship+intimacy. I'm not talking sex here (although a healthy sex life between a married man and woman IS intimacy and companionship). Intimacy in scripture, when not a sexual reference, simply means "to know."

This level of relationship is really KNOWING someone: their inner most secrets; their fears and hopes and dreams. Its absolute trust and confidence in one another. Its knowing that if you've got no one else, you've got this person.

The best example of this in scripture is David and Jonathan, where the Bible describes their companionship as their souls being knit together and that Jonathan loved David's soul as his own. (1 Samuel 18:1)

**These relationships don't happen overnight and they don't happen in large batches, BUT they do happen, you need them, and God designed you for them!**

Have we mentioned **Community Groups** at the Gathering lately??? Paul will talk more about this next week about the companionship within the Church.

If I wanted to GROW a friendship I would:

- Communicate, encourage, support, and share.
- Spend time together.
- Go out of my way for and serve my friend.
- Forgive and seek to do right by my friend and not hurt.
- Learn them inside and out.
- \*\*\*These are all the natural responses you'll receive from your intimate friend.

**Summed up, to GROW a friendship I must INVEST in a friendship.  
Investing in friendship will transform it into companionship.**

This is how my relationship with Jennifer has developed. Stranger >> Acquaintance >> Friend >> Companion. Over time we have become one another's closest companion. We don't have to force our relationship it continues to grow and develop naturally.

**Think Jesus:** What about intimacy with Jesus? Can we not just do the same thing? Can't we go from friendship to intimacy with Him by simply investing in our relationship? By responding to His love and pursuing Him back?

**Don't interpret today as a call to more RELIGION, but a call to more RELATIONSHIP.**

Let's wrap up with John 15:5-11 in The Message version. We know how to have a friendship. With the promise in mind that He has called us friend, lets invest in our Friend.