

What I Learned from my Dear Friend

Gavin Davies, August 2021

"One may have a blazing hearth in one's soul and yet no one ever came to sit by it. Passers-by see only a wisp of smoke from the chimney and continue on their way."

- *Vincent Van Gogh*

"A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity."

- *Proverbs 17:17*

Preface

In life, one is fortunate to have mates.

Moreso, one is blessed to have friends.

A good friend is more enriching than we realise. A good friend challenges, stretches and encourages us. A good friend lifts us up from the dirt, and says, “come on, you, let’s go together, you and I, and face it”.

I have been privileged enough to have such a friend. In this book, rather than using his name, I shall refer to him as “my dear friend”, for that is how we think of one another, and he is rightly terrified of anything that might make him proud!

About my dear friend

I was just a young man new to a church, and he was one of the older guys, I had no special interest in him. I first met him through singing in a choir (his firm tenor was better than his “dad jokes”!).

I can't say precisely in what manner it happened, but I just knew, somewhere deep inside, that I ought to love this man. I have no special aptitude for social situations, I'm a fairly awkward guy, so I believe it to have been nothing in the natural, but a gentle drawing of God's Holy Spirit.

My dear friend was not an easy man to get to know. When I first met him, he jumped from topic to topic near-frantically. He was known for “broadcasting” more than conversation, as his boundless enthusiasm poured forth.

This made some people uneasy, which is a shame; in some ways he is the finest reader of people I've ever known, he can smell sorrow like a bloodhound and will immediately draw alongside to comfort.

And yet, despite this insightfulness, he sometimes misses the simplest of social queues.

My dear friend is a very intense character, given to cutting to the heart of any given issue with a

straightforward wisdom that has been instilled in him through many decades of hard-fought, tearful, sincere Christianity. This wisdom is mixed with deep pain, a wounded soul, a tender heart longing for affection but not always knowing how to connect with others.

Many people find my dear friend altogether a bit too much - his affections too fierce, his criticisms too strong, his train of thought too unusual. I see him like a river - some seek to dam him up, others some to redirect him elsewhere. How fortunate am I, then, to have been given the privilege to sit beside his banks and pan for gold. How much I thank God for showing me my dear friend; if only those who don't know how to handle him would simply sit and listen to him for an hour, perhaps they could be enriched as I sense myself to have been.

As I sat with my dear friend, once a week, I would sit and listen as he would talk. Certain themes recurred, and there was a lot of his personal pain. There was a lot of "they've done X to me", initially with bitterness, but always quickly followed by "but I've got to love them, I've got to forgive them". Gradually, over time, I came to see the depth of my dear friend's sincere love for Jesus Christ, his sorrow for sin, his complete reliance on God. I longed to emulate him in this - I still do. In these things, I seek to imitate my dear friend, insofar as he is an imitator of Christ. My dear friend became my mentor.

As Christians, we ought to have love for one another. Sometimes I worry that I lack love for some, but with my dear friend, I have no such concerns. My heart swells when I pray for him.

In this short book, I want to record a few of the lessons I learned through this man.

Lesson 1: "I can't, You can, please help"

My dear friend suffered a period in life where, due to personal sin, depression and doubt, he could not even pray the Lord's prayer. He would drink too much, shout at the ceiling, and yet even in this, he was seeking his God. He cried out to God "how can I pray? I can't even say the Lord's Prayer!" and he sensed God saying to him; "just pray this: 'I can't, You can, please help'".

This simple prayer is infinitely deep, and not only sustained my dear friend, but greatly shaped who he would become. I have tested this prayer against the revelation of scripture and I find it to be a wonderful summary of the New Testament's teaching - we cannot save ourselves, sanctify ourselves, or truly become who God wants us to be, through our own efforts. The Scribes tried that, and Jesus called them "whitewashed tombs", a heartbreakingly strong insult that I tremble to imagine being directed at myself. No, we must be those who are fully reliant on God, in all matters. And even in the matter itself - we rely on God to make us reliant upon God!

My dear friend has prayed this prayer many times a day. He is no longer in that time of depression, no longer reeling in sin and confusion. He has learned, grown, changed. And yet, that simple prayer, is now part of his breathing - so dependent upon his beloved Christ is he.

