

WHERE THE WHITE EAGLE FLIES
Volume 2



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FRIENDSHIP

April 1993



One of the amazing things about our Lord is he could make friends with anyone. He was called "a friend of tax collectors and sinners." He treated all the oppressed with tender affection even in moments of weariness. Hypocrites were the only exception to this. The Lord continually loved them by rebuking them. When Jesus went to the cross all his friends deserted him. He knew both intimacy and betrayal yet this does not deter Him today from loving you and me.

David was a man who had great friendship. Jonathan loved David more than himself. Jonathan was willing to surrender his position of power in favor of the anointed one God had chosen. These two friends were unable to spend precious time together though their love was "greater than the love of women." David also knew the pain of betrayal, "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." Ps. 41:9. David also betrayed his friend Uriah and murdered him this act cost him pain in his family the rest of his days.

The classic story of being turned against by your friends is that of Job. He wrote, "My friends scorn me", Job 12:20. When covered with sores and seeking consolation, how easy it was for his friends to find his faults and share them with him. Being a good friend therefore, is not an easy task.

Jesus said, "Greater love has no man than this, than to lay down his life for a friend." (Jn. 15:13)

How many of us often feel lonely? How many feel as if we have no friends? How many retreat into a corner away from other believers because of someone who damaged us in an incident long past? How we treat our friends in fact is how we treat the Lord. "...He who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?" (1Jn 4:20) Some times this tendency to run away drives us into the world and we begin to replace the love of dear friends with material things and pleasures. At this point, scriptures tell us that to be a friend with the world is to be an enemy of God (James 4:4) and we are caught in a "Catch-22", a place of no escape.

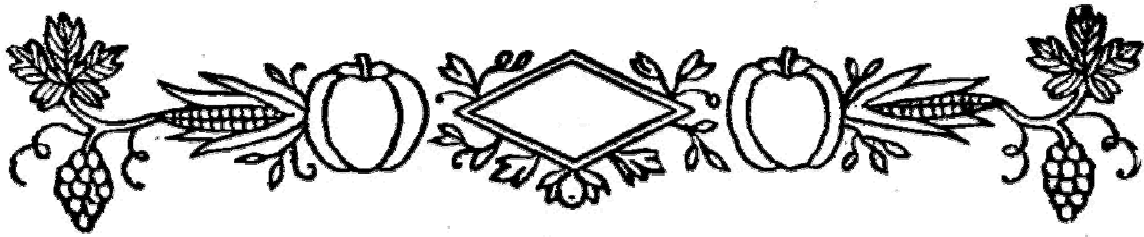
God, of course, does provide the way of escape. The answer is the same as when we first were saved. We must return to Jesus as our friend and He will help us restore these broken relationships so necessary to our health and well being. It is more important to be a friend than it is to be a king or millionaire.

Some of us ask ourselves, should there be any favoritism shown in our relationships with others? We are finite beings and we cannot be with everyone at the same time. John was referred to as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Jesus had a special tender affection towards John that was different from His love for Peter or Nathaniel. Something happened heart to heart between them.

Are we listening for our friend's heart? Are we walking loyally towards our friends as Jesus did towards his disciples? He said that "not one of them is lost except the son of perdition" (meaning Judas) Jn. 17:12.

Someone once said, "The richest man is the man with friends." In fact the Kingdom of God should be a kingdom of friends in Christ

A Code of Friendship



1. I will pray for my friend and present his needs to God.

"And the Lord restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before." Job 42:10

2. I will listen for my friend's heart more than talk.

"As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." Pr. 27:19

3. I will defend my friend in public and in private. He will be safe in my company.

"He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends." Pr. 17:9

4. I will not be a busybody in my friend's affairs.

"Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters." 1 Pet. 4:15

"It is an honour for a man to cease from strife; but every fool will be meddling." Pr. 20:3

5. I will honor my friend's privacy when he desires it.

"Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbor's house; lest he be weary of thee and so hate thee." Pr. 25:17

6. I will seek to refresh my friend by seeking Jesus myself and sharing what I hear.

"Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart; so does the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel." Pr. 27:9

7. I will not purposely hide my blessings or pain from my friend.

"A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." Pr. 17:17

8. I will speak the truth to my friend.

"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." Pr. 27:17 and 27:6.

