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Grade & Section: Grade 12 - Stem
Date: October 17, 2022
Reading Time: 4-5 AM; 8-10PM
Reading Log #: 2

Algae S. Densing, "True Friends" in *Never Forget*, eds. Missi Ortega et al. (Caloocan City, PH: Philippine Publishing House, 2018), 213.

TRUE FRIENDS

Jesus is a Friend that Loves[2]

We understand friendship as a process involving give-and-take relationships. However, the imagery Solomon uses links friendship to that of a brother. Solomon seems to emphasize a type of friendship that goes beyond our usual understanding. While we categorize friendship into acquaintance, friend, close friend, and best friend, the text suggests something higher. The friendship Solomon describes is not merely a typical friend but one who loves at all times and helps in times of adversity. This wise saying not only highlights the nature of friendship but also adds depth to the concepts of "love" and "trouble."

Jesus is a Friend who Leads

The Hebrew term used is letzarah, which means distress, tribulation, trouble, affliction, anguish, and adversity. Interestingly, this noun appears only once in the Old Testament, making it unique in this context. Consequently, we cannot gauge the extent of distress or trouble described in this text to fully understand the word "love." The word letzarah derives from tsarah, which appears 73 times in the Old Testament. Tsarah is consistently translated as "trouble" and "distress," and it is always associated with calamity.

Feedback and Reflection

Upon reading the manuscript, it is important to remember that we should become brothers, not just be there for our friends. It is essential that we treat each other as we would like to be treated ourselves. Being a friend is akin to being a brother, which reflects the bond that Jesus wants us to possess. However, as human beings, there are many hindrances to conforming to this standard of friendship. This bond is bound to fail if we don't put Jesus at the center of it.

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[2]Algae S. Densing, "Ordo Salutis and Via Salutis: A Comparative Study of the Salvation Paradigm of John Calvin and John Wesley's" (Mountain View College, B.S Thesis, 2021), 4.