My dear friend doesn't trust himself as far as he could throw himself, but he trusts Jesus because Jesus is the truth.

The cry of his heart seems to me an honest prayer, scripturally sound, the cry of a true son to his dear Father in heaven. I often pray it myself and I long to lean on God with even half the confidence, commitment and zeal that my dear friend does.

"I am the vine. You are the branches. Whoever abides in Me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit. For without Me, you can do nothing"

- John 15:5

Lesson 2: “God does it”

Luke, the writer of Acts, records that when King Herod's court proclaimed him to have the voice of a God, he refused to give God the glory, and he paid with his life. My dear friend is the polar opposite to this.

Any time I say something like “that’s wise” or “thank you for your help”, my dear friend responds with “God did it”. Quick as a flash, no hesitation. You see, my dear friend is aware of the lurking danger of pride. He’d be the first to tell you he’s got enough sin to battle without adding that viper into the mix!

“For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.”

- *Phil 2:13, NLT*

Lesson 3: "I'm precious because God loves me"

My dear friend had a tough childhood and it left him seeking to prove himself. One day, in his early 40s, he was dramatically born again - suddenly, he knew what life was about, why he was here, who God was, and he was never the same again.

That deep seated insecurity was not lifted from him entirely at that point - decades of painful heartwork followed - but from that moment, my dear friend no longer defined himself on his own terms, but on God's terms.

Because he had not been told he was precious before, realising that God saw him as a son and had given wonderful King Jesus for him, my dear friend has made it part of his life's mission to tell people that they are precious in God's sight. He encourages the downcast, gets alongside them, and points to the cross. "That's how much he loves you".

My dear friend has wounds across his very heart, deep-seated pain that is taking a lifetime to shift. Yet, since his initial rebirth, God has been at work, healing the hurt, moment by moment, gently and tenderly working in this wounded heart. It is a beautiful thing to see. My dear friend is a far gentler, kinder, more loving man than he was a decade ago. Every time I see him,

he has less to prove, but more to give. He is decreasing, Jesus is increasing.

“The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

- *Galatians 2:20b*

Lesson 4: “Without holiness no-one will see the Lord”

My dear friend is not perfect, but no false professor is he - insofar as I can discern anything in another, I discern my dear friend to be sincere in his devotion to Jesus. As such, he longs for holiness. He hungers and thirsts for it. Of course, he falls flat on his face sometimes, but he is always prepared to say he is sorry.

My dear friend's passion for personal holiness inevitably overflows into a desire for the church to honour Jesus. Some dismiss his concerns, but perhaps they don't know him at all. Zeal for Jesus drives him; he cannot bear to hear Jesus being given anything less than total honour. Anyone putting themselves forward makes my dear friend deeply uncomfortable, because, as he would say, “their focus is on themselves”. He is not aiming anything at another that he is not aiming doubly at himself - my dear friend frequently says “I want my focus to be completely on Jesus”, to which those few of us who are privileged to be his friends smile and respond “if you're not focused on Jesus, then may God help the rest of us!”

My dear friend worries for those in the visible church who may not truly be born again. I am a very sensitive man and I worry about this for myself, and I would not be bold enough to question anyone's sincerity at this point in my life. However, out of concern for the name of

Jesus, my dear friend longs for all to walk in holiness and reverence for God.

My dear friend taught me that holiness is not optional in the Christian life. I have blundered into most heresies at one point or another, and hyper-grace had been one of them. Since meeting my dear friend, since seeing his passion for holiness, his longing for God to be honoured, I have started, in my own stumbling, stop-start, manner, to pursue holiness, knowing that I cannot generate it of myself, all I can do is come empty-handed to my Jesus and ask Him to clothe me.