9. I will stand by and protect my friend in times of trouble.

"Two are better than one...for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up." Eccl. 4:9,10

10. I will keep no score of my friend's mistakes nor be rude to my friend.

"Love keeps no record of wrongs. Love is not rude." 1 Cor. 13:4

11. I will expect the best, not suspect the worst, of my friend and rejoice when it occurs.

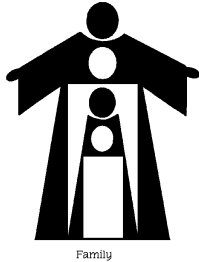
"A man that has friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Pr. 18:24

12. I will not reveal a confidence my friend has shared.

"A tale bearer revealeth secrets but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth a matter." Pr. 11:13

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. You are my friends if you do whatever I command you"

John 15: 12 and 14



Most of us who have children want to be good parents. It is perhaps the most important goal we have. As a parent myself I have found this task has many dimensions and there is much to overcome. Since I have been a pastor for almost twenty years my family has been subject to much scrutiny. I have found that opinions of my parenting skills break into several camps. There are those who have told me I was too lenient; those who have told me I was too strict; and those who tell me they too are still learning. Most people in the first two categories are raising young children and are studying people like me with much fear and trembling. The third category is made up mainly of people who are raising or have raised young men and women and have acquired some gray hair in the process.

When I was reflecting upon the challenges of this task the Holy Spirit reminded me that others before me have had much difficulty and to remember their struggle. You see God himself had a problem child, Adam. As much as God wanted to bless him Adam had to find out about good and evil. After much patience with Adam's seed God destroyed all but Noah and his family. But Noah had a problem with his children. Ham uncovered his father's nakedness and was cursed. Abraham was a great man of God but he had a problem child, Ishmael whose offspring continues to plague Israel today. Isaac, the seed of promise, was not exempt. He and Rebecca sired Esau and Jacob both of who were problems to them. The Edomites plagued Israel for generations. Jacob, the father of the nation of Israel had twelve sons. The first, Rueben was a fornicator as he slept with his father's concubine. Simeon and Levi put to death a whole town and lost their inheritance to Judah who

went in to a prostitute. Ten of these brothers tried to kill their younger brother Joseph. Job woke up every morning praying for his children who were often partying. David had a problem child named Absalom. Even the apostle Paul's mom could have worried for her son as he was murdering Christians.

Is parenting an impossible task? No it is a difficult ministry in need of much tenderness and patience. We are often too hard on ourselves or on one another. Billy Graham had a son who ran away, and rebelled. Yet he and his wife remained in the position of the father of the prodigal, looking out for his return. He has returned and is serving the Lord powerfully today. Jesus said to Peter "Satan has asked permission to sift you as wheat, but when you return strengthen your brethren." Satan asked God if he could touch Job and God gave him permission. His friends never saw that exchange but sat around correcting Job and condemning him until God judged them. Job had to pray them out of the results of their blindness.

There are parents today trying to find the right formula to avoid trials and raise godly sons and daughters. My reading of scripture tells me the latter is possible but the former is inescapable. There is every reason to do the best we can to implant the word of God in our children's hearts, to provide structure, protection and discipline so that our young people are secure. But in the end these are not "our" children. They belong to our Father and He is the one who has a destiny prepared for them. He is charting the course and we are helping to navigate on the way. I think you will find, as I have, that sometimes I was too lenient and sometimes I was too strict. But my worst offense as a parent was when I did not listen to the heart of my child. The issue is not always whether they are right or I am right. Am I listening, am I trying to understand from my child's perspective what is happening. These are not user-friendly times. The love of many is waxing cold. Paul's attitude toward the church was as a **nursing mother cherishes her children**. [1Thess: 2.7] David said of the Lord, "**Thy gentleness has made me great**." It is a great God who makes good parents because they listen to Him and to the heart cry of the young

The Child is Father

On a warm September afternoon in 1979, I was out in my workshop making a towel rack for my upstairs bathroom. I had just inserted the dowel into place and was about to apply shellac when the phone rang in the house, and Mary called me.

