

# groups.

— Notes | July 13, 2025

## Hymns | What a Friend We Have in Jesus

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This month we're spending time reflecting on some of the old hymns—songs that have been sung by generations of believers throughout history. Why? Because we believe the rich truth and deep theology in these lyrics are one of the beautiful ways God passes faith from one generation to the next. These songs hold timeless reminders of who God is and what it means to walk with Him. One of those hymns is *"What a Friend We Have in Jesus."* Even in the title alone, we're invited to consider a simple yet profound truth: that Jesus offers us friendship. For many, that may feel like a foreign concept—maybe even outside the framework of your experience with faith—but Scripture reveals a God who longs to be known in a personal and intimate way. Paul prayed that we would receive the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that we may *know* God—not just intellectually, but relationally. The Greek word *ginosko* speaks to this kind of knowing: experiential, intimate, and rooted in relationship. That's the kind of friendship God invites us into.

### Key Scripture | John 15:9-15

"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 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. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you."

### Related Scriptures

— Ephesians 1:17, Genesis 3:8, Romans 5:8, James 4:4

### Icebreakers:

— Q: Do you have a favorite hymn? Why is it your favorite?

## Key Thoughts and Reflections: \_\_\_\_\_

### I. The PACE of relationship: Abiding.

Q: What could it look like in your life to “abide” at an unhurried pace?

Q: Have you ever been tempted to treat your relationship with God like a “drive-thru” or something microwavable?

Q: The hymn says, “What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer.” What are you carrying right now that you haven’t fully brought to God? And what might it look like to talk to Him honestly—like a friend—about it this week?

### II. The PRICE of relationship: Obedience

Q: How do you personally wrestle with the word “commands” when it comes to your relationship with Jesus? In what ways have you experienced obedience not as legalism, but as an expression of loyalty and love?

Q: Where in your life might you be trying to maintain friendship with both God and the world? How do you see that tension affecting your sense of closeness or intimacy with God?

Q: Jesus modeled obedience to the Father as the pathway to abiding in love. What’s one area where God might be inviting you to walk in greater obedience—not out of pressure, but as a step toward deeper friendship and alignment with Him?

### III. The PAYOFF of relationship: Intimacy

Q: Jesus said He wants His joy to be in us and our joy to be complete. What do you think it looks like to experience joy *with* God, not just *from* God? When have you shared joy with Him like you would with a close friend?

Q: Real friendship involves openness, trust, and shared life—just like Jesus demonstrated. In what ways are you allowing God into your everyday decisions, emotions, and conversations? Where might He be inviting you to go deeper?

Q: Jesus laid down His life for His friends and calls us to love in that same way. What does sacrificial, selfless friendship look like in your life right now—with God and with others? Where is God calling you to reflect His love more deeply?

## Get Practical \_\_\_\_\_

This week, choose one intentional step to strengthen your connection with God: Pick a specific time, place, and pace to spend unhurried time with God each day. It doesn’t have to be long or elaborate—just honest. Start by talking to Him like a real friend: share what’s on your mind, what you’re grateful for, where you need help. Open Scripture and read a few verses slowly, asking, “God, what do You want me to know about You today?” Invite Him into your decisions and daily life. Friendship with God grows not through perfection, but through presence—and He’s already waiting to meet with you.