“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you without money, come, buy, and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost! Why spend money on that which is not bread, and your labor on that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of foods”

- *Isaiah 55:1-2*

Lesson 5: “I’m a rotten sinner, but the good news for me is I hate it”

My dear friend is a man who is honest about his sins. When he gets to know you, he will tell you what he struggles with in quite frank terms. He doesn't paint himself as holier-than-thou, he doesn't pretend to be anything other than weak and utterly dependent upon Jesus. His love for God is evident in all that he does, and yet he stumbles daily in many ways. He prays for God to take away the sin. He prays for his desires to change. He pleads, he sorrows, he hungers to be perfect, to be totally holy. And yet, he refuses to worry, he refuses to despair, because God who has called him is faithful, and He will do it:

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your entire spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The One who calls you is faithful, and He will do it.”
- 1 Thessalonians 5:25

This book is not about me, but I have always been a weak, frail, struggling believer, beset by sin, aware of my deep wickedness, scarcely with the courage to even raise my gaze to the cross to see the Saviour. I see in my dear friend a deep hatred of sin, a growing holiness, and a life story where sin has been stripped away layer-by-layer. Oh, how this encourages me! Oh, how I am moved to think of my dear friend, completely free, no

sin in his life, running down the golden streets of the Kingdom towards his beloved Jesus! How it brings me joy to think of my dear friend being all that he was created to be, his face beaming like a thousand suns!

And it won't be because my dear friend did it. It will be because the One who called him did!

Lesson 6: “People matter”

My dear friend is ever on the side of the outcast, the underdog, the struggler. This is perhaps why he warmed to me. He will talk about some injustice he has seen, some mistreatment of a person, and get very upset, and say with the utmost solemnity “... because PEOPLE. MATTER.”

To him, they matter *because* they matter to God and in some sense represent Him as His image-bearers.

“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

- *Genesis 1:27*

Because God gave His precious Son to redeem a people to be His children, so if we mistreat them, we mistreat royalty. My dear friend tells me that “when they hurt God’s people, they are hurting Jesus” and this is born out by the teaching of the sheep and the goats - *“as you did to the least of these, so you did to Me”*.

Even those who are not of the flock are precious. They are made in God’s image. My dear friend trembles at the thought of mistreating a person - *“he who mocks the poor insults their maker ” - Proverbs 17:5.*

Now, my dear friend is not always the best with people skills, and he has blind spots - sometimes he can be short tempered (partly due to various medical conditions) or petulant - but his HEART, the core of who he is, is totally committed to blessing people, to encouraging them, and to loving them. This is utterly beautiful to me. It's not something he naturally has, but the result of God's Spirit working in him, the words of God alive in him. My dear friend is so very ALIVE!

Lesson 7: “99 black squares, 1 white”

My dear friend reports having had many “pictures” (impressions in the imagination) from God. As somebody who seeks to test everything against scripture as best I can, these pictures seem to me to be broadly in line with biblical teaching.

One particular picture is of a set of squares, like a chessboard. 99 are black, 1 is white. My dear friend urges us to focus on the white piece. In my own struggles in the faith, this has been hugely beneficial to me - I am easily overwhelmed by the severe warnings of scripture, I find the promises hard to cling to, and easily feel condemned. I also struggle with despair at the state of the world. My dear friend encourages us to look at the positive even when all seems dark. Over time, more and more of the pieces turn white. Some scriptures that used to make my heart skip a beat in anxiety now bring me comfort and encouragement.

Focusing on how wonderful God is has been shown time and time again to lift my weary head, in the darkest of hours. Thinking of Jesus, in His Kingdom, in His full glory, with the nations bowing down to Him, is a tonic for my soul! There are so many “black squares” to look at, but if I can just get a glimpse at Jesus, that sustains and enriches me, no matter the horrors of the current age.

Lesson 8: “As best I can”

My dear friend is painfully aware that “*we are dust*”. He knows his limitations, his weaknesses. He is fond of telling me “you’re repenting as best you can, you’re believing as best you can, and you’re always asking God for more. What more can you do?”

He will say “I’m focusing on Jesus as best I can, and asking God to help me to do so better”. This is a wonderfully liberating way of looking at things!

What Jonathan Edwards called the “religious affections” are an excellent marker of the new birth - being oriented towards God’s Kingdom values, obeying His word, turning from sin. It’s been said to be “direction not perfection” - i.e. we are not going to do it perfectly, but as best we can, we turn towards God, and away from sin, day-after-day.

