



Date: _____

Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

Fitting In and Finding Friends Series, Lesson 16

Lesson Title: Let's Make a Deal For True Friendship

Take Home Point: Commit to being friends in Christ.

Warm-Up:

In the movie "Ice Age", a mammoth, a saber-toothed tiger, and a sloth join together to restore a human baby to his family. In the beginning, the tiger is in only to capture the child for delivery to the rest of his pack as revenge against humans. At one point, the mammoth rescues the tiger from falling into a river of lava. After the rescue, the tiger says, "You saved my life. Why did you do that?" To which the mammoth replies, "That's what you do in a herd. You take care of each other." Those three animals were a most unlikely "herd", but they got the job done and learned how to be real friends regardless of personality or background or expectations. Actually it's a good illustration of those who follow Jesus. Together, we make a most unlikely "herd", but God wants us to take care of each other and show his love to all who need it. Which is everyone.

Read: 1st John 3:16-18,23

Observation (What happened?):

What is it that demonstrates the love of God to others?

How does John describe God's word to us – as a good idea or a command we are to obey?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

How would you link together the last phrase of verse 16 with verses 17 and 18?

Why do you suppose John tied together acting out God's love with the truth of God?

Insight:

The John who wrote today's Bible reading also wrote the gospel that bears his name. In John's gospel, Jesus gives the standards by which we show him we are his disciples. In John 8:31-32, Jesus says, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." In 13:34-35, he says, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." And in 15:8, he says, "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples." How consistent John is in his writing themes! And that's because the themes of Jesus are consistent. Love God, obey his commands, share his love with others, bear spiritual fruit. This is true discipleship, and a description of the kind of friend God wants us to be – one that loves, shares God's life, and seeks to build up all that is good in another.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

Think of someone in your life who is not very loveable. How can you show God's love to them?

Take a moment to thank God for someone who is a true friend to you. Then thank that person directly in some way, too.