

# At the Top of My Thankful List – Friendship

I was leaving choir practice when I heard behind me, “Hey, Vicki! It’s time to retire those jeans!” Who said that? A true friend is one who said that. Penny is a new friend and I adore her. She hoped she had not hurt my feelings with her comment about my jeans. “I want you to look your best,” she said, as we walked to the car. Penny showed up in my Body & Soul class about a year ago and has been speaking truth over me ever since. Proverbs 27:6 (NLT) says, “Wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses from an enemy.” I was not offended, not in the least. She has also prayed over my knees, calling down God’s healing mercies for me. I know she loves me enough to speak truth over me. She is a friend who is making a difference in my life.

Friendships certainly should not be taken for granted. Traditionally, the month of November is the time we focus on those things for which we are thankful. I am grateful for the relationships that have shaped my life. In addition to Penny, my best friend from middle school through high school introduced me to Christ. She was brave, caring and bold enough to approach me with a Bible as a gift. After reading the Book of John, I took my first step of faith toward Christ and He received me with open arms. I have never been the same—all because of a caring friend whose friendship has endured through the years.

This Thanksgiving, I am more than ever thankful for the gift of true, authentic friendship. I think of all the times I held back speaking the truth to a friend, because I was afraid of being offensive or making them feel uncomfortable. Oh, how things changed twenty years ago on the day a true friend said

to me, "I love you and I can see you are struggling with your weight. Can I tell you about FP4H?" God used that friend, who happens to also be my mother-in-law, to change my life forever. I am eternally grateful she did not hold back. She demonstrated her love for me by speaking out.

So what does this mean for me? It means I need to be that kind of friend right back. We all have plenty of friends who need to hear the good news that we can be changed by the power of Christ. He is the one who can transform us from the inside out. As of today, at least 46% of women and 40% of men in America are suffering from obesity. We have the answer. Studies are showing that diets are not working and neither are education programs or legislation. We know why—most obesity stems from a spiritual problem and not a physical one. As we take the time to develop relationships with those around us, God will honor this by opening doors to share the Gospel. God wants us to be friendly and be reminded of what a friend we have in Jesus.

And I am reminded of one other friend who made a difference, and that is YOU. This past year has been wonderful in FP4H. We have been able to do some amazing things because of your love and generous financial support. Because of your friendship with FP4H, we have the resources to impact and changes lives—one pound at a time.

Giving thanks for my friends,

**Vicki Heath.....vicki.heath@fp4h.com**