I have found this a huge encouragement - instead of looking at my life, thinking “am I really loving or is it a put-on? Do I really trust God enough? Am I sincerely repentant? What if I’m not elect?”, I have been able to say “Lord, I thank You for the love You have kindly placed within me. I ask You for more. I thank You for the faith I have, I trust You with it, thank You that even if it’s as small as a mustard seed, it’s a lens through which I can gaze upon You. Thank You for turning me away from sins I’d been trapped in for years, please, continue

Your work there, please, help me to kill off the Old Man way of doing things. I can't, You can, please help me!"

Lesson 9: “My Spirit will teach you all things”

Jesus promised that it was better that He departed, so that the Spirit would come and dwell within the believers, leading them into all truth. My dear friend took this to heart very early in his faith, and said “OK then Lord, here I am!”

My dear friend has a wonderfully simple way of expressing his faith. He shares the Gospel with anyone who will listen - it's as natural as breathing to him, because it's always on his mind. He loves Jesus and wants everyone else to love Him too!

Simple isn't the same as naive or infantile, though. My dear friend's simplicity is the “truthy” kind of simplicity.

I'm a software developer, and we seek to make everything as simple as possible. It's actually very hard to make sophisticated concepts simple, but my dear friend manages it!

When asked “how do you explain the things of God so simply?” my dear friend will say, with characteristic direct simplicity, “because I asked the Holy Spirit to teach me. God's word says that if we ask Him, He'll give us the Spirit, so I asked!”

“If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

- Luke 11:3

Lesson 10: “You’d better make me like a little child, then!”

My dear friend has read a lot of books, but he’s not exactly what you’d call a theologian in the sense of having a system, having it all worked out. He’s not a Calvinist, Arminian, Molinist, or “any other kind of ‘ism” as he would put it. He simply believes the Bible, obeys it as best he can, and trusts in God. His faith is simple, childlike, but is as robust as oak, has weathered the storms of decades, and has been refined in the fires of life. Simple it may be, but unsophisticated it is not.

Many have asked him how he came by this faith, which is so solid it seems almost physically tangible. Did he go to a monastery on a mountain somewhere? Did he read every commentary available? Is there some formula?

The answer is much simpler. God said it, my dear friend believed it. *“I tell you the truth, unless you look at the Kingdom of Heaven like a little child, you will never enter it”* says Jesus. My dear friend responded with “OK then Lord, You’d better make me like a little child, then!” and has continued to pray that everafter.

And, ever more this is my prayer - “Father, make me like a little child! Lord, I love theology, I love study, but I love You more, please, do whatever it takes in my heart!”

God's word is incredibly powerful. We must never use it to try to manipulate Him; rather, we submit to it, and avail ourselves of its promises. God is never calling us to do anything that He won't help us with! He is our source, our everything. This isn't about any kind of "name it and claim it" that is centering on us - it's about God's glory.

This is about saying "my beautiful Father, Your word says You want us to live a lifestyle of love. Oh, I so long to, and I thank You that I even want to, and yet my heart is often cold, my actions harsh, please, fill me with Your Holy Spirit, help me, I need You so much, I can't do this by myself. I thank You that You love to give good gifts! I thank You that You are at work in me, giving me the desire and the power to do what pleases You! Oh Lord, no matter how long it takes, help me to bear fruit for You! Let the people around me see who You are! Please!".

Lesson 11: “Take it all to God in prayer”

“Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge” - Psalm 62:8

When my dear friend prays, there is a tenderness in his words. There is an honesty. There is a son, speaking to his Father, the perfect Father. It's beautiful. I've had the privilege of listening to my dear friend pray for many hours. Sometimes, just sometimes, when my dear friend prays, the atmosphere seems to me like a warm bath - comforting, soothing.

It's honest. He lays everything on the line. There's no topic off limits. And, as my dear friend would say, God already knows everything anyway, so why bother trying to pull the wool over His eyes?

My dear friend pours out his heart in prayer, everything. He even asks God when he gets stuck on crosswords! People laugh when he says this, even I was slightly taken aback at first, but then he said “take it ALL to God in prayer”.

My dear friend behaves like a child with his Father - Dad knows best! God is not only my dear friend's saviour, redeemer and master, but also his beloved Father.