"Chuck, it's for you, long distance."

As soon as I heard my parents' voices I knew something was wrong. My dad had retired in 1973 from the foreign service because of a blood disease. Over the last six years he had lived in San Antonio and had vastly improved. I had visited him earlier that year and caddied for him as he played his usual fine game of golf. I could feel the tension in his voice as he told me,

"Chuck, the doctor just told me I have leukemia."

"He's been feeling so good, I can't understand it," Mom added.

My mother had only recently recovered from a blow to the head she had received in a robbery. Dad had to care for Mom for some time afterward. Now somehow she had to muster strength to care for him. They had both always sacrificed for others. In fact their reason for moving to San Antonio was to help care for Dad's 101 year old mother.

Dad was speaking, "Charles, I want you to be ready, I may need you to give me white blood cells. I'm going in soon for three to six weeks of intense chemotherapy. Can you come?"

"I'll come as soon as you call."



"Charles, I'm going to fight this thing all the way."

"Good, Dad, we're praying for you."

"Charles, can you baptize me when you come? I've been thinking about it for a long time."

"Of course, Dad. We'll do it."

Mary and I had received Christ into our hearts in 1969-70. I had asked Jesus in on a street corner and since that time I had tried to share the good news with my parents. I had been quite a flake and it took a few years for my folks to understand that my life had really changed. After a few years, they began to respond and I started mailing Bible studies to them. They filled them out and mailed the studies back to me. It was so precious; I could only stand in awe at the Lord's grace. I was constantly reminded of Wordsworth's words "the child is father to the man." It was like I was Dad and he was the child. I now realize that this was working a deep humility in my father and mother as well as in myself.

I arrived in San Antonio three weeks later. Dad was failing. My sister had flown in from Massachusetts. The doctors had tried her blood and my aunt Jane's, but nothing was working. The last hope was my white blood cells. Within a day, I was strapped to the blood machine with tubes running in and out of my arms. Soon I could observe blood running out of me through a centrifugal machine. It whirled the blood at high speed extracting the white cells and returning the red cells. I was on the machine four times in a week about four hours at a time. Each time left me feeling weak.

While I was sitting there each day, I had the opportunity to share about Jesus with the nurses. One of them was the wife of a local TV weatherman who was also a Christian. After I told her about my father, she told her husband. From that point on, this wonderful servant of Christ

visited my father each day in his hospital room and later at his house. He read to him from scripture and prayed with him until six months later, Dad went to be with the Lord. I had prayed that Dad have someone to minister to him when I wasn't there, and Jesus mercifully answered my prayer.

My white cells temporarily gave Dad new life. He felt well enough several days later to be dressed in a fresh white hospital gown by a very cooperative hospital staff.

One evening, in front of a neighbor, nurses, my mother, and myself, my dad shared how he had given his life to Christ and received Jesus as his Lord and Savior. He had believed when he was a boy, but had been offended by a Sunday School teacher and left the church he was in. I found it amazing how seemingly small encounters can affect the course of our lives.

Because he could not get out of his bed, I sprinkled him with water. What grace I felt present in that room; what amazing love that would allow me to lead my seventy-year-old father to Christ and baptize him. The following is an account of my final time with my father as read at his memorial service June 1980.



I gave my cells to you, as you have
given your cells to me
and watched you change
to a little child before my eyes.
O father,
Like a helpless baby
you search for comfort in your struggle.

I sprinkle water on your head
Baptizing you in Jesus' name
You tell me of the peace
that you receive.
Such a simple way to be
a comfort to you.

