

Man's Best Friend

Daniel P. Curry, Jr. / General Adult

How good a friend would you call yourself? Most people would probably rate themselves fairly high on the “Good Friend to Have List.” The Bible even says many will proclaim their own goodness: “Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, But who can find a faithful man?” (Prov 20:6 NKJV).

Think for a moment about your actions as a friend compared to those of a dog. Could you be described as more faithful than a dog? More loyal? More dependable? Honestly, there are times when the answer may not be as obvious as we would like to think. In 1870, a famous courtroom speech helped shape the expression “man’s best friend.” During a trial involving the killing of a hunting dog named Old Drum, attorney George Vest delivered a powerful closing argument that deeply moved the jury and later became widely known as the “Eulogy of the Dog.”

In his remarks, Vest described the faithfulness of a dog in contrast to the failures often found in mankind. He spoke of the dog as the one companion who remains beside his master in prosperity and poverty, in health and sickness, and even in death. While the speech is emotional and poetic, it presses an important question upon us: if a dog can display such loyalty and devotion, what kind of friend should a Christian be?

The Bible teaches that faithful friendship is deeply connected to Christian character. A good friend is not simply pleasant company during easy times. A good friend is someone marked by loyalty, love, wisdom, and selflessness. Scripture says, “A friend loves at all times” (Prov 17:17). A true friend remains steady through hardship, disappointment, and difficulty. Faithful friendship requires patience and compassion. It requires forgiveness and grace. Paul wrote that love “suffers long and is kind” (1 Cor 13:4), while also teaching Christians to forgive one another “even as God in Christ forgave you” (Eph 4:32).

Jesus Himself demonstrated the highest example of friendship when He laid down His life for others. “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends” (John 15:13). Faithful friendship is built upon qualities such as love, loyalty, wisdom, encouragement, forgiveness, and grace. These are not merely traits that make someone pleasant to be around; they are reflections of Christian maturity.

So perhaps the better question is not whether a dog is man’s best friend. The better question is this: what kind of friend are you?