Lesson 12 - "A pleb like me"

My dear friend may be into his eighth decade, but he has a special joy about him that has really been growing lately. One of the most beautiful things I've ever seen in my life is when he is talking about Jesus, and all of a sudden he will stop, sit back, and beam this smile. His eyes narrow, moisten and glow, his skin reddens, and his lips form a thin, trembling line. Almost beatifically, he says "and He died for a pleb like me!".

The sheer joy of knowing Jesus radiates from my dear friend. Often I feel low, and I pray for my dear friend, and I think of that face - over 70 years old but with more joy than I've seen even on my infant daughter - and I perhaps sense something of God's pleasure in His redeemed people - how much He loves them.

Of course, I can never fully understand the measure of God's love, but my dear friend's smile, his simple gratitude, his absolute joy at knowing the One who is the Truth, gladdens my heart in a way I can scarcely convey.

That breathtaking grace, that shocking love, is so evident in my dear friend. May it be so in us all.

Lesson 13 - “Because He’s the *truth*”

If you ask most Christians why they love Jesus, I’d imagine they’d say “because He died for me”. That’s a great answer, in fact, that’s how we know what love is!

My dear friend would agree with this, but he starts from a slightly different place. He would say “because of WHO HE IS”. He would then smile, and talk about Jesus being the Truth.

My dear friend has always valued truth. His natural father, from what I’ve heard, wasn’t a devout man, but he would tell my friend to “tell the truth and shame the devil”. Loving truth is a strong basis for loving the one who is the Truth - in fact, “*love rejoices with the truth*” (1 Cor 13:6).

My dear friend hates any kind of falsehood, and much of his joy in believing comes from knowing Jesus as the Truth - the ultimate standard of all things. Approaching Jesus this way helps us to avoid trying to “get what we want” emotionally - it helps us remember that He is Lord, and all of creation exists for Him

For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.

- Colossians 1:16

Lesson 14 - "The enemy hates us"

My dear friend is near-continually engaged in spiritual warfare. Not that he seeks it out, insofar as I can tell. Rather, his emotions, his interpersonal struggles, his troubles in life, battles with sin, are all viewed through a lens of a battle between good and evil, with Jesus on one side and satan (literally "accuser") on the other.

Whenever I am too down on myself, my dear friend will gently remind me that the enemy is the "accuser of the brethren".

This is a useful reminder for the self-critical; we are not the highest tribunal. We have a hope in Jesus, and again and again we run to Him for fresh grace in our time of need.

As a young Christian, my dear friend used to ask God if he could pray for satan. There's a logic there - if the enemy laid down his arms then there would be peace, surely! However, God gently corrected my dear friend on this matter and made it clear quite how vicious and corrupted a foe we face.

My dear friend came to hate satan, and all his works. He doesn't like to give the enemy the limelight, but when my dear friend speaks of such matters, he always seems to finish by saying - "but Jesus wins" and smiling. And indeed He does!

Lesson 15: “I put them on my heart”

In offering to pray for people, my dear friend used to fret that he would forget and neglect to lift them up in prayer.

He prayed about this, and believes that God told him simply: “put them on your heart, right at the top, where I can see them”. My dear friend then visualises himself giving his very heartbeat to God - his heart to beat as a prayer for those people.

My dear friend has found that, by doing that, he is often reminded of faces and names, and lifts them up immediately in prayer.

I have found this a beautiful image, and often use it myself. It is God who makes our hearts beat, in a sense, so to view every heartbeat as a communication to Him on behalf of others is truly an exquisite picture of loving right-relating.

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

- *Ephesians 6:18*

Lesson 16: “Why do you want that?”

Sometimes, our motives are wrong. The parable of the tax collector and the pharisee is endlessly instructive; at times I for one have played both roles.

In prayer for increase in some virtue or help with battling some vice, my dear friend often reports a sense of an answer; “why do you want that?”.

For example, in asking to be more loving, my dear friend would be arrested into really pondering his motives.

It is God who searches the heart and knows the secrets. My dear friend often finds his own response to be simple - “because it would please Jesus”.

His reliance upon God seems so comprehensive that he doesn't anxiously reexamine his motives; rather he gives them to God as best he can, and trusts in God to do the heartwork necessary to please Father.

