

## Love's Hidden Ally

Scripture used: [Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 \(NLT\)](#); [John 15:12-14 \(NLT\)](#)

### OVERVIEW

Today Pastor Hurmon delivered the sermon message titled "Love's Hidden Ally". We need to define ourselves in a network of relationships that provide us with connection and care. We can do this by being a friend to people.

### KEY POINTS

- 1) **Love is a rugged commitment to be "with" and to be "for" the other:** This is the type of love that should be in marriages, but also in our friendships. It was the type of love that Jesus referenced in [John 15:13](#) when he said, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."
- 2) **One of the secrets to a lasting marriage is friendship.** After the wedding is over, the romance comes and goes, but friendship sustains marriage through the good and bad. The principles that guide this friendship can also be applied to our platonic relationships as well.
  - a) **Protect and nurture friendship.** Be each other's best friend and each other's first person. In a marriage, your spouse should be the first person who you share good and bad news with. They should be the first in line for all that life might bring. Your spouse should be your "go to" person.
  - b) **Be each other's safe friend:** Your spouse should be the first person you turn to when you need help, encouragement, or kindness. You can pray for each other and encourage each other. Be a good listener for your spouse or your friend. Be a soft, safe place to land.
  - c) **Prioritize the needs of your best friend over your own.** [Romans 12:9-10 \(MSG\)](#) Be good friends who love deeply and "practice playing second fiddle." Put the spotlight on your friend rather than yourself. And don't worry, as your spouse reciprocates this sacrificial love, you will be in the spotlight sometimes as well. In a relationship that practices this type of love, the rhythm of sharing the spotlight will become a regular part of the marriage or friendship. [Romans 12:10 \(NLT\)](#) "Take delight" in letting your best friend go first.
  - d) **Relationships that thrive are "have it your way," not "I need it my way":** We should make sacrifices for our best friend. [Ephesians 5:21-25 \(NIV\)](#) tells us how to love each other like Christ loves the Church by letting go of our selfish needs and ambitions and putting others first.
  - e) **Put down your right to punish while practicing unconditional forgiveness.** This breaks the cycle of continuously hurting each other. When someone hurts us, we have the right to punish that person, but to love like Jesus, we need to give up that right and forgive unconditionally, while still being wise about appropriate expectations or boundaries.
- 3) **The key to a transformative friendship is knowing the other person's story.** We all have baggage. In the baggage is yesterday's trauma. **Yesterday's trauma is tomorrow's drama.** We can share our trauma with our best friend as we sort through it. **Beneath the drama is a story of trauma.** By overlooking pain caused by trauma, we are opening doors to drama within that friendship. The pain from past trauma will never really leave us, but God can give us the grace to manage it. When Jesus died on the cross and was raised from the dead, He gave us access to His unconditional love that can heal us. Faithful healing - not perfect healing - comes when we align ourselves with Jesus first. Perfect love only comes from Jesus. We must look to Him as our primary source of love and healing.

### DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Do you think of friendship and love as different things, or complementary parts of the same thing? Find space and time this week to reflect on the type of love Jesus described in John 15. Ask God to reveal to you areas where you can ask Him to help you develop this type of love in your relationships. Ask Him to forgive you for times you missed the mark on loving His way, and seek His wisdom in how you can move forward into loving more like Jesus.
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Pastor Hurmon challenged us with a difficult task: sorting out the trauma in the luggage we carry. Have you opened up your "trauma baggage" recently? Why or why not? How has God helped you to manage your trauma with grace? At some point in your life, have you recognized a change in how you react when yesterday's trauma tried to become today's drama?
- 3) **DO** - Commit to getting to know someone's story. Maybe this is someone you are already close to, but would like to develop a deeper understanding. Or perhaps this is a new friend. Set aside time and prepare for how you can learn more about that person.