



# TRANSFORMED

DEVOTIONS CONNECTING TEENS TO CHRIST

**Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command.**

*John 15:13-14*

## The foundation for friendship

He says that he loves her. She is the best girlfriend ever. She makes him so happy. But he's cheating on her. Every week at the same time after school. Does he really love her? Does he *really*?

The young woman claims this person is her friend. They have been through so much together. They've laughed and cried. But as soon as her friend leaves the room, the young woman immediately begins to criticize her. The way she dresses. The way she complains. How annoying she can be. Does she really love her? Does she *really*?

It is embarrassing to consider the things you have done or said to your family and friends. Think of all the passive aggressiveness. Think of the ways we have manipulated people to get what we want. Consider the ways we have failed to give the people whom we claimed to love what they truly needed. They needed us to sacrifice our time or energy. A friend needed our support when they were struggling. They needed us to sacrifice our pride and forgive them. But we just wouldn't. We say that we love and care for people, but our emotions and actions project a different message.

Martin Luther said that there was a teaching that would be the key to a church standing securely or falling with a terrible crash. It was the teaching that we are declared not guilty in God's courtroom because Jesus lovingly laid down his life for us, his terrible friends. That's also the teaching on which our love for our friends will either stand or fall. If our love for others does not have Jesus' cross as its foundation, that love will inevitably reveal itself to be fake.

His cross is both the foundation for our love and supreme example of what loves does. There the love dripped from his head, his hands, his feet, as he died. Here is perfect obedience to the Father's command to love. "Whatever these people need," Jesus said, "I will gladly do." Jesus says he loves us. Does he *really*? Absolutely! Look at the cross and see it! Its selflessness covers all the times that our selfishness prevented us from loving in a real way. That is Jesus' love for you.

Over the next month we're going to think through what friendship looks like and what a good friend does. I want you to think about this question: "What does a good friend do?"

For now, rest on this foundation: Jesus is your best and greatest friend. He only thought of your needs and your salvation. Whatever you needed, that's what he gave. He gave no thought to what it cost him. He only thought about what he gained, you. That's true friendship.

**Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, only you can teach me how to be a truly good friend. Forgive me for my selfishness and lead me to love selflessly. Amen.**