Each night I hold your hand and pray,
almost as if I was the Dad

**and you the little boy.
I call you blood brother
and you try a little laugh.**

**You are so tender inside
so gentle and sweet and concerned for others.
Even as you suffer.
I am seeing a Kingdom in your heart.**

**The nurses love you,
You wake from a nap
and in the midst of fever
shyly ask them,
"Am I your favorite patient?"**

**Tuesday night you say, "Let me pray for you".
I give you my hand. You say, "Lord, thank you for a
faithful son".**

**No false motives, just sincere concerned, love.
I think of how I want to say that to my son, Abe
and how grateful I am to you, Lord for making
this moment possible.**

**Wednesday night came and it was time to go.
The doctor congratulates me saying, "Some people won't
even give blood".
Instead of feeling proud I told him how I had to overcome
fear and selfishness in order to give. I remember the blood
that Jesus shed for us all.**

**I read Psalm 121.
"I look to the mountains, Where does my help come
from."
Dad turns to me, "Let me pray for you, son."
It's like a benediction I feel a little like Isaac when
Abraham blessed him . . .
You pray "Thank you, Lord, for the miracles Charles has
worked among us.
Thank you for his helping me find the way into your
heart.
Lord be diligent to help him in his church work and
school.
Help him not to have a backed up workload. In Jesus'
name."**

**I pray, "Thank you, Lord Jesus for a dad who loves you.
Thank you that we have an eternal relationship and**

**nothing
can ever separate us from the love of God in Christ.
Neither death,
nor life, principalities or powers, heights or depths, things
present or things to come.
Thank you for eternal life Bless and strengthen Dad and
Mom. In Jesus' name."**

**I give you a farewell kiss,
Pray with Mom,
and walk out into the warm Texas night.**

Charles E. Smith

LIKE FOAM ON A WAVE

June 1993



Have you ever been to the ocean on a brilliant sunny day when the waves are roaring, cascading on the beach? Foam crests, at the tip of each incoming breaker, seeming to dance until the very last spray of its existence. When the foam disappears into the sand it has fulfilled its purpose, but until that final moment, it rides the ocean depths awaiting its destiny on the beach.

Our lives can be like foam awaiting the hour when the wave that carried us slides into eternity. In that climatic period of time, when we fulfill the purpose for which we were created, Christ is glorified. Jesus exemplified this. For 90% of His life on this earth, the first thirty years, we know almost nothing of what He did; yet volumes have been written about the three and a half years that end in his death, burial and resurrection.

Like Jesus, the meaning of our lives is revealed in our daily dying. What if the foam could refuse to crash on the beach? The entire ocean would soon be covered in foam. The foam however submits to a greater power, the wave. The wave submits to the divine rhythm of the ocean. The ocean in turn is ordered by the gravitational pull of the moon. The moon is influenced by its relation to the earth and sun. Like the foam we do not understand all that is happening to us to place us on the wave but we can have faith in the hand that placed us there unless we believe that creation itself is an accident of time.

Being foam on the crest of a wave is a little like riding on a roller coaster, once you get on you can not get off until the ride ends. Each wave is a part of the ocean and

cannot be separated from it. The foam cannot be fully separated from the wave. You and I cannot be separated from the love of Christ, which we received when we surrendered our lives to Jesus. If we do not deeply embrace and remember this love our long journey becomes an exercise in foolishness as death at the cross becomes an enemy to be feared rather than the path to freedom and life.

As time goes by and momentum builds, the wave is drawn to the beach. Each wave exists briefly at a point in time and each sequence of wave lasts for a short period of time. Revivals are often likened to waves. When they dissolve in the sand it is the rare observer who truly recognizes that one sequence has ended and time may go by before another begins. Sometimes we study the wave and attempt to create for ourselves what only God can set into motion.

