



IN THE BIBLE

## PRECEPT

### 1 PETER 1:22

<sup>22</sup> Since your souls have been purified by obedience to the truth through the Spirit unto a genuine brotherly love, love one another deeply with a pure heart.

### JOHN 15:13

<sup>13</sup> The greatest love you can have for your friends is to give your life for them.

## PROMISE

The Bible tells us of another kind of love that describes the love felt by friends, extended family, and community members. This love is called *philia*, a powerful emotional bond in deep friendships and a lasting connection shared between close friends. Some examples of this kind of love in the Bible are David and Jonathan's friendship illustrated in 1 Samuel 18:1-3 saying, "*Jonathan loved him (David) as his own soul.*" Another is Jesus' relationship with Lazarus; in John 11:3 it says, *So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love (phileo) is sick."* and in John 11:36 it says, *So the Jews were saying, "See how He loved (phileo) him!"* Jesus' relationship to His disciples also shows this kind of love; Peter said in John 21:15-17, "*Lord, You know all things; You know that I love (Phileo) You.*" Truly, this kind of love is difficult to find nowadays. Friendships are more trivial and relationships tend to be more transactional. We think about how we can benefit from the relationship/friendship and it happens at times that we only reach out to people when we need something or only spend time with them when it's beneficial to us. There are also those people that think that their spouse completes them already so there is no need for friends, not knowing that God alone can complete them and God also desires for us to have friends apart from our spouse. *Philia* requires a mutual commitment, it's a give-and-take kind of relationship, not one sided. It requires the following qualities:

**PURE & GENUINE HEART.** True friendships have no hidden agenda. Friends do not compete with each other but complement each other and that is only possible with a pure genuine heart. Joseph Hall says, "*Next to hypocrisy in religion, there is nothing worse than hypocrisy in friendship.*" A real friend is genuine and pure in their intentions and motives in the relationship.

**HONEST & OPEN COMMUNICATION.** Proverbs 27:5 tells us, "*A truly good friend will openly correct you.*" True friends acknowledge emotions yet they are honest in giving their opinions. Personality differs and may contrast but these differences are overcome by honest-to-goodness conversations.

**INITIATES SUPPORT & ENCOURAGEMENT.** Friends support us with our dreams and aspirations in life. They encourage us to step up and achieve our goals, excited about our success and grieve with us in our failures. They pray for us and care for us, and stay with us through the tough times, no matter what happens. Frederick Faber said, "*Many a friendship - long, loyal, and self-sacrificing - rested at first upon no thicker a foundation than a kind word.*"

**LISTENING EARS & RESPONDS WITH RESPECT.** Sometimes, the greatest thing we can do for a friend is to just be there and actively listen to them.

**INTENTIONALLY BUILDS TRUST & CONFIDENCE.** Lucius Annaeus Seneca says that one of the most beautiful qualities of true friendship is to understand and to be understood. Your friends are a safe place to be yourself without fear of judgment.

**ACCEPTS UNCONDITIONALLY & ALWAYS WILLING TO FORGIVE.** Proverbs 17:9 tells us, "*Love forgets mistakes; nagging about them parts the best of friends.*"

## PRACTICE

**1. Philia.** Who are these people that you want to love (*philia*)? Who are these people that you want to be accountable for personal and spiritual growth? How have they helped you draw closer to Christ?

**2. Nurturing Philia.** How can you nurture this love (*philia*) to make your friendships grow deeper and stronger?

## PRAYER

### I. North Life Connections

- Pray for these couples as they lead the North groups: Ocampo and Ico.

### II. East Life Connections

- Pray for these couples as they lead the East groups: Domingo, Torres, and Imperial.

### III. South Life Connections

- Pray for the Drapeza couple as they lead the South group. Pray also that we will be able to reach out to more people.

### IV. West Life Connections

- Pray for these couples as they lead the West groups: Solidum, Fabregas, Oliveros.

### V. Downtown Life Connections

- Pray for the Gamboa couple as they lead the Downtown group. Pray also for God to raise up more leaders.

### VI. Leaders

- Pray that God will bestow wisdom upon our leaders to guide their small groups in obeying God's Word.

### VII. Volunteers

- Pray that joy will continue to abound in the hearts of our volunteers as they serve Him and His people.