

# The Power of Friendship

As part of an assignment for a doctoral thesis, a college student spent a year with a group of Navajo Indians on a reservation in the Southwest.

As he did his research, he lived with one family, sleeping in their hut, eating their food, working with them and generally living the life of a 20<sup>th</sup> century Indian.

The old grandmother of the family spoke no English at all, yet a very close friendship formed between the two. They spent a great deal of time sharing a friendship that was meaningful to each, yet unexplainable to anyone else.

In spite of the language difference, they shared the common language of love and understood each other. Over the months, he learned a few phrases of Navajo, and she picked up a little of the English language.

When it was time for him to return to the campus and write his thesis, the tribe held a going-away celebration. It was marked by sadness since the young man had become close to the whole village, and all would miss him.

As he prepared to get up into the pickup truck and leave, the old grandmother came to tell him goodbye. With tears streaming from her eyes, she placed her hands on either side of his face, looked directly into his eyes, and said, "I like me best when I'm with you."

Isn't that the way we should feel in the company of family and good friends – those people who bring out the best in us?

Even more, that ought to be how we are affected in the presence of Jesus. Because of Him, we learn to see ourselves as worthy and valuable. The hurts, the cares, the disappointments of our lives are behind us when we look to Him and realize the depth of His love.

Our self-esteem no longer depends on what we have done or failed to do; it depends only on the value that Christ places on us.

To be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ because of a close walk with Him is to generate in others the Indian grandmother's simple statement: "I like me best when I'm with you."

*This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you (John 15:12 ESV).*

– Beecher Hunter