It may seem humiliating to think of our lives as foam on a wave. Sometimes we feel insignificant to God's eternal purpose. We can feel that the journey is too long, or the storms too strong, but Jesus said that when we have done all that he commands us, we are still unprofitable servants. When we yield humbly to Him and are swept into God's purpose for our lives, we finally realize that death on the beach is only the beginning of our journey. All of this life is a prologue to the great adventure He has prepared for those who love Him. Who we really are is hidden beneath the foam in the substance of the ocean. Like a good mystery the complete truth of who we are will be revealed later when each of us meets Him face to face.



Some years ago I attended a high school graduation ceremony. As the students filed in, I could tell that things had changed since last I had been to a graduation. While the school board member was giving a speech, a beach ball was bouncing around and sent spinning through the air by the students. The valedictorians put on a comedy routine and a quartet sang out of tune. It was like listening to a band in a parade that had never practiced and was unsure of where it was going.

In the midst of this confusion the stage was cleared for a fan dance by a group of oriental girls in the student body. The curtains opened and the atmosphere changed to awe and amazement as these exquisitely dressed young women put on a demonstration of grace and unity. The audience, which had paid little attention to the previous ceremonies hushed, then suddenly awakening began to applaud, as 12 fans moved in perfect symmetry as if the twelve were one. For five minutes we were transported to another time and another culture while the rewards of order, discipline, commitment, and community were playing out before our eyes. As I watched the rest of the ceremony, I was impressed that what I had seen did not come out of the girls' school experience, but out of their cultural heritage. The perfect unity of the dance had transformed the ceremony.

Have you ever been to a shopping mall with a skating rink and watched as a beautifully matched couple skated around the rink? Many shoppers will stop all that they are doing to watch the precision moves of the skaters as if reminded of something eternal. The same holds true of a formation of birds. In the case of one variety, when one bird cannot keep up with the flock, others will drop off and fly with it 'til the tired one has a chance to recover and then rejoin another flock and fly again in perfect order. Like the fan dancers, grace and unity are at the heart of any group or species' chance of survival.

The same ingredients that hold cultures together hold God's people together. The same mystery that causes birds to fly in symmetry causes the people of God to mirror Christ in the earth. Just as the graduation ceremony was confusing and

without direction until the fan dance, so are our activities for God without Grace and Unity.

"And I took for myself two staffs; the one I called Grace and the other I called Unity; so I pastured the flock."

Zech. 11:7

The two staffs joined together are a picture of the cross of Christ. The upward staff, Grace, represents our relationship with God based on the Grace He has given us unconditionally. The horizontal staff, Unity, represents our unity with each other here on the earth. In the passage in Zechariah, the Lord eventually cuts the two staffs in pieces as judgment against His people who have sinned so greatly against Him and each other. He then describes the changes their actions are bringing upon them (the wicked shepherd that will follow) instead of the blessings He wanted so much to give them.

Caring, seeking, healing, and sustaining are acts of grace that produce unity. How much we need them today. When every man goes to his tent and every ministry is in competition against the other, we sin against one another, the enemy devours souls and there is no dance. Unity is what shows the world what God's heart is really like.

Without the dance all that remains is the ceremony and the contest. Like the gladiators of old, we can attempt to survive while one species, race, ethnic group, political cause, church denomination is pitted against another, until we are swallowed up in the cacophony of this world's system.

Many are saying that God is judging His house and this nation. He is tearing down the handiwork of man so that He can be revealed. Like the graduation ceremony, it is not enough to have the shadow of what the event once was. We must have the substance. In the same way it does not please God for His church to have a form of godliness and deny the power thereof. There is a divine dance. The Holy Spirit is the choreographer.

It is no longer enough to simply go to the ceremony and compete for recognition. We must pick up the staff of grace and the staff of unity, put aside selfish pursuits, and focus on Jesus. As we receive His grace, our little hearts are broken away to allow the emerging of God's heart, the heart with no walls, no limits. Then we will sense the Holy Spirit inside of us rising up against the winds of adversity, criticism, and apathy.

We will enter the dance.