*“I, the Lord, search the heart,
I test the mind,
Even to give to each man according to his ways,
According to the results of his deeds.”*

- Jeremiah 17:10

Lesson 17: "I give you my lips"

My dear friend has often consecrated his lips to God, asking that he only say what pleases God. This is an excellent starting point for evangelism of any sort!

Evangelism is never forced by my dear friend. It's never "we're sat watching the football, oh, now it's evangelism time" as if one were changing a TV channel. No! My dear friend is just like a stick of Blackpool rock with Jesus written throughout - he cannot HELP but overflow with love for Jesus!

He is inclined to speak too long, and to monologue, but over the years he has become more aware of this and more fervently asked God to guide his tongue.

What a wonderful example to all of us - to intentionally seek God to tame the fire of our tongues!

*"Set a guard over my mouth, Lord;
keep watch over the door of my lips."*

- *Psalm 141: 3*

Lesson 18 - "Help me forgive them"

Sometimes my dear friend can scarcely bear the load of his pain. Other men may be able to let the pain slide off them like water off a duck's back but my friend doesn't have that kind of nature; he can't process it like that and it matters deeply to him. He can't shrug and move on, it's in there too deep, it hurts too badly.

Instead, I see him time and time again rely solely on Jesus, with trust and fervour, to help him bear pain, to forgive, and to heal. What may look like a lack in the natural turns into an amazing thing in the supernatural - there is little place for pride when Jesus is one's all in all.

So, for some, forgiveness seems to come easy. For my dear friend, it comes at great cost. He gazes at Jesus' sacrifice, knowing that in some sense, he drove in the nails with his sin. From that standpoint, he looks at his enemies, and begs God for love for them, pleads for their best interests.

It's not pretty, it's done in great pain, with frustration, tears. The whole alchemy of human emotion comes barreling out. Inch by agonising inch, God has exposed my dear friend's soul, poured ointment on the poisons, injected love where there was insecurity, understanding where there was confusion.

There's still some way to go with some individuals, the hurts have gone deep. But, the Great Surgeon's operating table is not always a one-and-done affair; if a person wishes to go all-out after righteousness, it's going to hurt sometimes, because it's life as a living sacrifice. Christianity isn't all nicey-nice - it's snot and tears and frustration, honestly poured out in trust of a Holy God, knowing only He can do anything about it.

So my dear friend leaps onto that altar, goes under the knife, until the work is complete, until he is transformed from glory to glory, until no bitterness can hold him nor sin entangle him.

May we all be so bold!

Closing thoughts

Real life friendship is never as linear and ordered as a book, so please don't get the impression that it's been like going on a course or something - we've disagreed about things, argued occasionally, and confronted one another. Friendship tends to ebb and flow.

That said, I hope this static snapshot of years of dynamic lessons learned from a friendship has been thought provoking. It is not intended to be hagiographic - my dear friend would be first in line to say he's far from perfect! - but I hope I have distilled some of the lessons I've been enriched by over the years.

There's more I could have said, more editing and finessing I could have done, but Ecclesiastes 11:4 is something of a go-to scripture for me - *"If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done."* and I've been sat on a first draft for a year at least, so maybe I'll do a second edition some day! (I mean, my voice as a writer is all over the place in this book! Consistency, much?!)

I will make just one request - please, never dismiss somebody outright, especially a fellow Christian brother or sister. Many have hidden depths that are not immediately obvious.

There is great treasure in all of God's people, in a wondrous variety of forms.

In spending just a little time with those that you find to be awkward or different, you just may find a dear friend of your own.

- Gavin Davies, Cardiff, August 2021

"we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us"

- 2 Corinthians 4:7

"One may have a blazing hearth in one's soul and yet no one ever came to sit by it. Passers-by see only a wisp of smoke from the chimney and continue on their way."

- Vincent Van Gogh

"A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity."

- Proverbs 17:17

A good friend is more enriching than we realise. A good friend challenges, stretches and encourages us. A good friend lifts us up from the dirt, and says, "come on, you, let's go together, you and I, and face it".

I have been privileged enough to have such a friend. Through him, I have seen something of Jesus. In this short book, I have tried to distil 18 lessons that I have learned from this dear friend.